



P5 STATE

DAL LAKE TO HAVE CRUISE BOAT SERVICE SOON

In a major boost to strengthen and promote the tourism infrastructure in the valley, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) is all set...

P6 THINK

TALIBAN'S UPPER HAND AFTER US WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

Like Bush, Barack Obama wanted to win the war in Afghanistan 'at all costs'. He deployed hundred thousand troops during the surge in 2010, which gradually went down, but ...



P3 CITY

TOURISM DEPT EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES OF TAPPING LESSER KNOWN DESTINATIONS: IT00

The Department of Tourism is planning to bring areas like Kitter Daji, Munde Daji, Bosian and other areas on the

**Quote!**

True freedom is impossible without a mind made free by discipline.
— Mortimer J. Adler

NEWS DIGEST**Mortar Shell Defused In Budgam**

SRINAGAR: Police on Saturday defused a live mortar shell in a forest area in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Station House Officer, Khag Tawfeeq Malik said that a live mortar shell was seen by locals and accordingly informed the police. The concerned police team rushed the spot and the area was sealed, he said. He said all the SOP's were followed

Army Vehicle Mows Down Woman

SRINAGAR: A woman was killed on Saturday after being hit by an Army vehicle in Yaripora area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district. 29-year-old Rohi Jan, wife of Aabid Ahmad of Kharbari village of Shopian, was hit by an Army vehicle at Kaddar Kulgam on Saturday evening, local news agency KNO reported. The woman suffered serious injuries in the accident and

Man Falls Off Cliff, Dies

SRINAGAR: A middle aged man died on Saturday after he slipped from a mountain peak in Darnhal Hanjipora area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district. 50-year-old Shakeel Ahmad Magray, a resident of Watoo Kulgam had gone for a picnic in the nearby forest area, where he slipped from a mountain peak, resulting in his on-spot death, reports said.

Woman Held With Grenades, Cash

SRINAGAR: Police on Saturday arrested a woman during a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Kreeri area of Baramulla. According to the reports, police, army's 52RR and CRPF 176 battalion arrested a 37-year-old woman from Hajin during a search operation in the Bangdara area of Kreeri on Saturday. Two grenades and a cash

GOVT'S SACKING SPREE CONTINUES**Hizb Chief's Sons, 2 Cops Among 11 Employees Fired For 'Terror Links'**

Izhar Nazir Ali

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday sacked eleven government employees, including Hizbul-Mujahideen Chief Syed Salahuddin's two sons besides two policemen in its ongoing crack-down against the people allegedly engaged in 'terror activities'.

The Special Task Force (STF) constituted for identifying and scrutinizing cases of government employees under Article 311(2) (c) of the Constitution of India, in its second and fourth 4th meeting, recommended 3 and 8 cases respectively, for their dismissal from the Government service, officials said.

The 11 employees terminated from services are from police, education, power, health, agriculture and skill departments and the SK Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), and hail from Srinagar, Budgam, Kupwara, Baramulla, Anantnag and Pulwama districts of the Valley.

Among those fired from government services are Syed Ahmad Shakeel and Shahid Yousuf, sons of Hizb chief Syed Salahuddin. One of them was



working with SKIMS and the other, was in the education department, they said.

Salahuddin has been designated as a 'Specially Designated Global Terrorist' by the United States.

"The National Investigation Agency has tracked terror funding trails of both the persons. They were involved in raising, receiving, collecting and transferring funds through Hawala (non-banking) transactions for terror activities of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen", the officials said.

The three officials recommended for dismissal in the second meeting of the

committee, included an order of the ITI in Kupwara, who was an over ground worker (OGW) of Lashkar-e-Taiba, they said.

He was providing information to militants about the movement of security forces, and abetting and harbouring militants to carry out activities in a clandestine manner, the officials said.

Besides him, there were two teachers from Anantnag in South Kashmir who were found involved in anti-national activities, including participating, supporting and propagating secessionist ideology of the Jamat-Islami (JeI) and Dukhtar-e-Millat (DeM),

Zilhaj Moon Not Sighted, Eid-ul-Azha On July 21

SRINAGAR: Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated on July 21 as the crescent of Zilhaj was not sighted on Saturday, Kashmir's Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam said.

The Grand Mufti said that the crescent of holy Zilhaj month has not been sighted and as such Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated on July 21, 2021. The crescent of Zilhaj, the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is most likely to be sighted on Sunday evening.

Govt Committed To Provide New Market To Artisans: LG

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Saturday that his government is determined to provide new markets, creating sustainable livelihood for the local artisans, besides preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Union Territory.

The LG made these remarks while inaugurating a 15-day long Craft Mela at Kashmir Haat



Speaking on the occasion, the LG, as per an official spokesperson observed that

Kashmir Haat is being revamped to provide best ambience to the locals and visiting

Srinagar Hot At 33.6, Jammu Humid At 31.2

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The maximum temperature was higher in Srinagar on Saturday than in Jammu city as the Meteorological department forecast rain from Sunday evening in J&K.

An official of the Met department said, "Maximum temperature was 33.6 degrees Celsius in Srinagar today while it was 31.2 in Jammu. Pahalgam had 28.0 and Gulmarg 23.0 as the maximum temperature today.

"In the Jammu division, Katra had 29.3, Batote 26.9, Banihal 28.9 and Bhaderwah 28.6 as the maximum today.

"Leh town of Ladakh had 32.8, Kargil 32.3 and Drass 29.4 as the

J&K Reports Lowest 185 Cases In 108 Days

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported 185 new covid-19 cases, lowest single day count in 108 days, even as two more people succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours, officials said on Saturday.

They said 74 of them were reported from Jammu Division and 111 from Kashmir Valley, taking the overall case tally to 318469.

Regarding the fatalities, they said, one death each was reported from Jammu Division and

Arif Haziq Among 3 Killed in Anantnag Firefight

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Three local militants of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), including the district commander were killed in a gun-battle with government forces in Achabal area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district, police said Saturday.

"Security forces had launched a cordon and

search operation in Kwarigam, Ranipora area of the South Kashmir district following inputs about the presence of terrorists there", a police official said.

While the forces were conducting searches in the area the militants fired upon them. The forces retaliated leading to an exchange of fire in which

SECURITY FORCES HAD LAUNCHED a cordon and search operation in Kwarigam, Ranipora area of the South Kashmir district following inputs about the presence of terrorists there."

Nodal Officers Nominated For Assistance Of Delimitation Panel

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday nominated nodal officers with the Delimitation Commission at the district level for providing timely information to it and receiving representations from stakeholders.

In an order issued by the General Administration Department, one officer has been nominated in each of the 20 districts of the union territory for liaisoning with the commission, which

wrapped its four-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on Friday during which it interacted with political parties and district administrations.

The order said the nodal officers shall be responsible for assisting the deputy commissioners in providing timely information as may be sought by the commission.

The nodal officers shall receive representations from stakeholders for submission to the commission and shall also be responsible for any other work

Mehbooba Reiterates Call For Dialogue, Reconciliation

Observer Monitoring Desk

JAMMU: Asserting that democracy, being a battle of ideas, drives its strength from dissent, President Peoples Democratic Party and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti Saturday reiterated that 'the only way to bring lasting peace in the sub continent was through process of dialogue and reconciliation.'

"The mechanisms of coercion and oppression are tested methods, failed to bring any change in the vexed Kashmir scenario. Dialogue and reconciliation has proved effective to end alienation among youth and bring considerable change, paving way for economic upliftment of the society", said Mehbooba, as per a statement.

Mehbooba was interacting with over a dozen delegations of party office bearers from twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch on second day of her ongoing tour of Jammu region.

She said that entering into an alliance with Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) after the 2014 elections was the most difficult decision for PDP but it was crucial for an organisation which wanted to resolve the Kashmir issue and facilitate peaceful ties between the two neighbouring countries.

"The BJP had to leave the alliance and dissolve the assembly in order to achieve its objectives. We led the government on our terms without compromising on any issue pertaining to the people of Jammu and Kashmir", she said.

"It was the efforts of then then Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayed that border areas of Rajouri and Poonch witnessed peace for the first time after India and Pakistan agreed on ceasefire in 2003", the former Chief Minister said, adding that opening of Poonch-Rawalakote border not only allowed separated families on the both sides to visit each other after decades but also created opportunity for the people to engage in cross-LoC trade.

Referring to the historical decisions of establishing Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Mughal

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs****AN APPEAL****NFSA beneficiaries may get their aadhar details seeded in Ration Cards**

Getting the entitled ration as a rightful beneficiary is your basic right.

Strengthen your claim for rightful ration through complete Aadhar seeding in ration card and help us to weed out bogus beneficiaries.

If you still have not seeded your Aadhaar details with your ration card get it done at your nearest FPS center, TSO's office or Assistant Director's office in the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs.

If you don't have your Aadhaar card, get yourself Aadhaar enrolled at your nearest ICDS center, Post office, Bank, District offices or any Aadhaar Enrolment Centre.

If your biometric authentication fails, you can update your biometrics at above centres.

You can locate the nearest Aadhaar Enrolment Center at the below given official website:

<https://appointments.uidai.gov.in/EACenterSearch.aspx?value=1>



DIPK-4409/21

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LG Inaugurates Multiple Projects Of Srinagar Smart City

Says Govt Exploring Possibilities To Transform Cities Into More Sustainable, Modern Ones

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a yet another move to transform the Cities of J&K and making them more vibrant, citizen-friendly, and modern, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today e-inaugurated multiple projects of Srinagar Smart City including Variable Message Displays (VMDs) installed across the city, besides dedicating the new Surface Car Parking at Residency Road, Srinagar to the public.

The Lt Governor also launched the 'mySrinagar' Mobile App, which will be a one stop solution catering to the needs of citizens and tourists in Srinagar. The app integrates all available e-services offered by various departments, tourism related information in both offline and online mode and emergency helpline services at finger tips of users.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor underscored that the J&K Government, through its continuous endeavours is exploring all the possibilities to develop Jammu and Srinagar cities into world class modern, sustainable and vibrant cities.

"These new initiatives are in line with our mission of making cities sensitive to the needs of citizens and our vision of evolving them through the use of modern IT & other interventions, enabling seamless information access and better ser-



THESE NEW INITIATIVES ARE IN LINE WITH OUR MISSION OF making cities sensitive to the needs of citizens and our vision of evolving them through the use of modern IT & other interventions, enabling seamless information access and better service delivery.

vice delivery. We need to adopt meaningful ways and means to cater the ever-changing needs of citizens, to acknowledge the limits of available capacities, and strive dynamically to address the same", asserted the Lt Governor.

The 'mySrinagar' app will work as a robust mechanism facilitating real-time information dissemination to the user, besides making information related to tourist attractions and destinations in Srinagar city available on single platform. More than 40 services from various line departments including 20 Srinagar Municipal Services are being offered through the

app. It was also informed that the app supports the GIS-based grievance management.

The Lt Governor directed the officials to collaborate with the concerned departments and integrate services like Building permissions, Electricity, and Water connections with the 'mySrinagar' mobile application for ease of access by the people.

Emphasising on putting Variable Message Displays (VMDs) into use as a relevant and instant information dissemination tool, the Lt Governor instructed the concerned officials to display information regarding government programs, schemes, aware-

ness campaigns; Information on traffic/congestion conditions, and alternate route diversions in case of high traffic; Real-time display of weather, temperature, air quality, etc.

He further suggested for preparing a comprehensive plan to develop VMDs as a source of generating additional revenue for Srinagar Smart City Limited.

He stressed upon maintaining proper inter-departmental coordination and asked the officers to get a better understanding of different facets of the prestigious project for effective implementation of various Smart City initiatives.

On the new Surface Car Park-

ing at Residency Road, Srinagar, the Lt Governor observed that the new parking space will provide a solution to the traffic congestion problem in the busy city area.

The Chair was informed that the new parking space has been built on a total area of 16000 sq ft and can cater to more than 100 four-wheelers and 15 two-wheelers. In addition, space/slot availability of the new parking can be accessed through online mode too. Parking slots have also been reserved for Electric vehicles and the parking gates have been equipped with remote-controlled Boom Barriers. The walls of the parking have been beautified by the local artists with wall paintings.

On being directed to reserve parking area for "Specially-abled", the officers informed the chair that the same provision has already been kept in the project.

Athar Aamir-ul-Shafi Khan, CEO Srinagar Smart City Limited outlined the silent features of the new projects inaugurated today.

He informed that the Variable Message Displays are strategically located on PAN city bases and have been integrated with ICCC platform, readable up to a distance of 150 Metres. The Control system is hosted on cloud to ensure 100% runtime. Surface Mounted Diode Technology for better visibility and IP67 Casing for all weather operability, he added.

DC Srinagar Sets Timeline Of Two Months For Completion Of Wasidari

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Saturday chaired a meeting to discuss issues regarding Nazool and Wakf lands in the district.

The meeting held threadbare deliberations on various issues with regard to expiry of lease of Nazool properties and encroachments on Nazool and Wakf lands besides settlement of discrepancy in revenue records.

The DC directed the officers to update all revenue records within set timelines besides demarcation process if any pending. He also instructed to speed up the pace of the Geo tagging process.

He asked the concerned to submit a report on Wasidari within two months for which additional manpower shall be provided.

The DC directed that revised rent proposal be also submitted regarding all leased properties in the district and instructed the officers to serve notices to all illegal occupants of Nazool land and initiate action as warranted under law against them.

On the occasion, directions were passed for conducting a massive and intensified anti-encroachment drive across the Srinagar district and demolish all illegal structures on government and Wakf properties.



He directed concerned to ensure retrieval of all encroached Kaahcharai and State land and asked them to maintain village wise records of encroached and retrieved land. He emphasized on rapid settlement of land related issues hampering execution of developmental projects.

While reviewing the possession of land/property under Wakaf Board, the DC was apprised about the present status about encroachments and other issues.

The CEO Wakaf board demanded that demarcation of various Wakaf properties be done by the Revenue authorities.

The DC stressed on Revenue and Wakf authorities to work in coordination to settle down all issues related to Nazool and Wakf lands.

Chief Executive Officer, Wakf Board, Mufti Fareed Ud Din, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Rayees Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Nazool Sandeep Singh Bali, all Tehsildars, Tehsildar Wakf Board and other concerned were present in the meeting.

MMINSR 7th Annual College Day Role Of Nursing, Paramedical Staff Amplified During Pandemic: Bhatnagar

SRINAGAR: Mader-e-Meharban Institute of Nursing Sciences and Research (MMINSR), SKIMS, Saturday celebrated 7th Annual College Day at SKICC here completing four decades of existence in the field of nursing.

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar was the chief guest on the occasion while as Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo was guest of honour.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor Bhatnagar highlighted the role played by the premiere institute like SKIMS during the pandemic Covid-19. He hailed the role of SKIMS in managing COVID 19 Pandemic and said the role of nursing and paramedical staff has amplified during the pandemic.

The Advisor in his address congratulated all the meritorious students and wished that they will carry further the legacy of professionalism imbued by their teachers.

He expressed gratitude to all the COVID warriors particularly Nurses for their tireless and commendable spirit during the pandemic. "Their

role is critical in patient output services and are real angels who are providing healing touch to the sick patients", Advisor Bhatnagar said.

He also remarked about the importance of Critical Care Nursing which he said has gained much prominence in these tough times of COVID-19.

