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P3 CITY

SMC ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SUSPENDED

The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir has ordered the suspension of a Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Enforcement Officer for bypassing his seniors while demolishing a property of Nawakadal residents in

P6 THINK

INDIAN JOB MARKET ON SNAIL'S PACE

India's challenge on employment is getting tougher and tougher. Employment is now regarded by many as the central long-term challenge facing the country. India has a low labour force participation rate (LFPR)



P5 STATE

J&K'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES OFFER FREE ACCESS TO REFERENCE MATERIAL

The Director Libraries & Research, Mohammad Rafi Friday called for making available the latest reference books and study material in



Widom!
There is no substitute for hard work.
—Thomas Edison

NEWS DIGEST

Another Soldier Ends Life

SRINAGAR: A soldier committed suicide on Friday inside a camp in Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district. Police sources said the soldier committed suicide by hanging himself to death inside an army camp in the Manasbal area of Ganderbal district.

"Investigation has been started to ascertain the reasons as to why he took this extreme step," sources said. (Agencies)

2 Wireless Sets Recovered Near LoC

SRINAGAR: Police have recovered two wireless sets from Balnoi area along Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, reports said Friday.

Around 0100 hours, a police party recovered two Motorola sets along with one adapter and a small torch from Balnoi near a sheep farm in Mankote area of Mendhar, a local news agency GNS reported.

Confirming the recoveries, a police official said that the party was headed by SHO. **More On P10**

Moving Ambulance Catches Fire

SRINAGAR: An ambulance caught fire in north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Friday, officials said. They said the driver on noticing the trouble in the ambulance stopped it near Turchan mode in Ajas area and shifted the patient being ferried in the ambulance in some other vehicle. The transfer of the patient was done in the nick of time as the ambulance was completely gutted in the fire. **More On P10**

Panel Formed To Revisit APR Guidelines

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday constituted a Committee re-visit the Annual Performance Report (APR) guidelines. The committee comprises Principal Secretary to the Government, Home Department, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department and Secretary, Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, according to an order. **More On P10**

Ladakh Reports Four New Covid Cases

LEH: Ladakh recorded four more COVID-19 cases, raising its tally to 20,369, while no fresh death was reported in the past 24 hours, officials said on Friday.

The union territory has registered 207 Covid-related deaths -- 149 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. A total of 20,100 patients have recovered till date. **More On P10**

Nation Passing Through A Challenging Period: Army Chief

Press Trust Of India

Pune: Army chief General M M Naravane on Friday said the Indian Army stands "strong and tall" in the face of challenges faced on both "active and unsettled" west and north borders where exigencies have increased during the coronavirus pandemic.

General Naravane said he has always maintained that wars are not fought between two armies, but they are waged between two nations.

His remarks came on a day when the Indian Army said that Indian and Chinese armies have completed the disengagement process and restored the pre-stand-off ground position in the Gogra friction point in eastern Ladakh.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the golden jubilee celebrations (1971-2021) of the Television Wing of the



Film and Television Institute of India, General Naravane hailed the role of mainstream cinema in reinforcing core values, preserving the diverse culture of the country and galvanising it in times of crisis.

The Chief of Army Staff, however, said that "stereotyping" of characters and Indian armed forces officers should be avoided.

"On a lighter note, I have always found the stereotyping of Indian (armed forces) officers in the films, both amusing and intriguing. The beautiful heroine's father is always a 'khadoos' (rude, snobbish) colonel, wearing a silk gown with whisky in one hand and a shotgun in the other. That really intrigues me.

"Well, creative license is understood, I believe that stereotyping of communities and characters needs to be avoided. Let's start believing in it," he said.

The Army chief said the nation is passing through a challenging period. "The exigencies on our active and unsettled borders, both west and north (an apparent reference to Pakistan and China), have only increased in the times of the pandemic. The Indian Army, your Army, however, is strong and tall in the face of these challenges," General Naravane said.

He said war **More On P10**

YOUR WORKSHOPS ON SCREEN PLAY writings, acting, film making have been received with great enthusiasm in the (Kashmir) Valley and the personal initiative of FTII director Bhupendra Kainthola was the key to the successful initiative."

Rahul On Two-Day J&K Visit From Monday

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will be on a two-day visit to Srinagar from Monday during which he will inaugurate the party's Jammu and Kashmir headquarters and meet Congress workers, sources said.

They said Gandhi is likely to reach Srinagar on August 9 and may attend the wedding of the son of J&K Congress chief Ghulam Ahmed Mir.

On August 10, **More On P10**

J&K Reports 144 Fresh Covid Cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 144 fresh cases of coronavirus on Friday, taking the infection tally to 3,22,286 while the death toll remained at 4,386 as no new fatality was reported in the last 24 hours, officials said.

Out of the fresh cases, 50 were from the Jammu division and 94 from the Kashmir division of the Union Territory, the officials said. Srinagar district recorded the highest number of 33 cases followed by 15 each in Jammu and Doda districts. **More On P10**

...LG Lays Foundation Stone Of Yatri Niwas

Amarnath Shrine To Be Connected With Ropeway

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Friday that his administration is planning to construct Yatri Niwas in various parts of Jammu and Kashmir to ensure comfortable stay for pilgrims who visit Valley for the annual Amarnath pilgrimage from all over the world.

The LG made these remarks while laying the foundation stone of office-cum Yatri Niwas of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) here today at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar, an official spokesperson said. The new facility would be built over 25 kanal land in a period of 18 months and will be able to accommodate over 3000 pilgrims once completed.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG while speaking on the occasion observed that the prestigious



THE NEW FACILITY WOULD BE BUILT OVER 25 KANAL land in a period of 18 months and will be able to accommodate over 3000 pilgrims once completed.

project is aimed at ensuring comfortable stay of pilgrims at Srinagar who come from all

over the world for the holy annual pilgrimage.

"It will also act as an Information Centre for the guidance of pilgrims, besides many similar works would be completed for smooth conduct of the yatra," said Sinha, who is also the SASB Chairman

"The government of J&K is initiating various services, along with the infrastructural development to provide a memorable experience to millions of **More On P10**

120 Kanal Land Transferred For Border Bn Hqs

The Jammu and Kashmir government ordered transfer of state land measuring 120 kanal in Rajouri district for the establishment of Border Battalion Headquarters, for Jammu Zone. According to an order issued by Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary to the government, sanction has been accorded to the transfer of state land measuring 120 kanal under Khasra number 822-min situated at village lamberi, Tehsil **More On P10**

ED Again Summons Mehbooba's Mother In PMLA Case



Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Enforcement Directorate Friday served a notice on the mother of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti in connection with a case related to money laundering, officials said here.

The summons served on Gulshan Nazir, who is in her late seventies, has asked her to appear before the ED's Srinagar office on August 18, they said.

The Mehbooba Mufti-led

PDP slammed the ED over the development, saying it was no coincidence that a summons is served every time the party registers a protest against the Centre's policy on Jammu and Kashmir.

On Thursday, Mufti had led a team of protesters from her party to mark the second anniversary of the Centre's move to abrogate the special status of the erstwhile state on August 5, 2019.

The PDP has asked the ED the details of the case including about **More On P10**

Govt Schools To Be Renamed After Fallen Soldiers

Firdaus Ali

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has decided to rename all government schools in the winter capital after the soldiers, paramilitary forces personnel and the policemen killed in the line of duty.

According to an official communiqué, the Deputy

Commissioners (DCs) of all the ten districts of Jammu, Kathua, Doda, Poonch, Ramban, Samba, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Udhampur, and Reasi in Jammu division have been asked to identify government schools in villages and municipal wards that can be named after the "Martyrs" from Police, Army and Central **More On P10**

Friday Prayers Offered At Jamia Masjid After 4 Months



Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: The historic Jamia Masjid in the Old City reopened for congregational prayers on Friday, almost four months after it was shut down due to the spread of

coronavirus.

According to reports, hundreds of devotees turned up at the 16th-century mosque located in Nowhatta area of the Old City to participate in the congregational Friday prayers after a gap **More On P10**

Decade Of Delay: Why Isn't Boulevard 4-Lane Project Taking Off?

Auqib Javeed

Despite funds cleared years ago, there's no headway in the Boulevard 4-Lane Road Project.

The project was announced by former chief minister Omar Abdullah on August 2, 2011, to streamline the traffic flow on the iconic stretch. The Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department was directed to start it on war-footing, but ten years down the line, the project is yet to see the light of the day.

Under the project, the government has to widen the road from the UN office Sonwar to KralSangri.

In the first phase, the road from Nehru Park to KralSangri

is to be widened. It will have a separate cycle track, coming at an additional cost of Rs.10 crore.

Showkat Jeelani Pandit, Chief Engineer, R&B Department, told Kashmir Observer that the department is waiting for the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) report and can go ahead with work only after receiving positive recommendations.

"We had a meeting with them [NEERI] recently and they are going to submit the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report soon," Pandit said. "Once we receive it, we will submit it in the J&K High Court."

The court has already sought an EIA report from the R&B



Department, Nadeem Qadri, an environmental lawyer, said. "Whatever is to be done

depends on the recommendations of NEERI's report," Qadri told Kashmir Observer.

Notably, Baseer Ahmad Khan, then Divisional Commissioner

had tasked Nagpur-based NEERI to study the impact of the Boulevard 4-Lane Road Project on the environment, and submit the report within ten days. However, years later, the report is still a work in progress.

Feroz Ahmad Mir, Executive Engineer, J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA), told Kashmir Observer that the delay in report happened as NEERI needed some more information regarding the project.

"We are expecting the report soon," Mir said.

"Since, no local agency was conducting EIA in Kashmir initially, so we approached NEERI for the report. But now,

we have the Centre of Research for Development (CORD) from Kashmir University locally preparing these reports."

However, Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat, an RTI and environmental activist, argued that by engaging NEERI for EIA, the authorities are only buying time.

"Authorities should have framed a committee of different concerned departments, like LAWDA, Forests, SMC, Pollution Control Committee, Kashmir University, and should have conducted EIA," Bhat said. "People from these departments are locals who are familiar with this place and would have done it within no time."



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

2

Saturday| 07-08-2021

Office of The Regional Transport Officer Kashmir

NOTICE



Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Yamin Zahoor Shah Watli S/O Zahoro Ahamd Watali



R/o Baghat Barzulla Sgr (Transferor) of Honda City bearing registration No. JK01Q-0902 chasis No: 205932 Engine No: 72218704 Model 2011 in favour of Faiz Ahamd S/O Ghulam Nabi Magar R/O Gulberg Colony Sriangar (Transferee).

Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned.

No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NOJK-RTOK 5309/K
Dated: 05/08/2021
P-KO

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Ikhlas Mushtaq S/o: Mushtaq Ahmad DarR/o: Lal Gam Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04G 0488 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Panzan .

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2098
Dated 06-03-2021
mcb

Assistant Regional Transport
officer Budgam Kashmir



ان نیابت نائب تحصیلدار ماگام

مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب محمد امین وار ولد مرحوم محمد لطیف وار

ساکنہ ماگام بمراو عطا لگی لیگل ہیرا ورڈ پینٹ اسرٹیفکیٹ تحت

SRO 294 دیگر کاغذات

اشتہار بمراو آگاہی ہر خاص وعام

معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل محمد امین وار ولد محمد لطیف وار کا دفتر بڈاش زیر کاروٹی ہے اس سلسلے میں بڈاشی حلقہ سے اس سلسلے میں بڈاشی حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل کی والدہ عتیقہ بیگم مورخہ 28-06-2022 کو فوت ہو چکی ہے۔ سال مئی ماگام میں رہائش پزیر ہے اور کبہ بڈیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

مشتاق احمد ولد غلام محمد وائی	زمرہ دوری	33 سال
دارت مشتاق ولد مشتاق احمد	زیر تعلیم	08 سال
محمد امین پرمو محمد لطیف	زیر تعلیم	20 سال
سُر یعلیٰ لطیف دختر محمد لطیف	زیر تعلیم	22 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کہہ نہیں ہیں سرٹیفکیٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم اندر دفتر بڈاش میں کرے معیار ذکر نے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار

sult r

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Kashmir

NOTICE

Whereas, an application has been received from one Shri : Khalid Ahamd Lone OS/o Khazir Mohammad Lone R/o Budden sari pora baramulla owner of vehicle No: JK05D-5219 for Endorsement of Hire Purchase agreement with M/S Mahindra & Mahindra Finance Service Ahamd Complex K.B, Adda Baramulla Now it is therefore, notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed Endorsement of Hire Purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Baramulla HQ Sopore within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. JK/ ARTOB/1081
Dated 05-08-2021
gms

Assistant Regional Transport
Baramulla H.Q Sopore

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Ompora Budgam QUOTATION

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of J&K, sealed quotations affixed with Rs. 6/ (Rupees six) Revenue stamps are invited from Registered CADD Centers for formulation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of Nilnag Storage Scheme of Irrigation Sub Division Chadoora for below mentioned items, which should reach office of the undersigned on or before 12- 08 -2021 up to 2 pm by hand.

Sr. No	Items	Unit	Rates
1	Drafting and Printing of front/Title pages Coloured on A4.	Page	RTQ
2	Drafting & printing of front Pages /Title Pages Coloured on A4 (Photo Paper).	Page	RTQ
3	Drafting and Printing in MS Word A4 size (coloured).	Page	RTQ
4	Drafting and Printing in MS Word A4 size (B/W).	Page	RTQ
5	Drafting & Printing of Estimates Abstract in MS Excel A4 Size (B/W).	Page	RTQ
6	Drafting & Printing of Drawings in AutoCAD (A4) Coloured.	Page	RTQ
7	Drafting & Printing of Drawings in AutoCAD (A4) (B/W).	Page	RTQ
8	Drafting & Printing of Detailed Site Plan/ Line Plan in AutoCAD (A3) Coloured.	Page	RTQ
9	Drafting & Printing of Detailed Site Plan/ Line Plan in AutoCAD (A3) (B/W).	Page	RTQ
10	Drafting of Detailed Cross Sections in AutoCAD (Width Less than 200m).	No	RTQ
11	Coloured Printout of Drawings on A4 size only.	Page	RTQ
12	Coloured Printout of Drawings on A3 size only.	Page	RTQ
13	Correction of drafted data in MS Excel or MS Word and B/W Printing of Same in A4 Size.	Page	RTQ
14	Spiral Binding A4.	No	RTQ
15	Calculations of CBR including agricultural statement	Page	RTQ
16	Black/ white Xerox A4 size (Text only).	Page	RTQ
17	A4 Photo printing on Photo paper	Page	RTQ
18	A3 Black/White Printout (Text only).	Page	RTQ
19	A3 Black/White Printout (Drawing only).	Page	RTQ

TERMS AND CONDITION:-

- The supply shall have to be made available within seven days after issuance of supply order.
- The defective/substandard material if any shall be rejected and have to be lifted back with charges at his own.
- Other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the PWD form No.25.

Executive Engineer,
Irrigation Division Ompora,
Budgam.

No:- 2665-70
Date:- 06-08-2021.

DIPK-6056/21

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Agriculture Kashmir

3rd & Final Notice

Javid Ahmad Khan and Ors
V/s
State and ors.

Subject: Review Petition (RP) No. 35/2019 titled Javid Ahmad Khan and Ors V/S State and Others against the Judgment dated 23.05.2019 passed in CPSW No. 165/2013, CPSW No. 164/2013 and SWP No. 192/2013 titled Javid Ahmad Khan and Ors V/S State and Others___Notice thereof.

