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P3 CITY

BLAZE DASHES DREAMS OF TWO WOULD-BE BRIDES IN SRINAGAR

A fortnight before their marriage ceremony, the dreams of two would-be brides were shattered after a massive blaze reduced their residential house into ashes

P6

STAGFLATION IN J&K

One of the many functions of money is to store value. Whenever someone adds value to the economy in the form of providing goods or services, money that they receive is a sort of a receipt which they can then exchange

P11 SPORTS

TALIBAN LOVE & SUPPORT CRICKET, SAYS AFGHAN CRICKET BOARD CEO

Cricket will not be a casualty in the wake of drastic political change in Afghanistan, assured country's cricket board CEO Hamid Shinwari,



Quote!

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."

—Helen Keller

NEWS DIGEST

2 JKAS Officers Posted As JKSSB Members

Srinagar- Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday posted two JKAS officers as members of the J&K Services Selection Board. The transfers with immediate effect were ordered in the interest of administration, reads an order. ● [More On P10](#)

Train Service Resumes In Kashmir

Srinagar: The train service between Baramulla in north Kashmir and Banihal in Jammu region resumed on Monday, official sources said. They said that the train service on 137-km-long Baramulla-Banihal route, comprising 17 stations, was suspended as a precautionary ● [More On P10](#)

Militancy In Kashmir In Last Phase: MoS Singh

Says Change In People's Thinking Visible In Valley



Jammu: Union minister Jitendra Singh Monday said there is a visible change in the thinking of people in Jammu and Kashmir and militancy in its "last phase" in Kashmir, which witnessed large-scale Independence Day celebrations Sunday. The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office ● [More On P10](#)

Teen Drowns In Ramban Pond

Banihal: An 18-year-old boy drowned while taking bath in a pond in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Monday. Moien Khan, a resident of Chamliwas, had gone for a bath in the pond at Tethar village of Banihal, they said. ● [More On P10](#)

Cab Injures Teenager Critically

Srinagar: A teenager boy was critically injured after he was hit by a vehicle in Rafiabad area of Baramulla district on Monday. 19-year-old Wasim Ahmad Sofi, son of Abdul Majeed Sofi of Chawwas was hit by a Sumo bearing registration number JK05A-1098 at Ladoora area ● [More On P10](#)

6 New Covid Cases In Ladakh

Leh: Ladakh recorded six new COVID-19 cases that pushed the infection tally to 20,451, officials said on Monday. Four people -- two each in Leh and Kar-gil -- were discharged from hospitals, taking the overall recoveries to 20,162, they said. ● [More On P10](#)

'War Is Over'

Taliban In Control As Tense Calm Grips Kabul

Agencies

Kabul: The Taliban declared the war in Afghanistan over after taking control of the presidential palace in Kabul while Western nations scrambled on Monday to evacuate their citizens amid chaos at the airport even as a tense calm gripped the capital.

President Ashraf Ghani fled the country on Sunday as the militants entered the capital virtually unopposed, saying he wanted to avoid bloodshed, while hundreds of Afghans desperate to leave flooded Kabul airport.

"Today is a great day for the Afghan people and the mujahideen. They have witnessed the fruits of their efforts and

their sacrifices for 20 years," Mohammad Naeem, the spokesman for the Taliban's political office, told Al Jazeera TV.

in their homes as the Taliban deployed fighters at major intersections. There were scattered reports of looting and

Now it's time to test and prove, now we have to show that we can serve our nation and ensure security and comfort of life."

"Thanks to God, the war is over in the country."

In a video posted to social media, Taliban co-founder Abdul Ghani Baradar also announced his movement's victory.

"Now it's time to test and prove, now we have to show that we can serve our nation and ensure security and comfort of life," he said.

Eerie calm in the capital On Monday, most people hid

armed men knocking on doors and gates, and there was less traffic than usual on eerily quiet streets. Fighters could be seen searching vehicles at one of the city's main squares.

The fighters also went around the city, collecting weapons from civilians "because people no longer need them for personal protection", a Taliban official said.

● [More On P10](#)



Security Personnel Among 500 Indians Stranded in Kabul

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: An unspecified number of security personnel are among at least five hundred Indian nationals stranded in Afghanistan.

An Indian aircraft has been parked at the chaotic Kabul Airport. However, the matter of concern is to bring the Indian mission staff from the embassy to the airport, officials said. The Indian embassy in Kabul and numerous consulates across Afghanistan have been shut following Taliban takeover.

The Taliban who marched into the capital on Sunday have enforced a curfew in Kabul and closed the airspace.

Diplomats on Monday termed the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan as a "setback" for India strategically, and asserted that the priority for New Delhi right now should be to evacuate its citizens from the war-torn nation.

Taliban insurgents swept Kabul after the US-backed Afghan government collapsed and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country ● [More On P10](#)

Ready For All Possible Consequences: BSF DG

Jammu: BSF Director General (DG) S S Deswal on Monday said they are keeping a close watch on the situation in Afghanistan and are fully ready for all possible consequences. ● [More On P10](#)

TODAY IS A GREAT DAY for the Afghan people and the mujahideen. They have witnessed the fruits of their efforts and their sacrifices for 20 years," Mohammad Naeem, the spokesman for the Taliban's political office, told Al Jazeera TV.

CRPF Man Injured In Grenade Attack

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A CRPF man was injured in a grenade attack by militants in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Monday, officials said here.

The ultras hurled the grenade targeting a CRPF party at the Government Middle School Langate in the north Kashmir district around 9.40 pm, they said.

In another attack, militants lobbed a grenade at a police party in Azad Gunj near the bus stop in Baramulla town, the officials said, adding that it exploded at the roadside.

No loss of life or injury was reported but a vehicle was damaged, they said.

Senior Police Officer Suspended

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday suspended a senior police officer for "exhibiting conduct unbecoming of an officer" in his capacity as member, recruitment board for recruiting constables for two border battalions.

"Whereas, disciplinary proceedings are contemplated by the Government against Maqsood ul Zaman, JKPS, Commandant IR-8th Bn, for exhibiting conduct unbecoming of an officer, in his capacity as Member, Recruitment Board, for recruitment against the posts of Constables for 02 Border Battalions," reads an order issued by Additional Secretary to the government, home department, Dr Arvind Karwani on Monday. ● [More On P10](#)

Govt Working On Holistic Development Of J&K: LG



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government is working with the agenda of holistic development of all the regions of the Union Territory, besides putting

in concerted efforts to meet the developmental aspirations of the people, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Monday.

The LG made these remarks while interacting with the DDC Chairpersons ● [More On P10](#)

Govt To Impose Curbs To Foil 8th Muharram Procession



Thousands of mourners participated in the 7th Muharram procession in Srinagar's Kathi Darwaza area on Monday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar: Restrictions will be imposed in parts of the up-town on Tuesday to prevent traditional 8th Muharram procession that remains banned since the onset of militancy in the erstwhile state in early 90's.

"The district administration has decided to impose curfew-like restrictions for

tomorrow's Muharram procession that was scheduled from Guru Bazaar to Dalgate," SHO Shaheed Gunj, Sabzar Ahmed Ganai told Kashmir Observer on Monday.

"No Muharram procession will be allowed tomorrow in the area. The district administration has strictly ordered us to impose restrictions," he added.

● [More On P10](#)

For now, we haven't received any communiqué from our higher ups for imposing restrictions in areas falling under my jurisdiction."SHO Nehru Park

J&K Logs 77 New Cases, 135 Recoveries

Srinagar: In a positive trend, 135 people infected by coronavirus recovered in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday while 77 new cases of virus and one death was reported from the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to officials, 135 more Covid-19 infected patients have recovered—48 from Jammu division and 87 from the Valley during the last 24 hours. During the same time, 77 fresh cases of virus surfaced in J&K— 54 from Kashmir and 23 from the winter capital, taking the total number ● [More On P10](#)

Remembers Vajpayee On His Death Anniversary

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday paid tributes to former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary, saying he was a true statesman whose vision will continue to inspire coming generations.

Vajpayee, the first BJP prime ● [More On P10](#)

Fighting Stereotypes With Feats: The Girl Who Wears Many Sports Hats

Sayima Dar

On the road to glory, Sabreena Akbar had a bumpy ride.

But the 25-year-old girl from Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district fought her odds and emerged as a sports icon for girls she's empowering as a "compassionate coach" today.

"There was always a sort of shame attached to a girl doing sports publicly," Sabreena says. "But, thanks to Almighty, I didn't pay any heed to jaundiced perceptions and kept on playing and

improving my game."

Sabreena says she had to fight against stereotypes to achieve her sports success.

"It was due to my own persistence, as well as to the support of my teachers and friends that I can proudly say I am a gold medalist in Martial Arts, a volleyball titleholder, a snow-skiing champion and a cricket captain. I rejoice the fact how my name is being mentioned throughout India whenever my state participates in any sports event."

In FOCUS

The strenuous sport star from Sindh valley lately got a shot in her arm when she was appointed as a national level board member by the J&K Roball Association.

Before her 'coming of age' moment, she was struggling for sports sustenance in an underprovided family.

But the girl had shown early-life sports resilience in her middle-school itself.

"It began as pastime," Sabreena, currently pursuing graduation in Physical Education, recalls. "It was a play akin ● [More On P10](#)



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Being overweight might cause depression, says Study

Agencies

Being overweight causes depression and lowers wellbeing, a largescale new study has proved. It further indicated that both social and physical factors might play a role in the effect. The findings of the study were published in the journal 'Human Molecular Genetics'.

With one in four adults estimated to be obese in the UK and growing numbers of children affected, obesity is a global health challenge. While the dangers of being obese on physical health are well known, researchers are now discovering that being overweight can also have a significant impact on mental health. The study sought to investigate why a body of evidence now indicates that higher BMI causes depression. The team used genetic analysis, known as Mendelian Randomisation, to examine whether the causal link is the result of psychosocial pathways, such as societal



influences and social stigma, or physical pathways, such as metabolic conditions linked to higher BMI. Such conditions include high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

In research led by the University of Exeter and funded by the Academy of Medical Sciences, the team examined genetic data from more than 145,000 participants from the UK Biobank with detailed mental health data available.

In a multifaceted study, the researchers analysed genetic variants linked to higher BMI, as well as

outcomes from a clinically relevant mental health questionnaire designed to assess levels of depression, anxiety and wellbeing. To examine which pathways may be active in causing depression in people with higher BMI, the team also interrogated two sets of previously discovered genetic variants.

One set of genes makes people fatter, yet metabolically healthier, meaning they were less likely to develop conditions linked to higher BMI, such as high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. The second set of genes analysed make peo-

ple fatter and metabolically unhealthy, or more prone to such conditions.

The team found little difference between the two sets of genetic variants, indicating that both physical and social factors play a role in higher rates of depression and poorer wellbeing.

Lead author Jess O'Loughlin, at the University of Exeter Medical School, said, "Obesity and depression are both major global health challenges, and our study provides the most robust evidence to date that higher BMI causes depression. Understanding whether physical or social factors are responsible for this relationship can help inform effective strategies to improve mental health and wellbeing." O'Loughlin added, "Our research suggests that being fatter leads to a higher risk of depression, regardless of the role of metabolic health. This suggests that both physical health and social factors, such as social stigma, both play a role in the relationship between obesity and depression."

UT Of Jammu and kashmir

Additional Directorate Of Sericulture Development Department

Tulsibagh, Srinagar, Kashmir, PIN - 190001

Fax: 01942311171 Email: sericulturekashmir@gmail.com

Sub: Revised Calendar of Dry Cocoon Auction Market 2021-22 (Kashmir Division) - reg

In order to put the Bivoltine Dry Silk Reeling Cocoons harvested by Sericulture Farmers of Kashmir Division during Spring Crop 2021, on sale, the department is organizing Cocoon Markets at Various location of Kashmir Division as per the following revised details. The Farmers/ Reelers from within and outside state will participate accordingly.

s NO	Name of Market with venue	Name of the participating district/ Jurisdiction	Period of the market	Name of the marketing Officer.(DDO)	Remarks/Details
1	Srinagar (Main Sralnage Srinagar Complex)	1. Srinagar 2. Budgam 3. Ganderbal 4. Bandipora 5. ISDP 6. Sonawari	16-08-2021 to 23-08-2021	Ashraf Ali Bhanday (DSO) He will be assisted by DSO Budgam Ganderbal and Bandipora	All the stake holders will follow SOPs of COVID-19. The DSO Bandipora will be the I/C of ISDP as well. The deployment of the staff for running the market affairs and its smooth functioning shall be made by the marketing officers.
2	Srinagar (Main Drainage Srinagar Complex)	1. District 2. Baramulla	24-08-2021 To 29-08-2021	Dr. Inayat Saleem Fazili (DSO Baramulla)	Every district should strictly adhere to the market calendar Programme.
3	Anantnag (Sarnal DSO Office)	1. Anantnag 2. Kulgam	31-08-2021 to 06-09-2021	Fayaz Ahmad Qadri (DSO Anantnag) He will be assisted by DSO Kulgam	Farmers should be accompanied by their concerned field staff and. jurisdiction officers. The stationery items like rearing card. Bid sheet books etc shall be arranged by concerned DDO, well in advance
4	Pulwama Nikas (DSO Office)	1. Pulwama 2. Shopian	08-09-2021 to 12-09-2021	Feroz Ah. Matto (DSO Pulwama) He will be assisted by DSO Shopian	All basic facilities like drinking water. Wash room, Electricity, Tea Shop etc shall be ensured by the marketing officer in the market.
5	Kupwara (Kupwara Nursery)	1. Kupwara	14-09-2021 to 18-09-2021	Fayaz Ahmad Aga (DSO Kupwara)	

The buyers participating in the auction market shall-

1. Register their name and deposit the caution money/security deposit /due amount with the concerned nominated marketing officer before participating in the auction proceeding.
2. The Demand Draft/ Account Payee Cheque should be in the name of concerned marketing officers