The Advisor also appealed the general public to follow COVID appropriate behaviour in containing the pandemic and preventing third wave.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo while speaking on the occasion acknowledged the role of nursing as crucial and said fifty percent of the staff in hospitals work as nurses who serve as link between doctors and patients. He said that they deserve all salutations and appreciation for their services. While divulging details on expanding medical infrastructure across J&K, he said 12 new nursing colleges will be opened and with this expansion health sector will be strengthened and more job opportunities and avenues will be available for students.



A WOMAN ROWS IN A BOAT IN THE INTERIORS of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Saturday.
KO Photo Abid Bhat

Chief Justice Inaugurates National Lok Adalat At High Court, District Court

SRINAGAR: Following notable decline in Covid positive cases, Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority and Ladakh Legal Services Authority today organized National Lok Adalat throughout the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority, Pankaj Mithal, inaugurated National Lok Adalat at J&K High Court in presence of Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey, Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Judge High Court of J&K, Justice Sanjay Dhar in Srinagar wing of the High Court and District Court Srinagar.

Meanwhile, Chairman, High Court Legal Services Committee, Justice Tashi Rabstan, inaugurated the National Lok Adalat in Jammu wing of High Court.

In Ganderbal, the National Lok Adalat was inaugurated by Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey while in Kathua, the National Lok Adalat was inaugurated by Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul.

In order to have maximum response and settlements between the parties in cases like MACT, matrimonial, cheque bounce cases under NI Act and Money recovery cases, J&K LSA and Ladakh LSA had organized pre-lok Adalat sittings and pre-counseling sessions so that the parties may get one or more chances for entering into negotiation with the opposite parties.

During National Lok Adalat at J&K High Court, 477 cases were taken up, of which, 36 cases were settled and the settlement amount of Rs 84,86,460 was collected.

Earlier, Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal also inaugurated National Lok Adalat at District Court Complex, Srinagar in



presence of Executive Chairman J&K Legal Services Authority and Administrative Judge for District Srinagar, Justice Ali Mohammad Magray, Judge High Court of J & K, Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Judge High Court of J&K, Justice Sanjay Dhar.

The Lok Adalat at District Court, Srinagar, was organized under the Chairmanship of Mohammad Akram Chowdhary, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar.

A total of nine benches were constituted at the district Court Complex, Srinagar.

On the occasion, Chief Justice Mithal said that Alternate Dispute Resolution system is one of the effective mode of disposal of cases and litigants should avail and participate in Lok Adalat as and when conducted by the courts. "In Lok Adalat both the parties go home happily with win win position", he added.

In bench number 1 where MACT cases were taken up, 41 MACT claims were disposed off in which the Chief Justice on spot handed over cheques to the two petitioners to the tune of Rs 19,85,000 and 12,50,000 in two cases respectively.

Justice Ali Mohammad Magray said that Lok Adalat are inexpensive with fast delivery of justice which also help courts in reducing the work load which enables them to look into more serious matters. Further, he said that there is no court fee

and if court fee is already paid, the amount will be refunded provided the dispute is settled in Lok Adalat.

Noor Mohammad Mir, Secretary District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, coordinated the National Lok Adalat at Srinagar.

At District Court Srinagar, a total number of 5036 cases were taken up for amicable settlement, of which, 3908 cases were settled. Besides, Rs 27,30,7769/ were awarded as compensation by MACT Srinagar and Rs 1,52,35,484/ have been collected as settlement amount by different courts including traffic challans.

During the day long National Lok Adalat in J&K, 32601 cases were taken up by 128 benches at various courts across the UT of J&K. Out of these, 24778 cases were disposed of and an amount of Rs. 50,60,75,876 was awarded as compensation/settlement amount in civil, criminal, labour disputes, electricity and water bills, land acquisition, family matters, cheque dishonor and bank recovery cases.

Likewise, in Ladakh a total of 608 cases were taken up by 8 benches and 493 cases were disposed of and an amount of Rs. 3,59,84,519 was awarded as compensation/settlement amount in civil, criminal, labour disputes, electricity and water bills cases, land acquisition, family matters, cheque dishonor and Bank Recovery cases.

M.K.Sharma, Member Secretary J&K and Ladakh Legal Services Authorities thanked all the participants including the Judicial Officers, Secretaries DLSAs, Advocates, representatives of insurance companies and banks, staff of courts and Legal Services Institutions besides litigants for their pragmatic approach in settlement of cases in such a large number.

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
- PAMPOR: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1991 - Total solar eclipse is seen in Hawaii
- 2001 - Iraq resumes oil exports, ending a 5-week halt in protest of a US and British-sponsored UN Security Council resolution
- 2006 - 209 people are killed in a series of bomb attacks in Mumbai, India
- 2007 - "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix", the 5th film based on the books by J. K. Rowling is released
- 2010 - FIFA World Cup Final: Andrés Iniesta scores an extra time winner as Spain beats the Netherlands 1-0 in Johannesburg, South Africa for 1st WC title)
- 2011 - Neptune completes its first orbit since its discovery on September 23, 1846
- 2012 - Police academy suicide bombing kills 20 in Sana'a, Yemen
- 2012 - S/2012 P 1, the fifth moon of Pluto is discovered
- 2013 - 30 people are killed in a wave of bomb and gun attacks across Iraq
- 2014 - The UN Security Council calls for a special meeting to discuss the current Israel-Palestinian conflict; Israel continue attacks on Gaza
- 2015 - Wimbledon Women's Tennis: Serena Williams becomes oldest winner in Open era (33) beating Garbiñe Muguruza 6-4, 6-4

From KO Archives

J&K Next To Bihar In Corruption. TII, CMS Blow Whistle

Abul Qaisar / Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - Jammu and Kashmir is in the news for yet another wrong reason, that it is India's second most corrupt state, next only to Bihar, while Kerala has emerged as the least corrupt state. The startling revelation follows a recent survey titled "The India Corruption Study 2005," conducted jointly by the Transparency International India (TII) and die Centre for Media Studies (CMS). The study sampled about 14,500 respondents from over 150 cities and 300 villages across 20 Indian states and covered about a dozen services, including police, judiciary, education and public distribution system. It has placed the state very low at 19th position, just a shade ahead of Bihar.

Apparently, die services surveyed may not have included various engineering disciplines, industries and allied sectors, revenue, agriculture and allied fields, education, healthcare, transport and traffic control. In case they were, Jammu and Kashmir should have had die dubious distinction of being die most corrupt state ahead of Bihar. While die alarming report may not have disturbed die sleep of those at die helm, die revelations must certainly not be music "to die state people's ears. By any stretch of imagination, the scenario is greatly disturbing for a place otherwise groaning under die debilitating impact of numerous other misfortunes, natural as well as manmade. Given the tall promises held out by successive rulers to root it out, die disclosure is all die more amazing.

For the only Muslim majority state mat Jammu and Kashmir continues to be in spite of die sustained, and in some degree successful, government-inspired attempts to change its demographic complexion, die revelations are all die more shocking. One is reminded of the story that an old women refused to believe that a Muslim had lied on something "I can't believe that a Muslim can ever tell a lie", she told her informer. It must have entailed a relentless effort by that known enemy, satan, and his countless visible and invisible followers to erase die most effective deterrent from die Muslim mind i.e. a firm belief in the Day of Judgement, even if its indicators are visible to die naked eye all over. The custodians of religion would need to ponder over die grim situation.

Pertinently, it is die government which is squarely responsible for die situation taking a turn for die worse in spite of the pledges die successive rulers made while seeking people's mandate. The incumbent regime is particularly answerable because its promises were much louder not only to eradicate the canker but even to bring the earlier swindlers and scammers to justice. The

Peoples Democratic Party, which wrested power from National Conference on die main plank of eradicating corruption, took about three years to identify a presiding officer for die Accountability Commission even as making it visibly functional may take another three years for its major coalition partner, Congress, to make the high-profile body discernibly functional.

By now, the chief minister, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, must have forgotten what he told die people on assuming die high office: that nobody should approach him in matters of recruitment as die process would be made absolutely transparent. 'Not only that he and several of his ministerial colleagues are accused of making backdoor appointments, the coalition partners certainly have a mischief Up their sleeves for the ensuing recruitment to over 20,000 vacancies in government departments. This is not the occasion to enumerate all the scandals that surfaced over the recent years in which the government's Conduct has been suspect, even to the extent of overt and covert complicity. Instances are galore to suggest the present rulers are worse than their predecessors.

(Kashmir Observer, 11 July, 2005)

WHO's Chief Scientist Warns The Pandemic Isn't Slowing Down



BLOOMBERG

Coronavirus infections are rising across most regions of the world as the delta variant spreads, clear evidence that the pandemic isn't on the wane, said the World Health Organization's chief scientist. While vaccination levels in some countries are reducing severe cases and hospitalizations, large parts of the world face oxygen shortages, a lack of hospital beds and higher mortality, said the WHO's Soumya Swaminathan in an interview with Bloomberg Television. "In the last 24 hours, close to 500,000 new cases have been reported and about 9,300 deaths -- now that's not a pandemic that's slowing down," Swaminathan said. Cases are rising in five of six WHO regions, and mortality rates in Africa have jumped by 30% to 40% in two weeks, said

Swaminathan. The main reason for the increases are the fast-spreading delta variant, slow vaccination rollouts globally and the relaxation of safety measures like mask mandates and physical distancing rules. The WHO this week urged governments to be careful when reopening so as not to put at risk the gains made. In England, remaining legal restrictions are set to be removed on July 19, and measures like wearing masks will become a personal choice. The U.S. and much of Europe have also loosened curbs as cases dropped. "The idea that everyone is protected and it's kumbaya and everything goes back to normal is a very dangerous assumption right now anywhere in the world," Mike Ryan, the head of the WHO's health emergencies program, said in a media briefing on Wednesday.

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Taliban political members at a press conference in Moscow. Reuters

In Moscow For Talks, Taliban Say They Control 85% Of Afghanistan

KABUL/MOSCOW: Taliban officials said on Friday the Sunni Muslim insurgent group had taken control of 85% of territory in Afghanistan, and international concern mounted over problems getting medicines and supplies into the country. Taliban also said it had made no promise to the US not to attack Afghan administrative centres. Afghan officials dismissed the Taliban assertion, but local officials said Taliban fighters, emboldened by the withdrawal, had captured an important district in Herat province, home to tens of thousands of minority Shi'ite Hazaras. Hundreds of Afghan security personnel and refugees continued to flee across the border into neighbouring Iran and Tajikistan, causing concern in Moscow and other foreign capitals that radical Islamists could infiltrate Central Asia. Three visiting Taliban officials sought to address those concerns during a visit to Moscow. "We will take all measures so that Islamic State will not operate on Afghan territory... and our territory will never be used against our neighbours," one of the Taliban officials, Shahabuddin Delawar, told a news conference. He said "you and the entire world community have probably recently learned that 85% of the territory of Afghanistan has come under the control" of the Taliban. Meanwhile, WHO Regional Emergencies Director Rick Brennan said at least 18.4 million people required humanitarian assistance, including 3.1 million children at risk of acute malnutrition. He said health workers were struggling to get medicines and supplies into Afghanistan. — **REUTERS**

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WE WILL TAKE ALL MEASURES SO THAT ISLAMIC STATE will not operate on Afghan territory... and our territory will never be used against our neighbours," one of the Taliban officials, Shahabuddin Delawar, told a news conference.

Taliban Says It Sees China As A "Friend" Of Afghanistan: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING: The Taliban has said it sees China as a "friend" of Afghanistan and assured Beijing that it would not host Uyghur Islamic militants from the volatile Xinjiang province, which is a major worry for the Chinese government, according to a media report. The comments came as the Taliban made territorial gains in the war-torn country amid the withdrawal of the US forces. China has already evacuated 210 of its nationals from Afghanistan by a chartered flight this week. Beijing is concerned that under Taliban rule, Afghanistan will become a hub for the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a separatist outfit aligned to Al-Qaeda which is waging an insurgency in Xinjiang. The resource-rich Xinjiang shares about 8- km-long border with Afghanistan. Playing down China's concerns, the Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said they see China as a "friend" to Afghanistan and is hoping to talk to Beijing about investing in reconstruction work "as soon as possible". Suhail also said the Taliban would no longer allow China's Uyghur separatist fighters from Xinjiang, some of whom had previously sought refuge in Afghanistan, to enter the country. The Taliban would also prevent al-Qaeda or any other terrorist group from operating there, he said. "We have been to China many times and we have good relations with them," Suhail told Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post, recalling the few meetings hosted by China in the past for Taliban delegations. "China is a friendly country and we welcome it for reconstruction and developing Afghanistan," he said adding that "If (the Chinese) have investments, of course, we will ensure their safety," Shaheen said. Sharply critical of the US move to pull out its troops without stabilising the peace process in Afghanistan, China this week has asked its close ally Pakistan to step up cooperation to contain the security risks in the war-torn country following the withdrawal of the foreign forces. "(China and Pakistan) need to defend regional peace together. Problems in Afghanistan are practical challenges that China and Pakistan both face," especially the expansion of both international and regional terrorism, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Tuesday addressing a meeting of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Pakistan. While the American troops' withdrawal and resurgence of the Taliban should strategically benefit China as the Taliban shares close ties with Pakistan, both Islamabad and Beijing are concerned as they faced threats from the Islamic militant groups which were part of Al-Qaeda and Taliban. China has been eyeing big scale investments in Afghanistan as the country has the world's largest unexploited reserves of copper, coal, iron, gas, cobalt, mercury, gold, lithium and thorium, valued at over USD one trillion. In 2011, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) won a USD 400 million bid to drill three oil fields for 25 years, containing roughly 87 million barrels of oil. Chinese firms have also gained rights to mine copper at Mes Aynak in Logar province, according to the Post report. But observers say China will remain very cautious and concerned about the Taliban delivering on its promises. "Whatever benign language the Taliban use, China remains highly concerned about the security situation there," Andrew Small, a senior transatlantic fellow with the German Marshall Fund's Asia Programme told the Post. He said China's biggest concern in its dealings with the Taliban had always been whether it was sheltering Uyghur separatists. China's crackdown in Xinjiang, observers say, has exasperated the resentment among native Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. The US, the EU and international human rights organisations have accused Beijing of committing genocide in the province.

Pakistan Bans Air Travel For Unvaccinated People

KARACHI: Pakistan has imposed a ban on air travel for people who have not been vaccinated against Covid-19, a move deemed to curb the further spread of the virus, it was reported on Saturday. In its announcement on Friday, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) said the ban will come into effect from August 1, reports Dawn news. The latest measures come after an increase in coronavirus cases was witnessed throughout the country, as well as the impending threat of an outbreak of the Delta variant. Besides the travel ban, the NCOC also made it mandatory for all adult students to get themselves vaccinated by August 31. A day after Prime Minister Imran



Khan warned about the spread of the Delta variant, Asad Umar, who also heads the NCOC, on Friday admitted that the fourth wave had set in and issued new guidelines to check its spread.