Whereas, in pursuance to Hon'ble High Court judgment dated 23.05.2019 and 26.02.2021 passed in CPSW No. 165/2013 and Review Petition No. 35/2019 titled Javid Ahmad Khan and ors V/S State and ors respectively and as per the decision taken in meeting held on 09.07.2021 in office chamber of Director Agriculture, Kashmir, you were provided a chance to submit the documents as envisaged in SRO 64/1994 for considering your claim under the rules governing the field in the office of Chief Agriculture Officer, Anantnag within seven days from the issuance of the earlier notice published in "Daily Aftab" and "Rising Kashmir" on 16.07.2021; and

Whereas, the Chief Agriculture Officer Anantnag vide his communication No. ADO/Ang/Enq/2021-22/2528-29 dated 05.08.2021, 99 petitioners figuring in CPSW No.165/2013 have deposited the Xerox copies of documents till 03.08.2021 i.e. the cut off date for submission of required documents; and

Whereas, the President of so called DRWs Mr. Javid Ahmad Khan (petitioner) has represented before Director Agriculture Kashmir (Chairman) for grant of extension for some more days in order to deposit the required documents as most of the petitioners hail from villages and far off/remote areas where the Newspaper in question is not seen as has also been recommended by Chief Agriculture Officer Anantnag vide communication No. ADO/Ang/Enq/2021-22/2528-29 dated 05.08.2021; and

Whereas, while considering the representation made by these so called DRWs as well as the recommendation of Chief Agriculture Officer Anantnag, the Chairman of the Committee on humanitarian grounds has accepted the plea of the petitioners and as such one weeks time is given to the petitioners for depositing the required documents as envisaged in SRO-64.


As such you are once again provided last and final opportunity to submit the documents as envisaged in SRO 64 of 1994 in the office of Chief Agriculture Officer, Anantnag within seven days from the date of issuance of this notice and nothing beyond that will be entertained in this matter.

Sd/-
Senior Law Officer
Directorate of Agriculture
Kashmir

DIPK-6022/21

از نیابت واگورہ			
مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب ندیم احمد شیخ ولد محمد سحان شیخ ساکنہ واگورہ بمراو عطا لگی بیکوارڈ اسرٹیفکیٹ تحت SRO 294			
اشتہار بمراو آگاہی ہر خاص وعام			
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر بڈاش زیر کاروٹی ہے اس سلسلے میں بڈاشی حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل مئی ماگام میں رہائش پزیر ہے اور کبہ بڈیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے			
محمد سحان شیخ	زمینداری	50 سال	سربرہ کبہ
حمید بیگم	گھریلو کام	47 سال	
نور محمد	مازومت	26 سال	
ندیم احمد	زیر تعلیم	22 سال	
رخسانہ بانو	گھریلو کام	24 سال	
بلال احمد	زیر تعلیم	20 سال	
اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کہہ نہیں ہیں سائل کے کبہ کی ماہوار آمدنی 1100 ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم اندر دفتر بڈاش میں پیش کرے معیار ذکر نے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا			
نائب تحصیلدار	ajz		

انتقال پرمالال



میر ذبیات بی ذکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ دی جا رہی ہے کہ عبدالرشید بیٹ ولد محمد سلطان بیٹ ساکنہ عمر آباد لین 2 ہاؤس نمبر 89 مختصر علالت کے بعد 15 اگست 2021 بروز جمعرات کو اس جہان فانی سے رخصت ہو کر اپنے خالق حقیقی سے جا ملے۔ (انا لله وانا الیہ راجعون) مرحوم کے حق میں اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی کا اہتمام 8 اگست 2021 بروز اتوار صبح 10 بجے مقبرہ واقعہ آبادی دینہ نزار صفا کمال میں ہوگا۔

مکوارہ۔

عارف رشید بیٹ
فون نمبر:- 7006525137
پتہ:- عمر آباد لین 2 ہاؤس نمبر 89

Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL SEED CERTIFICATION OFFICER KASHMIR

Fax No/ PH. No:-01942955289,

Email ID:-dscokashmir@gmail.com, seedcertification44@gmail.com

NOTICE

Release of incentives in favour of high value vegetable seed growers of Kashmir Division

The Department of Agriculture Kashmir is contemplating to help the local seed growers of the valley by providing incentive of Rs 150/- per kg of seed produced by the seed growers, to restore the past glory of the seed industry in respect of vegetables both European / indigenous high value seeds. The benefit shall be released only to those growers who are registered with Divisional Seed C-certification Office during Kharief -2021 and Rabi-2020-21 after completion of all codal formalities. Growers are advised to contact the office of the Divisional Seed Certification Officer, Kashmir so as to avail the opportunity within 07days (working days) from the publication of this notice.

-sd/-

(Mir Aijaz Hassan)

Divisional Seed Certification Officer
Kashmir

DIPK-6016/21

Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SUMBAL

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No. 62/ET/R&B/SUMBAL of 08/2021.

(Single Cover System)

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following work:-

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees.)	Time of Completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Improvement/Restoration of Road surface by way of Nallah Muck Filling at Kulpora Safapora (Wun Manz).	1.75	200/-	15 Days	3054-M&R	DEE

Position of AAA: Accorded

Position of funds Available

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	05.08.2021 from 2.00 P.M.
3	Bid submission Start Date	05.08.2021 from 2.00 P.M.
4	Bid Submission End Date	12.08.2021 upto 4.00 P.M.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	13.08.2021 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal (tender receiving authority).

3. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below)

4. The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal (tender receiving authority).

9. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

7. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

7.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

7.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

7.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

7.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

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

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

8. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

9. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal (The date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The original Treasury Challan (cost of tender document), and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of contract.

10. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

11. Price escalation and Taxes:- The %age quoted by the bidder shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

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

13. In case of CRF and any other specified project. the relevant guidelines / standard bidding document shall be followed.

DIPK-6011/21

No. R&B/Sb/21/1418-24.
Dated:- 05-08-2021.

Sd./
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Division Sumbal
/R.MIR/

Bollywood Actor Sonu Sood Visits Srinagar Flee Market, Bargains

Agencies

Srinagar: Bollywood star Sonu Sood, who is here in connection with the revised film policy of Jammu and Kashmir administra-



tion, surprised a street hawker by turning up at his stall and promot-

ing his wares.

Sood took to the streets of a flea market in Batmaloo in the city and started interacting with Shameem Khan, who has been selling shoes and slippers for over a decade.

The 48-year-old actor, who has earned public appreciation for supporting migrant workers during the pandemic, inquired about the rates of the slippers and asked Khan to give him some discount.

Sood then urged his fans to visit Khan's stall.

"Whoever wants to buy shoes, come to Shameem bhai's stall and he will give you a discount if you take my name," the actor said in a video posted on his Instagram.

"Kitna discount doge?(how much discount would you offer?," the actor asked, to which Khan said, "20 per cent."

Dr Farooq Greets People On Urs Of Hazrat Umar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Party President and Member of Parliament Srinagar Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Friday greeted people on the annual Urs observance of Ameer Ul Momineneen Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA).

Farooq said that Hazrat Umar (RA) followed in the footsteps of our beloved Prophet of Islam (SAW), by following his example and by upholding his traditions. "He was one of the four rightly guided Caliphs; even today he continues to be a role model for strength, justice, love, compassion, and mercy. A capable administrator, stern towards offenders and himself ascetic to core, he was uni-

versally respected for his justice and authority. His role in shaping the early Islamic community is widely acknowledged."

He professed outstanding virtues which imbued by our youth can go a long way in guiding them towards right path. "On this auspicious day, I pray to Almighty to salvage the humanity from the biggest ever public health nightmare that the world is confronting at present in the shape of COVID-19. I also pray to Almighty to increase the prospects of peace, prosperity, and brotherhood in the world in general and J&K in particular. Observing such days gives our youth a chance to refurbish their knowledge and get acquainted with the great Sahaba (RA) like Hazrat Ameer Ul Momineneen Umar Farooq (RA)," he said.

Kashmir Flood Alert App Launched To Monitor Real-time Water Level In Jhelum

Agencies

Srinagar: In order to monitor the real-time water levels of River Jhelum and its tributaries, Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department, in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC), Srinagar has developed a mobile application "Kashmir Flood Alert App".

The departments had been working on this project of developing an application for the last several months and after a successful trial, the app has been made available on Google play store.

The app provides real-time monitoring of water levels of 13 network stations which include Sangam, Pampore, Ram Munshi Bagh, Asham Wular, Vishow-Khudwani, Rambiyara-Wachi, Lidder-Batkot, DoodhGanga-Barazulla, Sindh-Doderhama, Suknag-Arizal, Feroz-pora-Drung and Pohru-Seelu.

An official said that there has been thousand plus downloads within the month only with 4.7 rating on the Google play store.

"Application was released in March 2021 and was updated in June 2021 and thousand plus downloads in a short span is a good response from the general public," official said.

Adding about the app, officials said that the Flood Alert Application provides

critical alerts to the general public about the flood threats arising out of heavy downpours or cloudburst or breaches. Devices installed at various gauge sites at 13 network stations use Radar Level Sensor technology for Automatic Water Level Recorders (AWLR) which provides periodic hourly data on real-time water levels. The app can provide long term trends



which can help in managing high risk like floods and the app can provide alarmed messages to the departments and also to the administration.

"The main objective behind developing the app was to establish efficient and timely hydro-meteorological data collection. All data collected is made available in a timely manner to the Divisional Flood Management and Mitigation Center and other real-time users," official added.

SMC Enforcement Officer Suspended

Agencies

Srinagar: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir has ordered the suspension of a Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Enforcement Officer for bypassing his seniors while demolishing a property of Nawakadal residents in Kashmir Capital Srinagar.

In a communication addressed to Commissioner SMC Divisional Commissioner Kashmir PK Pole

has asked the SMC Commissioner to suspend Enforcement Officer Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) namely Bashir Ahmad Bhat for demolishing property of three brothers from Nawakadal Srinagar.

"A report was sought from Patwari concerned to ascertain the factual position, who submitted the same. The concerned Enforcement officer has demolished the property of three brothers from

Nawakadal on his own without obtaining orders from his superiors. The accused officer has misused his official position and took law in his hands," reads the communication.

In this connection you are directed to place the accused Enforcement Officer, under suspension with immediate effect and submit compliance report to this office accordingly through return fax, the communication added. (KDC)

Police Hold Meetings With Shia Community Members

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In connection with the forth coming holy month of Muharram-ul-haram, SP Hazratbal Irshad H Rather-JKPS along with SDPOs of Zadibal & Zakura zone and concerned zone SHOs facilitated

munity, while, at Police Station Zadibal, the meeting was attended by representatives of All J&K Shia Association, representatives of J&K Anjuman-e-Sharie Shian which is headed by Syed Aga Hassan, representatives of Anjuman Itihad-ul-Muslimeen which



series of meetings in which large number of respectable citizens and representatives of Shia community participated. The meetings were held while following social distancing norms and other protocols.

A police spokesperson said that at Police Station Nigean, the meeting was attended by respectable citizens of Shia Com-

is headed by Molve Abass Ansari and other respectable citizens.

"Threadbare discussions were held with the representatives/participants regarding the forthcoming holy month of Muharram amid Covid-19 pandemic. The participants assured their full support and cooperation to the Police."

Student Injured In Oxygen Cylinder Explosion At SKIMS

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A BSC Nursing student suffered injuries after an Oxygen Cylinder exploded at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura on Friday.

Official sources said that a BSC Nursing student identified as Rumana suffered injury in her right hand after an Oxygen Cylinder exploded at SKIMS Soura.

They said that the injured suffered minor injuries and is stable.



DIAL-EMMA



- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 626 - Battle at Constantinople: Slavic/Persians/Avarenvloot defeated
- 936 - Otto I the Great becomes King of Germany
- 1914 - Russia invades East Prussia
- 1925 - League of Nation advises against Turk/Iraqi division of Mosoelgebied
- 1927 - Peace Bridge between US and Canada dedicated
- 1933 - The Iraqi Government slaughters over 3,000 Assyrians in the village of Sumail. The day becomes known as Assyrian Martyrs Day.
- 1944 - US 3rd Army reaches suburbs of Brest, Brittany
- 1944 - IBM dedicates the first program-controlled calculator, the Automatic Sequence Controlled Calculator (known best as the Harvard Mark I)
- 1956 - British government sends 3 aircraft carriers to Egypt
- 1956 - Dynamite transport explodes in Colombia; about 1200 die
- 1956 - 51-year-old Satchel Paige (Miami Marlins) wins a game before the largest crowd in minor league history, 57,000 at Miami's Orange Bowl; International League: Marlins 6-2 v Columbus Jets
- 1959 - Explorer 6 transmits 1st TV photo of Earth from space
- 1961 - Cosmonaut Gherman Titov circles Earth for a full day in Vostok 2
- 1961 - Soviet premier Khrushchev predicts USSR economy will surpass US
- 1962 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalinsk USSR
- 1964 - Turkey begins air attack on Greek Cypriots
- 1965 - Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore signs a separation agreement with Malaysia, after 2 years of political union
- 1976 - US Viking 2 goes into Martian orbit after 11-month flight from Earth
- 1976 - Scientists in Pasadena, California, announce Viking I found strongest indications to date of possible life on Mars
- 1981 - "The Washington Star" ceases all operations after 128 years of publication.
- 1985 - Takao Doi, Mamoru Mohri and Chiaki Mukai are chosen to be Japan's first astronauts.
- 1987 - Javed Miandad becomes first to score 6,000 Test runs for Pakistan as he cracks 260 in drawn 5th Test v England at The Oval
- 1990 - Operation Desert Shield begins - US deploys troops to Saudi Arabia
- 1997 - STS 85 (Discovery 23) launches into orbit
- 2008 - Georgia launches a military offensive to surround and capture the capital of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali, from Russian control, starting the South Ossetia War.
- 2012 - Heavy rain forces 20,000 people to flee their homes in Manila, Philippines
- 2012 - 200,000 people are evacuated from Shanghai in anticipation of Typhoon Haikui

From KO Archives

Hizb Wants To Give Peace A Chance: Salah-ud-din

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD- Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Syed Salah-ud-Din has said his outfit wants to give peace a try in Jammu and Kashmir and denied that it declared the cease-fire under any pressure.

We have taken our own decision and have not announced the cease-fire under any pressure, Salah-ud-Din said in an interview to an online news agency. Asked about the opposition to the cease-fire by several militant groups, he said they are annoyed because India has: never fulfilled any promise and think the talks offer will not bear any fruits while we want to give a try. Referring to the other militant outfits still active in the state, the Hizb supremo said his group was the main force in the valley and expressed the hope they would also halt their operations.

He rejected the autonomy resolution passed by the state assembly saying we want nothing less than freedom.

Salah-ud-Din criticised Jamaat-e-Islami for making irresponsible statements of cease-fire and said they should not have reacted so harshly without consulting us. He also came down heavily elected governments in Pakistan for damaging the Kashmir cause and said they had been making hollow claims about finding a solution to the Kashmir issue.

A meeting between Hizb commanders and army officers at an undisclosed destination to work out cease-fire modalities failed to take place today as two of the four commanders who represented Hizb in the first round of talks were not available.

Sources close to Hizb said that two had represented the outfit in the first round of talks with union home secretary Kamal Pande here on Thursday. Earlier, Fazal Has Qureshi mediator nominated by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, said the two sides were meeting today at an undisclosed destination to work out modalities for effective implementation to balance the militant demand that the talks can cover an issue-including secession against political pressure not to compromise on the constitution. (Kashmir Observer, August 7, 2000)

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE SUB-DIVISIONAL MAGISTRATE, NOORABAD (D.H. Pora)

Subject: Conduct of Magisterial Enquiry under Section 176CrPC into the encounter took place at village chimmer D.H Pora on 30/06/2021.

NOTICE

The District Magistrate kulgam has appointed undersigned as enquiry Officer in the encounter that took place at village chimmer D.H Pora on 30/06/2021 in which 03 militants got killed. In this regard, general public having knowledge regarding the matter are invited to record their statement within seven (07) days from the date of publication to this notice in the office of undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-

Sub Divisional Magistrate,
Noorabad

DIPK-6076/21

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir

Tel:0194-2315378, Fax 0194-2479548, e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com.