NO: ADSDK/Tech/Market/2021-22/2406-30
Dated 11-08-2021

Additional Director Kashmir

DIPK-6739/21

از نیابت قلم اباد

مضمون کاغذات درخواست متناجب حنیفہ بیگم زوجہ غلام قادر بیٹ ساکنہ کوٹاکم ہمداد عطا گی RBA تحت 294 SRO
اشتہار ہمداد آگاہی ہر خاص وعام
محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس سلسلے میں پیواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈر طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل موضع کوٹاکم میں رہائش پذیر ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے معاذ گرنے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

از نیابت قلم اباد

مضمون کاغذات درخواست متناجب عامر نبی ڈھوم ولد غلام نبی ڈھوم ساکنہ سترزی پورہ کلتری ہمداد عطا گی بیکوارڈ ایریسرٹیفکیٹ تحت 294 SRO
اشتہار ہمداد آگاہی ہر خاص وعام
محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس سلسلے میں پیواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈر طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل موضع سترزی پورہ کلتری میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کہہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے معاذ گرنے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

از نیابت واگورہ نائب تحصیلدار ایکریٹیکٹیو جیسٹریٹ درجہ اول

مضمون کاغذات درخواست متناجب دانش مقبول ڈار ولد محمد مقبول ڈار ساکنہ واگورہ ہمداد عطا گی RBA تحت 294 SRO
اشتہار ہمداد آگاہی ہر خاص وعام
محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس سلسلے میں پیواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈر طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل موضع واگورہ میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کہہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

غلام احمد ڈار	عمر رسیدہ	90 سال
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شاہین بیگم بیوہ غلام احمد	گھر ملا کام	42 سال
دانش مقبول	پیر محمد مقبول	21
حمید بانو	دفتر محمد مقبول	17
رقیب بانو	دفتر محمد مقبول	15
ریحانہ	دفتر محمد مقبول	14
حفصہ	دفتر محمد مقبول	09

اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے سائل کہہ کہہ ماہوار آمدنی 11000 ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے معاذ گرنے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

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R/o Sozeith Narbal Crossing
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Roll No 2422290 Session /Year Annual 2017
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Sd/ Assistant Secretary
bmg-r
bmg Sub Office Magam

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Javed Ahmad Paray
S/o Ab. Rahman Paray
R/o Bandgam Magam

BMG

Blaze Dashes Dreams Of Two Would-be Brides In Srinagar

Agencies

Srinagar: A fortnight before their marriage ceremony, the dreams of two would-be brides were shattered after a massive blaze reduced their residential house into ashes at Basant Bagh area of Srinagar.

The fire broke out in the wee hours of Monday morning. In the blaze, one residential house belonging to Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh was reduced to ashes. Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh said that he was scheduled to host the guests in the first week of September,

ber, saying that his two daughters are scheduled to get married.

“The devastating fire has shattered all our dreams. We have lost everything in the blaze,” he said, adding that the gold worth lakhs of rupees and a cash was also reduced to ashes in the massive fire.

He said that there are no hopes left now and the family is in distress.

Sheikh, along with family and all the neighbours appealed the Lieutenant Governor led administration to help the affected family at this crucial juncture.

College Students Protest In Srinagar Demanding Online Exams

Agencies

Srinagar: Students of various colleges pursuing undergraduate courses Monday protested at Press Enclave Srinagar demanding online exams.

The students said that the college authorities have issued datasheets for the offline exams ten days prior to the exams. “How can we prepare the whole syllabus in just ten days”, said a

student.

“We are depressed as we have a huge syllabus to study and very less time to prepare”, said another student.

The students were holding placards demanding justice and online examinations from the concerned authorities.

The students appealed to the authorities to conduct their online examinations so that they can prepare accordingly.

Srinagar Admin Felicitates Officials, Covid Warriors, Students On I-Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To acknowledge and recognize the services rendered by the officers / officials of District Administration Srinagar and other persons who have done distinguished and meritorious services in various fields viz. Education, Social Services, Sports, Covid-19 mitigation efforts etc., the District Administration Srinagar held a Felicitation cum Award ceremony programme at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex here. The felicitation program was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad who awarded the Commendation Certificates and Mementos to the Government employees, Covid-19 warriors, Students and Sports persons on the eve of Independence Day for this year.

During the programme, the DC also felicitated three meritorious students who have secured positions in recent class 12th exams and two girls who have participated at

National and International sports events. Among them Ishrat Rashid and Insha Bashir have represented the Indian Basketball team at Thailand and USA respectively.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC congratulated all the participants and said hard work and dedication towards one's profession is key to achieve success and a unique place in the society.

He lauded the contribution of all other officials of the administration in ensuring a prompt and efficient public delivery system in the district besides combating Covid-19 pandemic. Additional Deputy Commissioner, Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Hanief Balkhi, Joint Director Planning, Mohammad Yaseen Lone, all Sectoral Officers and other concerned were present on the occasion. At the end of the programme, ADC Hanief Balkhi presented the vote of thanks and appreciated everyone for their contribution towards society.

Srinagar Residents Urged To Strictly Adhere To Covid-19 SOPs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad urged the general public of Srinagar district to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 SOPs and other related guidelines laid down by the Government to contain infection of Covid-19 and to tackle any 3rd wave as predicted by Health Experts.

The DC said though the situation with regard to Covid-19 is so far improving day by day, but wearing Masks, maintaining Physical/ Social distancing, hand hygiene and avoiding mass gatherings are imperative to protect/ safeguard our family and fellow citizens from any infection or possible 3rd wave of deadly pandemic.

The DC said this while briefing the Media about the present situation of the Covid-19 in Srinagar district here on Monday.

He said that the pace of ongoing Vaccination drive has been intensified and till date above 6 lakh vaccine doses have been administered to people in Srinagar.

He also added that presently we have about 326 active positive cases in the district which is highest number in J&K, so we have to strictly adhere to Covid safety precautions to tackle the emergence of 3rd wave of Covid-19 as predicted by Health Experts. He further informed that Srinagar district has touched recovery rate of 98.4 percent and positivity rate has come down to 0.45 percent.

The DC appealed to the people of Srinagar to adhere to all guidelines and follow Covid-19 Appropriate Behavior to ensure safety of themselves, family and fellow citizens. He also urged the left out population to inoculate anti Covid-19 vaccine at the earliest to get protected against infection of Covid-19.



Ittihadul Muslimeen President Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari addressing mourners during a gathering on 7th Muharram in the interiors of Kathi Darwaza on Monday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

PDD Asked To Gear Up For Winter, Make All Receiving Stations Functional By September

Execution Of Various Receiving Stations In Srinagar City Inspected

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Ahmad Khan Monday inspected various ongoing projects of Power Development Department and visited the Stores at Bemina. He enjoined upon the officers to provide better Power supply to the consumers and take all necessary measures to gear up for upcoming winter season.

The Advisor made these remarks while visiting several Receiving stations being constructed under Prime Minister's Development Plan (PMDP) and IPDS in the Srinagar city here. He asked the executing agency to complete the work on these installations before the onset of winter season so that people of Srinagar and adjoining areas are able to draw benefits during winters. The Advisor exhorted upon the officers to make all these receiving stations functional and fixed the timeline of 30th September, 2021 in respect of each of them.

The Advisor visited the receiving stations at Wanabal, Batamaloo and SMHS Srinagar and inspected the ED-II and ED-III stores at Bemina. The Advisor was informed that the Power Development Department is constructing seven Receiving Stations in the city and these Receiving Stations are developed on the latest GPS platform with state of the art technology and shall substantially increase the power supply in the

city and adjoining areas. The Advisor also instructed the Distribution and maintenance wing to ensure that the work and distribution connected with these receiving stations is completed before the timelines as mentioned in respect for completion of receiving stations.

At the Stores at Bemina he was informed that 900 poles have been received against the demand of 1500 and the rest are expected to be received by the end of September. The Advisor asked the officers to activate their enforcement squads to stop the pilferage of power effectively. He directed for upscaling of efforts to bolster the revenue collection besides ensuring replacement of damaged transformers within a span of 24 hours as already outlined by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor and conveyed to them during series of meetings taken by the Advisor. He asked them to create a transformer bank and make a contingency plan with regard to the outages.

The Advisor asked the officers to devise a round the clock duty roster of staff to man these installations efficiently. He asked them that sufficient number of personnel should remain available at the stations every time. He further directed them to project their manpower requirements beforehand so that these are met before the completion of these projects. The Advisor directed the officers to have a robust grievance

redressal mechanism in place. The inspection of grievance logbooks and review should be done by the senior officers on weekly basis, the Advisor said. The Advisor called for making pre-emptive measures for tackling all the exigencies by the department itself. He urged them to augment the capacity of all the divisional or district workshops to meet the requirements of repairing transformers within the set deadlines. He asked them to complete the procurement of inventories well in time as already directed in the meetings taken with regard to the winter preparedness.

The Advisor directed the officers of Power Development Department to expedite the process of Branch cutting along all the corridors through which electric wires pass so that there is no undue power snapping during the snowfall in winters. The Advisor further directed the officers to start third stint of branch cutting from 8th of September and complete the process within 10 days. The Advisor was informed that once the projects get completed it would augment city power with about 80 MWs. He was further informed that the stores of ED-I and ED-II have enough quantity of transformers, poles, conductors and wire available for ongoing works and upcoming winter season. The Advisor directed the officers to replace the old rotten poles, conductors and wires expeditiously.

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1585- Antwerp surrenders after 8 months siege by Duke of Parma
- 1717 -France, Russia & Prussia sign agreement
- 1743- Sweden & Russia sign peace treaty
- 1808- Napoleon asks King Louis for Holland brigade towards Spain
- 1835- Solymon Merrick patents wrench
- 1836- British parliament accept registration of birth/ marriage/death
- 1869- 1st international boat race (River Thames, Oxford beats Harvard)
- 1870- Mrs Esther Morris becomes 1st US woman magistrate (South Pass, Wyoming)
- 891- Electric self-starter for automobile patented
- 1892- Russian/French generals Obruchev/ Boisdeffre signs Double Alliance
- 1897 -W B Purvis patents electric railway switch
- 1903- Joe Pulitzer donates \$1 million to Columbia University & begins the Pulitzer Prizes in America
- 1914- Lithuania surrenders to Germans
- 1915- German troops over run Kovno, Lithuania
- 1916-Bulgarian offensive in Macedonia
- 1917- Italy declares war on Turkey
- 1918- British troops attack Baku, Azerbaijan
- 1918- Turkish troops overthrow Caucasus
- 1924- French-German trade agreement signed
- 1933-Soviet Union test GIRD-RI rocket ("Object 09")
- 1938- 1st aircraft owned by US Forest Service in service (Oakland)
- 1940- Hitler orders total blockade of Great Britain
- 1944- Russian troops arrive at Austria-Prussia border
- 1945- Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta declare Indonesia (Dutch East Indies) independent from the Netherlands
- 1945- Korea is divided into North and South Korea along the 38th parallel
- 1947- The Radcliffe Line, the border between Union of India and Dominion of Pakistan is revealed
- 950- Indonesia gains independence from Netherlands
- 1959- USSR & Iraq signs contract for building Iraqi nuclear reactor
- 1988- Pakistani President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and U.S. Ambassador Arnold Raphael are killed in a plane crash.
- 1999- A 7.4-magnitude earthquake strikes zmit, Turkey, killing more than 17,000 and injuring 44,000.
- 2015- World's first flower could be underwater plant Montsecchia Vidalii claim US botanists (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences)
- 2015- Discovery of 7000 year old mass grave in Schöneck- Kilianstädten, Central Germany, published in PNAS Journal. 26 bodies bear evidence of violent conflict

PRAYERS

FAJR
4:22
ZUHR
12: 35
ASR
5:21
MAGRIB
7:20
ISHA
8:47

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION Ganderbal

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

EE/R&B/Divn/Gbl-e-NIT No.89 of 2021-22 under endorsement No. 8298-8303

Dated: 13-08-2021

Executive Engineer PW(R&B)Division Ganderbal on behalf of Governor of J&K State, invites percentage rate bids in electronic tendering system for the following works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with J&K UT Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State Governments.

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:-

S. No	Name of Work	Tendered Cost including GST (Rs in lacs.)			Cost of document (Rs in lacs.)	Earnest Money (Bid Security) (Rs in lacs.)	Time of completion For Construction work	Tender Call	Time and Date of opening of tenders online (Technical Bid)	Class of contractor
		Construction Part	Maintenance Part	Total cost of work						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Strengthening/ Upgradation of Inner Roads at Wahidpora under NABARD RIDF-XXVI (Length 4.00 Kms).	191.51	19.50	210.66	0.055	Bid security decl.	03 Years	27-08-2021 upto 4:00PM	28-08-2021 At 11:00 A.M	AAY with HMPH/ AAY Class Civil having agreement deed with any HMPH

M.H Account:- NABARD RIDF.XXVI
Position of AAA:- Accorded
Position of funds:- Available.
Technical Sanction. Accorded

- Date of Issue of Tender Notice 13/08/2021
- Period of downloading of bidding documents 13/08/2021 from 10.00 AM.
- Bid submission Start Date 13/08./2021 from 10.05 AM.
- Bid Submission End Date 27.08.2021 upto 4.00 PM.
- Date & time of opening of Bids (Online) 28.08./2021 at 11:00 AM in the office of Superintending Engineer R&B Circle Ganderbal/Bandipora
- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal (tender inviting authority) and Bid security Declaration as per format given in SBD. The EMD has to be submitted by the lowest bidder L1 (3% of quoted cost) within the period as specified in SBD.
- 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 Superintending Engineer R&B Circle Ganderbal-Bandipora H.Q. Ganderbal. (tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, If:-
 - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- 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.
- 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.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.
- Discoveries:- Anything of historical or other interest or of significant value unexpectedly discovered on the site shall be the property of the Govt.
- Tests:- The contractor shall be solely responsible for carrying out the mandatory tests required for the quality control at his own cost.
- Termination:- The employer may terminate the contract if the contractor causes a fundamental breach of the contract.