The NCOC added that various other proposals were under consideration to limit unnecessary movement during Eidul Azha, which will be decided in the next few days, including a restriction on tourism. — **IANIS**

BOTTOM LINE

Delta Variant Cases Mark 32% Weekly Increase In UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON: UK health officials said the Delta variant of COVID-19 continues as the dominant strain of coronavirus and marked a sharp increase in the UK with 54,268 more cases logged on Friday, which marks a 32 per cent increase over the previous week. Public Health England (PHE) said its weekly analysis shows the continued rise in infections is not followed by a similar increase in hospitalisations and deaths, which reflects a high protection offered by both doses of a coronavirus vaccine. In a separate study, PHE also found that all the vaccines being administered are as effective at preventing symptomatic disease in the majority of people with underlying health conditions as the rest of the population. "The data continues to show that the sharp increase in cases that we are seeing is not being followed by a similar increase in hospitalisation and death," said Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency. "This is because two doses of the available vaccines offer a high level of protection against the Delta variant. Getting both jabs is the best way to ensure you and the people you love remain safe, so we once again urge everyone to come forward as soon as they are eligible," she said. "As we approach the planned end of restrictions, we must remain cautious and careful. Cases are rising across the country, and whilst the vaccines offer excellent protection, they do not offer 100 per cent protection," she added.



The weekly PHE data found the Delta AY.1 sub lineage, so-called Delta plus mutation for its feared vaccine resistance, remains low at 44 cases. Overall, the Delta variant - first identified in India - currently accounts for approximately 99 per cent of cases that are sequenced across the UK, followed by the local Alpha variant of concern. In a variant technical briefing, PHE revealed that "secondary attack rates" - the likelihood of an infection occurring in a given context - amongst household contacts of cases with Delta has continued to fall. Despite this continued fall, secondary attack rates for both household and non-household contacts of cases with Delta remain higher than for Alpha. In its separate vaccine study, PHE found overall vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease in risk groups at approximately 60 per cent after one dose of either Oxford AstraZeneca (Covishield) or Pfizer/BioNTech, with little variation by age. After two doses, vaccine effectiveness is 81 per cent with Oxford/AstraZeneca in people in risk groups aged 16 to 64. No data is available for both doses of Pfizer/BioNTech yet. Diabetes, severe asthma, chronic heart disease, chronic kidney dis-

ease, chronic liver disease, neurological disease, and diseases or therapies that weaken the immune system - such as blood cancer, HIV or chemotherapy - have all been linked to an increased risk of hospitalisation or death with COVID-19. "This real-world data shows for the first time that most people who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 still receive high levels of protection after two doses of vaccine," said Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE. "It is vital that anyone with an underlying condition gets both doses, especially people with weakened immune systems as they gain so much more benefit from the second dose," she said. The UK government is to confirm on Monday its plans to end all legal lockdown legal restrictions in the country from July 19. Doctors and medical leaders have been calling on the government to keep some measures, such as face masks in indoor settings, in place as the infections continue to rise. In a statement, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, which represents 23 medical bodies responsible for training and development in various specialties, said it was essential that people took a responsible approach when restrictions were formally lifted. It warned that there was "little doubt that things will get worse before they get better". The warning comes as the UK logged 35,707 daily coronavirus cases on Friday, the highest daily figure this year since January 22.

GOVERNMENT OF UT JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PCD (PHQ) J&K SRINAGAR
INVITING E-TENDER NOTICE
e-NIT No/EE-PCD/PHQ/43/2021-22 Dated: - 08-07-2021

Executive Engineer PCD PHQ J&K JAMMU/ SRINAGAR on behalf of The President of India invites tenders by e-tendering on item rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Govt. / CPWD / Railways and other State / Central Governments for the following works.

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Estimated Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Cost of document (In Rs.)	Time Allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Repair / renovation of Rooftop of Sub-Police Hospital APC Channi	PCD (PHQ) J&K, Srinagar	5.12 lacs	300/-	45 days	07-07-2021	"A", "C" & "D"

1. Date of Publishing: 08-07-2021 at 1700 hours.
2. The Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 1730 hours on 08-07-2021
3. The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 09-07-2021 to 16-07-2021 upto 1600 Hrs. The bids received will be opened at 1100 hours on 17-07-2021 on line.
4. The complete bidding process will be on line.
5. Technical bids of bidders shall be opened on line in the office of Executive Engineer PCD PHQ J&K Jammu/ Srinagar on 17-07-2021 at 1100 Hrs.
6. In pursuance to Circular No. A/Misc(2018)-III-895/J dated, 22-12-2020 issued by Finance Department of J&K, there is no requirement of submission of bid security/ earnest Money deposit (EMD). However, every bidder has to furnish an undertaking/ declaration form accepting that if it withdraws or modifies its bids during the period of bid validity or if it fails to sign the contract or fails to submit a performance security within 03 days after opening of price bid, if they are awarded the contract, they will be suspended from participating in any tender process in future for a period of one year. Aforementioned undertaking/ declaration needs to be furnished as per format provided in Annexure "A" to this bid document duly attested by 1st class magistrate / Notary on stamp paper.
7. The cost of tender documents should be submitted by the bidder in shape of treasury challan / receipt and upload the same.
8. In case of abnormally low bids, the tender inviting Authority reserves the right to ask from the bidder for additional performance security with the approval of the next higher Authority which shall be binding upon the bidder in such case.
9. Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, bill of quantities, conditions and other details.
10. The site for the work is available. The intending bidders are strongly advised to inspect the site of work before bidding.
11. Financial Bids will be opened on line in the office of the Executive Engineer, PCD PHQ J&K Jammu/Srinagar. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
12. The bid for the work shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids. If any bidder / tenderer withdraws his bid/tender before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the said earnest money shall stand forfeited.
13. No Engineer or Gazetted rank or other Gazetted Officer employed in Engineering or Administrative duties in an Engineering Department of the Government is allowed to work as a Contractor for a period of two years after his retirement from Government service, without permission of the Government. This contract is liable to be cancelled if either the contractor or any of his employees is found any time to be such a person who had not obtained the permission of the Government as aforesaid before submission of the tender or engagement in the Contractor's Service.
14. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents.
15. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
16. The interested bidder can download the NIT/bidding document from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>
17. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get (DSC) "Digital Signature Certificate" as per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding. This certificate will be required for digitally signing the bid. Bidders can get above mentioned digital certificate from any approved vendors. The Bidders, who already possess valid (DSC) Digital Signature Certificates, need not to procure new Digital Signature Certificate.
18. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with Digital Signature. The bids cannot be uploaded without Digital Signature. No Proposal will be accepted in physical form.
19. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para 2(iii).
20. Before submission of online bids, bidders must ensure that scanned copies of all the necessary documents have been attached with bid.
21. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission of bids whatsoever reasons may be.
22. All the required information for bid must be filled and submitted online.
23. Bidders can contact the undersigned for any guidance for getting DSC or any other relevant details in respect of e-tendering process.
24. Original Registration certificate of GST No. shall be uploaded on line.
25. The guidelines for submission of bid online can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>
26. No construction material shall be supplied by Police Construction Division, PHQ. However, the brands of the material will be approved by Engineer Incharge of the concerned site in consultation with Executive Engineer, PCD PHQ J&K.

No: e-NIT/EE-PCD/PHQ/2021-22/3233-39
Dated: 08-07-2021.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PCD (PHQ) J&K Srinagar.

DIPK-4378/21

Later a team of officers visited Aara Shrief Mohalla Khawaja Sahab, Baramulla, Gurdawara Tatiyana Sahib, Shalbug, Shrine of Hazrat Syed Mohammad Janbaaz Wali (RA), Khanpoor and Shelputri Temple took a review of various works under pilgrimage tourism at these places. The Director was accompanied by Deputy Director Tourism, Dr. Ahsan-ul-Haq Chisti, Deputy Director (M&W) Tourism, Bashir Ahmad and senior officers of the tourism and other allied departments.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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NO HOLDS BARRED



Taliban's survival has brought newer questions into limelight to which there are complicated answers. Despite embracing violence, the Taliban perspective is actually two fold, as it wants a coherent peace plan with the government in a manner that weighs more towards them, which means that the government may have to give greater concessions

Taliban's Upper Hand After US Withdrawal From Afghanistan

Naveed Qazi

Like Bush, Barack Obama wanted to win the war in Afghanistan 'at all costs'. He deployed hundred thousand troops during the surge in 2010, which gradually went down, but the presence remained there. Trump's policy, however, was of a contradistinction, where he wanted to end the 'forever war'. The Biden administration took a step further, and announced a decision of withdrawal, as he intended to extricate some 2,500 American troops, who are on the ground in Afghanistan, leaving a small force to guard the US diplomatic mission in Kabul. Comparisons of US leaving Afghanistan have been made to the US withdrawal from Vietnam, just like in the Iraq war in 2011.

President Biden in April 2021 had announced that all American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021. Unlike Trump, Biden has included NATO in making his decision to withdraw, and dispatched his Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, to the alliance's headquarters, where he announced that the US would work with its allies to ensure a 'safe, deliberate and coordinated withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan.' Biden's decision was aided by the recent appointment of William Burns, a diplomat, to run the CIA.

Since the president's decision, the US Department of Defence had retrograded the equivalent of approximately 300 C-17 loads of material out of Afghanistan, and have turned nearly 13,000 pieces of equipment to the Defense Logistics Agency for disposition. US soldiers were also reported of exiting from the Bagram air base. However, the US would continue to provide monetary security assistance to Afghanistan.

The decision of withdrawal seems in lieu with the public mood in United States. Today, nearly three fourth of the American public wants the US troops to return back to their homeland, including military veterans, and their families.

Post 911, around 2,300 US service members have been killed, and many more are wounded in America's longest war. They have also consumed about \$1 trillion dollars in the process. Was it a war that they ever won? They haven't. It is imperative that there was little reason to wait for some perfect moment in the future.

The Americans wanted to stay in Afghanistan to prove that Bin Laden was wrong about America's long-term commitments in the region. But, the sense prevailed when they realised that they can't fight a war for other peoples. Thousands of civilians were killed, and the collateral damage extended to Pakistan's major cities.

In a Foreign Affairs Oped, President Ashraf Ghani, wrote: 'the Afghan government respects the decision and views it as a moment of both opportunity and risk for itself, for Afghans, for the Taliban, and for the region.'

Despite Biden administration's decision of troop disengagement, many Democrat and Repub-



The Defense Post

lican leaders are of an opinion that the move would destroy US's credibility, demoralise its allies, and produce new shock waves in the region. They also believe that the current uncertainty would put the Afghan army in travails, as major Taliban attacks would begin. If the army would crumble, the critics of the decision believe that the journalists, women, judges, democracy activists, will be left at Taliban's mercy, and would be assassinated in the open. The situation has made many Afghan professionals pack their bags to other places for work.

In the past, when Taliban ruled, they barred women to move out of their houses, had stopped their education, and they had beaten men for what they found as non-Islamic behaviour. Many women were used to get stoned to death, and men were often killed as alleged collaborators of the state. They also maimed locals, used them as human shields, and their judges sanctioned amputations. But, the Taliban had promised a change during the peace diplomacy with United States, including women empowerment and moderation in social life, according to ways of Islam. However, people in Afghanistan believe that these statements are rhetorical, and that they will return to their old ways.

The withdrawal would also pose newer problems for the operational reliability of the Afghan state forces: without Americans on the ground, spies will lose direct contact with informants. Access to bases in neighbouring countries will be heavily restricted. Flying missions from the Persian Gulf will take longer, and it will also dramatically shorten the time aircrafts can spend on targets. By stationing an aircraft carrier offshore, it would diminish its capabilities elsewhere.

However, those who argue for a neo-imperial war in Afghanistan cannot unravel why diplomacy through interlocutors didn't prove as a vantage

point, and why the wars in the past didn't triumph. Infact, Taliban has tried to demonstrate the will to fight longer, and die in larger numbers than United States forces are prepared to do. The only problem for Afghan government is that the Taliban wants to rule the areas they control and influence. And it's a serious problem for them. They have already lost more than sixty four thousand police and army members, according to research done by Brown University in 2019.

Quite lately, the Americans had been providing air support to the Afghan army against Taliban. They have killed twenty thousand to thirty five thousand Taliban fighters, including many senior commanders.

However, Taliban remains a major force to reckon with, has an upper hand in the war, and controls more territory than ever, since 2001. The Long War Journal estimates that Kabul government controls only third of the 407 districts. The rest are up for grabs (46 percent), or under Taliban rule (19 percent). The Taliban represents an informal power in its southern and eastern provinces. It has already started taking over certain places, even without a full withdrawal that's in the offing. Infact, the Afghan army is already dispirited, and are leaving their posts, which are devoid of international support now. Some 1100 odd Afghan soldiers have already retreated to Tajikistan, following an offensive from the Taliban in July 2021.

There is also a likelihood that al-Qaeda might use Afghanistan as a base for extremist attacks against the United States, post withdrawal. It leaves Pentagon with an ambiguous situation, as they don't know how to combat threats with the Taliban allies. When US invaded Afghanistan, it was home to only four extremist groups. Now, according to Pentagon, there are twenty such extrem-

ist groups. As for Al Qaeda, including its offshoots and spawned branches, such as ISIS, the total membership spans tens of thousands, and they have, at times, controlled multiple cities, indicating the spiralling effect of radicalisation the US invasions did to the region and beyond.

Before Al-Qaeda planned and launched the 2001 attack on America from sanctuaries in Taliban run Afghanistan, the Taliban were American friends, not foes. President Ronald Reagan's administration developed a plan to stealthily promote freedom-fighter militarism among Afghanistan's Islamic youths, propagated their jihadist lores, hoping they would someday rise up and oust the godless Soviet communist troops out from Afghanistan. Reagan officials decided to flood rural Afghanistan's madrassas with millions of schoolbooks, designed to foment Islamic militancy. Taliban's offensive ultimately defeated the Red army.

For quite a while, Afghanistan's geopolitics and geo-economics has given an allure to many other powers such as China, Russia and Turkey. However, the recent developments have taken China aback, where the country believes that withdrawal of US troops would be detrimental for its Belt and Road initiative, and would augment civil war conditions. Russia, on the hand, had created its own peace diplomacy for Afghanistan, called Moscow Consultations, to invite warring factions, the regional and world powers, to have an opinion on the situation in Afghanistan. When it comes to Turkey, which has had friendlier relations with Afghanistan since 1920s, it wants to reach an agreement with the United States to run and guard the Hamid Karzai Airport in Kabul.

US leaving Afghanistan would again create problems for Pakistan, as Taliban's ideological and operational capability has spilled beyond borders. That's why, Taliban is not only trying to upend the existing order in Afghanistan. The only thing which Taliban feels ticklish about is the recognition of Afghan army in the local arena, and in the international community. If that happens, then the Taliban might have to cut a direct peace deal with the Afghan government, sooner or later.

Taliban's survival has brought newer questions into limelight to which there are complicated answers. Despite embracing violence, the Taliban perspective is actually two fold, as it wants a coherent peace plan with the government in a manner that weighs more towards them, which means that the government may have to give greater concessions. In such a situation, many Afghans believe that they would suffer in a new social system.

Naveed Qazi is an author of six books, and editor of Globe Upfront. He can be mailed at naveedqazi@live.com. Views expressed are the author's own.
www.naveedqazi.com

DHAKA/NEW YORK - The global race to achieve net-zero greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions as soon as possible is also a race to realize a new kind of abundance: of public health, vibrant nature, good jobs, greater equality, and more opportunity. To build this world of plenty, we must simultaneously speed up our fight against the causes of climate change and build resilience to its effects. And we need to do it now.

As three of the nine Global Ambassadors for the United Nations' Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns, we are working to mobilize cities, regions, businesses, investors, and the public behind major efforts between now and 2030. The aim is to halve GHG emissions, regenerate nature, and ensure that the four billion people most at risk globally can withstand the effects of climate change and thrive in spite of them.

We all have different backgrounds. But we agree that the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating health and economic effects highlight our responsibility - and create a unique opportunity - to imagine a more prosperous future for both people and planet.