Sub:- Application for inclusion of partner in the registration certificate of Guest House "Saiba" located at Zero Bridge, Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, the Guest House has been registered with this Department in the name of Mrs Rukhsana W/o Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik R/o Zero Bridge, Srinagar on 03.05.2016 vide Registration No. Reg/1246/DTK/L7/ dated 03.05.2016 and the Registration certificate is renewed upto 31.03.2022;

Whereas, Mrs Rukhsana W/o Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik R/o Zero Bridge, Srinagar has approached this office for inclusion of partner namely Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik S/o Mr. Shamas Din Malik R/o Zero Bridge, Rajbagh Srinagar in the registration certificate of Guest House under the name and style "Saiba" located at Zero Bridge, Srinagar;

Whereas, the applicant has submitted all the requisite documents including Character Certificate of new incumbent, Partnership Deed executed before sub-registrar, Domicile Certificate, Aadhar Card, Passport, original registration certificate and press cutting for inclusion of partner in the registration certificate of the said guest house;

Whereas, inclusion of name of Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik S/o Mr. Shamas Din Malik R/o Zero Bridge, Rajbagh Srinagar in the registration certificate of the said guest house is purely for purpose of running operation management of the said guest house and do not confer any right of ownership upon the registration certificate holders;

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/2012, before changes are made in the registration records of this Department in respect of inclusion of partner namely Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik S/o Mr. Shamas Din Malik R/o Zero Bridge, Rajbagh Srinagar in the registration certificate of the above named guest house and issuance of registration certificate bearing names of Mrs. Rukhsana W/o Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik and Mr. Farooq Ahmad Malik S/o Mr. Shamas Din Malik, the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/ Financial Institutions/ Banks/ Development Authorities/ PHE Department/ Electric Department that in case of any objection/s, the same should reach the office of undersigned within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections beyond a period of 07 days will be entertained and the request of the applicant will be considered under rules, after submission of requisite documents.

DIPK-5978/21

Deputy Director Tourism,
Registration

No:Reg/PGH/175/254/DTK
Dated: 05.08.2021



Congratulations TO DHIBA THAKUR on securing 94.6 percent in Class Xth (CBSE)

From all near and dear ones

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER HANDWARA NOTICE

Where As application has been received from mohmad Ayoob Naikoo son of Gh Ahmad Naikoo Resident of teerna mawer District kupwara

Vehicle no HP65A5767 and registered owner of vehicle namely naresh kumar son of Durga Dass resident of V11 Bhatah P/O Maseran District mandi Hamachal pardesh HP

Vehicle type grand Alto Chassis no Mala85C1EM3393309 Engine No GALAFM 800919 having NOC certificate to ARTO office kupwara for re-Registration purpose.

Now it is notified for General information that objection if any to the proposed of the sold vehicle shall be filled in written in the office of the Assistant Regional transport officer kupwara with in seven days from the publication of this notice in the same daily news paper.

Sd/Assistant Regional transport officer kupwara.
(sult)

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for issuance of D-class contractor card . If anybody have any objection in this regard may contact to R& B Division handwara within seven days after that no objection will be accepted

: Reyaz Ahmad bhat
S/O:- Ab jabar bhat
R/O:- Chontipora mawer
(sult)

Hezbollah retaliates against Israeli bombing with rocket barrage

Hezbollah says rockets were fired in retaliation for Israeli bombing of southern Lebanon.

Agencies

Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah says it has fired a barrage of rockets at Israeli positions in occupied Shebaa Farms in retaliation for Israel's airstrikes on southern Lebanon a day earlier.

In a statement, Hezbollah said it hit "open fields" near Israeli positions at 11:15 a.m. local time Friday, using "dozens" of 122-caliber rockets.

Lebanon's Al Mayadeen television said at least 20 rockets were fired at Israel's military positions. Al-Minar TV said a number of the rockets targeted the Douf military base.

A Lebanese security source said the rockets were launched from the area of al-Arqoub, near the Lebanese town of Shebaa.

Air raid sirens sounded in the Upper Galilee, and in the Golan Heights, part of the territory Israel occupied in 1967.

Israeli media said residents of settlements in the north of the occupied territories had been asked to stay in homes.

Following the retaliatory rocket attack, Israeli prime min-



ister Naftali Bennett and the regime's minister of military affairs Benny Gantz held an emergency session amid reports of a massive number of sorties conducted by Israeli warplanes over southern Lebanon.

According to Al Jazeera, the Israeli military fired phosphorus bombs at Lebanese territories around the

Kafr Shuba hills near the border, causing fire in nearby fields.

The Israeli military confirmed that it had hit areas in southern Lebanon with artillery fire.

The development came after Israeli jets struck what the regime's military claimed were rocket launch sites in Lebanon. Lebanese President Michel

Aoun said the Israeli airstrikes were the first targeting villages since 2006 and showed an escalation in its "aggressive intent" towards his country.

Aoun also said the strikes were a direct threat to the security and stability of southern Lebanon and violated UN Security Council resolutions.

UN Warns Lebanon-Israel Border Escalation "Very Dangerous"

"This is a very dangerous situation, with escalatory actions seen on both sides over the past two days," it said, adding that it was working to "prevent the situation from spiralling out of control".

Beirut, Lebanon: The UN peacekeeping force patrolling the Lebanon-Israel border, UNIFIL, warned of a "very dangerous situation" after the Lebanese Hezbollah movement and the Israeli army traded fire on Friday.

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Taliban Assassinate Head Of Afghan Government Media Department

Afghanistan: Taliban had earlier warned they would target senior administration officials in retaliation for increased air strikes.

Agencies

Kabul: The Taliban shot dead the head of the Afghan government's media information centre Friday near a mosque in the capital, days after warning they would target senior administration figures in retaliation for increased air strikes. The assassination of one of the government's leading voices follows another bloody day of fighting in Afghanistan as the war spills into Kabul for the first time in months.

It also comes hours before the UN Security Council meets in New York to discuss the conflict.

"Unfortunately, the savage terrorists have committed a cowardly act once again and martyred a patriotic Afghan," interior ministry spokesman Mirwais Stanikzai said of the death of Dawa Khan Menapal.

Menapal was popular in Kabul's tight-knit media community, and known for pillorying the Taliban on social media -- even jokingly at times.

Former presidential spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said he was "utterly shocked and devastated".

"We lost another great soul," he added.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the death, with spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid sending a message to media saying "he was killed in a special attack carried out by mujahideen".

The murder comes after the militants warned Wednesday of more attacks targeting Afghan government leaders, a day after the defence minister Bismillah Mohammadi escaped an assassination attempt in a bomb-and-gun attack.

The Afghan and US militaries have stepped up air strikes in their fight against the insurgents in a string of cities, and the Taliban said Tuesday's Kabul raid

was their response.

Fighting in Afghanistan's long-running conflict has intensified since May, when foreign forces began the final stage of a withdrawal due to be completed later this month.



The Taliban already control large portions of the countryside, and are now challenging government forces in several provincial capitals.

"Nothing left"

Government forces continue to hit Taliban positions with air strikes and commando raids, and the defence ministry boasted Friday of eliminating more than 400 insurgents in the past 24 hours. Both sides frequently exaggerate battlefield casualty figures, making independent verification virtually impossible.

But even as Afghan officials claimed to be hitting the Taliban hard, security forces have yet to flush out the militants from provincial capitals they have already entered -- with hundreds of thousands of civilians forced to flee in recent weeks.

Social media is filled with videos of the devastating toll the fighting has taken in the southern city of Lashkar Gah, with posts showing a major market area in flames.

Aid group Action Against Hun-

Troops deployed in Pakistan town after mob attacked Hindu temple

Agencies

Pakistan has deployed paramilitary troops in a town in the country's eastern Punjab province a day after a Muslim mob attacked and badly damaged a Hindu temple there.

Wednesday's attack took place in Bhong in Rahim Yar Khan district after a court granted bail to an eight-year-old Hindu boy who was accused of desecrating a Muslim religious school earlier this week.

Statues were damaged and the temple's main door was burned down by the mob that said the boy, arrested on charges of intentionally urinating on a carpet in the madrassa's library, committed blasphemy, an act punishable by the death sentence in Pakistan.

Mere accusations of blasphemy have in the past incited mobs to violence and deadly attacks.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan took to Twitter to "strongly condemn" the attack, announcing that he had ordered the police chief of the Punjab province to arrest the culprits and take "action

against any police negligence".

"The government will also restore the Mandir," he added.

Punjab police official Asif Raza said the police have a list of 50 suspects and promised speedy arrests. He said troops were now guarding the temple and that security has been provided to members of the Hindu community.

Lal Malhi, a Hindu member of Pakistan's parliament, posted on Twitter that many Hindu families living in Bhong had "vacated the town" fearing for their lives.

Blasphemy laws

While Muslims and Hindus have mostly lived peacefully in Pakistan, there have been several attacks on Hindu temples in recent years.

In December 2020, a large mob destroyed a century-old Hindu temple in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province

Since 1990, at least 79 people have been killed in the name of the blasphemy laws, according to an Al Jazeera tally. Those killed include individuals accused of blasphemy, their family members, their lawyers and judges who have delivered "not guilty" verdicts.

US: 1 lakh Green Cards at risk of being wasted, Indian techies peeved

Agencies

About 1 lakh employment-based Green Cards are at the risk of being wasted in less than two months, causing resentment among Indian IT professionals whose wait for legal permanent residency now runs into decades.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the US.

This year's quota for employment-based immigrants is 2,61,500, far higher than the usual 140,000, Indian professional Sandeep Pawar told PTL.

Unfortunately, under the law, if these visas aren't issued by September 30, they are lost forever, he said.

The current pace of processing by US Citizenship and Immigration Services, or USCIS, suggests they will waste more than 1,00,000 Green Cards, a fact recently confirmed by the Department of State officer in charge of determining visa usage, he said.

If the USCIS or the Joe Biden administration doesn't take any steps, the extra 100,000 Green Cards that are available this year will be wasted, Pawar rued.

The White House did not comment on the questions asked in this regard.

Biden Offers "Safe Haven" To Hong Kong Residents In US After China Crackdown

Agencies

Washington: President Joe Biden on Thursday offered temporary "safe haven" to Hong Kong residents in the United States, allowing what could be thousands of people to extend their stay in response to Beijing's crackdown on democracy in the Chinese territory.

Biden directed the Department of Homeland Security to implement a "deferral of removal" for up to 18 months for Hong Kong residents currently in the United States, citing "compelling foreign policy reasons."

"Over the last year, the PRC has continued its assault on Hong Kong's autonomy, undermining its remaining democratic processes and institutions, imposing limits on academic freedom, and cracking down on freedom of the press," Biden said in the memo, using the acronym for the People's Republic of China.

He said offering safe haven for Hong Kong residents "further United States interests in the region. The United States will not

waver in our support of people in Hong Kong."

It is not clear how many people the move would affect, but the vast majority of Hong Kong residents currently in the United States are expected to be eligible, according to a senior administration official.

The White House said the move made clear the United States "will not stand idly by as the PRC breaks its promises to Hong Kong and to the international community."

Those eligible may also seek employment authorization, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said.

It is the latest in a series of actions Biden has taken to address what his administration says is the erosion of rule of law in the former British colony, which returned to Chinese control in 1997.

The U.S. government in July applied more sanctions on Chinese officials in Hong Kong, and warned companies of risks of operating under a national security law China implemented last year to criminalize what it considers subversion, secessionism, terrorism or collusion with foreign forces.

NEWS MAKER

Thousands jam Philippine vaccination sites over false news

Thousands of people jammed coronavirus vaccination centers in the Philippine capital, defying social distancing restrictions, after false news spread that unvaccinated residents would be deprived of cash aid or barred from leaving home during a two-week lockdown that started Friday.

Officials placed Metropolitan Manila back under lockdown until August 20, as a new spike in COVID-19 infections that health officials say could be due to the highly contagious delta variant threatens to overwhelm hospitals. Three other regions, including nearby Laguna province, were also placed under lockdown until August 15. Only authorized workers for essential businesses and residents on medical emergencies or food-buying errands can venture out. An



eight-hour curfew was imposed in the capital region starting at 8 p.m. and police checkpoints were set up in city boundaries. A day before the lockdown, false news spread on social media that unvaccinated residents would either be prohibited from leaving their homes to go to work or deprived of 1,000 pesos (\$20) aid. It sent large crowds heading for vaccination centers in the cities of Manila, Las Pinas and Antipolo even without prior registrations. Thousands lined up for several blocks in designated government centers and shopping malls to get the jabs, at times sparking arguments and complaints and snarling traffic. In Manila alone, up to 22,000 people showed up outside vaccination centers before dawn. People descended in groups and arrived in vans from nearby provinces, some rowdily removing barricades, city officials said, citing police reports. Many were not registered under Manila's immunization program. Police were forced to stop vaccinations in at least one of the shopping malls and asked the crowds to return home. Critics partly blamed President Rodrigo Duterte for the confusion. The brash-speaking leader warned Filipinos last week that those who refuse to get vaccinated will not be allowed to leave their homes as a safeguard against the spread of the delta variant. He acknowledged that there was no specific law for such a restriction.

For people who refuse to receive COVID-19 vaccine, Duterte said, well, for all I care, you can die anytime. We cannot allow our national immunization program to become superspreader

events, especially given the threat posed by the delta variant, the Department of Health said in a statement following the chaotic scenes. Officials later stressed that even unvaccinated residents could venture out in case of medical emergency. They can also obtain village permission to buy food, medicine or other essential items. They cautioned the public not to fall for fake news on social media and urged them to follow official government announcements. The government's vaccination campaign, which started in March after repeated delays, has faced vaccine shortages, delivery delays and hesitancy, including from those who prefer Western brands. More than 10.2 million Filipinos have been fully vaccinated and 12.2 million others have received their first coronavirus shots. About 70 million people are targeted to be immunized this year, said Carito Galvez Jr., who oversees the program.

The Philippines reported more than 8,100 confirmed COVID-19 infections Thursday, with 196 deaths, bringing the total number of cases nationwide to more than 1.6 million with 28,427 deaths in one of Southeast Asia's worst outbreaks.

Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic Restarting Space Tickets From \$450,000

Washington: After flying its founder Richard Branson to space, Virgin Galactic is restarting ticket sales beginning at \$450,000, the company announced Thursday.

The new price is about double the \$200,000 to \$250,000 paid by around 600 people who previously booked seats on Virgin's spaceship, as the company looks to cash in on the success of last month's fully-crewed test flight. Its next flight will come in September and involve members of the Italian Air Force, a paying customer. "We are excited to announce the reopening of sales effective today," said CEO Michael Colglazier in a statement, with first dibs going to people on a waiting list. "As we endeavor to bring the wonder of space to a broad global population, we are delighted to open the door to an entirely new industry and consumer experience."

In July, Branson beat Blue Origin owner Jeff Bezos to space in a battle between the billionaires. There will be one further test after the September mission, but after that their calendar for launches has not been revealed. The offerings for customers will include a single seat; multi-seats for couples, friends or family; and a full-flight buyout. The spaceplane was originally designed to carry six crew, but last month's flight, which was described as "fully-crewed," had just four -- suggesting this is the current number.

The company has predicted it will eventually run up to 400 flights per year, and two seats are up for grabs in a prize draw, with registrations open until September 1. Virgin's space experience involves an air-launched spaceplane, VSS Unity, that takes off attached to the belly of a massive carrier plane from a runway at Spaceport America in New Mexico. After gaining altitude, the spaceplane detaches from its mothership and ignites its rocket engine, ascending to beyond 50 miles (80 kilometers) above sea level. Passengers unbuckle and experience a few minutes of weightlessness before the plane glides back to the runway to land. The company has come under fire for its carbon footprint, which is roughly equivalent to a transatlantic flight but for far fewer people. It has said it is examining the possibility of offsetting its emissions.