DIPK-6716/21

No. 8298-8303

Dated: 13/08/2021R&B

Sd/
Executive Engineer
Division Ganderbal

From KO Archives

20 killed in J&K

Blasts Rock South Kashmir, 24 Wounded

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Six security personnel, including a deputy commandant, and 18 civilians were injured, some of them seriously, in separate explosions In Anantnag district today. Elsewhere, 20 people, including 18 militants, were killed in the escalated militancy-related incidents across the state since yesterday. A police station was also unsuccessfully attacked.

Official reports said two major explosions rocked the south Kashmir district of Anantnag today resulting in injuries to 24 people, including six security personnel. One of the civilians injured in one incident was admitted in a Srinagar hospital in a critical condition.

Some unidentified per-sons hurled a grenade towards a security forces vehicle at Bijbehara chowk on Jammu Srinagar highway at 11.25 a.m. today. The missile missed the in-tended target and exploded on the road resulting in in-juries to 18 civilians. Of them, Muhammad Yousuf Paddar of Damhal Hanjipora, who was injured critically, was rushed to SMHS hospital. No militant outfit has claimed responsibility for the incident. Soon after the incident, security forces cordoned off the entire area and conducted house-to-house searches.

A CNS report late this evening said six border security force (BSF) 195 battalion personnel, including a deputy commandant, were injured when the vehicle they were travelling in stumbled over a landmine at Wangam near Kokernagh at about 6.30 p.m. today. The vehicle suffered extensive damage. Soon after the blast, the security forces sealed off the village for searches. Several villagers were allegedly beaten up.

In an encounter with the security forces at Nikon Gall Peer Panjal in Mahore sector, according to a delayed official report, 10 militants of Harkat-ul Jihad islami (HIM) were killed on Sunday. Four of them were identified as Muhammad Rafiq, Ghulam Qadir Shah, Muhammad Shaban and Muhammad Farooq, all from Doda district of Jammu region. Some arms and ammunition were recovered from the encounter site.

Two top ranking militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were killed in an encounter with the troops of 24 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) at Warpora, Magam near Handwara in Kupwara district last night. The deceased were identified as Nazir Ahmad Ward alias Nisar alias Usman, believed to be the group's 'dis-trict commander, and Muhammad Sidiq Mir, battalion commander, both residents of Magam. Some Arms were also seized from them. An unidentified suspect was killed in an encounter with the security forces at Ragni post in Karnah sector. Some arms and ammunition were thought to have been recovered from him.

(Kashmir Observer, August 17, 2000)

China Says Ready For 'Friendly Relations' With Taliban After Kabul Takeover

Agenceis

China is ready to deepen "friendly and cooperative" relations with Afghanistan, a government spokeswoman said on Monday, after the Taliban seized control of the country.

Beijing has sought to maintain unofficial ties with the Taliban throughout the US' withdrawal from Afghanistan, which spurred an advance by the hardliners across the country that saw them capture the capital Kabul on Sunday.

China shares a rugged 76-kilometre border with Afghanistan.

Beijing has long feared Afghanistan could become a staging point for minority Uyghur separatists in the sensitive border region of Xinjiang.

But a top-level Taliban delegation met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Tianjin last month, promising that Afghanistan would not be used as a base for militants.

In exchange, China offered economic support and investment for Afghanistan's reconstruction.

On Monday, China said it "welcomed" the chance to deepen ties with Afghanistan, a country that has for generations been coveted for its geo-strategic importance by bigger powers.

"The Taliban have repeatedly expressed their hope to develop good relations with China, and that they look forward to China's participation in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters.

"We welcome this. China respects the right of the Afghan people to independently determine their own destiny and is willing to continue to develop ... friendly and cooperative relations with Afghanistan."

Hua called on the Taliban to "ensure a smooth transition" of

power and keep its promises to negotiate the establishment of an "open and inclusive Islamic government" and ensure the safety of Afghans and foreign citizens.

China's embassy in Kabul remains operational, Hua said, although Beijing began evacuating Chinese citizens from the country months ago amid the deteriorating security situation.

In a statement on Monday, the embassy told Chinese citizens remaining in Afghanistan to "pay close attention to the security situation" and stay indoors.

US President Joe Biden promised a complete withdrawal of US troops by September 11, marking an end to two decades of war.

But Washington was left shocked by the rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the Taliban's sweeping advance.

China has repeatedly criticised what it sees as the US' hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan as a failure of leadership.

Stability and business

The Taliban's takeover opens a strategic door to China laden with both risk and opportunity.

Maintaining stability after decades of war in its western neighbour will be Beijing's main consideration, as it seeks to secure its borders and strategic infrastructure investments in Pakistan.

For Beijing, a stable and cooperative administration in Kabul would pave the way for an expansion of its Belt and Road Initiative into Afghanistan and through the Central Asian republics, analysts say.

The Taliban meanwhile may consider China a crucial source of investment and economic support.

China has so far stopped short of officially recognising the Taliban as the new leaders of Afghanistan, but Wang Yi called them a "decisive military and political force" during last month's meeting in Tianjin.

Iran Says U.S. "Failure" In Afghanistan A Chance For Durable Peace



Agenceis

DUBAI: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said on Monday the United States' "military failure" in Afghanistan offered an opportunity to establish lasting peace in the country.

Taliban insurgents took control of the Afghan capital Kabul on Sunday following a rout of the U.S.-backed Afghan army as foreign forces withdrew from Afghanistan.

Washington has accused Iran in the past of providing covert aid to Taliban fighters against U.S. forces. Tehran, which supports an inclusive Afghan government that would include all ethnic groups and sects, has denied this.

"America's military defeat and its withdrawal must become an opportunity to restore life, security and durable peace in Afghanistan," Iran's state TV quoted Raisi as saying.

"Iran backs efforts to restore

stability in Afghanistan and, as a neighbouring and brother nation, Iran invites all groups in Afghanistan to reach a national agreement."

Shi'ite Muslim Iran has been a foe of the hardline Sunni Muslim Taliban for decades, but for the past few years it has been openly meeting Taliban leaders. In July, Tehran hosted a meeting of then Afghan government representatives and a high-level Taliban political committee.

Oil-producing Iran, a destination for Afghans seeking work or fleeing war, said on Sunday it had prepared accommodation in three provinces to provide temporary refuge to Afghans fleeing their country.

But with its economy stifled by U.S. sanctions, Iran has encouraged many of the more than 2 million undocumented and over 800,000 registered Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic to return home.

Kabul Near Standstill On Day One Of The Taliban's 'Emirate'



Agenceis

KABUL: The first day of what the Taliban calls the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" saw Kabul, a bustling metropolis of six million, turn into a slow, male-dominated city without police or traffic controls and with shuttered businesses everywhere.

A city that only 48 hours ago was jam-packed with cars and hundreds of people lining up outside banks, visa processing offices and travel agencies, had come to a near standstill.

Remnants of the Western-backed Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, built over 20 years of international support, linger. The dividers and K9 cages of police checkpoints were still standing, but unmanneled.

The giant explosives scanners still stand, but with no one to operate them. Streets leading to the airport road were jammed with no traffic police to direct them.

The most glaring difference is the city's new inhabitants: Taliban fighters who had come from all over the nation's 34 provinces. They could be seen proudly waving their black-on-white flag and displaying their guns from the very four-wheel drives that used to be sent across the country to hunt them down.

They could even be seen outside the well-guarded presidential palace where, until Sunday afternoon, former President

Ashraf Ghani would have sat contemplating the group's rampage through Afghanistan's provinces.

By all accounts, the mostly young men had the hallmarks of the same Taliban of 1996, traditional clothes, beards, Kohl-rimmed eyes and guns at their side.

Taliban fighters with smartphones

But there was one glaring difference between these men and their predecessors, each held a smartphone and was busy taking selfies with murals of the nation's one-hundredth independence celebration behind them.

"We are here to serve the people," said Ahmad, who had come from the eastern province of Maidan Wardak and gave only one name. Ahmad and his half a dozen friends were more than happy to pose for pictures and take selfies with eager passersby.

One even specifically took out his gun and held it out in front of a young man's Galaxy phone.

"Of course, you can take a picture. Take as many as you want," the group of Taliban fighters told Al Jazeera.

During their five years or so of rule, the Taliban had banned photography and provided the public with no access to the still-fledgling Internet.

Ahmad said he arrived with a convoy from Arghandab, about 40 minutes from the city, at about 3am on Monday. He and his men

were sent as part of the Taliban's effort to control any possible looting and other crimes after police and other security forces seemingly absconded.

"It was madness. No one was on the street, no police, nothing," he said of the early morning hours in Kabul.

He claims that when they arrived at a police station, they found bags of heroin they accuse the police of dealing in. Though the claim could not be independently verified, residents of cities like Kabul have long accused the police of involvement in or complacency towards the nation's drug trade.

Though no official state has been announced, Ahmad says the Islamic Emirate is already the government.

No one should fear the Taliban, the fighter said, even those who have worked with the government or foreign forces.

"We have come with an amnesty, everyone can go about their lives," he said as a painting of Amanullah Khan, the king who declared the nation's independence, looked down on him.

There have not been any verified reports of Taliban searches or seizures in Kabul. However, residents speaking to Al Jazeera from Kandahar and Herat last week said they had seen Taliban fighters entering the homes of people suspected of being involved with the former Kabul administration or international forces.

Russia Says Afghan President Fled With Cars, Chopper Full Of Cash: Report

Agenceis

Moscow: Russia's embassy in Kabul said on Monday that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had fled the country with four cars and a helicopter full of cash and had to leave some money behind as it would not all fit in, the RIA news agency reported.

Ghani, whose current whereabouts are unknown, said he left Afghanistan on Sunday as the Taliban entered Kabul virtually unopposed. He said he wanted to avoid bloodshed.

Russia has said it will retain a diplomatic presence in Kabul and hopes to develop ties with the Taliban even as it says it is no rush to recognise them as the country's rulers and will closely observe their behaviour.

"As for the collapse of the (outgoing) regime, it is most eloquently characterised by the way Ghani fled Afghanistan," Nikita Ischenko, a spokesman for the Russian embassy in Kabul, was



quoted as saying by RIA.

"Four cars were full of money, they tried to stuff another part of the money into a helicopter, but not all of it fit. And some of the money was left lying on the tarmac," he was quoted as saying.

Ischenko, the Russian embassy spokesman, confirmed his comments to Reuters. He cited "witnesses" as the source of his information. Reuters could not independently confirm the veracity

of his account immediately.

President Vladimir Putin's special representative on Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov said earlier it was unclear how much money the fleeing government would leave behind.

"I hope the government that has fled did not take all the money from the state budget. It will be the bedrock of the budget if something is left," Kabulov told Moscow's Ekho Moskvy radio station.

Afghan Military Jet Shot Down By Uzbek Air Defences

Agenceis

TASHKENT: An Afghan military jet was shot down by Uzbek air defence forces and crashed after crossing the border into Uzbekistan, the Uzbek defence ministry said on Monday.

The Afghan government collapsed on Sunday and the Taliban insurgents took control of the capital Kabul.

The jet crashed late on Sunday in Uzbekistan's southernmost Surxondaryo province adjacent to Afghanistan.

"Uzbekistan's air defence

forces prevented an attempt by an Afghan military aircraft to illegally cross Uzbekistan's border," defence ministry spokesman Bahrom Zulfikarov said.

He did not say how many people were on board or whether they have survived the crash.

Russia's RIA news agency earlier on Monday cited Uzbekistan's defence ministry as saying the pilot had ejected and was injured.

On Sunday, Uzbekistan said it had detained 84 Afghan soldiers who had crossed the border and sought medical help. Reuters

Four Palestinians Shot And Killed In Israeli Army Raid In Jenin



Agenceis

At least four Palestinian men have been shot dead during confrontations with the Israeli army in the Jenin refugee camp in the north of the occupied West Bank.

Saleh Mohammed Ammar, 19, and Raed Ziad Abu Seif, 21, were shot on Monday and died from their wounds shortly after arriving at the Jenin city hospital, according to a source at the health facility.

"Two citizens arrived at the emergency department, shot by the Israeli army, and died shortly afterwards, succumbing to their injuries," a source at the hospital was quoted as saying by local media.

The bodies of the two other men, one identified as Noor Jarrar and the other as Amjad Iyad Azmi, were taken by Israeli forces, sources said.

The governor of Jenin confirmed the deaths.

At least two other Palestinians were arrested. One was shot in the hand and the other, identified as Mohammed Abu Zina, was taken from his home during the raid.

Meanwhile, funeral processions began for the slain men in the Jenin refugee camp.

Witnesses said a group of Palestinians engaged in clashes with members from the Israeli police's Mustaribeen – an undercover unit made up of Israelis disguised as Palestinians.

The unit's agents usually embed themselves in Palestinian areas with the intention of arresting people. Maan reported the agents had been in the camp hours before Israeli forces stormed the area.

According to Maan, the Mustaribeen agents opened fire "directly on a large group of young men" just as Israeli troops raided the camp.

Stun grenades and tear gas were also fired at Palestinians, witnesses said.

The Israeli police said in a statement that soldiers shot at "attackers" after Palestinians

opened fire at the army's "undercover forces".

None of the Israeli forces was wounded in the incident. They were reportedly on a mission to detain an individual, police said.

Senior Palestinian official Hussein Al Sheikh accused Israel of "a heinous crime" and tweeted "the international community should be ashamed of its silence about this and its failure to provide protection to the Palestinian people from this oppression".

In recent weeks, there have been numerous clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in Jenin and Beita.

Beita sees regular demonstrations against the illegal Israeli occupation and settlement expansion, which often lead to confrontations.

Fighting Israeli forces has claimed the lives of several Palestinians and left hundreds more wounded.

Nearly half a million people live in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, alongside 2.8 million Palestinians.