Abundance in a zero-emissions world means no longer exploiting and wasting finite resources, but rather valuing the nature that sustains and protects

The Race to Sustainable Abundance

MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG | SALEEMUL HUQ | AGNES KALIBATA

us. It's about living with an abundance of clean air and water, biodiversity, jobs, healthy food, equality, and justice.

To that end, the 2015 Paris climate agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2° Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels, and to strive to keep it to 1.5°C. The science makes clear that every fraction of a degree of warming results in many more deaths and economic damage around the world. The private sector, local governments, communities, and individuals therefore have strong incentives to act on the Paris goals, even if it means stepping out ahead of their national governments.

These efforts will address factors contributing to major health problems and premature deaths - including air pollution from fossil fuels, extreme heat, and unhealthy diets - while promoting economic growth and creating millions of jobs. For example, by rethinking the food system - from the way food is produced, marketed, and sold to how it is disposed of - we can reduce GHG emissions from a sector that currently accounts for one-third of the global total

while creating a source of employment, health, and carbon sinks.

One approach, which the UN Food Systems Summit is driving forward, is the Food and Land Net Zero Country Alliance, a voluntary coalition of countries that commit to net-zero GHG emissions from food and land use by 2050. The alliance seeks to achieve this in a manner that increases productivity for smallholder farmers and enables them to produce more nutritious and sustainable products.

Work to cut emissions is well underway. Although it needs to accelerate, the solutions are largely known. Less understood is the Paris agreement's call to set out national plans for enhancing climate adaptation capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change. But the two goals - mitigating climate change and preparing for its effects - are interdependent.

After all, the rollout of solar energy and wind farms, electric transport networks, and other clean infrastructure is a crucial part of the transition to a zero-emissions economy. But we need to build that infrastructure to withstand

extreme heat and cold, floods, droughts, and wildfires. We also need to develop it in the most climate-vulnerable countries to power more resilient and profitable livelihoods, such as sustainable food systems.

Building resilience starts with local, community-tailored solutions, from early-warning systems for extreme weather to the restoration of natural capital such as forests, mangroves, and ocean ecosystems. But the lessons from these locally led projects must be shared around the world.

Finance will be crucial in this race to abundance, and - as UN Secretary-General António Guterres has advocated - needs to be split evenly between mitigation and adaptation. Doing so will unlock benefits, much like financing clean power does. According to the Global Commission on Adaptation, investing \$1.8 trillion this decade in projects such as early-warning systems, mangrove protection, and water management could generate \$7.1 trillion in net benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the dangers of being unprepared, and the vulnerabilities in our current economic

and health systems. It has demonstrated how public, economic, and planetary health are inextricably linked - and that we must now restore all three together. And this year offers three opportunities to advance that agenda.

In September, the first-ever UN Food Systems Summit will galvanize governments and the private sector to commit to sustainable solutions to some of the world's biggest challenges: poverty, gender inequality, hunger, and climate change.

That will set the stage for October's UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Kunming, China, where governments will create a framework for reversing biodiversity loss this decade. Then, at the UN's COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in November, they can leverage these new commitments to transform food systems and regenerate nature to develop strengthened climate action plans that match the Paris agreement's goals.

The three summits give national governments the opportunity to heed the chorus of businesses, investors, cities, regions, and citizens calling for a healthier, more resilient future. We can all be winners in the race to sustainable abundance. The starter pistol has sounded.

Project Syndicate



In towns, Municipal Committees are mismanaging wastes, which has led to an increase in the dog population, and thus leopards can easily find prey in civilian areas. So, Municipal Committees should also be held accountable. Besides, there is a dearth of resources in the wildlife department; we need to increase resources. Finally, we need to create buffer zones between humans and wild animals



Man vs Wild

Given the rise in wildlife attacks in Kashmir, particularly leopard attacks, Kashmir Observer’s Tooba Towfiq and Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat discussed this issue with Mr OP Sharma (Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir), Mr Raashid Naqash (Regional Wildlife Warden, Kashmir), Mr Ramzan Dar (Former Wildlife Warden, Kashmir), and Senior Journalist Athar Parvaiz on KO’s programme Full Circle. We have reproduced the extracts from the transcript here



We also need to create wildlife defence communities, particularly in vulnerable areas. We can set up flying squads in the Centre, Northern, and Southern Kashmir. These squads should visit vulnerable areas every week, and if the local population highlights that there is an impending threat of wildlife attacks in a particular area, they should conduct special visits to that area

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat (RMB): In the last few years, we have seen that leopard activity has increased in the vicinity of district Srinagar and inside district Budgam. Is it because the overall population of wild animals has increased in Kashmir?

Raashid Naqash (RN): I cannot comment on whether the leopard population has increased or decreased, as there is a considerable number of leopards that live outside the protected wildlife areas of Kashmir. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain their number. However, I think wildlife attacks have increased because wild animals, such as leopards and bears, have adapted to civilian or urban areas. Due to horticultural and agricultural expansions, these animals now find both cover and prey in these areas.

RMB: Do you see an increase or decrease in wildlife attacks today, as compared to the times when you were in office?

Ramzan Dar (RD): I think, with time, attacks by wild animals have increased. Moreover, I believe that there can be many reasons for it, but the three prominent ones are (I) Safety. If animals feel unsafe in their habitats, they desert them and barge into civilian or open spaces. (II) Food. If they have a shortage of food in and around their living areas, they again can come into human settlements in search of food. (III) Population growth. If the population of (wild) territorial animals increases in their area, they are compelled to search for new spaces.

RMB: There is a perception that deforestation and construction projects have led to the destruction of habitats of wild animals, and this is one of the reasons behind rampant wildlife attacks. What do you think?

OP Sharma (O.P.S): Yes, I think anthropogenic activities such as construction and developmental projects, vehicular movement through wildlife designated areas have negatively impacted wild animals. Moreover, we have restricted the movement

of wild animals in their inhabited spaces by placing barbed wires, constructing walls and viewpoints. All this has created stress among wild animals, and eventually, for their survival, they move into civilian or urban spaces.

RMB: After the recent leopard attacks in Humhama, Budagam, the administration cleared plantations in the area. Do you think this was the right step?

Athar Parvaiz (AP): I do not think that it was the right thing to do. In these matters, adopting scientific approaches is important. For example, we need to know ‘ why’ leopard attacks are increasing. So, in scientific analysis, we will examine whether their population has increased or is there any other reason? Unfortunately, we do not know about the leopard population and their movements in Kashmir due to the lack of employment of scientific methods such as camera traps, drones and radio-collaring. These are the things we need to look into. Besides, we need to know whether the natural prey base of leopards has decreased.

Tooba Towfiq (TT): Mr Raashid, would you like to respond to the issue of insufficient use of scientific techniques that Mr Athar just raised?

RN: I want to clarify that only 4,000 sq km of land in the Union Territory comes under protected areas, out of which, 2000 sq km is in Kashmir. On the other hand, there is 18,000 sq km of forest land in Kashmir, and wild animals take refuge in these lands as well. I reiterate that we cannot count or use scientific methods for animals living outside the protected areas. However, we have used scientific methods, such as satellite collaring, to monitor wild animals in the protected areas. Also, in these areas, we can complete leopard estimation in a couple of months. But the need of the hour is to do their estimation on a large scale, including in civilian areas, given that they have adapted to and are living in civilian areas.

OP Sharma: There is a lack of coor-

dination between the forest department, the wildlife department, and the common masses; we need to strengthen coordination mechanisms. We also need to create wildlife defence communities, particularly in vulnerable areas. We can set up flying squads in the Centre, Northern, and Southern Kashmir. These squads should visit vulnerable areas every week, and if the local population highlights that there is an impending threat of wildlife attacks in a particular area, they should conduct special visits to that area.

TT: Any final comments from you?

AP: Someone already said that leopards are increasingly preying on dogs, but in this discussion, we have missed a very important element, which is waste management. In towns, Municipal Committees are mismanaging wastes, which has led to an increase in the dog population, and thus leopards can easily find prey in civilian areas. So, Municipal Committees should also be held accountable. Besides, there is a dearth of resources in the wildlife department; we need to increase resources. Finally, we need to create buffer zones between humans and wild animals.

TT: Buffer zones between humans and wild animals have reduced over time, is it due to the patterns of urbanization?

RN: Yes, I think patterns of urbanization have played a significant role in reducing buffer zones. In residential areas, such as Rangreth, in between every ten constructed houses, there is a plot of land which has zero human intervention and is profusely dense. We have found pieces of evidence of leopard habitation in such plots. Thus, we need to educate people and inform them to keep an eye on such plots, increase activity inside deserted buildings and other uninhabited areas of their locality, so that leopards do not take refuge in them.

9 in 10 Indians feel digital wallets have made shopping easier

Agencies

As online shopping grows multifold amid the pandemic in the country, nine in 10 Indians strongly believe that digital wallets have made shopping easier and a vast majority (98 per cent) of those surveyed have shopped at an online-only retailer in the past 12 months, a new global report showed.

The survey by global payment's provider Blackhawk Network found, which mined the views of 13,000 global shoppers, also found that 69 per cent of respondents will shop more frequently at retailers that accept digital payments.

India has emerged as a forerunner in mobile commerce adoption in comparison to its global counterparts.

Over 54 per cent of the respondents said they will spend more money if they can use digital payment methods.

The findings showed that 93 per cent of Indian respondents prefer using digital wallets regularly as compared to their global counterparts' average of 55 per cent.

"The pandemic has intensified the demand for digital wallets as contactless payment is reckoned as the new normal. India being a very high cash-driven market, the digital payment industry is still very nascent, yet fast-evolving," said Theresa McEndree, global head of marketing, Blackhawk Network.

"As we start to hit more of a stride in our economic recovery, the winners will be the merchants that cater to the everyday digital payment preferences of today's shopper," McEndree said in a statement.

The Indian consumers are increasingly embracing innovative ways of transacting



using their mobile devices.

Compared to other countries, India leads by a margin when it comes to frequent usage of all given digital payment methods - PayPal, digital wallets, peer-to-peer apps, and barcodes or QR codes.

Contactless payment innovations like QR codes are keeping Indian businesses moving. QR codes, or barcodes on a mobile device, were being used more frequently at grocery stores and online-only retailers.

"On average, the likelihood of scanning a QR in India is greater than in any other coun-

try. Twenty per cent of Indian respondents used a QR code or barcode for the first time during the pandemic, and 69 per cent report using them more frequently," the survey noted.

In India, usage of peer-to-peer payment apps is almost as common at online only retailers (49 per cent) as it is at grocery stores (44 per cent) and department stores (41 per cent).

India, however, ranked lowest (13 per cent) among all countries in choosing 'secure checkout process' as the most important factor when making a payment.

Two Arthritis Drugs Reduce Risk Of Covid Death, Shows Study

Agencies

Washington: Arthritis drugs tocilizumab and sarilumab reduce the risk of death and the need for ventilators among hospitalized Covid-19 patients, according to an analysis of nearly 11,000 patients published Tuesday.

The study appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association and prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to recommend the use of the medicines, known as IL-6 inhibitors, in addition to corticosteroids among patients with severe or critical Covid.

Manu Shankar-Hari, a professor at King's College London and lead author of the paper, told AFP that the research represented a "definitive piece of evidence" in favor of the drugs after earlier studies produced mixed results.

Among hospitalized Covid patients, administering one of the drugs in addition to corticosteroids reduced the risk of death by 17 percent, compared to the use of corticosteroids alone.

In patients who were not on ventilators, the risk of progressing to mechanical ventilation or death was reduced by 21 percent, compared to the use of corticosteroids alone.

Severely ill Covid patients experience an immune system overreaction known as a "cytokine storm" that can cause severe organ damage and death.

Tocilizumab and sarilumab are used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune condition, by inhibiting the effects of interleukin (IL)-6, a type of protein called a cytokine that signals the body to mount an inflammatory response.

But previous research on whether IL-6 inhibitors can be useful against severe Covid have variously reported

benefit, no effect and harm.

This prompted the WHO to coordinate the new study that combined data from 27 randomized trials conducted across 28 countries.

The analysis included information on 10,930 patients, of whom 6,449 were randomly assigned to receive interleukin-6 inhibitors and 4,481 to receive usual care or placebo.

Overall, the risk of death within 28 days was 22 percent compared with an assumed risk of 25 percent in those receiving only usual care.

Outcomes were better when patients also received corticosteroids, with the risk of dying 21 percent compared to 25 percent for those receiving usual care.

This means that for every 100 such patients, four more will survive.

The study also examined the impact of these drugs on whether patients progressed to ventilators or death.

Among patients also given corticosteroids, the risk was found to be 26 percent for those receiving IL-6 inhibitors compared with an assumed 33 percent in those receiving usual care.

In other words, for every 100 such patients, seven more will survive and avoid mechanical ventilation.

Tocilizumab and sarilumab, which are given by infusion or injection, are currently recommended for use along with corticosteroids in severe Covid patients by Britain. The United States also recommends tocilizumab with corticosteroids.

Shankar-Hari said he hoped global organizations such as the WHO could now lobby to improve access of the drugs for lower and middle income drugs where the current cost could be prohibitive for widespread use.

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

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar): 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)

Website: www.jkbopee.gov.in E-mail: coejakbopee@gmail.com/helpdeskjakbopee@gmail.com

SUBJECT: - Admission Notification for Common Entrance Test-2021 for B.Sc. Nursing / B.Sc. Paramedical / B.Sc. Technology Courses.

REFERENCE: - (i) SRO-505 of 2019 dated 28-08-2019 issued by Health and Medical Education Department of J&K Government.

(ii) SRO-640 of 2019 dated 24-10-2019 issued by Health and Medical Education Department of J&K Government.

(iii) Notice No. 34-BOPEE of 2021 dated 27-03-2021.

(iv) Letter No. ME-Gztd./02/2021/NMC dated 30-06-2021

Notification No. 070-BOPEE of 2021

Dated: 08-07-2021

As conveyed by the Health & Medical Education Department, UT of J&K and in supersession of Notice No. 34-BOPEE of 2021 dated 27-03-2021, Online Applications, duly affixed with latest colored photograph, thumb impression and signature, are invited from Domiciles of the Union Territories of J&K /Ladakh, who are eligible and desirous for appearing in the Common Entrance Test 2021 for admission to B.Sc. Nursing / B.Sc. Paramedical / B.Sc. Technology Courses for the academic session 2021. The selection of the candidates for such courses shall be regulated by the J&K Board of Professional Entrance Examination Act, 2002 and the Rules and Regulations there under; JK Reservation Act, 2004 as amended vide J&K Re-organization Act, 2019, JK Reservation Rules, 2005 as amended vide S.O. 68 dated 28-02-2020, S.O. 127 dated 20-04-2020, and subject to further amendments, if any, by the competent authority, from time to time and the guidelines/information as contained in the Electronic Information Brochure-2021, which are available on the official website(s) of the BOPEE www.jkbopee.gov.in/ www.jakbopee.org

Important Information

1. Online Applications for Common Entrance Test for B.Sc. Nursing / B.Sc. Paramedical / B.Sc. Technology Courses - 2021
2. Receipt of online application forms: w.e.f. 28-07-2021.
3. Last date for filling the online application forms: 07-08-2021 (mid-night).
4. Fee Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand only) to be paid online through National Credit Card/Debit Card/Net Banking.
5. Please download e-information Brochure from BOPEE website(s) viz www.jkbopee.gov.in / www.jakbopee.org.
6. The syllabus for the examination/test is available in the e-brochure.
7. Date of Entrance Test: to be notified separately.
8. The Board shall not be responsible for any act of omission or commission in filling up of the Online Application Form by the candidate. It is incumbent upon the candidates to go through the information contained in the e-information Brochure and agree to follow the conditions contained therein. No candidate can claim any alteration in any of the conditions which have been incorporated in the e-information Brochure and notified in advance.
9. The candidates are further advised to remain in touch with the BOPEE website (a) www.jkbopee.gov.in / www.jakbopee.org. The Board does not undertake any responsibility for any delay caused in publication of Notices/ Notifications in the Print Media (Newspapers) as delay, if any, in such publication(s) is not within the control of the Board, notwithstanding that the Board notifies the same on the official website(s) and for publication in the newspapers simultaneously on the date of issue of the said Notifications/Notices etc.
10. The examination may be conducted Offline by the Board.