J&K's Public Libraries Offer Free Access To Reference Material

Director Libraries Urges Students To Take Advantage Of This Exhaustive Knowledge Bank

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Director Libraries & Research, Mohammad Rafi Friday called for making available the latest reference books and study material in all the Public Libraries for various Competitive Examinations including IAS, JKAS, NEET, JEE, CAT, CLAT, GMAT, SSB etc. He urged the aspirants to visit the nearest Public Library in their respective area to benefit from these important references. The Director said that given the overwhelming demand by students, the Libraries Department has, on the recommendation of UT-Level Library Advisory-cum-Purchase Committee (UTLLAPC), this year made available around 350 titles of free reference books/study material in its libraries to help students, especially those who can't afford to purchase such costly material, study and prepare for various competitive examinations.

During his visit to the Public Library at Bagh-e-Mehtab, the Director interacted with the students present there and sought their inputs for further improving the facilities at Public Libraries to the best advantage of the users.

He informed the students that besides making available the reference books/study material for competitive examinations, the Department of Libraries & Research is also in the process of tying up with some prestigious Coaching Academies in the country to arrange free online coaching for J&K youth for these examinations.

During his visit to the District Library Budgam, the Director re-

viewed the progress of work on up-gradation of the Library by way of construction of additional accommodation comprising a spacious Reading Hall, separate washrooms for ladies and gents and a Store. The estimated cost of these works is around Rs 30.20 Lakhs.

He urged the executing agency R&B Division Budgam to expedite the construction work so that the Library is ready at the earliest for functioning as a full-fledged e-Learning-cum-Career Counselling Center in pursuance to the instructions issued by the Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha for digitally transforming the public libraries in J&K and reposition them as multi-purpose facilities, providing varied services considering the needs of users, especially the youth.

He said this novel project is aimed at rediscovering how the public libraries move forward and adapt to new technologies, new communities, new user-needs and information behaviours to play a productive role in youth development. "The initiative will also help in creating a better interface between the intellectual, technological and physical infrastructure in these libraries," he said.

During his visit to Tehsil Library Chadoora, the Director called for identifying a suitable alternate accommodation for relocating the Library. He said the District Development Commissioner Budgam will be requested to provide some unutilized government building in the area to the Libraries Department for shifting Tehsil Library Chadoora there.

LG Launches J&K Film Policy

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has launched the Union Territory's Film Policy, which officials said has been worked out to facilitate the overall growth of the film industry in the region, including setting up of a film development council and revival of closed cinema halls.

The policy, launched at a star-

ing locales, infrastructure for film screening, revival of closed cinema halls, upgrading existing cinema halls, encouraging setting up of multiplexes and cinema halls, destination marketing, organising the J&K film festival, and restoration and preservation of films from the region. The government has set up a single-window clearance mechanism, prepared equipment, location and talent directories, besides offering a host of

and explore the pristine beauty of Jammu and Kashmir. At the same time, also avail a host of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives, besides world-class facilities offered by the J&K government, he said.

The Film Policy has been drafted after consultations with the experts and in-depth study of progressive film policies of other states, UTs, and other countries.

"Suggestions of renowned names of the Indian film industry have also been incorporated while formulating the policy. The facility which one gets at other locations in Europe or America, we are committed to providing the same at the locations in Jammu and Kashmir," the Lt Governor said.

Sinha said the Film Policy is not just a government document, but it is Jammu and Kashmir regaining its proud legacy of association with the world of cinema, and the long and cherished tradition of film shooting.

It is also a reflection of a changing development scenario of Jammu and Kashmir and represents the aspirations of the art sector, he said.

"To meet the need of the film shooting, we have the manpower of more than 1500 such trained artists which will also provide an opportunity to the local talents to show their skills," Sinha said.

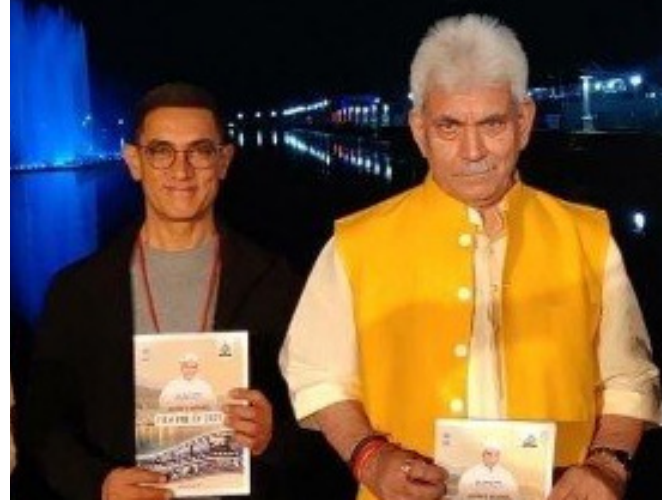
"Besides, there are hundreds of unexplored places, which have been left unattended by filmmakers and we are developing those potential places with the requisite facilities and team of the best local artists. The new film policy will also give a fillip to the film tourism sector, thus opening up more employment avenues for the locals, he added.

As far as security is concerned, 10.52 lakh tourists coming in July alone shows that there is no concern from the security point of view, the Lt Governor said.

While highlighting some of the key endeavours of the government to add more attraction to the film sector and introducing Jammu and Kashmir's long association with the films to the new generation, he said the government has decided to install illuminating signages dedicated to the directors, film actors and crew members at the locations where memorable films have been shot. Recalling the era of 60s and 70s, the Lt Governor noted that there was a time when J&K and Hindi Film Industry were complementary to each other.

The majestic beauty of J&K has been captured through the lens and showcased on the silver screen. Renowned films makers and film personalities like Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Rajendra Kumar, Dilip Kumar in the 60s, and later, big names like Yash Chopra, Rahul Rawail, Mani Ratnam, had their deep association with Jammu and Kashmir.

The world will once again get to see and experience the same scenario after decades, Sinha said.



Moment Of Happiness: Aamir Khan

Srinagar: Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan has said the Jammu & Kashmir's Film Policy-2021, launched by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, will facilitate the shooting of movies in the valley, known for its beautiful locales. The new Film Policy was launched by the Lt Governor at a star-studded event here on Thursday in the presence of the Bollywood actor and filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani. It aims to establish Jammu and Kashmir as the first choice of film shooting destination for filmmakers.

"I want to congratulate Manoj Sinha and am also thankful to him for this Film Policy. It is a moment of happiness for the film industry and we will get several facilities and it will make shooting films here easy. I wish the whole team all the very best," Khan said at the launch event at SKICC here.

The actor, who is currently shooting for his upcoming movie "Laal Singh Chaddha" in the

union territory, said the administration, police and all the other agencies have been very cooperative with the team.

"If I share my experiences, the shooting of our film is on and not yet covered under this policy, but I must tell you that the administration, police and all the other agencies have been very cooperative.

"They have helped us a lot and I really want to thank them. It has been really very supportive," Khan added.

The 56-year-old actor also thanked the people of the valley for showering them with love.

"I want to thank the people the most. The people here are as much beautiful as Kashmir is. We have been showered so much love, this place is so much beautiful that we will want to come back here again and again and hug you. It is really wonderful," Khan, who is in the valley with his mother, sisters, ex-wife Kiran Rao and her parents, said.

studded event here on Thursday in the presence of Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan and filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, aims at establishing Jammu and Kashmir as the first choice of film shooting destination for filmmakers.

The officials said the policy has been worked out to promote the overall growth of the film industry in the Union Territory, setting up of the Jammu and Kashmir Film Development Council and providing hands on access to website for talent pool and all shooting destinations. They said it will also facilitate the development of shoot-

incentives for filmmakers coming to the UT, the officials said.

Speaking at the launch event, Sinha said it was a historic day for Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the government is creating a vibrant film ecosystem to make the region the film industry's favourite once again.

Among one of the best in the country, the new Film Policy will transform Jammu and Kashmir and revive its halcyon days of being a cinematographer's delight, he added.

"I invite filmmakers from across the world to come to J&K

Awareness Prog On WP&GWH Methods Held In Kulgam

KULGAM: IWMP Kulgam Friday organised a day long awareness programme on Water Preservation & Ground water Harvesting methods here at mini-secretariat Kulgam. The programme was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din-Bhat. Present on the occasion were ADDC, ADC, Project Manager IWMP, ACR, ACP, Tehsildar Headquarter and other officers.

Director Planning, Higher Education Visits IUST

Awantipora: Director Planning, Department of Higher Education J&K, GM Ganie visited Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST) on Friday. He took stock of various developmental projects undertaken by the University under CAPEX, RUSA and Language Projects. Registrar IUST Prof. Naseer Iqbal while welcoming the Director informed him about the progress made by the University on the academic as well as on the infrastructural front.

Prof. Naseer gave a detailed account of various ongoing projects at the campus. Director Planning while lauding the efforts and contribution of entire IUST fraternity for the growth and development of the University, expressed hope that the University shall continue to grow in future as well.

HED Faculty Asked Not To Participate In DD, AIR Programs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Higher Education Department (HED) has asked its faculty members not to participate in Doordarshan and All India Radio programmes without obtaining prior permission.

"It has been brought to the notice of Higher Education Department that certain Faculty Members are participating in Doordarshan and all India Radio programmes instead of performing their legitimate duties, which is a stark violation of rules and standing instructions of the

Government issued from time to time. The matter has been viewed seriously," a communiqué of the department read.

The Department has impressed upon all the Faculty Members of Higher Education Department to resist this practice in Doordarshan and all India Radio programmes without prior permission of the department.

It further reads that non compliance shall be construed as willful insubordination and action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against the defaulter.



Congress Parliamentary Panel Likely To Visit Kashmir, Ladakh

Observer News Service

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel chaired by leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is likely to visit Kashmir and Ladakh on a five-day trip, sources said on Friday.

According to them, this will be the first visit by parliamentarians of various parties, including the opposition, after the abrogation of Article 370 provisions.

Members of the Public Accounts Committee will visit Srinagar, Drass, Kargil and Leh during the trip, sources said.

Sources in the panel said the members will visit Kargil on August 15 and will celebrate Independence day by hoisting the national flag.

They are expected to review the high-altitude clothing and food provided to personnel of the armed forces deployed in the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh region.

Also, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, chaired by Congress leader Anand Sharma, is scheduled to visit Kashmir and Leh starting August 17.

Dir Tourism Flags Off Tour Operators Group To Gurez

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G N Ittoo Friday flagged off a group of travel operators to Gurez for a familiarisation visit.

The group of travel operators would visit the Gurez valley to make an on the spot assessment of the tourist potential particularly adventure tourism and identify recreational spots for the visitors.

Interacting with the group of travel operators, the Director said

the familiarisation visit is part of the Department's effort to identify and explore hidden and unexplored areas of Kashmir. He said already the Department is promoting lesser known destinations so that tourists get varied choices and products.

The members of the group, on the occasion, hoped that their visit would help them in promoting Kashmir in general and Gurez in particular among the tourists.

Senior officers of the Department were present on the occasion.

Special Sanitation Drive Conducted At Shopian

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: A special sanitation drive conducted by District Administration Shopian under Swachhta Pakhwada was Friday kick started by Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya in presence of Senior Superintendent of Police Shopian, Amrit Paul Singh at Shopian.

The rally headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Simnani along with Tehsildar Shopian, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Committee Shopian, Chief Education Officer, District Youth Services and Sports Officer, District Information Offi-

cer, Municipal Councilors, Civil and Police officers passed through various Bazaars of Shopian with an aim to keep the environment neat and clean.

The theme of the drive was "Plastic Free Shopian" by ensuring complete ban on polythene and single use plastic in the district being celebrated upto 15th August under which a host of cleanliness activities are being organised to promote cleanliness across all vulnerable locations in the district, dedicated to specific areas viz. premises, depots, residential colonies, site offices and construction sites etc. for carrying out these cleaning and sanitation activities.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE KASHMIR

Old Secretariat, Srinagar-190001,
Phone No. 0194-24950499, e-mail; dirswkmr@gmail.com

Subject:- Online verification and submission of hard copies of Scholarship Applications under State Portal viz:- jk.gov.in/jkeservices for the year 2021-22 –(OBC,EBC,PCP & DNT) regarding.

C I R C U L A R

It is for the information of Students/Heads of schools/Colleges/Universities that as per notification for submission of online scholarship applications under the scheme Post-matric Scholarship for OBC/EBC/PCP & DNT's categories on State Portal viz: jk.gov.in/jkeservices for the year 2021-22 is 14 Aug 2021.

Persual of online record reveals that more than 10,000 applications have been submitted till date. In order to process these applications for grant of sanction, it is mandatory for students to submit hard copies of application forms to Institutes. The Institutes after duly verifying the details entered by the student submit it to concerned District Social Welfare Officer who return after 2nd level verification sends these applications (both online and offline) to Directorate of Social Welfare Kashmir for accord of sanction.

Keeping in view huge quantum of applications received in this financial year it is enjoined upon all Institute level Nodal Officers and District Social Welfare Officers to forward the hard copies to the next level (viz District Social Welfare Officer and Directorate of Social Welfare Kashmir respectively) within 02 days from the date of receipt to enable this office to scrutinize and finally sanction scholarships in favour of eligible students within stipulated time.

Sd/-
(Bashir Ahmad Dar), KAS
Director General,
Social Welfare Department Kashmir

No:- DSWK/Sch/2021/3398-3458

Dated:- 04. 08. 2021

DIPK-6028/21

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL FORESTRY KASHMIR C I R C U L A R

In pursuance to the Hon'ble High Court J&K Order dated: 23-07-2020 passed in PIL No. 5/2020 titled Court on its own motion V/s Union Territory of J&K and as per the recommendation of the Committee constituted vide Govt. Order No. 470-JK(GAD) of 2020 dated:14-04-2020, it is impressed upon all Divisional Forest Officers, Social Forestry Divisions Kashmir Region to get the all private Nurseries associated with raising of poplars registered immediately with the Department on priority basis in order to ensure that only male poplar clones are propagated in such nurseries to overcome the cotton menace in future for which the Advisory stands already issued through print and electronic media and involvement of local Administration is mandatory to impose ban on planting of female poplars as well as their raising in private nurseries.

Besides, all the Divisional Forest Officers, Social Forestry Divisions Kashmir Region shall ensure the involvement of VPPCs for getting these private nurseries registered immediately to implement the Hon'ble High Court order dated 23-07-2020 in letter and spirit and report the compliance within fifteen (15) days.

Sd/-
Regional Director
Department of Social Forestry
Kashmir

DIPK-6057/21

No. DFO/SF/ANG/2021-22/691
Dated:- 04-08-2021

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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NO HOLDS BARRED



Empires are lucrative business for imperialists, while bringing only indignity and misery to those they conquer. Afghanistan is the graveyard of tens of thousands of innocent Afghans who perished over the last two decades - and a resounding success for American militarism in the region and beyond

Indian Job Market on Snail's Pace

Muhammad Waseem Bhat

The crux of the problem is the shortage of 'good jobs' that have high labour productivity and therefore provide decent incomes. Such jobs are largely to be found in the organized sector, while most workers are bottled up in the unorganized sector. In the absence of social security, households accept any employment if no quality jobs are available. This leads to low wages and no severance pay. While public discussions on jobs have increased, discussions on labour reforms have not been taken up with equal vigour

India's challenge on employment is getting tougher and tougher. Employment is now regarded by many as the central long-term challenge facing the country. India has a low labour force participation rate (LFPR) by world standards. LFPR is defined as the number of persons looking for a job as a proportion of the working age population (age group 15-59). As per International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates, the world LFPR was around 61.8% in 2018 whereas the corresponding number for India is just 53.7%. In 2015-16, the LFPR for males in India was 75.5%, while that for females was a meagre 27.4%. As per World Bank's released South Asia Economic Focus report titled "Jobless growth?", India's employment rate is 50% which is significantly lower than the expected rate of about 60%. Further, the ILO report says that the number of workers in vulnerable forms of employment (own-account workers and contributing family workers) is likely to increase in the years to come. Vulnerable labour includes self-employed family workers who are typically engaged in informal work and lack social security.