Palestinians have staged near-daily protests in Beita since May to voice anger at a nearby illegal Israeli settler outpost.

The settlement was evacuated in early July but Israeli army troops remain stationed there while authorities deliberate on its fate. If the settlement is approved, its founders will be allowed to take up residence there more permanently.

Beita's residents have vowed to continue their campaign until the army also leaves the outpost.

The occupied West Bank is part of the territory where a Palestinian state is envisaged under the two-state solution.

Israel occupied the West Bank during the 1967 War and all settlements there are considered illegal by most of the international community.

Israeli forces often carry out raids in various areas across the West Bank, where they detain, and often kill, Palestinians.



ABDUL GHANI BARADAR The face of Taliban victory

The Taliban has taken over Kabul in one of the swiftest blitzes in the history of military offensives.

The insurgents entered the capital unopposed on Sunday as the government forces collapsed and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, bringing the Taliban back to power two decades after they were toppled by a US-led invasion in December 2001.

As uncertainty looms over the future of leadership in Afghanistan, multiple reports and speculations suggest that Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the co-founder and political

bureau chief of Taliban, is most likely to be the supreme head of the country. After being freed from a Pakistani jail in 2018 upon the request of the United States, he re-emerged as an undisputed leader of Taliban.

Although Haibatullah Akhundzada is currently the supreme leader of Taliban, Mullah Baradar is its political chief and its most public face.

Like most Afghans currently in their 50s, Mullah Baradar's childhood was affected and altered by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970s.

Baradar was born in Uruzgan province in 1968.

However, he was raised and spent most of his childhood in Kandahar, the birthplace of Taliban. He fought in the Afghan mujahideen against the Soviets in the 1980s.

Right after the Russians were driven out in 1992, Afghanistan was plunged into civil war between rival warlords who had once stood up together to fight the occupying force. During the Afghan Civil War, Baradar set up a madrasa in Kandahar with his former commander and reputed brother-in-law, Mohammad Omar, the one-eyed cleric also known as Mullah Omar.

Pakistani Model Killed By Stepbrother For 'Honour'

Press Trust of India

Lahore: A Pakistani fashion model, who was found dead at her house here last month, was killed by her stepbrother for "disgracing the family's honour", police said on Monday.

On her return from Dubai, the 29-year-old model, Nayab Nadeem, was found strangled at her house in Lahore on July 11 and a murder case was registered on the complaint of one of her two stepbrothers.

Punjab police spokesperson Rana Arif told PTI on Monday that the mystery of this blind



murder has been solved as the victim's stepbrother turned out to be her murderer.

The model's stepbrother, Muhammad Aslam, has

confessed that he first strangled her and then stripped her dead body naked to mislead the police and show that it was a rape-cum-murder case.

"Aslam confessed killing Nayab for disgracing the family's honour," the police official said and added that the suspect claimed that the fashion model had relations with different men and she was a "stain on the family's honour".

Nayab lived alone in the rented house and she was not married. Aslam has been remanded in police custody for three days for further investigation.

CS Directs JKRLM To Establish 11000 SHGs

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta Monday while asserting that self help groups have huge potential in Jammu and Kashmir, directed the JKRLM to ensure establishment of additional 11,000 self help groups by 30th September, 2021 by ensuring social mobilization of rural women, besides identifying various commercial activities suited for the rural economy to establish fruitful forward and backward linkages.

He chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved under the centrally sponsored scheme 'UMED' in Jammu and Kashmir.

It was informed that J&K Rural Livelihood Mission has so far established 46,000 self help groups and linked them to financial institutions, besides releasing Rs. 15.82 crore in favour of 3,955 Self Help Groups. During the current financial year two additional blocks have been brought under the fold of J&K Rural Livelihood Mission.

The Chief Secretary further directed the Mission to immediately establish permanent SHG haats at district and block headquarters for providing a ready market to various SHG products. The Mission was asked to draw a SHG-wise calendar for all districts and

give wide publicity to weekly sales of diverse products in advance.

He also directed appointment of 'Bank Sakhis' in Panchayats having more than 50 SHG bank linkages to assist SHG members in availing various banking facilities.

Dr. Mehta urged upon the Principal Secretary RDD to take up convergence between agriculture-based rural SHGs and various other schemes of agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, and animal and sheep husbandry departments; to evaluate their contribution in doubling the farmers' income. It was also decided that interactions will be held with leaders of SHGs of all districts to obtain a feedback on the functioning of the scheme.

It was also informed that the Mission has trained 8,039 mahila kisan in agro-ecological practices, besides establishing all-women dairy FPO of 250 Self Help Groups (SHG) members in convergence with NABARD.

To enhance market opportunities and strengthen marketing linkages, the Mission has hired two marketing agencies for training and entrepreneurship development of rural SHG women with special focus on institutional innovation of SHG products for enhancing their competitiveness.

BG 6th Sem Students Aghast Over Delay In Exams

Agencies

Srinagar: The students of BG 6th semester 2018 who are enrolled in Kashmir University are demanding final semester exams for the completion of their degrees.

The students said, "We have started our first semester back in march 2018 and we are lagging behind one year in our graduation".

The students are demanding that the university authorities should conduct our final semester exams within no time so that we can apply

for post graduation and other career oriented courses.

All other universities in the valley have conducted the exams of BG final semester 2018 batch but Kashmir university is not paying heed to our concerns, said a student from batch 2018.

"We tried to talk to the university authorities but still our exams are not being conducted," said the students.

We appeal to the authorities to conduct our final exams in due possible time so that we can pursue our career further, said the students.

DDC Shopian Stresses On Door-to-door Awareness About 'Mumkin Scheme'

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya Monday reviewed the Employment Generation Status under various self employment Dastaq schemes, an initiative by District Administration to involve and motivate more and more unemployed educated youth for establishing self-employment generation units in the district.

It was informed in the meeting that 2000 unemployed youth have been identified and registered for establishing their self-Employment income generating units under different schemes in various line departments and also a

target of 5000 unemployed educated youth are expected to be registered this year to enable them to establish their own income generating units.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC stressed upon the line departments and bankers to work in tandem and coordination and ensure that the targets fixed already are achieved well in time.

The DDC took strong note of pendency in some institutions and asked them to improve their performance for which he gave a timeline for achievement of targets and stressed upon them to visit them at their door-steps to make them aware about the Centrally-sponsored scheme like mumkin scheme etc.



Domestic Violence Victims Rue Absence Of Women's Commission

Agencies

Srinagar: Two years after the abrogation of Special Status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the subsequent reading down of state commissions, the government is yet to re-establish a Women's Commission in the region leaving a population of more than twelve million in a lurch, particularly the victims of domestic violence.

After the bifurcation of the erstwhile state the Women's Commission, along with six other commissions, including those dealing with human rights, right to information (RTI), and rights of the disabled were disbanded and about 160 special laws that applied to the erstwhile state were scrapped.

A pressure group based outside Kashmir who reinstated the commission in Telangana after 30 months had written to the Prime Minister of India demanding the restoration of the women's commission in Jammu and Kashmir amid the rise in domestic violence cases across the erstwhile state.

Danish Zahoor, head of the Women's Commission in J&K, said that they are pleading for the restoration of women's commission of J&K in Srinagar as

violence against women has increased since Covid-19 lockdown.

"Women's commission is purely a social institute and has nothing to do with politics. They are doing a great job especially for underprivileged women facing different issues," Zahoor said.

Zahoor said after the abrogation of the special status of J&K, women in the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been left in a lurch as they can't go to Delhi to solve their issues in the national women's commission.

He said that now authorities have given approval for a special J&K-Ladakh cell at the national commission for women but it will have a very little impact as it is not easy for the victims to reach Delhi with their problems.

"Yes, there are options that you can register your problems online there but uneducated women and women living in remote far flung areas won't be able to take up their issues to the commission," he said.

"A single women's police station for 10 districts can't handle all the cases, there is a need to restore women's commission in J&K," he said. "Even those women who had

filed cases in the commission before August 05 have also been left vulnerable as they have nowhere to go," he said.

"I feel that the special cell for J&K-Ladakh was the first step towards success and we are hopeful that efforts of our group along with the media and others will bear fruits and very soon we will have a full fledged women's commission here," Zahoor said.

Experts, activists and NGOs working on gender issues also believe the commission is an alternative for women to come forward and report violence as for many women filling a complaint at the police station is a daunting task.

As per the first phase of the 2019-20 national family health survey, almost one in three married women experience physical, emotional or sexual violence.

As per survey, only 14 percent of the women after experiencing any kind of violence have sought help, however, over 77 percent have neither disclosed nor sought help about the violence they experienced.

The domestic violence cases are increasing in Jammu and Kashmir at a rapid rate.

'Mumkin Scheme' Helps Reasi Resident To Make A Decent Living

Observer News Service

REASI: The customized Livelihood Generation Scheme-MUMKIN has opened the door of opportunity for several youth like Mohammad Rafiq- a resident of district Reasi to earn a decent living for supporting his family.

The Administrative Council of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir has come up with this customized scheme to enable the likes of Rafiq to earn their livelihood by providing subsidized small commercial Vehicles on highly soft loans.

Under this scheme the youth of J&K are be-

ing facilitated to procure light commercial vehicles for starting a sustainable livelihood. The objective of the scheme is to provide the financial Assistance for purchase of light commercial vehicle (load Carrier) to the desiring unemployed youth on the subsidy of Rs 160000 or 20% of the on road price of the vehicle (which ever in minimum).

In District Reasi, 70 cases of MUMKIN have been approved by the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) for the first Quarter of Financial year 2021-22. Out of these, subsidy has been approved

in favour of 25 cases, while 8 beneficiaries received the vehicle till August-14, 2021 and they have started to earn their livelihood. The vehicle was provided to the youth who before have struggling to earn their two times meals.

Mohammad Rafiq of Agharballian W.No.05 Tehsil and District Reasi was a Matriculate unemployed youth and the head of the 6 member family including 03 daughters and 01 son. With no regular income, Rafiq had been struggling for several years to make the two ends meet by working as driver on paltry salary.

AG Office Refutes Issuance Of Appointment Orders

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Advocate General (AG) Office, J&K has issued a clarification regarding issuance of fake appointment orders that are in circulation in social media.

In a statement issued here, the office of Advocate General has refuted that neither such so-called selection committee was constituted by this office nor any such orders have been issued.

This has also been verified from the office records, read the statement.

Meanwhile it was informed

that some so-called recruitment orders are circulated in social media against the direct recruitment quota in the category of Junior Assistants and Orderly ought to have been issued purportedly by the AG office under his seal and signature. The orders bear fictitious Order No.76-AG of 2021 dated 13 July, 2021 and No. 79-AG of 2021 dated 13 July, 2021.

The statement informed the general public that these appointment orders are fake and have no legal footing. The matter is being referred to the Crime Branch for further necessary action.

Numerous Steps Taken To Augment Infra In J&K Healthcare Institutions: Dr Singh

Inaugurates 1000 LPM Oxygen Plant At GMC Kathua

Observer News Service

KATHUA: Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region and PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh Mon-

The Union Minister said Jammu & Kashmir has taken lead in Covid Vaccination and it has become possible with the dedication of the medical staff who are reaching out to



day said that Government of India has taken numerous steps to augment medical infrastructure in Healthcare institutions of Jammu & Kashmir to deal with the challenges like Covid-19 and other medical situations.

He said this after inaugurating 1000 LPM capacity Oxygen Generation Plant here at Government Medical College, Kathua today.

Pertinently, the newly installed Oxygen Generation Plant has been installed under PM Care initiative. The DRDO, NHA, PWD and Mechanical Engineering Department were roped in to install the Plant in the shortest possible time.

With the addition of 1000 LPM Plant, the total Oxygen Generation Capacity in GMC Kathua has gone up to 3250 LPM.

The Union Minister also dedicated a portable Ultra-sound Machine and two CBC analysers worth Rs 35.89 lakh provided under his MPLAD fund.

Dr Jitendra also inspected the Covid Vaccination Centre and interacted with people and Nursing Staff deputed to undertake the age appropriate inoculation drive at GMC Kathua

people braving all odds. He directed Principal GMC to incentivise those staff members who register lowest wastage of Covid Vaccines.

Later, Dr Jitendra distributed Ration among the beneficiaries of Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY) at Hatli Morh.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Singh said the initiative of providing free ration to the identified group of people adversely affected by the Covid situation has been worked out with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is being extended till this year's October month.

Dr Jitendra Singh also chaired a meeting with elected representatives of PRIs, ULBs and Officers of District Administration at the Conference Hall of DC office complex.

DDC Chairman, Kathua Mahan Singh put forth development issues before the Union Minister which were related to the early completion of key roads, revised payment of Border Bunkers, tapping of Tourism potential areas of the district etc.

Vice Chairman, DDC, Raghunandan Singh and other elected members highlighted development related issues of

Rajouri Youth Murdered For 'Objecting' To Relation Of 2 Teenagers: Police

Agencies

Jammu: Police on Monday said two persons have been arrested in connection with the murder of a 28-year-old youth in Rajouri district last week and said that the murder was done for "repeatedly questioning" relation of teenagers.

Police last Wednesday formed a Special Investigation Team to investigate the "brutal murder" of the youth, Ankush Bakshi son of Bachan Lal, in Chakli area of Rajouri district.

Ankush was attacked with sharp edged weapons and died on the spot as a result of the injuries sustained, police had said.

Based on this, police said, a case (FIR No. 538/20210 under section 302 and 458 IPC was registered at police station Rajouri and investigation started.

Govt Committed To Redressing Public Issues On Priority

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan has reiterated government's commitment towards redressal of public issues on priority.

Advisor stated this while chairing a public grievances redressal camp here today held at Lieutenant Governor's Grievance Cell.

Nearly, 30 public deputations and 60 individuals hailing from different areas of Kashmir valley highlighted their demands and grievances before the Advisor seeking an early redressal of the same.

A deputation of residents from Barbar Shah area of Srinagar raised several issues pertaining to improvement of civic amenities in the area.