Online Application Forms:

Application Forms have to be submitted through online mode only on the BOPEE websites www.jkbopee.gov.in/through URL's/ Links provided for this purpose) w.e.f. 28th July, 2021 to 07th August, 2021 (mid-night). The payment of Rs. 1000/-only (Rupees one thousand only) as fee is to be made also online through the Integrated Bill Desk Payment Gateway which can be used to make payment with any National Credit Card/Debit Card/Net Banking. The procedure for filling up of Application Form and eligibility etc. of the candidates has been given in detail in the e-Brochure. The applicants must necessarily, in their own interest, go through this e-Brochure before attempting to fill up the online Application Form.

Help Desk:

The applicants can also contact the Help Desk of I.T. Section of the BOPEE during the office hours and working days only on 0194-2437647 / 0194-2433590/ / 0191-2479371/0191-2479371 and or email at helpdeskjakbopee@gmail.com for any assistance / guidance in this regard.

Submission of Online Application Forms:

The interested candidates have to upload the following scanned original / self-attested certificates in PDF format with size from 100-200 KB along with the Application Form:-

- (i) Domicile of UT of J&K/UT of Ladakh as the case may be (Domicile Certificate, if not issued, at the time of filling up of online Application Form, the candidate can upload undertaking certifying that he/she shall submit / produce the same at the time of counselling). For Candidates of UT of Ladakh, ST certificate issued by the Competent Authority of Ladakh shall be treated as Domicile Certificate.
- (ii) Qualifying marks (12th class certificate) with the result (if declared)
- (iii) Date of Birth Certificate (Matriculation issued by the Board); and
- (iv) Reserved category certificate, if any.
- (v) Any other document(s), as requested.

However, it is for the information of all the concerned that afore-titled documents as required for submission of application form shall be considered provisional and subject to change(s) vide any order as may be issued by the Government subsequently.

Notes:-

1. The candidates can change/ modify their online Application Form at any time before it is "submitted" online. However, for any subsequent modifications, if required, finally the candidates should approach the BOPEE office Srinagar/ Jammu. They are advised, in their own interest, not to share their login details with any other person, lest he/she may get an opportunity to change important details in the Application Form. They can check the status of their Application Form on the official website(s) of the BOPEE. If any form is not confirmed for want of required information, the candidate concerned must report to the BOPEE office Srinagar or Jammu by or before 9th August, 2021 or two days after the last

date fixed by Board failing which his/her Application Form shall be rejected without any further notice.

2. For online, candidates shall have to upload their photograph, signature and thumb impression images in JPEG format and size within the range of 10-50 KB as given in the instructions in the e-information Brochure uploaded on the BOPEE website(s).
3. The candidates must, after filling up all the required entries, ensure that their online payment has been successfully made and all the requisite documents have been uploaded in specified format/size. Mere downloading of the Application Form does not mean that the candidate has submitted his/her Application Form successfully. Candidate should ensure that he/she keeps checking the status of his/her online application forms until it is scrutinized by the Board and approved/accepted.
4. The candidates should enter valid e-mail address/mobile number on the application form, which shall be used by the Board in sending messages/emails to the candidates, whenever required.
5. For any help / assistance candidates may call "Help Desk" numbers during office hours of the working days available on the website of BOPEE.

Eligibility:

A. Eligibility for B.Sc. Nursing Programme:

The candidates applying for admission to B.Sc. Nursing Programme must fulfil the following eligibility conditions;

A candidate must:

- (i) be a domicile of UT of J&K/UT of Ladakh as the case may be (if the candidate(s) applying for this course do not have domicile certificate at the time of filling up of application form, he/she is advised to upload an undertaking certifying that he/she shall produce the domicile certificate at the time of counselling). For Candidates belonging to UT of Ladakh, ST certificate issued by Competent authority of Ladakh shall be treated as Domicile certificate;
- (ii) be at least 17 years old on 31st December-2021;
- (iii) have passed 10+2 or equivalent examination individually in the subjects Physics /Chemistry, Biology and English Core/English Elective and must have obtained minimum of 45% marks taken together in PCB subjects from Recognized Board Under AISSE/CBSE/CSE/SSCE/NSCE or other equivalent Board or students appearing in 10+2 examination in science conducted by National Institute of Open School with 45% marks;
- (iv) be medically fit.

b. The candidates appearing/appeared in 10+2 (12th Class) examination 2021 can also apply, provided such candidates have qualified the examination at the time of declaration of the result of the Entrance Test/at the date of counselling as may be notified by the Board. Their Entrance Test result shall remain withheld unless they produce the necessary certificate of qualifying the 10+2 (12th Class) examination;

B. Eligibility for B.Sc. Para-medical Courses:

The candidates applying for admission to B.Sc. Para-medical Courses must fulfil the following eligibility conditions;

A candidate must:

- (i) be a domicile of UT of J&K/UT of Ladakh as the case may be (if the candidate(s) applying for this course do not have domicile certificate at the time of filling up of application form, he/she is advised to upload an undertaking certifying that he/she shall produce the domicile certificate at the time of counselling). For Candidates belonging to UT of Ladakh, ST certificate issued by Competent authority of Ladakh shall be treated as Domicile certificate;
- (ii) be at least 17 years old on 31st December-2021;
- (iii) have passed 10+2 or equivalent examination with Science (PCB) and English through a recognized Board / University securing minimum 50% and above marks for Open Merit Candidates and 40 % marks and above for candidates belonging to Reserved Categories in aggregate;
- (iv) The candidates appearing/appeared in 10+2 (12th Class) examination; 2021 can also apply, provided such candidates have qualified the examination at the time of declaration of the result of the Entrance Test /at the date of counselling as may be notified by the Board. Their Entrance Test result shall remain withheld unless they produce the necessary certificate of qualifying the 10+2 (12th Class) examination;

b. lateral entry for the students having obtained diploma in concerned stream and having passed 10+2 with Physics, Chemistry, Biology and having diploma registered with J&K Para-medical Council.

C. Eligibility for B.Sc. Technology Courses in SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar

A candidate must:

- (i) be a domicile of UT of J&K/UT of Ladakh as the case may be (if the candidate(s) applying for this course do not have domicile certificate at the time of filling up of application form, he/she is advised to upload an undertaking certifying that he/she shall produce the domicile certificate at the time of counselling). For Candidates belonging to UT of Ladakh, ST certificate issued by Competent authority of Ladakh shall be treated as Domicile certificate;
- (ii) have passed 10+2 or equivalent examination with Science (PCB) and English through recognized Board / University securing minimum 50% and above marks for Open Merit Candidates and 40 % marks and above for candidates belonging to Reserved Categories in aggregate;

b. The candidates appearing/appeared in 10+2 (12th Class) examination 2021 can also apply, provided such candidates have qualified the examination at the time of declaration of the result in the Entrance Test /at the date of counselling as may be notified by the Board. Their Entrance Test result shall remain withheld unless they produce the necessary certificate of qualifying the 10+2 (12th Class) examination;

Syllabus etc.:

a. The candidates applying for courses mentioned above at (A), (B), (C), are advised to go through syllabus for common entrance test referred in e-brochure of B.Sc. Nursing/ B.Sc. Paramedical / B.Sc. Technology Courses available on BOPEE website www.jkbopee.gov.in.

b. The information regarding tentative number of seats, Reservation Policy etc. for the examination is given in the e-information Brochure. The examination shall be conducted in one sitting of three hours duration and the paper shall contain 180 questions comprising of different sections.

Notes:

The eligibility is bare minimum/provisional and shall be subject to such changes/bench marks as may be fixed by the concerned University. The Board shall on receipt of any such communication from the concerned authority/University notify the same, which shall govern the eligibility criteria.

Instructions:

a) The information provided by the candidates in the online Application Form cannot be verified from the original documents by the BOPEE officials before admission of candidates. The information on the Application Form or on the Admit Card of candidate shall in no case be construed as an acceptance of such information/category certificate by the BOPEE. Therefore, if at any stage, it is found that a candidate has provided false or incorrect information in respect of any eligibility condition(s), his/her candidature will be cancelled without any further notice/ affording any opportunity to him/her;

Warning:

- (a) The candidates are warned not to resort to any unfair / fraudulent means or act of impersonation at the time of Entrance Test or upload any objectionable material including a photo of any object, other than his/her own photograph while submitting the online form. In case, a candidate is found taking recourse to such acts, criminal prosecution shall be initiated against him/her and his/her abettors. He /she shall be permanently debarred from appearing in the entrance Test in future.
- (b) Any candidate uploading image of an object other than his/her own photograph shall be disqualified from appearing in the Examination(s). Besides action as warranted under law shall also be taken against such candidate.

Original Documents required to be submitted in the Institution at the time of Admission:-

- a) Marks certificate of the qualifying examinations (12th class marks certificate);
- b) Date of birth (Matriculation / Secondary School Certificate) from a recognized Board;
- c) Domicile Certificate for candidates belonging to UT of J&K and ST certificate as a Domicile for candidates belonging to UT of Ladakh;
- d) Category Certificate, if any;
- e) Any other document as may be required by the Institution.

Notes:-

- a) The candidates having more than one reserved category certificate can get benefit of only one category indicated and uploaded along with the Application Form, which in no case shall be changed afterwards. The candidate, whose category certificate has not been found valid, will be considered in open merit, if otherwise found eligible without any further notice.
- b. Candidates who select single choice/preference shall be considered for that course/college/institute only.

Roll No Slip/Admit Card (if entrance test is conducted):

The notification for downloading of online/electronic admit cards will be issued separately.

Venue for conduct of Examination (if entrance test is conducted):

The examination shall be conducted at Jammu/Srinagar simultaneously as may be decided by the Board.

Issuance of Admit Cards and Date of Test (if entrance test is conducted):

The information with regard to availability of Online Admit Cards, Venue and Time of the Entrance Test will be issued separately in due course of time. The date of Entrance Test shall be notified separately.

NOTE:-

1. The online submitted form is purely provisional and is liable to be cancelled at any stage subject to the final verification of the documents and even at any stage where such a document is proved to be false/false.
2. In case the Board shall not conduct the entrance test, the selection of the eligible candidates shall be made on the basis of the Marks of the marks obtained in the qualifying examination.

NOTE:-

4% of the available seats are reserved for the candidates of UT of Ladakh in the Govt. Colleges / Institutes of J&K for the year 2021-22.

DIPK-NB-1683/21

No. BOPEE/Exam-06/2021

B.O.P.E.E.

Dr. Sunit Gupta
Controller of Examinations
J&K, BOPEE
Dated: 08-07-2021

Tourism Deptt Bringing Kitter Daji, Munde Daji, Bosian On The Tourist Map



Dr. Itoo Conducts Extensive Tour Of Upper Rafiabad Areas; Says Deptt. Exploring Possibilities Of Tapping Potential Of Lesser Known Destinations

BARAMULLA: The Department of Tourism is planning to bring areas like Kitter Daji, Munde Daji, Bosian and other areas on the tourism map of Kashmir and in that process a detailed project report is being prepared by the department.

In this regard, Director Tourism Kashmir, Dr. GN Itoo today took a detailed tour of upper Rafiabad areas during which he visited Kitter Daji, Munde Daji, Kungroosa, Dangiawacha and other areas to assess on spot feasibility and tourism potential of these areas. He also took an on spot assessment of various trekking routes and other adventure avenues available at these places.

Interacting with the locals at various places, Director Tourism said that the department is identifying, exploring and developing so far hidden tourist destinations to provide tourists with more options for recreation. This, he said, would immensely improve the local economic activity at these destinations.

Highlighting that the department is providing constant handholding of tourism stakeholders, Dr. Itoo said that the department is doing handholding of tourism stakeholders on all fronts so that they are able to cope up with the chal-

lenges of post covid business environment.

The Director further said that to deal with the challenges of ongoing pandemic covid-19, the department has completed the vaccination of employees of department and other allied workers besides more than ninety percent stakeholders have also been inoculated till date. He added that the department also organized a capacity building programme on implementation of covid protocols recently for all the stakeholders associated with the tourism sector.

Remarking that the administration is providing all possible help to the tourism stakeholders, Dr. Itoo said that the department recently organized a workshop for tourism stakeholders for availing the benefits of incentives under the new industrial policy.

During the visit, the director specifically appealed to the youth at these destinations to come forward and take the benefits of various incentives of starting tourism units for which, he says, the department will extend all possible help.

Later a team of officers visited Asar Shrief Mohalla Khawaja Sahab, Baramulla, Gurdawara Tatiyana Sahib, Shalbug, Shrine of Hazrat Syed Mohammad Janbaaz Wali (R.A), Khanpoar and Shelputri Temple took a review of various works under pilgrimage tourism at these places.

The Director was accompanied by Deputy Director Tourism, Dr. Ahsan-ul-Haq Chisti, Deputy Director (M&W) Tourism, Bashir Ahmad and senior officers of the tourism and other allied departments.

Poultry Rates Fixed Without Consulting Farmers: KVPFA

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Days after the government fixed rates of poultry products, Kashmir Valley Poultry Farmers Association (KVPFA) on Saturday said that the decision of fixation of rates of poultry was decided without consulting them.

Tariq Elahi, a senior member of the association talking with a news agency, said that the government is playing with the livelihood of over 5 lakh people and rates are fixed without consulting the farmers.

He said that rates are very low as cost in making a chick of one kg is around Rs 141 while as the government has fixed rates lower than the production.

KVPFA has also written to Director Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs in this regard and have requested him to look into the matters of farmers and save the livelihood of 5 to 6 lakh people.

The letter "Save Poultry Industry (Farmers)" reads that with due regard and reverence, "it is to understand that poultry broiler production is an industry that involves the livelihood of more than five lakh people in various aspects of poultry farming and retail cum wholesale trades etc. In this connection, it is suggested and submitted that white meat (broiler meat) is best for human health in every respect but still its whole sale /retail rates are too low, due to which farmers are suffering constantly while as another kind of meat like Red meat is @ 600/kg cost of beef @ 400/kg, cost of skull meat is up to Rs.300/kg, cost of fish is around Rs. 300/kg and cheese is @250/kg. So this is total injustice with poultry farmers."

"Do not forget we are manufacturers but while fixing rates, your Deptt. is always seeing wholesale/retail prices of Punjab etc. Which is trading not manu-



facturing? Fail to understand how can fix rates of manufacturing...? In no way the cost of production /wholesale/retail in neighboring states as the production cost is much higher in the valley due to many reasons, which is well known to everyone," It adds.