Let us now elaborate on the issue. Vulnerable employment is often characterized by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine workers' fundamental rights. In India, a significant proportion of the jobs created in the services sector over the past couple of decades have been in traditional low value-added services, where informality and vulnerable forms of employment are often dominant.

Similarly, the rapid growth of ICT services in recent years in some emerging countries, notably India, have not generated enough employment opportunities for the large majority of the population. In India, for example, the share of informal employment has risen within almost all manufacturing industries, partly as a result of labour market rigidities preventing modern manufacturing from creating employment opportunities. Hence, the quality of jobs is a critical part about the employment challenge.

The crux of the problem is the shortage of 'good jobs' that have high labour productivity and therefore provide decent incomes. Such jobs are largely to be found in the organized sector, while most workers are bottled up in the unorganized sector. In the absence of social security, households accept any employment if no quality jobs are available. This leads to low wages and no severance pay. While public discussions on jobs have increased, discussions on labour reforms have not been taken up with equal vigour.

Sticky labour laws and a difficult business environment have led to employers shifting their new hiring in favour of contract labour where social security is much lesser. Hence, the focus should be on how to increase employment for low-skilled workers in the organized sector. We need to raise quality jobs, the social security offered and at the same time we need to improve labour laws to ensure that markets allocate labour efficiently. This will, in true sense, promote inclusive growth in the country.

So what can the policymakers do to revive job growth?

Special packages are needed for labour-intensive industries to create jobs. There are a number



Credits: AFP

of labour intensive manufacturing sectors in India such as food processing, leather and footwear, wood manufacturers and furniture, textiles and apparel and garments. The nature of the package will need to be individually designed for each sector defined as quickly as possible.

Additionally, an export promotion programme focusing exclusively on labour-intensive exports is needed for India to expand in the global value chains. Export markets are the major source of demand for labour-intensive products.

There is also the need to address infrastructure and credit constraints, land-acquisition constraints, skill constraints, and the numerous bureaucratic obstacles that deter the growth of firms, particularly the small labour-intensive firms that numerically dominate industry and services.

Moreover, a major factor underlying the weak demand for low-skilled labour in the organized sector is India's labour laws and regulations, which are some of the most rigid in the world. For any firm that employs more than a hundred workers, the Industrial Disputes Act makes retrenchment of jobs legally impossible without prior government permission. The Act makes even flexible redeployment of labour within an enterprise very difficult. One legal way round is to employ contract labour. But contract labour leads to poor-quality jobs. Moreover, the Contract Labour Act prohibits the employment of contract labour in 'core' activities.

Labour market reform would be possible only if it was negotiated with trade unions as part of a deal that includes more generous severance benefits, a better overall safety net, and more effective schemes for job-search and training, in other words, some strengthening of income security in exchange for some weakening of extreme job security. In the Union Budget 2017-18, the government announced that legislative reforms will be undertaken to simplify, rationalise and amalgamate the existing labour laws into 4 Codes on (i) wages; (ii) industrial relations; (iii) social security and welfare; and (iv) safety and working conditions.

Investment by the government always creates many jobs. Thus, an engagement between the Urban Development and MSME Ministries is necessary as it will attract more investment to industrial clusters, which is where most non-agricultural jobs are.

Additionally, as reflected by the low female labour force participation rate, there is a strong need for creating jobs for women across all sectors. Promoting entrepreneurship by women will have a multiplier effect on employment creation.

India has one of the youngest populations in an aging world. By 2022, the median age in India will be just 28, compared to 37 in China and Europe, and 49 in Japan. Demographics can change the pace and pattern of economic growth. Investing more and more efficiently in people will enable India to tap into its demographic dividend and prepare the country for the future. There is a powerful link between these investments and economic growth, stability and security. Investing in people through healthcare, quality education, jobs and skills helps build human capital, which is key to supporting economic growth, ending extreme poverty, and creating more inclusive societies. Human capital is now the fastest-growing component of India's wealth. There is a desperate need to boost employment in both formal and informal sectors in India. The experience of countries that managed to transform rapidly, such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and China, shows that the manufacturing sector and the ability to compete in the vast global marketplace hold the key to the creation of well-paid jobs for low and semi-skilled workers. With its large workforce and competitive wages, India can become a hub for manufacturing industries and thus create employment opportunities.

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

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US President Joe Biden's announcement of a military withdrawal from Afghanistan after two decades of invasion and occupation has generated predictable reactions. The cliched succession of articles by both liberal and reactionary commentators declaring that the US miserably failed in Afghanistan totally misses the point.

They presume, historical facts be damned, that the point of this invasion and occupation was to bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan, to defeat the Taliban, to destroy al-Qaeda, and to ensure democratic rule in a Muslim country. These are all delusional assumptions.

Successive US administrations, from Bush, through Obama and Trump, down to Biden, never had any such objectives. The US has spectacularly succeeded in doing precisely what it intended: to flex its military muscles, test its newest weaponry and warfare tactics, assert its global hegemony, and manoeuvre its regional strategic position against Russia and China.

The gaudy and gauche notion that the US went to Afghanistan in order to defeat the Taliban, eradicate al-Qaeda, and secure peace and prosperity for the Afghan people is just too puerile to entertain. Why would the US do anything like that?

Over the last four years, under the Trump administration, the US has been exposed for the corrupt and dysfunc-

tional racist oligarchy that it has always been. In a country where the very foundations of public education are crumbling for both boys and girls, why would the state care about the education of Afghan girls - a cliched card still flashed by the (neo)con artists?

We must understand why the US invaded Afghanistan in the first place, before we judge it a success or failure.

Asymmetrical warfare

For decades Central Asia has been the prize of US imperial strategists. The events of 9/11 were an excuse and a subterfuge for the US to flex its military prowess and reconfigure its strategic options of asymmetrical warfare in post-Soviet Central Asia. Neither Afghanistan, nor indeed the Taliban, were ever the primary issues; they were the smokescreen.

What happened to Afghanistan during the US occupation, or what will happen to Afghans now that the US has left

and the Taliban are on the move to recapture the territories they lost, is not of the slightest concern to American strategists or their imperial priorities.

China is rising as a major economic and military threat; Russia is always a menace; North Korea is a pain in the neck; and Iran is misbehaving around the US's favourite settler-colony. These are the main and overriding issues for the US. As for Afghanistan, why should they care? The fate of 40 million human beings left at the non-existent mercy of the malignant fanaticism of the Taliban is entirely irrelevant in such calculations.

Both Biden and former US President Donald Trump have had other domestic and regional priorities, perhaps at odds with each other's politics, but identical when it comes to the calamitous consequences for Afghanistan. The same is true about former presidents Barack Obama and George W Bush, now close family friends: Obama continued the strategic ex-

pansions and drone-driven enhancements of the Bush administration.

The primary target of the criminal atrocities of both al-Qaeda and the Taliban were always Muslims in general, and Afghans in particular. The spectacular lunacy of 9/11 was a sideshow - a deadly visual performance to project power they never had. Spectacular acts of suicidal violence are terrorising signs of desperation and weakness.

'Mission accomplished'

As for general public opinion, Americans grew weary of the Afghanistan war long ago. The 9/11 anniversary itself has become a series of boring and banal events, the attacks having served their purpose of drumming up justification for the US "war on terror". Bush was absolutely right when, aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier in May 2003, he triumphantly declared: "Mission accomplished!" He was referring to the Iraq

war, but he might as well have been talking about Afghanistan.

Empires are lucrative business for imperialists, while bringing only indignity and misery to those they conquer

Today, Biden has huge domestic responsibilities on his hands, and he does not want to be bothered with Afghanistan anymore. What the US has gained from its massive expenditure in the region is invisible to the naked eye - a matter of "national security," and most certainly not an attempt to bring peace and prosperity and (God forbid) "democracy" to Afghans.

The US today is perfectly willing and able to dismantle democracy at home. It is not in any moral or political position to take democracy anywhere else.

The US adventure in Afghanistan turned the most educated and capable Afghans into collaborators with conquering military forces, and they are now running for their lives - and the US could not care less. Empires are a lucrative business for imperialists, while bringing only indignity and misery to those they conquer.

Afghanistan is the graveyard of tens of thousands of innocent Afghans who perished over the last two decades - and a resounding success for American militarism in the region and beyond.

Middle East Eye

Facebookify the World?

The current version of Facebook may increase your ability to connect to other people and communities. But at the same time it limits how you connect to them: features such as six preset “reactions” to posts and content chosen by invisible algorithms shape the entire experience

Nick Kelly

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg recently announced the tech giant will shift from being a social media company to becoming “a metaverse company”, functioning in an “embodied internet” that blends real and virtual worlds more than ever before.

So what is “the metaverse”? It sounds like the kind of thing billionaires talk about to earn headlines, like Tesla chief Elon Musk spruiking “pizza joints” on Mars. Yet given almost three billion people use Facebook each month, Zuckerberg’s suggestion of a change of direction is worth some attention.

The term “metaverse” isn’t new, but it has recently seen a surge in popularity and speculation about what this all might mean in practice.

The idea of the metaverse is useful and it’s likely to be with us for some time. It’s a concept worth understanding even if, like me, you are critical of the future its proponents suggest.

The metaverse: a name whose time has come?

Humans have developed many technologies to trick our senses, from audio speakers and televisions to interactive video games and virtual reality, and in future we may develop tools to trick our other senses such as touch and smell. We have many words for these technologies, but as yet no popular word that refers to the totality of the mash-up of old-fashioned reality (the physical world) and our fabricated extensions to reality (the virtual world).

Words like “the internet” and “cyberspace” have come to be associated with places we access through screens. They don’t quite capture the steady interweaving of the internet with virtual realities (such as 3D game worlds or virtual cities) and augmented reality (such as navigation overlays or Pokémon GO).

Just as important, the old names don’t capture the new social relationships, sensory experiences and economic behaviours that are emerging along with these extensions to the virtual. For example, Upland mashes together a virtual reflection of our world with non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and property markets.

Facebook’s announcement speaks to its attempts to envision what social media within the metaverse might look like.

It also helps that “metaverse” is a poetic term. Academics have been writing about a similar idea under the name of “extended reality” for years, but it’s a rather dull name.

“Metaverse”, coined by science fiction writer Neal Stephenson in his 1992 novel Snow Crash, has a lot more romantic appeal. Writers have a habit



of recognising trends in need of naming: “cyberspace” comes from a 1982 book by William Gibson; “robot” is from a 1920 play by Karel apek.

Recent neologisms such as “the cloud” or the “Internet of Things” have stuck with us precisely because they are handy ways to refer to technologies that were becoming increasingly important. The metaverse sits in this same category.

Who benefits from the metaverse?

If you spend too long reading about big tech companies like Apple, Facebook, Google and Microsoft, you might end up feeling advances in technology (like the rise of the metaverse) are inevitable. It’s hard not to then start thinking about how these new technologies will shape our society, politics and culture, and how we might fit into that future.

This idea is called “technological determinism”: the sense that advances in technology shape our social relations, power relations, and culture, with us as mere passengers. It leaves out the fact that in a democratic society we have a say in how all of this plays out.

For Facebook and other large corporations, determined to embrace the “next big thing” before their competitors, the metaverse is exciting because it presents an opportunity for new markets, new kinds of social network, new consumer electronics and

new patents.

What’s not so clear is why you or I would be excited by all this.

A familiar story

In the mundane world, most of us are grappling with things like a pandemic, a climate emergency, and mass human-induced species extinction. We are struggling to understand what a good life looks like with technology we’ve already adopted (mobile devices, social media and global connectivity are linked to many unwanted effects such as anxiety and stress).

So why would we get excited about tech companies investing untold billions in new ways to distract us from the everyday world that gives us air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink?

Metaverse-style ideas might help us organise our societies more productively. Shared standards and protocols that bring disparate virtual worlds and augmented realities into a single, open metaverse could help people work together and cut down on duplication of effort.

In South Korea, for example, a “metaverse alliance” is working to persuade companies and government to work together to develop an open national VR platform. A big part of this is finding ways to blend smartphones, 5G networks, augmented reality, virtual currencies and social networks to solve problems for society (and, more cynically, make profits).

Similar claims for sharing and collaboration were made in the early days of the internet. But over time the early promise was swept aside by the dominance of large platforms and surveillance capitalism.

The internet has been wildly successful in connecting people all around the world to one another and functioning as a kind of modern Library of Alexandria to house vast stores of knowledge. Yet it has also increased the privatisation of public spaces, invited advertising into every corner of our lives, tethered us to a handful of giant companies more powerful than many countries, and led to the virtual world consuming the physical world via environmental damage.

Beyond the one-world world

The deeper problems with the metaverse are about the kind of worldview it would represent.

In one worldview, we can think of ourselves as passengers inside a singular reality that is like a container for our lives. This view is probably familiar to most readers, and it also describes what you see on something like Facebook: a “platform” that exists independently of any of its users.

In another worldview, which sociologists suggest is common in Indigenous cultures, each of us creates the reality that we live in through what we do. Practices such as work and rituals connect people, land, life and spirituality, and together create reality.

A key problem with the former view is that it leads to a “one-world world”: a reality that does not permit other realities. This is what we see already on existing platforms.

The current version of Facebook may increase your ability to connect to other people and communities. But at the same time it limits how you connect to them: features such as six preset “reactions” to posts and content chosen by invisible algorithms shape the entire experience. Similarly, a game like PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds (with more than 100 million active users) allows limitless possibilities for how a game might play out – but defines the rules by which the game can be played.

The idea of a metaverse, by shifting even more of our lives onto a universal platform, extends this problem to a deeper level. It offers us limitless possibility to overcome the constraints of the physical world; yet in doing so, only replaces them with constraints imposed by what the metaverse will allow.

*By arrangement with
the Conversation*

The Political Lessons of COVID-19

LUIGI ZINGALES

CHICAGO – If an evil mind were to engineer the perfect virus to wipe out an animal species, it would choose the optimal combination of transmissibility and infection fatality rate. But to eliminate humanity, the evil mind would have to develop a virus capable of neutralizing human responses to it – not just individual responses (which are insufficient to deal with a pandemic) but collective ones, too. A perfectly engineered killer virus thus would be able to exploit the inefficiencies in our collective decision-making. As it happens, that is what the SARS-CoV-2 virus appears to have achieved.

If we do not believe in intelligent design, we should not believe in evil design either. Still, Darwinian evolution tells us that survival pressure will eventually generate more effective viruses. Many new viruses have jumped from animals to humans, but none in the last 100 years was as devastating as SARS-CoV-2.

Yes, COVID-19 is less lethal than Ebola and less infectious than the common cold. When the more lethal Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) first appeared in 2012, it was contained and largely eliminated within the space of just a few months. Why, then, has COVID-19 proved so elusive? Because it plays to the weaknesses of our institutions. And in so doing, it provides a useful lesson in what we must fix in order to tackle future existential threats.

For starters, the coronavirus’s exponential progression challenges the reactive nature of democratic institutions. Just as it took the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to drag the United States into World War II, it took the collapse of Lehman Brothers to prompt the US government to organize a response to the global financial crisis. “The Americans,” according to a quotation often misattributed to Winston Churchill,



“can always be trusted to do the right thing, once all other possibilities have been exhausted.”

This strategy works well in a linear context, but it is extremely risky in an exponential one, where doing the “right thing” may be much more difficult when the response is delayed. Though all viruses tend to grow exponentially if left unchecked, the asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic spread of COVID-19 made it much more difficult to handle.

Difficult, but not impossible. Nowadays, we have the technology to track people’s movements and interactions, but liberal democracies generally do not want to use it. A Catholic media site was recently able to trace the sexual escapades of a high-ranking priest simply by using commercially available cell-phone data. Google and Facebook can do just about anything to target their ads. Yet,

in a democracy, the same technologies seem to be not available to save lives.