Another deputation of Health and Nutrition Mobilizer employees sought extension in their contractual services.

Similarly, a deputation of DCPU employees raised the issue of their



regularization in the department.

A deputation from Alamgari Bazaar sought repairing of drainage adjacent to Masjid Imam Riza (RA) in the area.

Likewise, a deputation of shopkeepers from Regal Lane, Lal Chowk raised the issue of rent before the Advisor.

A deputation from Harwan area of Srinagar demanded installation of

water pipes in their area while another deputation from Alamgari Bazaar sought construction of a community hall.

Various other individuals and delegations also called on the Advisor and raised issues and demands related to School Education, Haj & Auqaf, Social Welfare, Tribal Affairs, Culture, Agriculture, Horticulture and Rural Development & Panchayati

Kathua Helicopter Crash...

Searches Continue For 2nd Missing Pilot

Agencies

Jammu: A day after body of one of the two missing pilots of a helicopter of Indian Army's aviation corps which crashed near Ranjit Sagar Dam in the Basohli area of Kathua was found, searches continued for the second one on the 14th day, officials said on Monday.

While the body of one of the pilots identified as Lt Col AS Baath was recovered,

there was no trace of the remains of another pilot yet, official sources said.

Army has said to have intensified search operations for Pilot and helicopter which had crashed into the Ranjit Sagar Dam with Submarine Rescue Unit of Indian Navy flown in to explore digitally located wreckage at depth of approximately 80 - 100 meters, the officials said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My husband's DOB has been Wrongly mentioned in his Death certificate As 01-04-1950 (71 yrs old) instead of 1/4 /1960 (61 yrs old), as per Adhaar card, which needs immediate correction . If any body have any objection may contact to police station Qalamabad within seven days after that no objection will be accepted.

Applicant's Name:- Mugli Bagum

W/O:- Late Ali Mohd Shah

R/O:- Sharhama Lach

SULT-R

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

PM's poll promise

In his Independence Day speech, the prime minister Narendra Modi said that the preparations are on to hold Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. This is seen as an indication of the seriousness of the centre to hold elections in the union territory in near future. Only prerequisite is the report of the delimitation commission which is set to enhance the number of the seats. But after the PM's commitment to hold polls soon, it is expected that the delimitation commission would complete its task within the next few months. The PM also praised the holding of last year's District Development Council elections.

But the people in Jammu and Kashmir would be most interested in the Assembly polls and to this end would want the delimitation commission to give its report soon. Incidentally, the commission visited Kashmir in July in the wake of the much hyped meeting of the prime minister Narendra Modi with the J&K leaders. The meeting turned out to be more of an interaction of the PM and the home minister Amit Shah with the J&K leaders than an effort to resolve the issues currently facing the former state. Both the PM and the HM stayed true to their ongoing approach towards J&K. They were not inclined even to restore statehood in the near term. Instead, the statehood, it was made clear, would follow "at an appropriate time," once the delimitation exercise has been completed and the elections within the union territory framework have been held. This could set the stage for the restoration of statehood. But no one in J&K is sure if the statehood to be granted would be full or a truncated one where the real power would vest in the governor.

Significantly, the PM didn't talk of J&K statehood even in his August 15 speech. He only reiterated the line toed by him during his meeting with J&K leaders. Over the last two years, New Delhi has gone ahead with its project in Kashmir with a single minded devotion. It has passed order after order and tinkered with and made changes to the entire edifice of the existing socio-political structure. It is, however, difficult to believe that the centre would restore statehood soon. That's until perhaps the union government is certain that its new laws for the union territory can be undone by a future dispensation. So, there's likely going to be more wait till the UT has been fully insulated against such a prospect.

O T H E R O P I N O N

How America failed in Afghanistan

The pathway of the collapse was predicted and predictable. This has happened in Afghan political and military history a couple of times before. But there was a speed and momentum of people recalculating where their interests lay, and switching sides, and capitulating without violence that I don't think the Biden Administration had expected when it announced its timetable in the spring.

The counter-argument to the Biden Administration's policy is not going to be forever war and the defeat of the Taliban; it is going to be a critique of the haste with which it pulled the plug on what was not a large deployment, and one that was not incurring a lot of casualties."

The New Yorker

Disaster in Afghanistan will follow us home

Biden's heedlessness, on the cusp of a sweeping Taliban blitzkrieg that on Sunday saw them enter Kabul, will define his administration's first great fiasco. It won't matter that he is carrying through on the shamolic withdrawal agreement negotiated last year by the Trump administration, with the eager support of Trump's isolationist base, and through the diplomatic efforts of Trump's lickspittle secretary of state, Mike Pompeo.

This is happening on Biden's watch, at Biden's insistence, against the advice of his senior military advisers and with Biden's firm assurance to the American people that what has just come to pass wouldn't come to pass. Past presidents might have had a senior adviser resign in the wake of such a debacle, as Les Aspin, then the secretary of defense, did after the 1993 Black Hawk Down episode in Somalia.

This time, Biden owns the moment. He also owns the consequences. We should begin to anticipate them now."

-The New York Times

Stagflation in J&K
Exorbitant living costs and contracting economy



Ejaz Ayoub

This untamed Inflation is making it excruciatingly hard for economically vulnerable sections of the society to make ends meet. To make the situation even worse, the contraction in J&Ks economy since August 5, 2019 as per various independent estimates has been a staggering negative 20-25%

One of the many functions of money is to store value. Whenever someone adds value to the economy in the form of providing goods or services, money that they receive is a sort of a receipt which they can then exchange with other goods and services in the economy as per their need. This arrangement, however, becomes questionable when these pieces of receipts lose their ability to store the value of one's productivity. This robbing of value often happens due to increase in the supply of such receipts in the system. And it becomes even more ethically questionable when the supply of such receipts is controlled by none other than the Government itself.

The seeds of this global monetary economic system that we know today, were sown in the early 1970s. It was when the post WWII Gold backed Bretton Woods agreement was unilaterally abolished by the United States to make way for the present day fiat currency system. Since then, central banks across the world have been grappling with the problem of synchronising money supply with the productive capacity of their respective economies in order to manage growth while maintaining the purchasing power of currency at the same time. However, during times of low economic activity or poor fiscal resources, a standard tool kit adopted by Central Banks across the globe is to infuse more money supply in the system with an objective of shoring up demand or supporting Government expenditure. This tightrope walk often leads to bouts of inflation and valleys of recession. Recent hyperinflation scenarios in economies of Zimbabwe and Venezuela are typical examples of how poorly managed money supply in the economy can lead to currency notes becoming worthless pieces of paper.

Since the onslaught of Covid19 and the subsequent economic recession in India, the monetary response by the Reserve Bank of India has been aimed at infusing tremendous amounts of money supply in the economy. With way too many receipts (currency) floating in the economy coupled with supply side disruptions, the erosion in the value of Indian Rupee has been substantial. A deep cut in economic output with a contraction of -7.5 in the GDP as on March 2021 is making things even more grim.

On 12th August 2021, National Statistical Office (NSO) - Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoPSI) released All India Consumer Price Index

(CPI) figures for July 2021 inflation. As per MoPSI, all India CPI averaged at 5.59, which was comparatively lower than June 2021 of 6.26. Pertinent to mention that the stated comfort level by RBI for inflation is around 4%. J&K's inflation on the contrary went from an already high of 7.42 in June 2021 to a whopping 7.81 in July 2021. This overheated inflationary pressure in J&K has been consistently hovering around this territory for over a year. The inflation has been primarily rooted in the supply side of the equation. It's a cost push rather than demand pull inflation driven by supply side bottlenecks & furthered by exploitative excise/VAT on Petrol/Diesel/LPG. Besides treacherous road links leading to logistical cost disadvantages, frequent restrictions in movement of men & material is only worsening it.

The methodology adopted for calculation of inflation under CPI takes into account a basket of essential and basic items like food, fuel, apparel, education, healthcare, transportation, housing, recreation and household goods and other services. Food inflation has been driven by a huge spike in prices of cooking oil, eggs, pulses and non-alcoholic beverages. In other segments, fuel prices, transportation costs and healthcare have registered a very unhealthy growth.

This untamed Inflation is making it excruciatingly hard for economically vulnerable sections of the society to make ends meet. To make the situation even worse, the contraction in J&Ks economy since August 5, 2019 as per various independent estimates has been a staggering negative 20-25%. Recession coupled with inflation is a classic case of a lethal stagflation. This is also reflected in the job losses data published by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). As per CMIE J&K's unemployment ratio for the month of July is 15.4 %. This implies approximately 7 lakh bread earners in J&K are unable to find dignified income generating work in the economy. Seven lakh is proportionally a very big chunk of the total workforce which is around 44 lakh. This loss in income in turn pushes a lot of households to abject poverty.

Coupled with the fast eroding value of money due to inflation, the situation is rapidly spiraling down into a lethal mix of despair and survival crisis. Rising cases of suicides and drug abuse have a strong correlation with this toxic income and inflation crisis. Economic miseries that have unfolded in the last two years are taking a serious toll on the socio-

economy of the region.

In addition to this, high levels of inflation also erodes the value of hard earned savings. With over Rs. 1.3 lakh crore lying in bank deposits in J&K UT at an average annual Interest rate of only 5.1-5.5%, J&Ks latest inflation data at 7.81% poses a serious challenge. The regional liquid wealth is eroding at a faster rate than what is being compensated by the interest payments. These deposits are earning a negative real rate of interest. Which implies people are actually losing money by keeping it in bank deposits. Saving in a rapidly inflating currency is a bad idea. During inflationary times it's always profitable to store value in other asset classes instead of fiat currency. Borrowing, however, during these times for creating revenue generating assets rather than consumption or speculation is a better financial strategy.

The immediate regional short term policy response should first aim at reducing exorbitant VAT on petrol, diesel and LPG. This small revenue sacrifice by the Government will have far reaching benefits in easing up the inflationary pressures. Besides this, supply side bottlenecks on account of excruciating restrictions in movement of men and material needs to be revisited. This will smoothen up the flow of economy and ease out supply side disruptions, making availability of goods and services at cheaper costs. Moreover, availability of food, healthcare and education on subsidised rates to the economically vulnerable sections of society deserves to be among the top priorities of the administration. This inflationary wave as per the indicators is here to stay for another quarter or two. Sustaining this needs a well calibrated and timely response from the policy makers. It's not just about the people; a defunct crisis laden economy is in nobody's interest. Govt. needs a well functioning economic system to earn taxes and fill its highly indebted coffers. Therefore, rescuing the economy is in every stakeholders interest including the tax dependent state exchequer.

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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Teaching Practices in Kashmir

In a recent meeting with senior administrators of the Union Territory, Dr Arun Mishra, the Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, emphasized updating the school curriculum by August 31. It is good to update books and keep track of the emerging facts, but in Kashmir, the use of obsolete books is not the only factor that hinders the education of school-going children. In essence, in most schools of the valley, teaching methods are a problem in itself.

Unfortunately, Kashmiri students are not motivated to think criti-

cally; they are expected to remember things. Yes, to remember things for exams and getting grades. Rarely are they encouraged to question the validity and production of facts that books carry. And sadly enough, a cross-question to a teacher is taken as an insult to him or her. There's a cliché that teachers in Kashmir use "Don't argue." What is the problem with argumentation? If a student disagrees with a view that a teacher proposes, then (s)he has every right to contest the idea of his/her teacher. In other words, every student should be able to argue. Argumentation on

literary issues is a step towards critical thinking. And that's what school-going children should be trained in from a certain point, to think critically.

Now, here's another example to understand methods of teaching in schools of Kashmir. Most students in Kashmir learn about the "grammar" of the English language. Students most commonly learn about nouns, pronouns, articles, verbs, adjectives, tenses, and forms of sentences. What they grasp through grammar training is how to remember different parts of speech than how to use them during

communication. The true essence of learning grammar is to improve communication skills, but here in Kashmir, it is taught to pass exams.

Until reflective thinking is not encouraged in schools of Kashmir and students are not allowed to argue on literary issues with their teachers, updating books will not have much of an impact. Thus, steps should be taken to improve teaching practices in the valley.

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How the chisel of time and tragedies shapes us

Often great service is born from a cycle of misdeeds followed by remorse

Rashmi Nandkeolyar

But what of the regrets that bother us, that cause us unease, shame and guilt? The choices we made when we were not at our finest, the hurt we caused that we cannot undo, the people we betrayed and most importantly, when we let ourselves down, “the man in the mirror”, whose unfaltering, dispassionate judgement impales our conscience/self-esteem?

The other day a young colleague came to see me. Even the COVID mask could not hide her grin, nor office protocol suppress the skip in her step. She was ecstatic because she had just been promoted. She has a loving and supportive husband and will soon be able to pay off the mortgage for an apartment.

Her life, more or less, is where she wants it to be. In a moment of self-reflection and satisfaction, she said, “I wish I had known four years ago that this is what my life would be down the road. I wasted so much time feeling insecure and scared of the future. If I had known, I would have enjoyed all those years.”

Amid the joy, there is regret

As we journey through life, we do look before and after, and even our sweetest songs are tinged with the melancholy of opportunities lost, of needless suffering and angst.

I, too, have my share of regrets. In this basket of ‘might have been’ is a doctoral degree, a career as a writer, a professional stage director. I also wish I had applied myself better in college, honed my interests and gifts more rigorously. I wish I had been emotionally stronger and shut out the white noise of teenage emotions. I wish I could have known that it didn’t matter and the future beckoned brightly. I wish, I wish....

But is it precisely the fact that we fell by the way, that we felt trapped and vulnerable, or made the wrong choices; that provided the knock we needed to pick ourselves up, gird our loins and do better? Do we owe our current reality to our resilience and dedication, consequent to being wounded in the travails of life?

I bat for this

Our mistakes, in fact, became the cornerstones of our success. The chisel of time and tragedies shapes us to become the person we want to be. A child walks after several falls; and so do we learn to run after faltering along the way. We learn to “manage” life and ourselves, we make the best of our opportunities and of ourselves, having known the worst. Adversity, in fact, makes a man/woman of us.