"In order to encourage and give a boost to the local poultry farming in the valley, the production cost is too calculated on a fortnightly/ monthly basis under the experts from Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir in collaboration with Association and fixed at minimum 10 percent profit," the letter reads.

"Our request to the government is to kindly come up with clear broiler rate policy so that neither farmers nor other people associated with industry may suffer in any way as the livelihood of more than 5 to 6 lakh people associated with the industry in J&K needs protection. Further, like all other states are fixing process /mechanism may be handed over to trade bodies and the Department of Animal husbandry jointly. The animal husbandry department is fully aware of everything regarding the poultry industry," the letter reads.

"Please write to Govt. that

being demand and supply item allows Association in collaboration with Animal Husbandry Deptt. to decrease rates keeping everything in mind, otherwise, the livelihood of 5.00 lac people will be in danger. Keeping in view, that valley is totally dependent on the neighboring states of Punjab Haryana and particular for all sorts of raw materials (chicks, feed, maize and farm equipment etc.) as such reach at for higher costs thus adding to the burden of the cost of production," it said.

"In J&K, besides other problems there are two main complicated problems which are directly affected (Heavily) on the poultry farmers business in terms of marketing," It adds

"Some greedy poultry lifters are importing out dated dressed chicken and are selling me in open market. But doing on one hand they are playing with the health of common people as it has been 100% proved that said dressed birds are unhygienic /jatka/ out-dated and on other hand killing local poultry market of J&K. So please stop them immediately. Sir, Hope you will take the contents of this letter in a most positive manner and will do the needful immediately and oblige," It adds further—(KNO)

80 Seater Cruise Boat Service To Start Soon In Dal Lake

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a major boost to strengthen and promote the tourism infrastructure in the valley, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) is all set to start the promotion of the much-awaited 80 seater cruise boat service in Dal Lake very soon.

Managing Director Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) Nisar Ahmed while speaking to the news agency said that they will be receiving the charge of cruise boat very soon as there is some technical work to be done before it is set in operation, however the promotion for the boat will be started soon so that people become aware of the development.

"As soon as the cruise boat starts, people can make the bookings for family get-togethers, ring ceremonies or any other social gatherings. The cruise boat comes with the seating capacity of 80 people and is equipped with a maximum of facilities," he said.



Pertinently after the government announced the tourism sector in priority sector for vaccination, the tourism department in its inoculation drive immunized the tourism stakeholders who have a direct interface with the tourists.

According to the Tourism department officials, around 90 percent of the people associated with the tourism industry have been vaccinated, which include, hoteliers, restaurant owners, houseboat owners, and their staff, shikarwallas, and others associated with the industry, after which the tourism department also held the Capacity Building Measure Program for

tourism stakeholders, sensitizing them about the adoption of Covid appropriate behavior.

The government is also in process of starting the air safari and air rides over certain tourist locations including a ride over Dal Lake and adjoining areas.

While chairing a review meeting on Friday, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan stated that the move will boost tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and provide tourists with an interesting experience. He also mentioned that the department is looking into helicopter services to improve connectivity between major destinations and attract more visitors—(KNO)

India-Dubai Flights To Resume Next Week? Airlines Reopen Bookings



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI:- Flights from certain destinations from India to Dubai may resume as soon as next week as airline operators have reopened bookings on certain routes. Routes from India to Dubai are expected to re-open on July 15 with Indian carrier Vistara to operate a flight from New Delhi to Dubai on the first day of the to-be confirmed travel resumption. Bookings have opened for the same on the Air Vistara website.

The flight is scheduled to arrive in Dubai at 11:20 pm local time. Other airlines such as IndiGo, and Spicejet will also be available.

Vistara is operating four flights--on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday--a week to Dubai. Additionally, from July 17, the airline is also going to operate flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Sharjah. IndiGo on the other hand is allowing travellers to book flights to Dubai from four cities, namely, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Delhi, and Mumbai.

Spicejet, too, is planning to operate direct flights to Dubai from Kochi. The flights will begin to op-

erate from July 16 onwards. Starting July 17, Spicejet will also operate direct flights from Mangalore, while from July 18, direct flights from Jaipur will commence. Delhi to Dubai direct flights will only begin from July 20.

Further, Emirates airline and budget carrier flydubai are also seen as re-starting flights from India on July 16, reported Gulf News. Etihad Airways will resume flights from July 22. Reportedly, most flights are expected to open after , which falls around July 21.

Flights to Dubai were set to resume on June 23, but were later rescheduled owing to the coronavirus disease situation. The UAE first suspended air travel to and from India in April as the latter battled a devastating second wave of Covid-19; the ban was later extended till July 6 due to the fast-spreading 'Delta variant' of the COVID-19 virus. Abu Dhabi will allow Indian passengers from July 21. According to the latest updates, flights from India to Dubai and Abu Dhabi are set to resume on July 15 and July 21.

India's Fuel Demand Rebounds In June

Agencies

NEW DELHI: India's fuel demand rebounded in June after slumping to a nine-month low in the previous month as restrictions to curb the spread of the pandemic were eased, helping economic activity and mobility to pick up.

Fuel consumption rose 1.5 per cent to 16.33 million tonnes in June from a year earlier and by 8 per cent over May 2021, data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas showed.

Petrol sales rose 5.6 per cent year-on-year to 2.4 million tonnes in June. It was up 21 per cent from May sales of 1.99 million tonnes.

Diesel - the most used fuel in the country - rose 12 per cent from May to 6.2 million tonnes, but was down 1.5 per cent from June 2020 and 18.8 per cent from June 2019. This is the first monthly increase since March.

Fuel demand had recovered to near-normal levels in March before the onset of the second wave of COVID-19 infections led to the re-imposition of lockdowns in different states, stalling mobility and muting economic activity.

Consumption in May slumped to its lowest since August last year amid lockdowns and restrictions in several states.

Fuel demand showed signs of

resurgence in June after restrictions began to be eased and the economy gathered pace.

With COVID case addition continuing to decline and vaccination pace picking up, state governments have continued to reopen, though some exceptions such as Maharashtra exist.

The then Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had last month stated that India's fuel demand would recover to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021.

"We are confident by the end of this calendar year we will be in a position to restore our original (pre-COVID) consumption behaviour," Pradhan said.

Consumption of LPG, the only fuel which showed growth even during the first lockdown because of free supplies by the government to the poor, rose 9.7 per cent year on year to 2.26 million tonnes.

It was up 26.3 per cent over June 2019. With airlines yet to resume full-scale operations because of travel restrictions around the globe, jet fuel sales at 2,58,000 tonnes was up 16.2 per cent year on year but 61.7 per cent lower than June of 2019.

Naphtha sales dropped by about 3.1 per cent to 1.19 million tonnes while sale of bitumen - used for making roads, were down 32 per cent at 5,09,000 tonnes. Fuel oil consumption rose 1.9 per cent to 5,33,000 tonnes.

MOBILES

Oneplus Buds Pro To Launch Alongside Oneplus Nord 2, Company Confirms

By: Tech Desk

OnePlus is all set to launch a new pair of wireless earbuds, OnePlus Buds Pro on July 22, alongside the OnePlus Nord 2. The company has confirmed this news in a blog post. OnePlus is also allowing users to test the new set of earphones in advance.

The original OnePlus Buds was launched back in July 2020. The company then unveiled a cheaper of it, which is called OnePlus Buds Z. Now, it is gearing up to launch the Pro version. The brand has also announced 'The Lab,' a limited product review program that OnePlus has used in the past to get some early product feedback from users.

"Are you excited about the upcoming OnePlus Nord 2 5G launch? I bet you didn't know the new installment of the Nord series would be accompanied by the yet-to-be-announced Buds Pro! Do you want to test them both? Well, you might have to wait less than you



expected. The Lab is back and following our most recent edition of The Lab - OnePlus U1S - we'll have a non-phone product again. This time we are including two products - The OnePlus Nord 2 5G and the Buds Pro," OnePlus said.

Interested users can submit their applications on this site. Note that the deadline to submit the application is July 17. If you get selected, then the company will ship the device around the official launch event and it will give seven calendar days to write the review.

As for the features of the OnePlus Buds Pro, the company hasn't re-

ARE YOU EXCITED about the upcoming OnePlus Nord 2 5G launch? I bet you didn't know the new installment of the Nord series would be accompanied by the yet-to-be-announced Buds Pro! Do you want to test them both? Well, you might have to wait less than you expected. The Lab is back and following our most recent edition of The Lab - OnePlus U1S - we'll have a non-phone product again. This time we are including two products - The OnePlus Nord 2 5G and the Buds Pro," OnePlus said.

vealed anything. But, the Pro version is expected to offer features like Active Noise Cancellation (ANC) and a Transparency mode as both of them was not available on the original version of OnePlus Buds. Brands like Realme is already offering affordable wireless earbuds with ANC support.

Realme Pad Alleged Live Images Leaked Online Ahead Of India Launch

By: Tech Desk

Realme is expected to launch its first tablet in the near future. Now a few leaked images of the Realme Pad, being used in the wild, have surfaced online. The images appear to have been taken from a distance and aren't very detailed.

Realme had recently confirmed the existence of the Realme Pad and stated that the device will launch sometime soon. Now, unofficial images of the alleged tablet have been leaked by Slashleaks, but it does not seem to have the Realme logo anywhere. The leak shows that the device has a design similar to the official teasers which Realme had shown off recently.

The images of the Realme Pad does give us some insight into what the device could look like. There are two images that show the front and back of the device. The Realme tablet seems to be made from alu-



minium or metal alloy. The device has a single rear camera, placed in a protruding module. The tablet has a square design, similar to the Apple iPad Pro models.

Coming to the front of the device, the Realme Pad seems to have sizeable top and bottom bezels. It is important to note that this may not be the final design of the device, so users are advised to take this with a pinch of salt. The specifications and

COMING TO THE FRONT OF the device, the Realme Pad seems to have sizeable top and bottom bezels. It is important to note that this may not be the final design of the device, so users are advised to take this with a pinch of salt. The specifications and features of the upcoming Realme tablet are still unknown.

features of the upcoming Realme tablet are still unknown. The Realme Pad is expected to be a mid-range tablet that might ship with Android 11 OS. It could offer support for 4G LTE connectivity. The company is expected to offer it with a 64GB storage model. We will have to wait a while longer to know more.

Home Secy Reviews COVID-19 Situation In Hill Stations, Tourist Locations; Says Pandemic Is Not Yet Over

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday sounded a note of caution against reported blatant disregard of COVID-appropriate behaviour at hill stations and other tourist locations, stressing that the second wave of the pandemic is not yet over.

The Home Secretary was reviewing the steps taken by the state governments for checking the spread of COVID-19 at hill stations and tourist locations, a home ministry statement said.

During the meeting, the overall management of the COVID-19 situation and the vaccination status in Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal were discussed.

The meeting was conveyed that the decline of the second wave is at variable stages in the different states and UTs in the country, and while the overall case positivity rate may be declining, the case positivity rate in certain districts of Rajasthan, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh is over 10 percent, which is a cause for

concern, the statement said.

The Union Home Secretary sounded a note of caution in the wake of media reports showing blatant disregard of COVID-appropriate behaviour at hill stations and other tourist locations, the statement said.

Bhalla emphasised that the second wave of COVID was not yet over and states should ensure strict adherence to the protocols prescribed in respect of wearing of masks, social distancing and other safe behaviour.

States were also asked to follow the five-fold strategy of Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate and COVID Appropriate Behaviour, as has been laid out in the MHA order dated June 29, 2021.

Adequate health infrastructure preparedness, especially in rural, peri-urban and tribal areas, was also advised to tackle any potential future surge in cases.

The meeting was attended by V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog; Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Director General, Indian Council for Medical Research; and Chief Secretaries, Directors General of Police and Principal Secretaries (Health) of the eight states.

Delhi Court Directs Police To Ensure M S Sirsa Do Not Flee From Justice

NEW DELHI: A court here has directed the Delhi Police to ensure that Shiromani Akali Dal leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa does not flee from justice as he is facing probe in a case of alleged misappropriation of funds during his tenure as the secretary-general of Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC).

Metropolitan Magistrate Pankaj Sharma passed the order on Friday while hearing an application of one Bhupinder Singh, who had filed the graft complainant.

The applicant informed the court that there was apprehension that Sirsa may run away from the country.

In view of the apprehension

expressed on behalf of the complainant and for the interest of a proper investigation, investigation officer has to ensure that accused persons do not flee from the course of justice, the court said.

The court also sought a progress report from Delhi Police in the case by July 26, when it will next hear the matter.

During the hearing held through video conferencing, the applicant's advocate Sanjay Abbott told the court that Sirsa has already sold his properties and he is in the process of fleeing as soon as flights resume.

The counsel further submitted that the investigation agency has not taken appropriate steps to prevent him from fleeing.

North India Waits For Monsoon As Weather Turns Sultry

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Sultry weather conditions prevailed in north India on Saturday even as some areas received rains on account of easterly winds which have made conditions favourable for the advancement of the much-awaited monsoon in the region.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the southwest monsoon is likely to cover parts of north India, including Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, in a day.

The monsoon gave its date with Delhi a miss on Saturday and is now expected to hit the national capital in the next 24 hours. The maximum temperature in the city settled at 39.8 degrees Celsius, four degrees above normal.

Relative humidity was recorded at 5.30 pm was 47 per cent.

On Friday, the weather office had predicted that the monsoon would reach the national capital on Saturday, 13 days after its usual date of June 27.

This will be the most-delayed monsoon in Delhi in the last 15 years. According to Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre, the monsoon had reached the capital on July 7 in 2012 and July 9 in 2006.

Hot weather conditions continued to prevail in neighbouring Haryana and Punjab even though some parts received rains.

Narnaul city in Haryana recorded a maximum temperature of 41.2 degrees Celsius, four notches above the normal.

Among other places in the state, Hisar experienced hot weather at 41 degrees Celsius while Rohtak, Gurgaon and Bhiwani's maximum temperatures were recorded at 40.1 degrees Celsius, 40.7 degrees Celsius and 40.4 degrees Celsius respectively.

In Punjab, the maximum temperatures of Amritsar, Ludhiana and Patiala settled at 36.5, 37.1 and 38 degrees Celsius respectively. Amritsar received 16 mm of rain.

A massive landslide triggered by heavy rains in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district closed



the arterial Jammu-Srinagar national highway for traffic leaving over 500 vehicles stranded.

Parts of Rajasthan witnessed light to moderate rainfall as conditions have become favourable for the advancement of the monsoon.

Jaipur, Bundi, Tonk and Dabok recorded 23.4, 17.5, 2 and 0.8 mm rainfall respectively. Bikaner was the hottest place in the state with a maximum temperature of 43.5 degrees Celsius, followed by Ganganagar and Pali at 43.3 degrees Celsius and 43 degrees Celsius respectively.

In central India, the monsoon has become active in Madhya Pradesh after a gap of around 10 days, as large parts of the state received light showers that provided some relief to people from sultry weather conditions.

Senior meteorologist in IMD Bhopal office, P K Saha, said the state is expected to receive good rainfall between July 11 and 16.

"The monsoon is slowly becoming active in Madhya Pradesh after a break. The south-westerly winds are growing strong in the Arabian Sea, which is bringing forth moisture to the state," he said, adding a that low-pressure area is likely to form over the north-west Bay of Bengal on Sunday which is going to further bring moisture in the state.

Kumbhraj town in Guna received 72 mm of rain, while the Sarai area in Singrauli recorded 66.4 mm of showers in 24 hours till 8.30 am on Saturday.