The unequal effects of COVID-19 throughout the population also are very effective at weakening the political response to it. Mounting a collective response would have been easier if the mortality rate was similar across age groups; but it isn’t. Until the Delta variant emerged, a twenty-something was more likely to be struck by lightning than to die of COVID-19. By contrast, for an octogenarian, the COVID-19 fatality rate approaches that of smallpox.

An effective common response to the pandemic requires a shared sense of belonging. For example, Americans who benefited from New Deal welfare programs in the 1930s were more willing to enroll as volunteers in World War II. But many young people today feel increasingly marginalized in the

economy, and hold older generations responsible for their plight. Should we be surprised that they are so unwilling to sacrifice the best years of their lives to protect the old?

Although Asia’s more collectivist societies did much better than many Western countries in combating the first phase of the pandemic, they fared less well in developing and securing enough doses of COVID-19 vaccines. This underscores the fact that vaccine development depends on scientific capabilities, not those of political institutions. Unsurprisingly, the most scientifically advanced countries, including the US, the United Kingdom, Germany, and China, were at the forefront of the vaccine research and development effort.

COVID-19’s asymptomatic spread and markedly varied lethality across demographic groups would have been

bad enough on its own. But the problem has been compounded horribly with the West’s broken media system, resulting in maximal confusion.

In the US, a foreign enemy could not have done a better job of spreading false rumors and hysteria about the virus, especially in the early phases of the pandemic when a collective response would have been most effective. How many times did we hear the phrase “it’s just a flu,” and not only on social media? On February 26, 2020, a month after Wuhan had been locked down, the Journal of the American Medical Association was still comparing COVID-19 to the flu. As a recent interview with Dominic Cummings, the former chief adviser to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, revealed, this misinformation impaired decision-making at the highest level.

The coronavirus’s constant mutations could mean that the existing COVID-19 vaccines will be insufficient to eliminate the pandemic. The Indian government’s response (or lack thereof) to the virus greatly affected both that country and the rest of the world. If it is so difficult for the US to marshal a common response, developing one at the level of the United Nations seems impossible.

Commerce and communications may now be global, but governance is not. If we want to continue living in a global economy, we need to develop an effective system of global governance.

This is the biggest lesson from COVID-19. A global economy makes local problems global. Even if we can muddle through this pandemic, we cannot necessarily muddle through the next one – or through other problems like climate change, which also have an exponential and uneven impact and require global solutions. If we do not learn this lesson, our species deserves to become extinct.

Project Syndicate

BIG WIN FOR AMAZON OVER RIVAL RELIANCE IN INDIA TOP COURT BATTLE

India's Supreme Court blocks \$3.4-bn deal struck by Reliance as battle to dominate country's retail sector intensifies.

US e-commerce giant Amazon has won a major legal victory in India as the country's top court blocks a \$3.4bn deal struck by domestic rival Reliance.

Amazon, Walmart-backed Flipkart and Reliance, owned by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, are locked in a titanic battle to dominate online retail in the country of 1.3 billion people.

Reliance struck a deal last year to buy assets belonging to Future Retail, India's second-largest supermarket chain, owned by Future Group. The acquisition of Future Group, which owns some of India's best-known supermarket brands, such as Big Bazaar, would have strengthened Reliance's presence in the hugely competitive e-commerce sector.

Amazon, which owned a stake in one of Future Group's firms that reportedly included an option to buy into the flagship company, claimed that the Reliance deal amounted to a breach of contract.



The US online giant last year approached the Singapore International Arbitration Centre which put the Reliance deal on hold after finding merit in Amazon's objections. Amazon said the arbitrator's order was binding, while Future contested its legality. On Friday the Supreme Court ruled that the order was valid. There was no immediate comment from Reliance or Amazon.

Amazon, owned by the world's richest man Jeff Bezos, has pledged \$6.5bn in investment in India, according to Bloomberg News. Flipkart, which Walmart bought a majority stake in for \$16bn in 2018, recently garnered \$3.6bn in the country's largest fundraising at a valuation of nearly \$38bn, Bloomberg said.

Future Group founder Kishore Biyani was once known as India's retail king, but he has struggled in recent years as the coronavirus pandemic dealt a heavy blow to his empire.

Reliance's shares fell more than 2 percent in Mumbai.

Digital currency model likely by the end of year: RBI Deputy Governor

India is thinking of a phased introduction of digital currency, says Rabi Sankar

Agencies

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expects to come out with a model for operations of fiat digital currencies by the end of the year,

while the Bank of England and the US Federal Reserve are also looking at it.

"It will be difficult to pin a date on it (introducing DC). We should be able to come out with a model in the near future, prob-

ably by the end of this year,"

Speaking at the same press conference, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das made it clear that the central bank continues to have concerns with the private DCs that are not



Deputy Governor T. Rabi Sankar said on Friday. He reiterated that the RBI is internally evaluating the possibility of introducing a fiat digital currency, going into a slew of aspects like its scope, technology, distribution mechanism and validation mechanism.

In a July 22 speech, Sankar had said that India is also thinking for a phased introduction of a digital currency saying the time for them is now. China has already started a trial run for its digital

ably by the end of this year," Sankar told reporters at the post-policy review press conference.

In the July 22 speech, Sankar had said that such currency is likely to be in the arsenal of every central bank going forward and setting up such a system will require a nuanced approach. Work on the central bank DC has been on for many years now, which have seen a massive popularity gained by private cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, which are based

regulated and has conveyed

the same to the government. Meanwhile, he said an expert panel tasked with studying the digital lenders following instances of suicides by borrowers is in the final stages and will be submitting its report by the end of this month. Once the report is received, the RBI will be studying the same and take appropriate action based on the recommendations, Das added.

Covid-19 3rd wave may pull GDP growth down to 7%: Abhijit Banerjee

Agencies

Nobel laureate economist Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee on Thursday apprehended that the impending third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic might adversely impact the GDP, and its growth rate might go down to 7 per cent, even below the IMF's recent projection of 9.5 per cent. Banerjee, who heads West Bengal's Global Advisory Board (GAB) and advises the state government on issues related to the pandemic, said that boosting the state's economy is directly related to the revival of the country's economy as it is under stress due to the ongoing pandemic situation.

"The economy is going slow due to the COVID situation. Earlier the IMF had said GDP growth would be 12.5 per cent. Now it is saying it would be 9.5 per cent. I apprehend it might go down to 7 per cent. Another wave will decrease it further. If the country's economy does not improve, the state will not be able to move forward alone," he said.

Last month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut its economic growth forecast for India to 9.5 per cent for the fiscal year to March 31, 2022, as the onset of a severe second COVID-19 wave cut into recovery momentum.

This forecast for 2021-22 is lower than the 12.5 per cent growth in GDP that IMF had projected in April before the second wave took a grip. For 2022-23, IMF expects economic growth of 8.5 per cent,

higher than the 6.9 per cent it had projected in April.

"But I apprehend it may drop to 6 per cent to 7 per cent at the end. I can't give it in writing. But if another wave hits, it may drop further. I hope it doesn't happen," he said.

Banerjee said that the economy of West Bengal is also connected with the country. "If the country's



economy does not improve, Bengal alone will not be able to do anything. If the economy of the whole country is active, it will have an impact. "Many Bengalis work in other states. A lot of income comes from migrants. We cannot solve this problem alone. When the coun-

try's economy opens, that will pull us. The state government is certainly trying to help, but the problem will be solved only when the country's economy recovers," Banerjee said. The noted economist said that the Centre should be more into free-spending policies like other economies of Europe and the US rather than being more concerned about balancing the deficit and the budget. "The (union) government has a fiscal problem, and it may have more faith in balancing the budget than free-spending policies. The government is trying to use the one instrument it has as other forms of tax collection are not necessarily keeping pace, given the economy is slow. It is using this to balance the budget," he said when asked to react to the Centre's decision to increase cess on various items, including fuel, from time to time in the last year.

Lok Sabha passes bill to end all retrospective taxation

New Delhi, Aug 6 (PTI) A bill that aims to end all retrospective taxation imposed on indirect transfer of Indian assets was passed by the Lok Sabha on Friday amidst continuous protests by opposition over the alleged snooping through the Pegasus spyware and other issues.

When the "The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021" would be passed by Rajya Sabha too, all tax demands made on companies like Cairn Energy and Vodafone using a 2012 legislation on indirect transfer of Indian assets prior to May 28, 2012 will be withdrawn.

The Union Finance Minister described the 2012 legislation as "bad in law and bad for the investors' sentiments".

Rajendra Agrawal, who was in the chair, declared the bill passed after clause-wise discussions of the bill and a brief statement by Sitharaman.

The finance minister said there were 17 litigations due to the retrospective tax law and even the Supreme Court had said in 2012 that the tax could not be levied for the indirect transfer of shares of foreign companies.

"The bill has been brought as a clarification," she said.

Sitharaman said in 2014, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had made a commitment to set up a high powered committee to look into the provisions of the 2012 law as the NDA government did not believe in retrospective taxes.

Jaitley had said that the present government did not believe in retrospective taxes but the law could not be amended at that time as there were court cases, she said. The finance minister said once the lawsuits were settled in September and December 2020, the government

had started consultations with various stakeholders, including the Law Ministry.

"Now we have come up with this bill at the next available opportunity. We are fulfilling the words given in this august house by former finance minister Jaitley and the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought the bill," she said.

"It is also proposed to refund the amount paid in these cases without any interest thereon," the bill said. The refund could be around Rs 8,100 crore, which was collected by enforcing the 2012 law. Besides creating uncertainty in minds of investors, the retrospective taxes have in recent months been overturned by international arbitration tribunals in two high profile cases -- UK telecom giant Vodafone Group and oil producer Cairn Energy.

In the case of Cairn Energy, the tribunal had asked the Indian government to return the value of the shares it had seized and sold, tax refund withheld and dividend confiscated to enforce the retrospective tax demand.

With the government refusing to honour the award, Cairn Energy PLC moved court in the US to seize assets of Air India. It got an order from a French court to freeze 20 Indian properties in Paris to recover USD 1.2 billion-plus interest and penalties.

The move clubbed India with nations such as Pakistan and Venezuela that have faced similar actions by entities seeking enforcement of awards. Finance Secretary T V Somanathan had said a total of Rs 8,100 crore was collected using the retrospective tax legislation. Of this, Rs 7,900 crore was from Cairn Energy alone. This money will be repaid.

RBI keeps key rates intact, maintains accommodative stance

Agencies

Mumbai: To protect the nascent economic recovery, the Reserve Bank of India retained its key short-term lending rates during the third monetary policy review of FY22. Besides, the growth-oriented accommodative stance was retained to give a push to economic activity despite high retail inflation levels. Accordingly, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das pointed out that any departure from the present pro-growth monetary policy stance might "kill the nascent and hesitant recovery."

He reiterated RBI's priority to "promote growth within the framework of financial stability."

Consequently, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the central bank unanimously voted to maintain the repo rate, or short-term lending rate, for commercial banks, at 4 per cent.

Likewise, the reverse repo rate was kept unchanged at 3.35 per

cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the 'Bank Rate' at 4.25 per cent.

It was widely expected that MPC would hold rates and the accommodative stance.

Furthermore, the RBI retained the FY22 projection for real GDP growth at 9.5 per cent on the back of receding impact of Covid second wave as well as rising vaccinations. According to Das, economy is recovering from set back from the Covid's second wave.

He said that accelerated vaccination drive along with, buoyant exports and monetary as well as fiscal support has aided recovery.

As per RBI's assessment, private and government consumption, investment coupled with demand are on path of recovery.

He cited the strong external demand as opportunity for India.

However, India's benchmark indices traded in the red ed right after the RBI MPC resolution was released.

No change in fuel prices in almost 3 weeks

Agencies

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies (OMC) continue to pause fuel price revision for the 20th consecutive day on Friday as a wait and watch policy continues amid fluctuating global crude prices.

Global crude prices have swung in



all directions in July starting with a low of \$70 a barrel to quickly breaching to \$77 a barrel, and then fall below \$70 a barrel to crossing \$75 a barrel later in the month.

The oil prices have softened again to just over \$70 a barrel on concerns of growing Covid cases, slowing industrial recovery globally and rising US oil inventory.

With no price increase by OMCs, in the national capital, petrol con-

tinued to sell at Rs 101.84 per litre, while diesel was unchanged at Rs 89.87 a litre on Friday.

The pump price of fuel has been static since July 18.

In the city of Mumbai, where petrol prices crossed the Rs 100-mark for the first time ever on May 29, the fuel price is at Rs 107.83 per litre. Diesel prices in the financial capital is at Rs 97.45, the highest among metros.

Petrol prices in all the metros have now crossed Rs 100 per litre mark. In Chennai, petrol is selling for Rs 102.49 a litre and in Kolkata Rs 101.08 a litre. Diesel is also price at Rs 94.39 and Rs 93.02 per litre in both cities, respectively.

The price pause came after fuel prices increased on 41 days in the current financial year. The 41 increases took petrol prices up by Rs 11.44 per litre in Delhi. Similarly, diesel have increased by Rs 9.14 per litre in the national capital.

Prices of both auto fuels reduced only once in April by 16 and 14 paise per litre, respectively. Diesel prices were also reduced by 16 paise per litre in Delhi on July 12.

Since April 2020, petrol prices have increased by Rs 32.25 per litre from Rs 69.59 a litre to Rs 101.84 a litre in Delhi. Similarly, diesel prices during the same period increased by Rs 27.58 per litre from Rs 62.29 to Rs 89.87 a litre in the national capital.

Xiaomi becomes world's top smartphone brand in June 2021: Counterpoint

Agencies

Xiaomi for the first time has surpassed Samsung and Apple to become the number one smartphone brand in the world in June, a Counterpoint Research showed on Thursday. Xiaomi's sales grew 26 per cent (month-on-month) in June, making it the fastest-growing brand for the month.

Xiaomi was also the number two brand globally for Q2 2021 in terms of sales, and cumulatively, has sold close to 800 million smartphones since its inception in 2011, according to Counterpoint Research's Monthly Market Pulse Service.

"Ever since the decline of Huawei commenced, Xiaomi has been making consistent and aggressive efforts to fill the gap created by this decline. The OEM has been expanding in Huawei's and HONOR's legacy markets like China, Europe, Middle East and Africa," said Research Director Tarun Pathak. "In June, Xiaomi was further helped by China, Europe and India's recovery and Samsung's decline due to supply constraints," he added. China's market grew 16 per cent (MoM) in June driven by the 618 festival. "Xiaomi was the fastest grow-

ing OEM, riding on its aggressive offline expansion in lower-tier cities and solid performance of its Redmi 9, Redmi Note 9 and the Redmi K series," said Senior Analyst Varun Mishra, commenting on the China market and Samsung supply constraints.



At the same time, due to a fresh wave of Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam, Samsung's production was disrupted in June, which resulted in the brand's devices facing shortages across channels. "Xiaomi, with its strong mid-range portfolio and wide market coverage, was the biggest beneficiary from the short-term gap left by Samsung's A series," Mishra added. --IANS

Karache Opens In Srinagar's Downtown

Offers Elegant Pakistani Suits, Bridal Dresses In Wide Range Of Colours, Prices



Srinagar: Karache, a designer boutique offering a wide range of wedding dresses was inaugurated on Friday in Gajwara locality of the Old City.

The boutique started by a young woman entrepreneur Syed Zaneb has a vast collection of Pakistani designer suits and wedding dresses, including Lehengas available in a wide range of colors and prices. The bridal dresses are tagged at different prices ranging from Rs 2000 to Rs 10,000. Zaneb, a B.Com pass out, was earlier associated with the hospitality industry. Her idea to start a venture of her own was to meet the growing demands of brides.

"Being a woman, I relate to the feelings and needs of the woman.

And when it is a special occasion like marriage, every bride wants to look gorgeous and. The new generation has a different choice. They want a blend of modesty and modernity in their attire," Zaneb says.

"Many brides go to Delhi and other cities of India for wedding shopping. This not only consumes their money but precious time as well. Our motive is to provide the brides with the best dresses that suit their persona and choices," she added.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by members of the business fraternity, respectable citizens of the market and eminent personalities, like Actor Mir Sarwar, RJs, and Shehla Arif.