I am delighted to note stories of courage and strength: a dear friend has built a formidable reputation as a businesswoman from the ashes of her broken marriage; she is an exemplary portrait of a resilient, gritty woman who did not allow her regrets and failures to define her.

I have known innumerable students who have succeeded after many setbacks to achieve their dreams: the academically challenged student who became a stage actor, the student who took a couple of gap years to clear the medical



entrance examination, the physically challenged student who is an expert coder.

The man in the mirror

But what of the regrets that bother us, that cause us unease, shame and guilt? The choices we made when we were not at our finest, the hurt we caused that we cannot undo, the people we betrayed and most importantly, when we let ourselves down, “the man in the mirror”, whose unfaltering, dispassionate judgement impales our conscience/self-esteem? Memories of our misdeeds that we must live with, guilt that we carry, seemingly forever; mar our present.

The most common regrets are undue harshness with children, cheating on a partner, ignoring old parents, betraying an old friend or a business partner.

What can we do to expunge these regrets, knowing that the past cannot be erased?

A friend cannot forgive himself for sending his old mother to live in his home country, looked after by relatives. When she died, he could not return home, even for the last rites.

His guilt has eroded his physical and mental health. Nor medicines, nor counsel-

ling have soothed his troubled body or soul. Even as he rationally explains his choices, the heart has its own language. He is tormented by regrets.

My son’s grief at losing a beloved pet as a teenager has never been assuaged because he believes that he could have done better in taking care of her. Recently, after more than two decades, I heard him say, “Mum, we didn’t know better back then”. That is as much forgiveness as he allows himself.

What is the balm for such regrets?

I believe that we must be kinder to ourselves, appreciate our fragility as human beings, and be comforted in knowing that the acknowledgement of our regret is a vital factor in our personal growth. Because we regret, we will change. As much as we suffer, we will amend.

Our heartfelt regrets transform us to do better: often great service is born from a cycle of misdeeds followed by remorse. It is this dichotomy that makes us believe that the world will continue to evolve into a better place.

The Gulf News

Freedom In The Eyes Of Hussain

Arguably it was this sense of freedom that Imam Hussain was referring to when he addressed the enemies saying, “if you do not believe in God and the Hereafter, at least be free in this world”

Muntadar Kadhim

Freedom is a lofty value that all humans recognise irrespective of sect or religion. This is especially true of those who commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), who died opposing the corrupt dictator of his time, Yazid ibn Muawiyah.

I think it would be interesting to reflect on what freedom means, in the context of Ashura, and through the prism of Imam Hussain and his companions. First, let’s begin by briefly discussing two concepts of freedom.

Freedom To Do What You Like

In contemporary culture, to be free is to be able to do what you like. Freedom is the absence of the interference of others in your life, allowing you to lead the life you see fit. This concept of freedom is that of Classical Liberalism, which has historically been very influential. Because its focus is on the absence of something, namely the absence of interference of others, it has been dubbed negative freedom. If someone forces you to do something, then they are restricting your negative freedom, because they are interfering with your life. When the corrupt ruler Yazid oppressed Muslims through threats, intimidation, imprisonment, and worse, he restricted their freedom in this sense of freedom.

Arguably it was this sense of freedom that Imam Hussain was referring to when he addressed the enemies saying,

If you do not believe in God and the Hereafter, at least be free in this world.

In other words, don’t let Yazid and his thugs force you to do their bidding; don’t let them interfere with your life in this way. This sort of freedom was recognised by all, including the soldiers of Yazid, many of them being Kufans who joined Yazid’s army out of fear.

A Deeper Sense of Freedom

But there is more to freedom than non-interference of others. Think about the alcoholic who lives in a liberal society with very few restrictions. The al-



coholic does what he likes—he drinks alcohol. While he might be free to do this as no one is interfering in his life to stop him, and so is free in the sense of freedom discussed above, in a deeper sense he is anything but free; rather he is a slave to his addiction, spending all his time between intoxication and seeking more alcohol to satisfy his cravings. Or consider the person driven by his animalistic passions, whose sole concern is to satisfy those base desires in any way he can. He is ruled by his desires, and lives his life in the prison of these desires, unable to break free and appreciate the greater things in life.

What this shows is that there is a deeper, more profound sense of freedom, that isn’t simply freedom from interference of others, or freedom to do what you like. This deeper, positive notion of freedom is concerned with fulfilling your potential as a human being, which is to fulfil your potential as a moral and spiritual being. This is no small thing. To achieve this type of freedom is to refuse to be a slave

to drugs and alcohol, and to rule over your own animalistic desires rather than let them rule over you. It is to not give into peer pressure, blindly following the herd, easily swayed by the opinion of the majority and turning whichever way the wind blows in the words of Imam Ali. It is to fulfil your purpose in creation as a spiritual being, through submission to the ultimate source of all goodness and devotion to Him. It requires knowledge of important truths, strength, and courage to act on them, and perseverance to remain on the path.

Imam Hussain’s Sense of Freedom

So what of Imam Hussain? There can be no question that he was an exemplar of this deeper sense of freedom, through his devotion to God and application of lofty Islamic principles in his life, his courage, and patience in the face of the greatest trials, and impossible odds. While Yazid’s army restricted

his negative freedom, he was on the day of Ashura the freest man on Earth.

We call Imam Hussain Abul Ahrar—the father of the free—a title he holds in part because of the freedom he inspired in his companions. Companions such as Hurr, a general in Yazid’s army who intercepted Imam Hussain on the way to Kufa, and who was responsible for trapping the Imam in Karbala. Hurr’s story is an incredible tale of forgiveness and redemption, for when Hurr came to realise the evil of what he had done, he defected from Yazid’s army and joined Imam Hussain, in the face of certain death. After seeking forgiveness from the Imam, he became one of the first to fight the enemy and be martyred. Imam Hussain then approached the lifeless body of Hurr, whose name literally means free in Arabic, and wiping away soil and blood from his face he said, Congratulations Hurr! You are free (hurr) as your mother named you, free in this life and the next!.

Contrast this with Umar Ibn Saad, who led the army against Imam Hussain after being promised the rulership of Ray in Iran by Ibn Ziyad. Although he was freer than Imam Hussain and his companions in the superficial negative sense of freedom, he was ultimately a slave to his greed and love for wealth and power. He was at the mercy of these spiritual vices and under the command of Iblis, so was in the deeper and more important sense not free at all.

Perhaps it was this sense of freedom Muslim ibn Aqeel, Hussain’s emissary, was referring to, when in the midst of battle, on the streets of Kufa he was offered safety by his enemies. Muslim replied in the form of beautiful poetry that began,

I swear I will not be killed except as a free man. This offer of safety, even if true, and even if it allowed Muslim to live a life without interference, would have compromised his real freedom.

Indeed the battle of Karbala is a battle between the free and the slaves. It is a battle between those who conquered their animalistic self (nafs) and those who were ruled by it. In the words of Imam Hussain himself,

By God, I shall not surrender as one humiliated, nor shall I escape like a slave.

Here’s how products make people feel grounded to place, past

Agencies

A recent study from the Vienna University of Economics and Business and Cornell University have found that there is an increase in demand for products that are local, made by individually identified people, traditional, or remind people of their childhood and native place.

The findings of the study were published in the 'Journal of Marketing'. The study is authored by Isabel Eichinger, Martin Schreier, and Stijn M.J. van Osselaer.

Consumers are increasingly seeking products that are local, made by individually identified people, traditional, or remind them of their childhood and family growing up.

Consumers' need to feel grounded is evidenced by the ever-increasing popularity of farmers markets, hand-cut soap, artisanal bread, the locavore movement, and the return to familiar grocery brands during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Locally rooted microbreweries, for example, were at the forefront of this renaissance of artisan, indie, and craft production. In 2019, craft beer accounted for 13.6 per cent of total US volume sales, a 4 per cent increase even while overall beer sales dropped by 2 per cent.

Similar trends can be found beyond the food and beverage sector. They are surprising given modern society's aspirations to globalize, automate, and digitize.

Why is this happening now and what drives these shifts in demand?

As Eichinger explained, "It is consumers' need to feel grounded-which we define as a feeling of emotional rootedness. We argue that the dual forces of digitization and globalization



have made social and work lives increasingly virtual, fast-paced, and mobile, leaving many consumers feeling like trees with weak roots at risk of being torn from the earth. Marketers can cater to the need to feel grounded by offering products that help consumers connect to place, people, and past."

A series of studies involving thousands of participants across the US and Europe showed that groundedness increases product attractiveness and consumers' willingness to pay.

Schreier said, "Our research points out how marketers can strategically leverage groundedness for their products, for example by emphasizing local origin or by choosing traditional product designs. Marketers can also improve their targeting by identifying consumers with a higher need for groundedness."

The researchers conducted a survey with a representative US consumer panel. Their idea is that consumers whose everyday work and lives are more affected by major trends like digitisation, urbanisation and global change will also experience a higher need to feel grounded.

Indeed, they found

higher levels of need for groundedness with consumers who perform a lot of desktop work at their computer; who have a higher socioeconomic status; who more strongly perceive COVID-19 to have put their life in a state of flux; and who indicated living in a big city. These consumers were also more interested in purchasing products that connect them to their place, people, and past.

Feelings of groundedness are not only relevant for business; they are also important for consumer welfare. In particular, the studies show positive psychological downstream effects of groundedness on consumers' happiness and feelings of strength and stability.

"Participants who felt more grounded from the use of local rather than nonlocal apples in a home-made pie also reported feeling stronger, safer, more stable, and better able to withstand adversity," said van Osselaer.

"Consistent with the notion of being securely anchored and having a strong foundation, feeling grounded improves self-perceptions related to resilience," added van Osselaer.

Feelings of groundedness are worthy of both managers' and policy

makers' attention. Products are more attractive when they provide consumers with the feeling of groundedness; for example, because they are locally made (connected to place), by producers consumers can relate to (connected to people), and according to traditional methods (connected to the past).

Marketers can leverage groundedness by adapting their marketing mix accordingly and strategically target customer segments with a higher need for groundedness.

Policymakers should consider groundedness as a driver of consumer well-being, a topic that becomes ever more acute in a time that is fast-paced, digital, and marked by changes that can make consumers feel adrift in the world.

Office of the Executive Engineer lake Division No. 1st. J&K Lakes and Waterways Development Authority Srinagar

Gist of N.I.T No. LD- 1st. 31 of 2021-22(e).

For and on behalf of the LT. Governor, Jammu & Kashmir UT, e-tenders on item wise percentage basis are in double cover system are invited from Registered Civil Contractors of PWD/CPWD/MES for the below mentioned work/s:-

Sr. No.	Name of the work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Time of Comp.	Class of contract	Tender fee (Rs)
01.	Improvement / strengthening of Right Side Embankment of Telbal Nallah from RD 1887meters to 2037 meters and plugging of breach from RD 2127 meters to 2157 meters and RD 2307 to 2327 meters, upstream Diversion of Head Works with Regulation Gate Reckoned RD 0 meters.	84,38,866.00	75 days	AAY	2500.00
02.	Improvement / strengthening of Right Side Embankment of Telbal Nallah from RD 719 meters to 919 meters upstream Diversion of Head Works with Regulation Gate Reckoned RD 0 meters.	58,67,830.00	60 Days	AAY	2000.00
03.	Improvement / strengthening of Left Side Embankment of Telbal Nallah from RD 787 meters to 919 meters upstream Diversion of Head Works with Regulation Gate Reckoned RD 0 meters.	39,35,216.00	60 Days	AAY/	1500.00
04.	Construction of Retaining wall/ Lining wall on left side from RD 56 to 73 meters and on both sides from RD 73 to 173 meters of Wanihama Nallah Upstream of Confluence of Wanihama/ Batapora Nallah at Village Pati Kurg reckoned as RD 0meters.	51,90,292.00	60 Days	BEE AAY	2000.00
05.	Construction of Protection Wall on left side of Wanihama Nallah (Fakir Khul) from RD 1100 to 1160 and 1900 to 1460 meters at Gikadal Wanihama Payeen for Protection houses near the House of Mohammad Yasin Mir and Abid Khurshed and others.	27,88,255.00	45 Days	AAY/	1500.00
06.	Construction of protection lining wall on both sides of Batapora Nallah from RD 1021 to 1208 meters Upstream village Batapora for Protection of Houses near House of Gh. Rasool Bhat, Parviz Ahmad and others.	71,47,549.00	60 days	AAY	2500.00
07.	Construction of protection wall on both sides of Sundri Nallah, Tributary of Wanihama Nallah at Village Burzhom from Grid Station to the House of Bashir Ahmad Baba.	37,86,716.00	60 days	AAY/	1500.00
08.	Construction of protection wall on right side and raising to existing wall on left side from House of Noor Mohammad Sheekh to Shop of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat Livion Khul Tributary of Batapora Nallah at Village Batapora.	7,02,626.00	30 days	BEE/ CEE/	700.00
09.	Construction of Protection Wall on right side of Batapora Nallah (Damaged Portion) at village Gulshanabad Nowbugh Saidpora for protection of houses near the house of Mushtaq Ahmad and Others.	5,42,470.00	30 days	CEE/ DEE	700.00

Online bidding schedule:

01.	Date of issue of tender Notice.	14.08.2021.
02.	Start date for downloading of bidding documents.	16.08.2021 (10.00AM)
03.	Bid submission start date	17.08.2021 (10.00 A.M)
04.	Bid submission end date	06.09.2021 (04.00 P.M)
05.	Date and time of opening of bids (Technical & Financial) on line.	08.09.2021 (2.00 P.M)
06.	Tender inviting authority.	Executive Engineer Lake Division No: 1st J&K LDA Miskeen Bagh Srinagar.
07.	Tender opening/receiving authority.	
09.	Tender fee to be drawn in favour of.	Tender fee to be deposited into account No. CDG/01850102 00 00 0004, JK Bank Upper Sathu through E-challan / treasury receipt/Pay in Slip. Note: NIT No. and S.No. of the work shall be mentioned on paying slip while depositing the fee. The fee must be deposited between publishing date of NIT and bid submission end date. No before or after-wards shall be entertained.

1. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.Q.Q), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in upto said bidding schedule.

2. The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in upto said bidding schedule.

For downloading and online bidding please visit www.jktenders.gov.in.

No: LD-1/4115-4143

Dated:13.08.2021

Executive Engineer,
Lake Division No. 1st.
JKLWDA Srinagar.

DIPK-NB-2642/21

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR Office of the Chief Executive Officer SRINAGAR SMART CITY LTD

(A J&K Government Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

E-N.I.T NO:- 04/SSCL of 08/2021 DT:- 13/08/2021

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Organization	Estimated Cost	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Head of Account	Class Of Contract	Time Allowed for completion
1.	All Weather Open Gym Equipment	Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Ltd	Rs. 20.20 lacs	Rs. 1000/- Pledged to Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Ltd	SSCL	AYY/BEE/ CEE	45 Days

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor UNION Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Tenders are invited by e-tendering mode from approved "AYY/BEE and CEE Class Contractors" registered with J&K State PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the works detailed in the table below.

Position of funds: - (Available)

Critical Dates:

1.	Date of issue of Tender notice:-	13/08/2021
2.	Date of publication of E-tender:-	13/08/2021
3.	Bid Submission Start Date:-	13/08/2021 from 13:00 Hrs.
4.	Bid Submission Closing Date:-	26/08/2021 up to 16:00 Hrs.
5.	Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bid	27/08/2021 at 14:00 Hrs.
6.	Date and Time for Opening of Financial Bid	To be notified after Technical Evaluation is completed.

The complete bidding process will be online.

a) Bids of bidders shall be opened on line in the office of Chief Executive Officer SRINAGAR SMART CITY LTD on 27/08/2021 at 14:00 hrs.

b) All the bidders are required to pay Cost of Tender Document in favour of Srinagar Smart City Ltd. "Bank Account Number" 0216010100002252, IFSC, JAKA0GARDEN, MICR:190051008, Branch SSI Lal Chowk Srinagar.

2. The original copy of Cost of Tender Document shall reach to the Office of Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Limited (Address: 1st Floor Budshah Building, Lal Chowk, Srinagar, 190001, J&K) before the last date of opening of online bids.

3. Bid documents can be viewed at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, conditions and other details.

4. The site for the work is available.

5. Bids must be accompanied by cost of Tender Document as specified in column 5 of the table above payable at Srinagar pledged to Chief Executive Officer SRINAGAR SMART CITY LTD. The cost of downloaded tender documents shall in the form of Demand Draft pledged to Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Ltd.

6. Bids will be opened in the office of the Chief Executive Officer SRINAGAR SMART CITY LTD on 25/08/2021 at 14:00 hrs. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bid for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period of 180-days from the date of opening of bids.

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

9. The guidelines for submission of bid online can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

10. The Quantities mentioned in the BQ are purely tentative and are likely to get changed as per the actual requirements at site.

11. The Bidder Must Upload all relevant Documents strictly in order given below:

- Demand Draft
- Copy of relevant PAN
- GST Registration Certificate
- Copies of ITR's for last 3 financial years.
- Last 3 month's Bank Statement
- CA attested financials for last 3 years (Balance sheet & P/L Account)

No: SSCL/CEO/4831-32

DT:- 13/08/2021

DIPK-NB-2646/21

Sd/-

Chief Executive Officer
Srinagar Smart City Ltd.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS J&K SRINAGAR Final Notice

No:-PHQ/PRB-02 Women-Bn/08/2021/482-94 Dated:- 14/08/2021

Subject:- Production of deficient documents.

Reference:- PHQ/J&K advertisement Para-Recvt-A-22-2019/16251-300 dated 09.03.2019.

It is, for the information of all those candidates of Jammu / Kashmir Province who have applied for the post of Constable in 02 Women Battalions and have qualified PET/PTST (detailed out at Annexure 'A') to this notice, that after the scrutiny of documents they were found document deficient and are hereby informed/notified to produce their deficient documents/testimonials (in original) before the Police Recruitment Board.

Candidates are advised to report along with original documents in their respective offices detailed as under w.e.f 16.08.2021 to 22.08.2021.

01. The candidates of Jammu Province shall report in PRB Section PHQ Gulshan Ground Jammu.

02. The candidates of Kashmir Province shall report in PRB Section PHQ Peer Bagh Srinagar.

It is apt to notify that it is last and final chance for such candidates to make good their deficiencies and no such claim shall be entertained after the stipulated period.

DIPK-6735/21

Annexure 'A'

Roll No.	Roll No.	Roll No.	Roll No.	Roll No.	Roll No.
000001	000002	000003	000004	000005	000006
000007	000008	000009	000010	000011	000012
000013	000014	000015	000016	000017	000018
000019	000020	000021	000022	000023	000024
000025	000026	000027	000028	000029	000030
000031	000032	000033	000034	000035	000036
000037	000038	000039	000040	000041	000042
000043	000044	000045	000046	000047	000048
000049	000050	000051	000052	000053	000054
000055	000056	000057	000058	000059	000060
000061	000062	000063	000064	000065	000066
000067	000068	000069	000070	000071	000072
000073	000074	000075	000076	000077	000078
000079	000080	000081	000082	000083	000084
000085	000086	000087	000088	000089	000090
000091	000092	000093	000094	000095	000096
000097	000098	000099	000100	000101	000102
000103	000104	000105	000106	000107	000108
000109	000110	000111	000112	000113	000114
000115	000116	000117	000118	000119	000120
000121	000122	000123	000124	000125	000126
000127	000128	000129	000130	000131	000132
000133	000134	000135	000136	000137	000138
000139	000140	000141	000142	000143	000144
000145	000146	000147	000148	000149	000150
000151	000152	000153	000154	000155	000156
000157	000158	000159	000160	000161	000162
000163	000164	000165	000166	000167	000168
000169	000170	000171	000172	000173	000174
000175	000176	000177	000178	000179	000180
000181	000182	000183	000184	000185	000186
000187	000188	000189	000190	000191	000192
000193	000194	000195	000196	000197	000198
000199	000200	000201	000202	000203	000204
000205	000206	000207	000208	000209	000210
000211	000212	000213	000214	000215	000216
000217	000218	000219	000220	000221	000222
000223	000224	000225	000226	000227	000228
000229	000230	000231	000232	000233	000234
000235	000236	000237	000238	000239	000240
000241	000242	000243	000244	000245	000246
000247	000248	000249	000250	000251	000252
000253	000254	000255	000256	000257	000258
000259	000260	000261	000262	000263	000264
000265	000266	000267	000268	000269	000270
000271	000272	000273	000274	000275	000276
000277	000278	000279	000280	000281	000282
000283	000284	000285	000286	000287	000288
000289	000290	000291	000292	000293	000294
000295	000296	000297	000298	000299	000300
000301	000302	000303	000304	000305	000306
000307	000308	000309	000310	000311	000312
000313	000314	000315	000316	000317	000318
000319	000320	000321	000322	000323	000324
000325	000326	000327	000328	000329	000330
000331	000332	000333	000334	000335	000336
000337	000338	000339	000340	000341	000342
000343	000344	000345	000346	000347	000348
000349	000350	000351	000352	000353	000354
000355	000356	000357	000358	000359	000360
000361	000362	000363	000364	000365	000366
000367	000368	000369	000370	000371	000372
000373	000374	000375	000376	000377	000378
000379	000380	000381	000382	000383	000384
000385	000386	000387	000388	000389	000390
000391	000392	000393	000394	000395	000396
000397	000398	000399	000400	000401	000402
000403	000404	000405	000406	000407	000408
000409	000410	000411	000412	000413	000414
000415	000416	000417	000418	000419	000420
000421	000422	000423	000424	000425	000426
000427	000428	000429	000430	000431	000432
000433	000434	000435	000436	000437	000438
000439	000440	000441	000442	000443	000444
000445	000446	000447	000448	000449	000450
000451	000452	000453	000454	000455	000456
000457	000458	000459	000460	000461	000462
000463	000464	000465	000466	000467	000468
000469	000470	000471	000472	000473	000474

India petrol, diesel prices complete a month without any revision

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel prices in the country remained static for the 30th consecutive day on Monday.

Accordingly, in the national capital, petrol continues to be sold for Rs 101.84 per litre, while diesel is also being sold

prices should have actually resulted in consumers getting relief by way of a cut in the retail price of petrol and diesel. Rather, OMCs have decided to wait and watch the disruption now as crude prices are still swinging.

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



at the unchanged price of Rs 89.87 a litre on Monday.

Across the country as well, fuel prices remained unchanged providing some relief to the consumers already feeling the heat of higher inflation that has raised prices of several other commodities including food items.

Global crude prices have now softened to below \$ 70 a barrel after it swung in all directions in July starting with a low of \$70 a barrel to quickly rise to over \$ 77 a barrel, only to fall soon below \$ 70 a barrel and crossing \$ 75 a barrel later in the month.

Lower oil and product

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

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

The long price pause has come after fuel prices increased for 41 days in the current financial year.

Indian fuel sales' recovery largely intact as Delta variant ravages Asia

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Indian fuel consumption recovery largely held up in the first half of August, a rare positive for oil demand as the delta virus variant led to curbs on movement in other Asian markets including China.

Gasoline sales rose 3.7% in Aug. 1 to 15 from the same period in 2019, prior to the pandemic, according to preliminary data from India's three biggest fuel retailers. Sales of diesel, meanwhile, fell 8% from 2019, an improvement from July when they were down 11%. The two fuels account for more than half of all sales of petroleum products in the country.

Indian Covid-19 cases have fallen sharply from a peak in May, leading to a pickup in fuel demand in the world's third-biggest crude importer as re-

strictions on movement were loosened. It's one of the few bright spots in Asia as the rapid spread of delta has led to renewed restrictions on mobility, most notably in the No. 1 crude buyer China.

he recovery in India eased on a month-on-month basis, however. Gasoline and diesel sales fell 4.9% and 15%, respectively, from the same period in July. Consumption of diesel typically declines during this time of the year as monsoon rains hamper construction activities. Sales of jet fuel, however, jumped 25% from the previous month but were still down 45% from 2019.

Spokespeople at the three retailers -- Indian Oil Corp., Bharat Petroleum Corp., and Hindustan Petroleum Corp., -- declined to comment. The companies account for more than 90% of Indian fuel sales.

Here's a table of the preliminary data:

Fuel	Aug. 1-15 ('000 Tons)	M/m	From Aug. 1-15 2019
Diesel	2,112.7	-15%	-7.9%
Gasoline	985.8	-4.9%	3.7%
LPG	1,062.8	-2.7%	-2.5%
Jet	165.6	25%	-45.3%

Government rolls out much awaited 'Karkhandar' scheme to revive traditional crafts of UT



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 2021: In a significant development, the Government on Monday issued orders for giving a fresh impetus to the training in handicraft sector in the UT by unveiling the 'KARKHANDAR' scheme which is a unique concept as far the upliftment of artisans and weavers through training is concerned.

The scheme will be implemented throughout the UT by Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir/ Jammu.

Speaking on the development, Director Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir, Mahmood Ahmad Shah, termed this a landmark decision that will give a fresh lease of life to the craft scene of the UT and especially to the languishing crafts.

The Director also said that the scheme will not only boost those crafts which have good potential but also the languishing ones. Among the languishing crafts the crafts like Glazed tiles, Silver ware and filligree will be

taken on for full revival in the first instance, he added.

The manpower generated through various training programmes by the department in the form of trainees will now get an edge as the trainees will get training from the experienced trainers in nearby karkhanas and those trainers now can be National/ State/ Shilp Guru awardees/ Master crafts person of repute in their respective crafts.

The main thrust of the scheme shall be to identify and impart skill upgradation training in such crafts which are facing human resource crunch like walnut wood carving, silver filigree, carpet, kanishawl weaving, khatamband and Paper Machie crafts.

Under the scheme the meritorious trainees will be given RS 2000/month as honorarium and the trainer will get Rs 2000/month for each trainee and plus Rs 25000/- for logistics, raw materials etc.

The aim of the this scheme is to transfer the skill set of the

master craftsmen to the younger generation as this was a general observation that the skill transfer from the master craftsmen to the younger generation was happening at a snail's pace.

By virtue of this scheme, the practical knowledge sharing between the skilled and those who who want to equip themselves in the practical aspects of the particular trade will happen at a fast pace and in a time bound manner.

This scheme is in addition to some already launched major schemes that include Artisan Credit Card Scheme and Scheme of Financial Assistance to the Cooperatives for the artisans and weavers of the UT.

Chairman Indian Oil Corporation Ltd calls on Lt Governor



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 16: Sh. Shrikant M Vaidya, Chairman Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) called on Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhavan here today. The Chairman discussed with the Lt Governor about various issues pertaining to smooth operation of the supply chain of the Corporation.

The Lt Governor, while interacting with the Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd assured that the issues projected by him would be looked into on merit.

FM Sitharaman rules out cut in excise duty on petrol, diesel, for now

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday ruled out a cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel to ease prices, which have touched an all-time high, saying payments in lieu of past subsidised fuel pose limitations. Petrol and diesel as well as cooking gas and kerosene were sold at subsidised rates during the previous Congress-led UPA government. Instead of paying for the subsidy to bring parity between the artificially suppressed retail selling price and the cost that had soared because of international rates crossing USD 100 per barrel, the then government issued oil bonds totalling Rs 1.34 lakh crore to the state-fuel retailers.

These oil bonds and the interest thereon are being paid now. "If I did not have the burden to service the oil bonds, I would have been in a position to reduce excise duty on fuel," she told reporters here. "Previous government have made our job difficult by issuing oil bonds. Even if I want to do something I am paying through my nose for the oil bonds."