During the same period, Bhopal's Kolar area received 4.8 mm of precipitation, while Indore's Dipalpur and Mhow areas recorded 10.5 and 6 mm rain, respectively.

Down south, a red alert for extremely heavy rainfall on Sunday

has been issued in Kannur and Kasaragod districts in Kerala which has been receiving a copious amount of rainfall.

The IMD has also issued an orange alert for Wayanad, Kozhikode and Malappuram districts and a Yellow alert for Palakkad, Thrissur, Idukki and Ernakulam districts.

Kottayam got 15 cm of rain till Saturday 10 am while Thiruvananthapuram district got 1.7 cm of precipitation and Ernakulam 10.7 cm.

"Strong wind with speed reaching 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph is likely along and off Kerala coast. Fishermen are advised not to venture into these sea areas," said a weather warning issued for fishermen for the Kerala coast till July 13.

The easterly winds have made conditions favourable for the advancement of the southwest monsoon and it is likely to cover parts of north India, including Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, in a day, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

It said lower-level easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal have extended northwards, reaching up to Delhi, Haryana and east Rajasthan as on Saturday.

Low-level relative humidity has also increased over the region.

"Hence, the conditions continue to remain favourable for further advancement of southwest monsoon over Delhi, remaining parts of west Uttar Pradesh and some more parts of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan during the next 24 hours," the IMD said.

Conditions are also becoming favourable for further advancement of southwest monsoon into remaining parts of the country during the subsequent 48 hours, the weather department added.

Afghan national among 4 arrested, 354 kg heroin worth over Rs 2,500 cr seized: Police



AGENCEIS

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police Special Cell has arrested four men, including an Afghan national, and recovered a record 354 kilograms of heroin worth over Rs 2,500 crore in the international market from them, officials said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Rizwan Kashmiri, a resident of Ghitorni here and native of Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir, Gurpreet Singh and Gurjot Singh, both residents of Jalandhar in Punjab and Hazrat Ali, a native of Kandahar in Afghanistan, they said.

It recently came to the notice of the police that Kashmiri was involved in drug peddling in Delhi and other states like Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana.

"On Monday, police received information that Kashmiri was going to deliver contraband in south Delhi's Ghitorni area. A trap was laid and the accused was arrested when he was going to deliver a packet of one kilogram of heroin," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said.

Kashmiri revealed that he works under an Afghan national named Isha Khan who recently left India and went to Afghanistan. Khan directed him to contact Gurpreet and Gurjot who were currently operating a drug racket from Faridabad in Haryana, the DCP said.

Based on the disclosure of Kashmiri, Gurpreet and Gurjot were arrested, he said.

Police recovered 166 kg and 115 kg of heroin from two cars which were parked in a society based on the duo's information. Later, 70 kg heroin was also recovered from the rented accommodation of both the accused, police said.

Gurpreet and Gurjot revealed that they were

operating the drug racket on the instructions of a man named Navpreet Singh, presently based in Portugal, police said.

Gurpreet met Navpreet in Punjab's Kapurthala Jail when they were in judicial custody in separate cases, the DCP said.

Based on the disclosure of Kashmiri, Ali was also arrested from Gurgaon and two kg heroin was recovered from his possession. Around 100 kg of different chemicals used in the preparation of heroin was also recovered, Kushwah said.

Elaborating about the operation, the police said opium grown in various parts of Afghanistan is concealed in different legitimate exports -- talc stone, gypsum powder, basil seeds and in packaging material like gunny bags, cartons etc.

It is then transported in containers to Chabahar Port in Iran from where the consignments are shipped to Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai, they said.

Thereafter, the material is separated from the legitimate exports and sent to makeshift factories based in Shiv Puri in Madhya Pradesh for further extraction and processing to get the final product, police said.

The locals with the help of Afghan experts process the heroin and the chemicals required for the process are procured from various shops located in MP and Delhi, police said.

After preparation, the heroin is then delivered to Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan J-K and various other parts of the country using different supply chains. The arrested accused are parts of different components of this network, police said.

In 2019, the Special Cell had seized 330 kg of such heroin in a multi-state operation, they added.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

Hizb Chief's Sons

The eight government employees recommended for dismissal in the fourth meeting of the committee included two constables of the Jammu Kashmir Police who supported militancy from within the police department and provided inside information to militants as also logistic support, the officials said.

Constable Abdul Rashid Shigan has himself executed attacks on state forces, they said.

Another government employee with militancy links is Naaz Muhammad Allaie, an orderly of the health department. He is an OGW of the Hizbul Mujahideen and has a history of direct involvement in militant activities, the officials said.

Two dreaded militants were harboured by him at his residence, they said.

Employees Jabbar Ahmad Paray and Nisar Ahmad Tantray of the education department, who terminated from service, were actively involved in furthering the secessionist agenda unleashed by militant-sponsors from Pakistan and are Jamat-e-Islami ideologists, the officials said.

Shaheen Ahmad Lone, an inspector of the power department has been found involved in smuggling and transporting of arms for the Hizbul Mujahideen, they said.

He was found travelling along with two militants on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway and carrying arms, ammunition and explosives in January last year, the officials said.

Earlier in April-May, the administration dismissed seven employees including DSP Davinder Singh. Along with him Bashir Ahmad Sheikh and Mohammad Yousof Ganie, both from Kupwara in North Kashmir, were dismissed from the education department.

Dr Abdul Bari Naik, assistant professor, geography, Government Degree College, Women, Udhampur; Nazir Ahmed Wani, Naib Tehsildar (Revenue Officer), Pulwama.

Pertinently, Idrees Jan, a teacher from north Kashmir's Kupwara district was the first government employee to be sacked from his service for his anti-national activities on May 1. His dismissal came barely over a week after

the Union Territory administration constituted a Special Task Force (STF) to identifying the employees involved in anti-national activities and who pose a threat to the country's security.

In an order issued on April 21, the GAD had accorded to the constitution of STF for identifying and scrutinizing cases of government employees, to initiate the process under Government Order No. 738-JK(GAD) of 2020 dated 30.07.2020, for action in terms of provisions of Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution of India.

The order had further stated that Additional Director General of Police (CID) has been nominated as Chairman of the committee and Inspector General of Police, Jammu/Kashmir, Representative of Home Department not Member below the rank of Additional Secretary, Representative of Department of Law, Justice Member & Parliamentary Affairs not below the rank of Additional Secretary and Representative of the Concerned Department, as necessary, not below the rank of Additional Secretary shall be the members.

"The terms of reference of the Special Task Force shall be to scrutinize cases of employees suspected of activities requiring action under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution of India," the order had said.

The order had also empowered the STF to compile records of such employees, wherever necessary and to refer it to the Committee constituted vide Government Order No. 738-JK(GAD) of 2020 dated 30.07.2020. It also orders STF to engage with other members of the Terror Monitoring Group (TMG) for identifying such other employees, as necessary besides taking the assistance of other Agencies and Department(s) in this regard, as necessary.

"The Special Task Force shall speedily scrutinize such cases in a time-bound manner and shall be serviced by the Criminal Investigation Department," the order added. (With PTI inputs)

Srinagar Hot

Drass 29.4 as the day's highest temperature", the official said.

He said there is likelihood of rain in both the Valley and the Jammu division beginning Sunday evening.

"There is likelihood of rain from tomorrow evening and on July 12. The Valley will receive light to moderate rain while in the Jammu division we are expecting moderate rain at most places with scattered heavy rainfall at some places", the official said.

Maximum Temperatures Recorded Srinagar = 33.6°C Qazigund = 31.0°C Pahalgam = 28.0°C Kupwara = 34.6°C Kokernag = 30.1°C Gulmarg = 23.0°C Anantnag = 31.8°C Shopian = 28.3°C Ganderbal = 32.0°C Bandipora = 33.1°C Budgam = 33.0°C Pulwama = 32.5°C Kulgam = 30.1°C Jammu = 31.2°C Banihal = 28.9°C Batote = 26.9°C Bhaderwah = 28.6°C Katra = 29.3°C Kathua = 32.2°C Kishtwar = 31.4°C Ramban = 31.8°C Poonch = 28.7°C Rajouri = 29.2°C Leh = 30.7°C Kargil = 35.1°C Drass = 27.2°C

J&K Reports

Division and Kashmir Valley, taking the death toll 4356.

Providing the district-wide details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 41 cases, Baramulla 4, Budgam 11, Pulwama 11, Kupwara 15, Anantnag 6, Bandipora 5, Ganderbal 13, Kulgam 3, Shopian 2, Jammu 22, Udhampur 3, Rajouri 11, Doda 16, Kathua 4, Samba 1, Kishtwar 9, Poonch 3, Ramban 5 and Reasi 0.

Moreover, they said, 355 more COVID-19 patients have recovered, 104 from Jammu Division and 251 from Kashmir. So far 310985 patients have recovered, leaving active cases at 3128-1460 in Jammu and 1668 in Kashmir, they said.

There was no new confirmed case of mucormycosis (black fungus) reported today and thus the cumulative number of confirmed cases remained 31 in J&K.

Arif Haziq Among

fire in which three militants were killed, the official said.

One of the slain militants has been identified as Arif Hazam belonging to the terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), he said, adding Hazam was involved in the killing of Territorial Armyman Havaldar Manzoor Beigh in June 2019.

Pertinently, the killing of three local militants has taken the number of militants dead in gunfights with government forces this week to eight. On July 8, four local militants were killed by state forces in two separate encounters in south Kashmir's Pulwama and Kulgam districts. The four slain militants, as per police were associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Al-Badr outfits and were part of groups involved in various militancy related incidents.

A day earlier on July 7, police had claimed to have killed Mehraj-ud-din Halwai, a longest surviving Hizbul Mujahideen militant commander in an encounter in Kralgund area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Zilhaj Moon Not

The month of Zilhaj is considered as a very sacred month in the Islamic calendar, during which one undertakes annual haj (Pilgrimage) to Mecca.

Govt Committed

and visiting tourists for crafts, food, and cultural activities.

"People can explore the mystical world of Kashmiri art and savour the unique flavours of delightful local cuisines," the LG said.

"We aim to empower handicraft, handloom artisans and improve living standards of present and future generations of our artists. With endeavours like revamping the Kashmir Haat, we are strengthening our commitment to providing market support to local artisans and weavers," he added.

Sinha, as per the official spokesperson said that with an Amusement cum Children Park coming up soon in the same property, Kashmir Haat will be one of the most happening places to visit in Srinagar. The LG, he said, also spoke about the Government's plans to open a similar Haat in Jammu that will showcase the rich, varied handicraft tradition of the region.

"Government is determined for providing new markets, creating

sustainable livelihood for the local artisans, besides preserving rich cultural heritage of J&K," the LG said.

The official spokesperson said that the craft Mela will provide a platform to the Artisans, Weavers & Cooperative societies to showcase the best of Kashmir handicrafts. Traditional musical display and Live demonstration of artistic skills by School of Designs, Srinagar to be one of the main attractions of the mela.

He further said that the LG visited the Stalls and interacted with the artisans. He also directed the concerned officials to ensure adherence to all Covid protocols while conducting the activities at Kashmir Haat.

"It is pertinent to mention that there have been no regular cultural activities at Kashmir Haat except a few occasional events. However, it is being transformed into a Craft and Food Bazaar similar to the ambience provided by Delhi Haat in the national capital. The initiative will help in tapping the best of the talents in art and craft and revive the age-old tradition of village market in Srinagar," the official spokesperson said.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; Mohammad Aijaz, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar; HoDs, other senior officers, and a large number of artisans were present on the occasion.

Nodal Officers

other work as may be assigned by the commission, the order read.

On Friday, the Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (ret'd) Ranjana Prakash Desai concluded the four-day visit to J&K to gather first-hand inputs on the conduct of the exercise to redraw constituencies and carve out new ones in the UT.

Except for the Peoples Democratic Party and the Awami National Conference, the commission interacted with all political parties and officials concerned during the visit.

Justice (ret'd) Desai has assured the exercise would be transparent and completed by following due process as laid down in the law.

Mehbooba Reiterates

University, Mughal Road, nursing colleges, the PDP president said that Pir Panchal has always been the key focus of her party.

"Cross-Line of Control (LoC) travel and trade was one of the most significant confidence building measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan and every effort was made during my tenure to ensure that the people-to-people contact goes beyond the divided families."

The former chief minister said that it was unfortunate how the union government trampled every democratic institution in furtherance of its own political agenda, reversing progress on each front in the troubled Jammu and Kashmir.

"The damage has been done beyond repair. Whenever a government is formed in Jammu and Kashmir it will have to start from scratch and regaining trust of people in democracy will be the key challenge for any party coming to power", she added.

Mortar Shell

accordingly, a bomb disposal squad (BDS) of Budgam Police was immediately called and the shell was defused without causing injury to anyone.

"The shell is an old one and had apparently been swept down from nearby Tosamaidan forests," Malik told local news agency KDC.

Army Vehicle Mows

accident and was removed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Medical Superintendent DH Kulgam, Muzafar Zargar said that the woman was declared dead on arrival.

Man Falls Off

After strenuous efforts by the locals and police, Magray's body was recovered from the spot, reports said.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognisance of the matter and started further investigation.

Woman Held With

cash of Rs forty seven thousand was from her possession, news agency KDC reported, while quoting sources.

According to the report, the woman was taken into custody.

Tokyo Records Most COVID-19 Cases In 2 Months



Agencies

TOKYO: Tokyo has reported 950 new coronavirus cases, the highest daily number in two months, as infections steadily spread less than two weeks before the city hosts the Summer Olympics.

Saturday's tally compared to 822 confirmed cases reported Friday. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Thursday declared a state of emergency in Tokyo starting Monday to keep the infections from becoming explosive during the Olympics, which open on July 23.

His government initially planned to take less-stringent measures, but came under pressure to issue the emergency order as the more contagious delta strain spread in the Tokyo region. Experts warned that case loads could surge to thousands within weeks as people traveled around the country on summer vacations and the Olympics drew foreign and domestic visitors to Tokyo.

Olympic officials decided not to allow spectators at Olympic venues in the Tokyo region, while allowing limited attendance in other parts of Japan.

However, that plan is crumbling after Hokkaido and Fukushima announced that no fans would be permitted at venues in their areas.

Despite the recent acceleration of Japan's vaccination program, only 16.8% of the population is fully vaccinated. Japan has reported

ed about 812,000 cases and nearly 15,000 deaths in the pandemic.

Expect Long Wait At Tokyo Airport On Arrival: IOA Tells Athletes

IOA President Narinder Batra on Saturday highlighted fresh concerns that India's Olympic-bound athletes may face on arrival in Tokyo, including spending long hours in immigration without food and water.

Batra was informed of the inconveniences the athletes from other countries are facing on landing in Tokyo by the Indian Chief De mission B P Baishya on Friday. He has raised the issue to the Games' organisers ahead of the Indian contingent's departure.

"Important issues brought to my notice from Chief De Mission meeting on July 9. Same issue was highlighted in the meeting by different countries including Czech, those who arrived at Narita airport," Batra said in a statement.

"They have to wait for 4 HRS, before the immigration process to begin and they waited for three hours to board the transport. No food and no water was provided."

"Germany highlighted the Volunteer services are almost non-existent," the statement read.

The first batch of India's Olympic-bound athletes is set to depart for Tokyo on July 17. More than 120 athletes are bound for the Games.