Like Zainab, hundreds of wom-

en entrepreneurs have made a mark for themselves in a male dominated society and continue to inspire more and more women into business. Shehla Arif, a known bridal wear designer welcomes the entry of new comers like Zainab in the fast expanding fashion industry of Kashmir.

Renowned makeup artist Faiga Reshie, who was also present in the inauguration ceremony, said that Women entrepreneurs in Kashmir were carving out a niche for themselves in businesses.

"The success of a woman entrepreneur lies in wholeheartedly supporting other women who want to be financially independent," she said.

IAF Chief Flies Sortie In F-15 Fighter Jet In Israel

Agenceis

New Delhi: Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria flew a sortie in an F-15 fighter aircraft in Israel on Thursday apart from holding wide-ranging talks with his Israeli counterpart Maj Gen Amikam Norkin on further boosting bilateral military co-operation, officials said.

The Chief of Air Staff (CAS) reached Israel on Tuesday on a three-day visit from the United Arab Emirates.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Friday described Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria's visit to Israel as an "important milestone" in cooperation between air forces of the two countries.

"The visit of the CAS to Israel marks an important milestone in the Indian Air Force and the Israeli Air Force's ties, with both sides reaffirming a shared vision of enhanced bilateral engagements and multidisciplinary professional exchanges for the future," the IAF said.

It said the Chief of Air Staff flew a sortie in an F-15 fighter jet along with the commander of the Israeli Air Force.

He was given also given an overview of the Israeli Air Force's operational environment.

"The CAS had very productive meetings with Director General MoD (Ministry of Defence) and Chief of the Gen Staff on matters of mutual interest and bilateral defence cooperation," the IAF said in a statement.

As part of the visit, Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria, accompanied by Maj Gen Norkin, also visited the "Yad Vashem" and paid homage at the memorial, it said.

Yad Vashem is Israel's official memorial in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

"The Chiefs also laid wreaths at the Cemetery for Indian soldiers in Talpith, Jerusalem," the IAF said.

The defence and security co-operation between India and Israel has been on an upswing.

India is the largest buyer of Israel's military hardware. Israel has been supplying various weapon systems, missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles to India over the last few years but the transactions have largely remained behind the curtains.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh last month held a telephonic conversation with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Gantz.

Next 100 Days Crucial, Be Alert; Follow SOPs: LG



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Friday that next 100 days are crucial as per the experts and the need of the hour was to remain alert and vigilant and follow to Covid protocols to prevent the third wave of coronavirus.

"Next 100 days are crucial as per the experts' report. We need to be alert, vigilant and must adhere to Covid protocols to prevent the third wave," Sinha said, as per an official spokesperson.

The LG made these remarks while chairing the weekly meetings with members of Covid Task Force, Deputy Commissioners, and SsPs on present Covid scenario in the UT.

Emphasizing on reaching out to the maximum population to make them aware about the Covid related SoPs, the LG, as per the official spokesperson directed the Health and Information departments to come up with a comprehensive district-level plan for conducting IEC campaigns.

"Divisional Commissioners will monitor the implementation of awareness activities in their respective divisions," the LG said.

As per the official spokesperson, the LG asked the DCs and SsPs to rope in religious leaders and community heads for spreading awareness regarding adherence of Covid Appropriate Behaviour, besides

making informative announcements from religious places to create a sense of responsibility on the part of the general public to follow covid protocols and control the spread of the infection.

The LG, he said, also laid special emphasis on mobilizing the joint teams for effective enforcement on the ground and taking long-term solutions to mitigate the spread of Corona virus. Directions were passed to the DCs, SsP to ensure that no congregation takes place with more than 25 people.

On being informed that as many as 5,62,000 vaccine doses are available with J&K, the LG, as per the official spokesperson observed that availability of vaccines in such large numbers will go a long way in complementing the government's efforts to achieve the set target of covering 60% of our population by this month.

"Dedicated focus must be given on timely inoculation of 2nd dose, besides ensuring 100% coverage of the 18-44 age group with the first dose," Sinha said.

According to the official spokesperson, while assessing the surveillance activities being conducted in the districts, the LG directed the district administrations to scale up the surveillance exercises.

"Contact tracing must be done at a 1:15 ratio to break the spread chain of the virus," the LG said.

Sinha, he said, passed specific directions for uploading of all covid related data at the earliest, besides increasing testing and awareness activities in areas with high positivity rates.

While taking a district-wise thorough assessment, the official spokesperson said that the LG sought the present standings of the districts in respect of various indicators and norms set for evaluating the Covid situation from Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department, Atal Dulloo, who in turn briefed the chair about the analysis of Covid-19 pandemic including the status of vaccine availability and coverage; real time reproductive number of cases (Rt value); availability of vaccine; positivity rate; daily trends of COVID 19 cases & testing done etc.

"He informed that more than 51 lakh population has been inoculated with 1st dose till date. It was further informed that the remaining districts viz Kupwara, Srinagar, Doda, Kathua, Reasi, and Udhampur which were yet to achieve saturation of 1st dose in 45 and above age group are also nearing the 100% coverage," the official spokesperson said.

He further said that the LG also sought the status of the covid containment efforts of the Administration, besides the measures taken to vaccinate the targeted population under different age-groups and other interventions made to effectively tackle the spread of the corona virus.

Petition Against Pime Minister, Union Home Minister Dismissed

NAGPUR: The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed a petition which sought that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah be disqualified under the Representation of the People (RP) Act, 1951. The court also imposed a cost on the petitioner Ram Khobragade, a lawyer.

The petition demanded that Modi and Shah be declared guilty of "corrupt practices" under section 123 of the RP Act and disqualified for alleged violation of the model code of conduct during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. A division bench of Justices Sunil Shukre and Anil Killor said the petition was not maintainable as it was

filed "in ignorance of the provisions made in sections 80-81 of the RP Act" and also Article 102 of the Constitution.

Sections 80 and 81 deal with under what circumstances a petition challenging election can be filed, and Article 102 explains how an MP can lose the membership of Parliament.

Flood-like Situation In Parts Of Rajasthan

Heavy Downpour in Deluge-Hit MP Abate

Agenceis

New Delhi: Sultry weather prevailed in most of north India on Friday and intense rain in parts of Rajasthan forced dams to release 1.5 lakh cusec water causing flood-like situation while heavy rainfall is likely in deluge-hit Madhya Pradesh where the almost week-long downpour has temporarily subsided.

In Rajasthan's Jhalawar district, a boy died when a wall of his house collapsed as very heavy rainfall in isolated areas of the state's Hadauti region affected normal life.

Khanpur, which received the highest 172 mm of rains in a day, Sarola and Asnawar areas of Jhalawar were facing a flood-like situation due to intense rain in the last six days. On Friday morning, two dams released over 1.5 lakh cusec of water worsening the situation.

The Kalisindh dam opened 10 gates at 11 am, releasing nearly 1,18,000 cusecs of wa-

ter while the Bhim Sagar dam

opened five gates and released nearly 50,000 cusecs. Apart from Jhalawar, several areas in Baran district are facing a flood-like situation with most of the rivers in the region are overflowing. The Baran-Jhalawar road is inundated.

The weather department has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall at one or two places in Sawaimadhopur, Dholpur, Karauli and Baran districts on Saturday. An official of the department said that rainfall activities are likely to reduce in the next 24 hours after the weakening of the low-pressure area.

Sultry weather conditions prevailed in the national capital with the maximum temperature settling at 36.7 degrees Celsius, three notches above the season's average. Humidity levels oscillated between 88 per cent and 55 per cent.

Haryana and Punjab witnessed weather similar to Delhi. Gurgaon registered a

high of 34.9 degrees Celsius.

Ambala in Haryana recorded a maximum temperature of 35.2 degrees Celsius and Hisar registered a high of 35.6 degrees Celsius. In Punjab, Amritsar recorded a maximum of 32.2 degrees Celsius, Ludhiana 32.2 degrees Celsius and Patiala at 35.1 degrees Celsius.

Light to moderate rainfall and thundershower occurred at isolated places in Uttar Pradesh with Deoband in Saharanpur recorded 5 cm of precipitation, Gaighat in Ballia and Allahabad 4 cm each, Salempur in Deoria and Muzaffarnagar 3 cm each. The highest maximum temperature in the state was recorded in Varanasi at 35.7 degrees Celsius.

Rainfall has abated in Madhya Pradesh after intense showers pounded the state for close to a week claiming 12 lives in flood-ravaged Gwalior and Chambal divisions and displacing many.

The entire state received inter-mittent rainfall on Friday with



JEE-Mains Results Announced, 17 Candidates Score 100 Percentile

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Seventeen candidates have scored 100 percentile in the third edition of engineering entrance exam JEE-Main, results of which were declared by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Friday.

The perfect scorers included Karnam Lokesh, Duggineni Venkata Paneesh, Pasala Veera Siva and Kanchanapalli Rahul Naidu from Andhra Pradesh, Vaibhav Vishal from Bihar, Anshul Verma from Rajasthan, Ruchir Bansal and Pravar Kataria from Delhi, Harsh and Anmol from Haryana, Gaurab Das from Karnataka, Polu Lakshmi Sai Lokesh Reddy, Madur Adarsh Reddy and Velavali Venkata from Telangana and Pal Aggarwal and Amaiya Singhal from Uttar Pradesh.

A total of 7.09 lakh candidates had registered for the exam conducted at 915 examination centres in 334 cities, including 12 cities outside India in Bahrain, Colombo, Doha, Dubai, Kathmandu,

Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, Muscat, Riyadh, Sharjah, Singapore and Kuwait.

"Examination of the 1,899 candidates in the flood-affected districts of Kolhapur, Palghar, Ratnagiri, Raigad, Sangli, and Satara in Maharashtra who could not appear on 25 and 27 July was conducted on August 3 and 4, 2021, the NTA said in an official statement.

"A total of 162 candidates from Bahrain who could not appear for session 1 due to lockdown also appeared on August 3 and 4. A total number of 707 observers, 293 city-coordinators, 19 regional coordinators, 6 special coordinators and 2 national coordinators were deployed at these centres to oversee the smooth and fair conduct of the examination," it said.

The examination was conducted in 13 languages --English, Hindi, Gujarati, Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Nation Passing

movies have immortalized Indian soldiers and highlighted their courage.

"War movies had always an enduring impact on people of all ages, especially our youth. These films have immortalized our soldiers in the hearts of every Indian.

"We have grown up watching these films, which have captured the valour of armed forces. It served to reinforce the supreme sacrifice of a soldier in national conscious," he said.

General Naravane said a large number of TV serials, too, have depicted the life and challenges of soldiers and creating awareness in the society while encouraging the youth to join the armed forces.

He thanked FTII for its efforts in recent times to reach out to the youth of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Your workshops on screen play writings, acting, film making have been received with great enthusiasm in the (Kashmir) Valley and the personal initiative of FTII director Bhupendra Kainthola was the key to the successful initiative," the Army chief said.

He added that the coronavirus pandemic halted such programmes but said the Indian Army would like to play a role of a facilitator to restart the initiative.

The Army chief said interaction and outreach of popular actors in difficult areas have further reinforced the existing bond between the military and the society.

"I would like to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the role of the entertainment industry in making this possible," he said.

2 Militants Killed

of arms and ammunition in Samba district, officials said.

On a tip off, police and army conducted a search operation in Sarthian border hamlet, they said.

During the search, they recovered two pistols, five magazines and 122 ammunition rounds in a gunny bag, they said.

The arms were possibly dropped by a drone from across the border. However, further investigation is on, they said.

Security forces also recovered two wireless communication sets, batteries and some torches during an operation that was launched near

a sheep farm in Balnoi area of Poonch district. (PTI)

ED Again Summons

the FIR and the accused "just so we can prepare legally and know what she is going to be asked about".

She was summoned by the ED on earlier occasions also.

The party had conveyed to the ED that she should be allowed human assistance as she was not well versed with English, Hindi and Urdu languages and if the details of the case were known, it would help her in being prepared for the questioning.

The criminal case filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is linked to the recovery of at least two diaries by the ED after raids on an alleged associate of Mufti.

The diaries contain the details of some purported payments made from the chief minister's discretionary fund in alleged contravention of rules, officials said.

These funds are alleged to have been diverted during the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) rule in the erstwhile state.

A few lakh rupees from these funds are alleged to have been transferred into the accounts of Nazir and some others, and the Enforcement Directorate wants to question her about it, the officials said.

Nazir is the wife of the late Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Govt Schools

Reserve Police Forces (CRPFs).

"A Committee shall be constituted at district level to prepare such details after due verification. SSP/ADC/DPO or AC Panchayat/ representative of Army etc can be included in the committee to finalize the list at district level," the communiqué reads.

The letter issued by the deputy director of Divisional Commissioner Jammu, has asked DCs to forward the list to divisional commissioner's office by or before August-5.

On Friday last, J&K the Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta directed district administrations to acknowledge contributions of citizens towards nation-building and enlist individuals with exemplary achievements in this regard.

"As a mark of respect and appreciation to civilians with distinguished contributions to public welfare, Dr. Mehta asked the concerned to identify 75 roads and schools to be named after them," an official spokesperson had said.

Friday Prayers

of over four months. A sizable number of women devotees also attended Friday prayers held for the first time since April this year.

Reports said that paramilitary CRPF men and cops were deployed in large numbers around the central mosque, considered to be a bastion of detained Hurriyat Conference (M) chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, to meet any possible law and order situation.

Meanwhile, Anjuman Auqaf, the management of Jamia Masjid said that all arrangements were put in place to ensure Covid SOPs were observed by the devotees attending the prayers.

According to an Anjuman spokesperson, Imam Hai Moulana Syed Ahmed Naqshbandi expressed happiness over the resumption of prayers but lamented that since the past two years Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir has been "arbitrarily" detained at his house by the state authorities, and is not even allowed to visit Jamia Masjid to deliver the Friday sermon- which people are longing to hear and participate in.

"This is causing people great hurt and anguish. It is the centuries old tradition of Mirwaiz-een-e-Kashmir, who delivers the unique Friday sermon from the pulpit of the Jamia Masjid," Imam Hai said, as per Anjuman spokesperson.

"By keeping the pulpit forcibly empty by detaining Mirwaiz, authorities are deliberately hurting the sentiments of the Muslims of the Valley," he added.

Amarnath Shrine

devotees of Shri Amarnathji," he added.

As per the official spokesperson, the LG also said that his administration is planning to construct Yatri Niwas in various parts of the UT, besides a permanent office and a bigger Yatri Niwas will soon come up at Jammu to facilitate a large number of visiting devotees.

"Another Yatri Niwas with the capacity to accommodate 3200 yatris is coming up at Chanderkote, District Ramban," Sinha said, as per official spokesperson, adding "With

modern facilities and conducive environment being created, the day is not far when the Yatris visiting Shri Amarnathji shrine would cross the 10 lakh mark which will also make a greater impact on the economy of J&K."

The LG, he said, also stated that a study was also being conducted for exploring feasibility of a ropeway at Shri Amarnathji Shrine.

According to the official spokesperson, Nitishwar Kumar, Chief Executive officer of the Board termed the project as a historic development.

"This was a long pending demand from various organizations and stakeholders for having a dedicated Yatri Niwas for Shri Amarnathji Yatris," Kumar said, while highlighting the recent developments made by SASB for facilitating Shri Amarnathji Yatris.

Mahant Deependra Giri also spoke on the occasion and said that the upcoming Yatri Niwas is a much-needed facility to accommodate Shri Amarnathji yatris.

Earlier, as per the official spokesperson, the LG launched "Shri Amarnath Ishwaram", an iconic and signature video song on Shri Amarnathji and dedicated the same to the devotees of Shri Amarnathji on the auspicious occasion of Shrawan Shivratni. Released under the banner of T-Series, the video song was composed by Aman Pant, while devotees worldwide can experience the powerful Shiva mantra in the voice of renowned singer Sachet Tandon.