Copa America: Brazil & Argentina Clash In A Tournament Final For 5th Time



Agencies

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil and Argentina will face off for the fifth time in a tournament final when they determine which team will carry the Copa America trophy out of the Maracana Stadium on Saturday. Brazil holds a 3-1 edge in their 84-year history of matches.

1937 COPA AMERICA: Argentina 2, Brazil 0

The Copa America format was a round-robin tournament and was supposed to have no final. But in 1937 the two arch-rivals finished level with eight points each, and instead of considering goal difference to pick the winner, Brazil and Argentina agreed to play for the trophy. The match ended 0-0 after 90 minutes at the Gasometro, the old stadium of San Lorenzo in Buenos Aires. Argentina won its fifth continental title in extra time with two goals by Vicente de la Maza.

2004 COPA AMERICA: Brazil 2, Argentina 2 (Brazil wins on penalties)

Argentina's win seemed all but certain as the match at the Estadio Nacional in Lima ticked down. Argentina had opened the scoring with Christian Gonzalez from the spot, saw Luisão equalize in the end of the first half, but a shot by César Delgado three minutes before the end had then defending World Cup champions Brazil nearly knocked out. But striker Adriano scored on the last shot of the match to send the match to penalties. Brazil's goalkeeper Julio César

stopped Andrés D'Alessandro and Argentina's Gabriel Heinze missed his chance from the spot. Juan scored the decisive penalty for Brazil, which won Copa America for the seventh time.

2005 CONFEDERATIONS CUP: Brazil 4, Argentina 1

Brazil eliminated host Germany in the semifinals while Argentina knocked Mexico out and the archrivals met in a final that many expected to be close. It wasn't. Brazil thrashed Argentina despite Robinho replacing the injured Ronaldo. Adriano scored the first goal with a blast from outside the box in the 12th minute. Kaká found the back of the net from nearly the same position only five minutes later. Ronaldinho, the best player in the world at the time, netted the third in the 48th minute from close range and Adriano finished the rivals off with a header in the 64th minute. Pablo Aimar scored Argentina's only goal.

2007 COPA AMERICA: Brazil 3, Argentina 0

Argentina was widely expected to win the South American tournament that year. At age 20, Lionel Messi played the final in Maracaná with Juan Román Riquelme and Carlos Tévez up front, but could not make a difference for the favorites. Brazil scored with Júlio Baptista, an own goal by Roberto Ayala and then Dani Alves. It was the Seleção's second consecutive title in the tournament. It was also Messi's first disappointment in Argentina in tournament finals.

Lonestar Kashmir FC Seeks To Reclaim Its I-League Status

R Elahi

SRINAGAR: Huddled together at the Synthetic Turf Ground TRC in Srinagar, 2015 I-League runner-ups Lonestar Kashmir FC players and coaches look a mixed bunch of youth and experience. Donning their black dominated training uniform, under the blistering heat of an afternoon sun, the Kashmir FC players are on their toes as they go through one training regimen after another. Guided by the forceful commands of their coaching staff, the players are put through drills that simulate real match situations involving KFC's creative midfielders pinging long balls to the right wing.

Keeping a close eye on the proceedings, KFC's owner/fiduciary Ahmed Lone watches from the sidelines.

"Kashmir FC started a year before the 2014 floods. We played the National Indian League back then and the team was completely made up of J&K boys. In 2015-16 we played I-League 2nd Division, becoming the first pro club from J&K to achieve that feat. And I must say it wasn't easy because football here was in a deep slumber back then. People didn't even know what I-League was," Lone told Kashmir Observer.

"We have worked hard and spent Rs 5 to 6 crore over all these years so that football in Kashmir could be revived. LKFC is the first pro team of the Valley, every player and every coach here is paid. There are no volunteers. Our contribution to the game is huge because it was our players and coaching staff that became the foundation of clubs like Real Kashmir and others," he said, momentarily



stopping to applaud a well-worked drill that resulted in a goal.

"Our youth academy and our Girls' Football Academy is a testament to Lonestar Kashmir's motivation to develop and improve grassroots football," Lone added.

Out on the field, Lonestar's foreign recruits stand out from the local boys. A central defender cum defensive midfielder from Panama, with loads of experience playing across Latin American football leagues as well as in Mexico, passing the ball to KFC's left back, a young boy from Kanipora area of Srinagar.

Another fresh recruit for Kashmir FC, a top priority addition, is its Mumbai born and raised Head Coach, Chandan Rathod. An AFC 'A' License coach, as well as a CK coach, Rathod has massive experience of coaching football clubs and youth developmental projects in Mumbai, Gujarat and Bangladesh.

At TRC, Rathod's team execute meticulously scheduled drills and match simulations. He shifts between training KFC's goalkeepers and then coming around to shout orders at his outfield players. Aided by J&K's well-known coach and manager Mohd Shafi Nari and young AFC 'C' License coach, Masood Maqbool, Time is of the essence as Lonestar Kashmir

is set to play its first match in the I-League 2nd Division in the form of JKFA Professional League 2021.

"Our objective is to qualify for the I-League. But I'm here to educate coaches and learn from them as well," Rathod told KO after the training session was over.

"Just like I want young footballers at KFC to get better and better, I want young coaches like Masood to excel and progress in their coaching careers. J&K needs well-trained local coaches who can train local players."

"Me and Irfikhar Lone are on the same page regarding the direction of the club. We want to develop KFC's academies so that we can strengthen the club's future. We would also like to modernize the game of football in Kashmir. I saw in the UT Knockout League in March that it was like a rugby game instead of football. The officials need to be strict and consistent."

"The issue of infrastructure is also a detrimental factor to the overall growth of football in J&K."

Lonestar Kashmir FC will begin their JKFA Professional League campaign on Monday, July 12 against Jammu-based club Shaheen FC at the Synthetic Turf Ground, TRC. The match is scheduled to kick off at 5:15 pm.

Sri Lanka Series To Now Start From July 18, Confirms BCCI

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian team's six match limited-overs series in Sri Lanka will now start from July 18, BCCI secretary Jay Shah told PTI on Saturday, a day after a COVID-19 outbreak in the home team camp forced the postponement.

The series, which was originally scheduled to start with the three ODIs on July 13, had to be rescheduled after Sri Lanka's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst G T Niroshan tested positive for the dreaded virus on their return from the UK tour. It also meant an extended quarantine period for the squad members. While the tentative date that was originally being discussed was July 17, but Shah con-

firmed that it will start from July 18.

"India-Sri Lanka ODI series to start on July 18 due to COVID-19 outbreak in home team camp," Shah told PTI.

The three ODI matches will now be held on July 18, 20 and 23 at the Premadasa Stadium followed by the T20 Internationals, starting on July 25. The last two T20s are set to be played on July 27 and 29, respectively, at the same venue.

"We understand that circumstances are extraordinary, but the BCCI would like to extend its full support to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) during these tough times for the smooth conduct of the upcoming series," Shah said in a statement, issued by the BCCI.

"Our medical team is in constant touch with the team of doctors at SLC and together following all safe-

ty protocols that will help the series to get underway. We are confident that both nations will put up a spirited show in the days to come and we are in for some exciting cricket," Shah assured. Sri Lanka Cricket secretary Ashley de Silva expressed his gratitude towards BCCI for standing by them during hour of crisis.

"We are grateful to the BCCI for understanding the situation and agreeing to cooperate with us at this moment of time, as it has done on numerous occasions, during our long-standing relationship."

Earlier in the day, a Sri Lankan player in one of the two bio-bubbles had tested positive for COVID-19 as the virus outbreak continued to rock the home team ahead of its white-ball series against an Indian team led by Shikhar Dhawan.

Coming Home? Or Going To Rome? England Take On Italy To End Title Drought

Agencies

LONDON: To hear the England players giddily singing along with the Wembley Stadium crowd to "Sweet Caroline" — "so good, so good" — encapsulates the youthful exuberance and carefree spirit of a group unburdened by trying to end the team's 55-year trophy drought on Sunday.

To hear Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini talk about going all the way shows how pressure to win a trophy for your country can be an enduring motivation for yourself and the squad, especially in the twilight of a career.

"Maybe at 36 you feel it more," Chiellini said, "because you understand more how hard it is and the work that goes into it."

The European Championship final on Sunday pits England, which hasn't even reached a final since winning the 1966 World Cup, against one of the conti-

with a 33-match unbeaten run since then under coach Roberto Mancini.

"At the beginning, when he told us to have in our minds the idea of winning the Euro, we thought he was crazy," Chiellini said. "Instead, during these years he has created a team which is now on the brink of doing that. And as he has repeated to us after every match, 'One centimeter at a time', and now there is only the last centimeter left."

They have to find a way past an opponent that has conceded only one goal in its six games at Euro 2020 and coped with Harry Kane not even scoring in the group stage.

"England are clearly not just Kane because they have amazing players on both wings," Chiellini said, "and their substitutes could all be in the starting 11 of a team that wins this competition."

Tournaments can define, reshape perceptions and elevate players.

Just look at Federico Chiesa, who



nen's most decorated teams.

The last of Italy's four World Cup victories came in 2006, when Chiellini had already made his international debut but didn't play at the tournament. But the team is a comparative underachiever in the European Championship with its only title in 1968.

Italy, however, has already reached the final twice in recent years — in 2000 and 2012 — whereas England hasn't got close until now.

With the pandemic restricting travel to London, the permitted crowd of 66,000 at Wembley Stadium will be largely packed with England fans for the national team's greatest soccer moment since 1966, when coach Gareth Southgate wasn't even born.

Winning Euro 2020 would be a form of redemption for Southgate, whose penalty miss against Germany at Euro '96 denied England a chance of making the final.

"I know it won't be enough for me and for the rest of the staff and for the players if we don't win it now," Southgate said. "You get lovely messages that say 'whatever happens now', but that won't be how it will be on Monday. We've got to get it right."

"We can win it, but we've got to get it spot on to win it. I said to the players... people are respecting how they've been and that they've represented the country in the right way but now they have a choice of what colour medal."

Italy didn't even qualify for the 2018 World Cup but has excelled

wasn't even starting for Italy initially at Euro 2020 but went on to score key goals in the knockout phase.

Take Raheem Sterling, whose place in the England lineup was questioned because of his failure to score at any previous tournament and his struggles with Manchester City. He responded by netting the team's only goals in the group stage, the opener in the win over Germany in the round of 16, and his attacking threat won the penalty that led to England's semi-final winner against Denmark.

"What he's done for us and the unselfish part of his game goes unsung about," said John Stones, Sterling's teammate with both England and City. "But as players we see it. He's been a great threat going forward with how direct he's been in the games and it has been great playing with him."

"I'm sure he will be giving everything on Sunday, being that direct, and hopefully get another goal and see where it takes us." The final takes soccer to the end of an unprecedented period of pandemic disruption since the European Championship began 60 years, completing a unique tournament staged across the continent like never before, after being delayed by a year.

Guarding against a presumption of glory might be the hardest thing for England fans energized by the "football's coming home" lyrics in its team anthem.

To home or Rome? We'll know on Sunday night.

Ash Barty Wins Wimbledon Women's Title To Claim 2nd Major

Agencies

WIMBLEDON: Everything came so easily for Ash Barty at the start of the Wimbledon final. Hard to believe one player would grab the first 14 points of a major championship match.

Surely, it couldn't stay that one-sided, right? Of course not.

Still, Barty used that perfect start and a strong enough finish to get the job done, holding off Karolina Pliskova's comeback bid to win 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-3 at the All England Club on Saturday for her second Grand Slam title. "It took me a long time to verbalize the fact that I wanted to dare to dream it and say I wanted to win this incredible tournament. ... I didn't sleep a lot last night. I was thinking of all the 'What-ifs,'" the No. 1-ranked Barty said. "But I think when I was coming out on this court, I felt at home, in a way."

She adds this trophy to the one she won at the French Open in 2019. Barty is the first Australian woman to win Wimbledon since Evonne Coolagong in 1980. Barty was a teenager when she first met Coolagong and considers her an inspiration and a mentor.

"I hope I made Evonne proud," said Barty, who wore an outfit that was a tribute to the dress Coolagong played in when she won the tournament for the first time, 50 years ago. Barty, 25, was the Wimbledon junior champion a decade ago, then left the tennis tour for nearly two years in 2014 because of burnout. She played professional cricket back home, then eventually returned to her other sport.



"I was really proud of myself," said Barty, who climbed her way up the stands to hug her coach, Craig Tytzer, and others, "the way I was able to reset and just keep going, just keep chipping away, at the start of that third set and hold my nerve there in the end."

Good call.

She was at her best at the beginning of each set against the eighth-seeded Pliskova, a 29-year-old from the Czech Republic with a big serve.

Pliskova dropped to 0-2 in major finals; she also was the runner-up at the 2016 U.S. Open.

"I was fighting very hard to make

it difficult for her," said Pliskova, a former No. 1 who got choked up during the trophy ceremony and lamented to the capacity Centre Court crowd: "I never cry. Never."

Barty's most significant wobble came in the second set. She led 3-1, gave that break back, then went ahead again and served for the victory

at 6-5. But she sailed consecutive forehands long to get broken, then was shaky in the ensuing tiebreaker, ceding it with a double fault.

But in the first Wimbledon women's final to go three sets since 2012, Barty went up 3-0 in the decider and never relented. It also was the first since 1977 between two participants who never had been that far at the All England Club.

The match was played under a cloud-filled sky and, because of the threat of showers, Barty and Pliskova shared a warmup session under the closed roof at No. 1 Court earlier in the day, standing side-by-side.

They shared smiles and chatter during the coin toss before the final, but once things got serious, Barty didn't mess around.

Right from the get-go, there was not a hint of uneasiness or uncertainty. Her strokes were confident. Her demeanor, too. During the match-opening run that put her up 3-0, love-30 and, after Pliskova finally won a couple of points, 4-0 after 11 minutes, Barty showed off her varied skills.

She returned Pliskova's speedy serves — the ones that produced a tournament-high 54 aces entering Saturday — without any trouble. She lobbed Pliskova, who at 6-foot-1 is 8 inches taller than the 5-foot-5 Barty. She hit winners with heavy topspin forehands and set up others with sliced backhands. She threw in an ace of her own, and even compiled more than Pliskova, 7-6.

The key stat probably was this: Barty won 22 of 31 points that lasted nine strokes or more.

As balls flew past Pliskova, and the murmuring in the full-capacity stands reached a crescendo — "Is she going to win a point?" — she watched with little more than a blank stare. She fiddled with her racket strings as if wanting to be anywhere else.

Pliskova's coach, Sascha Bajin, who previously worked with Naomi Osaka and was Serena Williams' hitting partner, observed the scene with arms crossed.

Pliskova finally got the measure of her strokes in the second set. That could have shaken Barty. Except here's the thing: She speaks clearly about never letting anything get her too down, including the hip injury that knocked her out of the French Open last month and prevented her from her usual preparation for Wimbledon.

And so, with her typical grit, Barty managed to get back to the steadier version of herself down the stretch. When she got a second chance to serve it out, Barty didn't flinch, even when she had to stare down a break point.

A missed backhand by Pliskova removed that threat, and Barty delivered a 108 mph ace. One last backhand miss from Pliskova ended it.

Barty crouched at the baseline and covered her face with her arms. "I was really proud of myself," said Barty, who climbed her way up the stands to hug her coach, Craig Tytzer, and others, "the way I was able to reset and just keep going, just keep chipping away, at the start of that third set and hold my nerve there in the end."

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