During his address, he said, the LG observed that the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board's devotional song reflects the divine journey of Lord Shiva with Mata Parvati to the Holy cave and narrates the route of the divine journey with the religious significance of places en route.

"This devotional track will also make the devotees feel spiritually connected with the divine Lord," Sinha said. He also prayed for the well-being of the people of the UT.

120 Kanals Land

Nowshera District Rajouri in favour of Home Department for establishment of Border Battalion Headquarters, for Jammu Zone.

"The land shall be used only for the purpose for which the sanction of transfer has been accorded after obtaining all other permissions as may be required for its establishment from the competent authority," reads the order issued

on August 5.

Rahul On Two-Day

he will inaugurate the headquarters of J&K unit of the Congress and address a meeting of party workers and leaders in the union territory.

J&K Reports

The number of active cases rose slightly to 1,404 in the Union Territory, while 3,16,496 patients have recovered from the infection so far, the officials said.

The death toll due to the pandemic was 4,386 as no fresh fatality was reported in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the officials said there were 37 confirmed cases of black fungus in the Union Territory as no fresh case was reported since last evening.

2 Wireless Sets

Manzoor Kohli and the operation was done under the supervision of SDPO Z A Jafri.

Moving Ambulance

that ensued, they said. "The ambulance suffered substantial damage even as the fire was doused off by sleuths of fire and emergency besides police," an official said.

He said there was no loss of life or injury in the incident. Mechanical fault is the possible reason for the fire, the official said. "Further investigation has been launched," he added.

(GNS)

Panel Formed To

The APR guidelines had been notified vide Government Order No. 1311-CAD of 2001 dated 09 Government 2001.

The Committee shall submit its recommendations, keeping in consideration the existing guidelines in the J&K and the Government of India pattern on ACR rules, within a period of one month, the order added.

Ladakh Reports

Of the four new cases, two each were reported in Leh and Kargil. No death due to Covid was reported in Ladakh in the past 24 hours, the officials said. Nine more patients were discharged after they were cured of the disease,



INDIA RANK: 66
Gold: 0 Silver: 2 Bronze: 3 Total: 5

Observer News Service

"Then where can we play?" asked Wajahat Shameem.

Earlier on Thursday the newly formed Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) held its first meeting where its members Abdul Qayoom Bagaw, Ashwani Gupta and Roopali Slathia met Mithun Manhas, JKCA Sub-Committee member.

Press Trust of India

"Respecting their sentiment, the Khel Ratna Award will hereby be called the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award! Major Dhyan Chand was among India's foremost sportspersons who brought honour and pride

The prestigious award carries a prize money of Rs 25 lakh.

Observer News Service

Appreciating the efforts of the Department of Youth Services and Sports, he said that such events shall continue with full momentum across the district. The tournament is being organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports at two venues viz Nanil and Zablipora and teams from all zones of the district are participating in the event.

Observer News Service

Speaking on the occasion, ADC Baramulla appreciated the organisers for organising the event in

the district. He appealed the youth to keep themselves engaged with curricular and co-curricular activities, saying that sports keep them fit both mentally and physically. He said that such sports activities should also be conducted in other sub divisions, tehsils and block levels. The ADC offered his full support from the district administration and said that all the sports facilities including infrastructure should be kept available for the youth who are the future of the society.

Press Trust of India

Brief scores: England 183. India 278 all out in 84.5 overs (K L Rahul 84, Ravindra Jadeja 56; Ollie Robinson 5/85, James Anderson 4/54).

Anderson Surpasses Kumble's Haul Of 619 Test Wickets



Agencies

He was set to make about 70 million euros (\$82 million) per year under his new Barcelona contract, but it was never

Manchester City, which is owned by the Abu

Agencies

Letting Messi go was the only way of saving the club, and just like that Messi's era at Barcelona came to an end. President Joan Laporta said Friday that keeping the Argentina star would be risky and not even the greatest player in the world was worth jeopardizing the club's future.

He said he hoped the league would have been more flexible with its rules, but understood that it couldn't make an exception even if that meant losing Messi.

"There are objective reasons regarding the economical situation at the club and an investment of that volume with the contract of Messi was risky," Laporta said. "We wanted to assume those risks, but when we realized the real situation of the club after the audit, it meant that we would have put the club in great risk."

The 31-year-old Kiyuna is a native of Okinawa, where karate originally proliferated in Japan. The five-time world champion began winning international honours a decade ago.

Supreme Court's Move After Controversial High Court Order On Sex Assault

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Considering gravity of controversy surrounding the Bombay High Court verdict holding that "groping a minor's breast without 'skin to skin contact' cannot be termed as sexual assault", the Supreme Court today appointed an amicus curiae to assist in the case in which a man was acquitted under the provision of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The top court on January 27 had stayed operation of the January 19 verdict of the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court after Attorney General K K Venugopal had mentioned it and was allowed to file an appeal.

A bench of Justices U U Lalit and Ajay Rastogi said that in this case it needs to appoint amicus curiae looking at the gravity of the controversy as this is a case where accused cannot go unrepresented. The bench said it will list the matter for disposal on August 24 as the first item on the board for the day.

"We request senior advocate Siddharth Dave to assist the court as amicus curiae. Registry is directed to send papers of the case to Dave immediately," the bench said in its order.



The top court, which on January 27 stayed the high court's verdict after the Attorney General mentioned the matter, had also issued notice to Maharashtra government and permitted the Attorney General to file an appeal against the January 19 verdict of the High Court.

"In view of what is stated, we permit the learned Attorney General to file an appropriate petition against the said judgment. In the meantime, we stay the acquittal of the accused in Criminal Appeal... in respect of the offence under section 8 of the POCSO Act. Issue notice to the accused and the State of Maharashtra returnable in two weeks," the bench had said in its order.

Mr Venugopal, while mentioning the matter before the top court had submitted that the judgment of the high court is "unprecedented" and is likely to set a "dangerous precedent".

The high court verdict had said that groping a minor's breast without "skin to skin contact" cannot be termed as sexual assault as defined under the POCSO Act.

It had said that since the man groped the child without removing her clothes the offence

cannot be termed as sexual assault but it does constitute the offence of outraging a woman's modesty under IPC section 354.

The high court had modified the order of a sessions court, which had sentenced a 39-year-old man to three years of imprisonment for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl.

Several pleas have been filed in the matter challenging the verdict and similar judgments.

While IPC Section 354 entails a minimum imprisonment for one year, sexual assault under the POCSO Act entails a minimum imprisonment of three years.

The sessions court had sentenced the man to three years of imprisonment for the offences under the POCSO Act as also under IPC section 354. The sentences were to run concurrently.

The high court, however, had acquitted him under the POCSO Act while upholding his conviction under IPC section 354.

"Considering the stringent nature of punishment provided for the offence (under POCSO), in the opinion of this court, stricter proof and serious allegations are required," the high court had said.

"The act of pressing of breast of the child aged 12 years, in the

absence of any specific detail as to whether the top was removed or whether he inserted his hand inside the top and pressed her breast, would not fall in the definition of sexual assault," it had said.

It had further said that "the act of pressing breast can be a criminal force to a woman/ girl with the intention to outrage her modesty".

The POCSO Act defines sexual assault as when someone "with sexual intent touches the vagina, penis, anus or breast of the child or makes the child touch the vagina, penis, anus or breast of such person or any other person, or does any other act with sexual intent which involves physical contact without penetration is said to commit sexual assault".

The court, in its verdict, had held that this "physical contact" mentioned in the definition of sexual assault must be "skin to skin" or direct physical contact.

"Admittedly, it is not the case of the prosecution that the appellant removed her top and pressed her breast. As such, there is no direct physical contact i.e. skin to skin with sexual intent without penetration," the high court had said.

India, China Agree On Disengagement In Gogra In Eastern Ladakh



Agenceis

India and China have disengaged their troops in the Gogra Heights area of eastern Ladakh. This comes nearly a week after the two sides held the 12th Corps Commander-level talks at Moldo on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The disengagement has taken place around Patrol Point 17A in eastern Ladakh. This had been one of the friction points between the two countries amid the military tussle that has been on for more than a year.

"All temporary structures and other allied infrastructure created in the area by both sides have been dismantled and mutually verified. The landform in the area has been restored by both sides to pre-stand off period," the Indian Army said in a statement.

As per the agreement, both sides have ceased forward deployments

in this area in a phased, coordinated and verified manner. The disengagement process was carried out over 4 and 5 August, 2021. The troops of both sides are now in their respective permanent bases.

Indian and Chinese troops disengaged in Pangong Lake area in February this year but there had been slow movement on further easing of tensions after that.

Like the earlier disengagement protocols the area will be a buffer zone with patrolling by either side suspended till there is a final resolution to the tensions.

As of now disengagement has taken place in Galwan, Gogra and Pangong Tso. The Hot Springs area around PP 15 still remains tense.

As conveyed earlier this week, the twelfth round of talks between the Corps Commanders of India and China were held on July 31, 2021 at Chushul Moldo Meeting Point in Eastern Ladakh.

The two sides had a candid and

in-depth exchange of views on resolution of remaining areas related to disengagement along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector of India-China border areas.

As an outcome of the meeting, both sides agreed on disengagement in the area of Gogra. The troops in this area have been in a face-off situation since May last year.

This agreement ensures that the LAC in this area will be strictly observed and respected by both sides, and that there is no unilateral change in status quo.

With this, one more sensitive area of face-off has been resolved. Both sides have expressed commitment to take the talks forward and resolve the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western Sector.

The Indian Army, along with ITBP, is totally committed to ensuring the sovereignty of the nation and maintaining peace & tranquility along the LAC in the Western Sector.

Opposition Leaders Support Farmers, Join Kisan Sansad At Jantar Mantar

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Several leaders of opposition parties, including former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, on Friday extended their solidarity to protesting farmers and joined their Kisan Sansad at the Jantar Mantar here, saying the three "black" agri laws will have to be withdrawn.

Leaders of 14 opposition parties met at Parliament House and then reached the nearby Jantar Mantar to participate in the Kisan Sansad, which began on July 22 to mark over seven months of the farmers' protests at Delhi's border points against the laws.

The leaders neither spoke from the podium of the Kisan Sansad (farmers' parliament) nor were they seated on the dais.

"Today all opposition parties together decided to support the

farmers and demand the withdrawal of the three farm laws," Gandhi told reporters.

"We want to give our entire support to all the farmers of the country," he said.

The three farm laws were enacted in September last year, following which farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, are protesting at Delhi border points since November.

"It will not work with a discussion on the farm laws and these black laws will have to be withdrawn," Gandhi said, when asked that the government says it is ready to hold talks with farmers.

He also alleged that the government is not allowing the opposition to raise the Pegasus snooping issue in Parliament.

"You know what is happening in Parliament. We want to discuss the Pegasus (snooping) issue and

they are not allowing it to happen. (Prime Minister) Narendra Modi has got into every telephone," he said.

Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and several other Congress leaders besides members from other opposition parties were present at the meeting at Parliament House.

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, RJD leader Manoj Kumar Jha, CPI (M) leader Elamaram Kareem, CPI leader Binoy Viswam, IUML leader Mohammed Bashir and DMK leader Tiruchi Siva were among those present at Jantar Mantar.

AAP and TMC leaders were not present at the Kisan Sansad site.

"The Opposition leaders" meeting decided to hold their protest at Jantar Mantar at 1 pm and sit with the protesting farmers," a senior leader told PTI earlier.

30 Foreign Nationals Arrested For Staying Illegally In India In July: Police

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The police have arrested 30 foreign nationals so far for staying illegally as part of a special drive started in July to nab such individuals, and also arrested four landlords for housing them without checking travel documents, officials said on Friday.

In such a drive conducted at Chander Vihar area of outer Delhi's Nihal Vihar on Wednesday, 11 foreign nationals, including 10 from Nigeria and one from Ivory Coast, were found living in India without valid passport or visa.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Parvinder Singh said, "A case was registered on Thursday under relevant section of Foreigners Act and all the accused have been sent to judicial custody."

Four FIRs have also been registered against the landlords for providing accommodation to them without checking valid travel documents, he said.

As part of the special drive, five foreign nationals staying illegally here were arrested on Thursday while on July 24, the police had arrested 14 such individuals living illegally here, he added.

No Vehicle Entering Mizoram From Assam Even As Curbs Lifted: Top Official



Agenceis

The "unofficial" economic blockade on National Highway-306, allegedly imposed by certain groups in Assam's Cachar district, entered its 12th day on Friday, a top official in Mizoram said.

Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuauango told reporters that no vehicle has made its way to the state from Assam, despite the withdrawal of the travel advisory issued by the Himanta Biswa Sarma government.

A festering border dispute between the two northeastern states had triggered a bloody conflict on July 26, leading to the death of seven people -- six Assam Police personnel and a civilian.

The Assam government had subsequently issued an advisory asking people to avoid travelling to Mizoram. It was revoked on Thursday following talks between the two sides.

Chuauango said the ruling dispensation in Mizoram is in "constant touch" with the Assam government, which has promised to take necessary steps for resumption of traffic movement via NH-306.

"It is unfortunate that no vehicle carrying goods or passengers is entering Mizoram from Assam, despite the withdrawal of the travel advisory. The government is in constant touch with the Centre and Assam. I have also spoken with the Assam chief secretary, who assured us that measures will be taken to clear the road," he said.

Officials in Mizoram alleged that railways tracks linked to

the state were damaged in at least three places in Assam's Hailakandi district. The "unofficial" blockade has choked all supplies, including medical consignments and COVID-19 equipment, they added.

Lalruatkima, the information and public relations minister in Mizoram, further said that more than 30 people, including non-tribals, are currently stranded in Silchar's Mizoram house due to the blockade.

Several Mizoram residents are also stuck in Guwahati, he said.

Cachar SP Ramandeep Kaur, when contacted, told PTI over phone that the Assam government had been encouraging people to travel to Mizoram but many were reluctant "fearing backlash".

"Even before the withdrawal of the advisory, the government encouraged people to travel to Mizoram. It seems some of them are reluctant as they fear being attacked," she stated.

Kaur also said that two vehicles were vandalised by unidentified men somewhere between Silchar and Lailapur when they had tried to move towards Mizoram on Thursday.

A probe has been launched into the incident, she added.

The Mizoram and Assam governments had on Thursday agreed to find a "lasting solution" to the century-old boundary dispute and take measures, including resumption of interstate vehicular movement, to de-escalate tension between the two sides.

"Both the states have

CBI Arrests Man Posing As National Highway Authority Chairman, Looting Lakhs

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested an impersonator who had allegedly cheated a person to the tune of 80 lakh by posing as chairman of the National Highways Authority of India, officials said today.

The accused Manoj Kumar Jha, a resident of Madhubani in Bihar, was arrested from Gurgaon, they said.

Following the arrest, the central probe agency carried out searches at eight premises in Delhi, Kolkata, Madhubani and Bokaro Steel City, which led to recovery of various incriminating documents and around 200 SIM cards, officials said.

"It was alleged that the impersonator called one senior officer in NHAI. It was also alleged that the complainant was advised to talk to the said chairman, as he has informed to refer two-three big reputed contractors for some urgent purpose," CBI spokesperson RC Joshi said.

When the complainant contacted Manoj Jha, he allegedly told the complainant that his daughter urgently needed 80 lakh in Kolkata and his son-in-law would collect the amount from there.

"The money was allegedly transferred through hawala network to Kolkata and collected by the accused himself. During investigation, the impersonator was identified as resident of Madhubani (Bihar) and was subsequently arrested from Gurgaon (Haryana)," Mr Joshi said.

He said the accused is presently in the CBI custody till August 9.

Inkishaf

Why Pollution Control Committee Has No Kashmiri Member?

Watch to know more in this episode of **Inkishaf** on **KASHMIR OBSERVER** YouTube Channel



<https://youtube.com/c/kobserver>

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