Sitharaman, who had raised excise duty on petrol and diesel to record high to shore up revenue collections last year, said the interest on oil bonds paid in the last seven years totalled Rs 70,195.72 crore. Of the Rs 1.34 lakh crore of oil bonds, only Rs 3,500 crore of principal has been paid and the remaining Rs 1.3 lakh crore is due for repayment between this fiscal and 2025-26, she said. The government has to repay Rs 10,000 crore this fiscal year (2021-22). Another Rs 31,150 crore is due to be repaid

in 2023-24, Rs 52,860.17 crore in the following year and Rs 36,913 crore in 2025-26.

"A significant amount is going for interest payment and principal repayment. What unfair burden on me," she said.

"Opening balance in 2014-15 was about Rs 1.34 lakh crore and interest repayment was Rs 10,255



crore. Since 2015-16, interest burden each year is Rs 9,989 crore." The collections from the hike in excise duty far exceed the amount due to be paid to oil companies. Excise duty on petrol was hiked from Rs 19.98 per litre to Rs 32.9 last year to recoup gain arising from international oil prices plunging to multi-year low as pandemic gulped demand. Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Teli had last month told Parliament that the Union government's tax collections on petrol and diesel jumped by 88 per cent to Rs 3.35 lakh crore in the year to March 31 from Rs 1.78 lakh crore a year back. Excise collection in pre-pandemic 2018-19 was Rs 2.13 lakh crore. The hike in taxes last year did not result in any revision in retail prices as they got adjusted against the reduction that was warranted because of fall in international oil prices.

Car Seat Cover 'Accessory', Not 'Part', At 28% GST, Rules AAR

Agencies

New Delhi: It may seem amusing but your good old car seat cover is not actually a "part" of the seat but an "accessory", at least, in the eyes of the tax department.

In an assessment, the Andhra Pradesh Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR) has turned down the plea of an applicant to term the car seat cover as part of the seat and thereby, attracting lower 18 per cent GST. The AAR has said seat cover is actually a car accessory that, like the car itself, would attract higher 28 per cent GST.

The AAR order, coming in the matter of Saddles International Automotive & Aviation Interiors Pvt Ltd, held that car seat covers fell under HSN 8708 of Notification no 01/2017-CT dated June 28, 2017 that attracts 28 per cent GST and not under HSN 9401 that defines part and where the GST was reduced through an amendment to 18 per cent.

In its application, Saddles In-

ternational had said that the seat covers help to assemble and complete the structure of seats and even though at first glance, seat covers, per se, might not seem to be essential to the completion of seats, but the functions it performs are indispensable for the seats.

Also, the company said that accessory, per se, is something which is complimentary to the main product. But at the same time, it is something which can be used in various equipments or machines or commodities.

However, the car seat covers in question can only be used with seats and nothing else. They are manufactured keeping in mind the requirement of the protection of car seats and are designed in a way so that they can be affixed only with seats. Hence, they cannot be termed as a mere accessory. As a corollary, if the seat covers in question do not qualify as accessory, the same has to be classified as a part, the company had said in its application.

Tyre industry body ATMA urges govt to allow duty-free import of natural rubber

Agencies

Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) on Monday asked the government to allow duty-free import of natural rubber as shortage of the commodity in India has become a major deterrent for the tyre industry to support domestic manufacturing.

According to the tyre industry body, natural rubber (NR) consumption is expected to increase further and the annual demand is expected to cross 13 lakh tonnes this fiscal.

"With the production of 7,90,000 tonnes as projected (in normal scenario) by Rubber Board, NR imports to the tune of at least 5 lakh tonnes are a must," ATMA said in a statement.

The tyre industry accounts for over 70 per cent of NR consumed in the country, it added.

While the Rubber Board had projected much higher production figures for the ongoing fiscal, ATMA claimed that "the ground realities are not in line with the Rubber Board's guidance as market arrivals of sheet rubber have dried thin".

"During the first quarter of the current financial year, domestic NR production could fulfill only

42 per cent of the total requirement. According to provisional figures, as against NR consumption of 3.01 lakh tonnes, NR production stood at 1.27 lakh tonnes in the Q1 of FY22," it said.

With economic recovery back



on track and the automobile industry witnessing increased traction, there is a surge in demand for tyres, the industry body said.

"However, a squeeze in domestic availability of NR, the key raw material, has become a major deterrent for the tyre industry to support domestic manufacturing," ATMA said, adding "imports of NR are imperative to bridge the huge deficit and for tyre plants to run".

ATMA said it "has therefore urged the government to remove restrictions on import of NR urgently and allow duty-free import of NR to the extent of domestic deficit since imports have not shown to put any adverse im-

be addressed at the earliest so that tyre production processes are not disrupted, he added.

As per ATMA, the policy environment regarding the import of NR is "highly restrictive".

"There are port restrictions on

pact on domestic prices that have been ruling higher than international prices for a long time".

Commenting on the situation, ATMA Director General Rajiv Budhreja said, "as such the tyre industry has been experiencing tightness in domestic availability of NR during the ongoing fiscal. However, in the second quarter a severe crunch is being witnessed while the NR prices are shooting up." The paucity of NR needs to

import of NR which is allowed to be imported only from two ports - Chennai and JNPT- adding to the costs and delays. Moreover, the tyre industry needs to adhere to pre-import conditions for NR import against (tyre) export obligation," it said.

Further, the export obligation period for tyres has been reduced from 18 months to only 6 months making it tough for the industry, ATMA said.

Saudi Aramco-RIL Deal Talks In Advanced Stage, May Close Soon

Agencies

New Delhi: The talks between Saudi Aramco and Reliance Industries (RIL) for the Saudi oil major's stake purchase in RIL's oil-to-chemical business are in an advanced stage and may conclude in coming weeks.

Aramco is discussing the purchase of around 20 per cent stake in the Reliance arm for about \$20-25 billion, reports have said.

A query on the matter from RIL did not elicit a response while mail sent to Aramco remained unanswered till the filing of the story.

Following the reports, RIL shares surged on the BSE. Around 2.40 p.m., RIL shares on the BSE were trading at Rs 2,178.50, higher by Rs 33.75, or 1.57 per cent, from its previous close.

Addressing RIL's 44th Annual General Meeting, RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani said that he expects RIL's partnership with Saudi Aramco will be

to be formalised in an "expeditious manner during this year", after obtaining required regulatory clearances.

Aramco Chairman Yasir Al Rumayyan has been appointed

Ambani had said that Rumayyan's joining the board is also the beginning of internationalisation of Reliance and more announcements on international plans of the com-



as an independent Director of RIL with effect from July 19.

pany would come in times to come.

Addressing RIL's 44th Annual General Meeting, RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani said that he expects RIL's partnership with Saudi Aramco will be to be formalised in an "expeditious manner during this year", after obtaining required regulatory clearances.

Cops Injured On Duty To Get Financial Help

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh on Monday issued directions to all police units to ensure immediate financial

assistance to the police personnel receiving injuries during their duties.

The directions have been issued vide a circular issued by Police Headquarters J&K today, a police spokesperson said.

According to the circular, the DGP has directed all units to provide assistance up to Rs 25,000 to the Police Personnel who sustain grievous injuries while performing their duties in countering “terrorist”

attacks, law and order duties, anti-insurgency operations, mob violence, fatal road accidents during duties or in any unforeseen incident to mitigate the expenses on their treatment.

“This extension of immediate financial support to the injured Police Personnel, from the Joint Welfare Fund of the concerned Subordinate Unit will enable the injured Personnel to bear the immediate cost of

medication or hospitalization,” the circular reads, as per police spokesperson.

The circular further reads, the amount so sanctioned by the subordinate Unit shall be re-funded/ reimbursed from PHQ

Welfare Accounts on the recommendations of concerned DDOs, duly supported by a report of the particular incident and precise treatment details, specifying the nature of injury of the injured Police Personnel.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Taliban In Control As

“We understand people kept weapons for personal safety. They can now feel safe. We are not here to harm innocent civilians,” the official told Reuters.

City resident Saad Mohseni, director of the MOBY group media company, said on Twitter that Taliban soldiers had come to his company compound to enquire about the weapons kept by his security team.

On Monday evening, a tweet from the purported account of Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said “no problem will be created” for diplomats and charity workers.

“We assure all diplomats, embassies, consulates, and charitable workers, whether they are international or national, that not only no problem will be created for them on the part of IEA (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) but a secure environment will be provided to them,” it read.

Taliban's short journey to Kabul

It took the Taliban just over a week to seize control of the country after a lightning sweep that ended in Kabul as government forces, trained for years and equipped by the United States and others at a cost of trillions of dollars, melted away.

Al Jazeera broadcast footage of what it said were Taliban commanders in the presidential palace with dozens of armed fighters.

Naeem said the form of the new regime in Afghanistan would be made clear soon, adding the Taliban did not want to live in isolation and calling for peaceful international relations.

“We have reached what we were seeking, which is the freedom of our country and the independence of our people,” he said.

“We will not allow anyone to use our lands to target anyone, and we do not want to harm others.”

A Taliban leader told Reuters the insurgents were regrouping from different provinces, and would wait until foreign forces had left before creating a new governance structure.

The leader, who requested anonymity, said Taliban fighters had been “ordered to allow Afghans to resume daily activities and do nothing to scare civilians”.

“Normal life will continue in a much better way, that's all I can say for now,” he told Reuters in a message.

Central Kabul streets were largely deserted early on a sunny Monday as waking residents pondered their future.

“I'm in a complete state of shock,” said Sherzad Karim Stanekzai, who spent the night in his carpet shop to guard it. “I know there will be no foreigners, no international people who will now come to Kabul.”

For the tens of thousands who have sought refuge in Kabul in recent weeks, the overwhelming mood was one of apprehension and fear.

“I am worried there will be a lot of fighting here,” one doctor who arrived with his 35-strong family from Kunduz told AFP, asking not to be named. “I would rather return home, where I know it has stopped.”

The militants sought to project a more moderate face, promising to respect women's rights and protect both foreigners and Afghans.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern called for the Taliban to uphold human rights and said the world was watching: “It's going to be all about the actions, not the words.”

‘Failed experience’

any Afghans fear the Taliban will return to past harsh practices in their imposition of Sharia law. During their 1996-2001 rule, women could not work and punishments such as stoning, whipping and hanging were administered.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urged all parties to exercise the utmost restraint, and expressed particular concern about the future of women and girls.

The UN also said the Security Council would meet over Afghanistan on Monday.

In Washington, opponents of US President Joe Biden's decision to end America's longest war, launched after the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, said the chaos was caused by a failure of leadership.

Biden has faced rising domestic criticism after sticking to a plan, initiated by his Republican predecessor, Donald Trump, to end the US military mission by Aug 31.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell blamed Biden for what he called a “shameful failure of American leadership”.

“Terrorists and major competitors like China are watching the embarrassment of a super-power laid low,” McConnell said.

Naeem said the Taliban would adopt an international policy of two-way non-interference. “We do not think that foreign forces will repeat their failed experience.”

Shame

A US State Department spokesperson said early on Monday that all embassy personnel, including Ambassador Ross Wilson, had been transferred to Kabul airport, mostly by helicopter, to await evacuation and the American flag had been lowered and removed from the embassy compound.

Hundreds of Afghans invaded the airport's runways in the dark, pulling luggage and jostling for a place on one of the last commercial flights to leave before US forces took over air traffic control on Sunday.

“This is our airport but we are seeing diplomats being evacuated while we wait in complete uncertainty,” said Rakhshanda Jilali, a human rights activist who was trying to get to Pakistan, told Reuters in a message from the airport.

US forces managing the airport fired into the

air to stop Afghans surging onto the tarmac to try to board a military flight, a US official said.

Dozens of men tried to clamber up onto an overhead departure gangway to board a plane while hundreds of others milled about, a video posted on social media showed.

The Pentagon on Sunday authorised another 1,000 troops to help evacuate US citizens and Afghans who worked for them, expanding its security presence on the ground to almost 6,000 troops within the next 48 hours.

More than 60 western countries, including the United States, Britain, France and Japan, issued a joint statement saying all Afghans and international citizens who wanted to leave must be allowed to do so.

Western nations, including France, Germany and New Zealand said they were working to get citizens as well as some Afghan employees out.

Russia said it saw no need to evacuate its embassy for the time being while Turkey said its embassy would continue operations.

In a Facebook post, Ghani said he had left the country to avoid clashes with the Taliban that would endanger millions of Kabul residents. Some social media users branded Ghani, who did not disclose his location, a coward for leaving them in chaos.

Westerners rush to leave Kabul, rescue Afghans

Nato allies that had pulled out their forces ahead of the Biden administration's intended Aug 31 withdrawal deadline were rushing troops back in as well this weekend, to airlift their citizens.

Some complained the US was failing to move fast enough to bring to safety Afghans at risk of reprisal from the Taliban for past work with the Americans and other Nato forces.

“This is murder by incompetence,” said US Air Force veteran Sam Lerman, struggling on Sunday from his home in Woodbridge, Virginia, to find a way out for an Afghan contractor who had guarded Americans and other Nato forces at Afghanistan's Bagram air base for a decade.

Massouma Tajik, a 22-year-old data analyst, was among hundreds of Afghans waiting anxiously in the Kabul airport to board an evacuation flight.

“I see people crying, they are not sure whether their flight will happen or not. Neither am I,” she said by phone, with panic in her voice.

Even as CH-47 helicopters shuttled American diplomats to the airport, and facing criticism at home over the administration's handling of the withdrawal, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken rejected comparisons to the 1975 fall of Saigon.

“This is being done in a very deliberate way, it's being done in an orderly way,” Blinken insisted on ABC's “This Week”.

A joint statement from the US State and Defence departments pledged late on Sunday to fly thousands of Americans, local embassy staff and other “particularly vulnerable Afghan nationals” out of the country.

It gave no details, but high-profile Afghan women, journalists, and Afghans who've worked with Western governments and non-profits are among those who fear Taliban targeting for alleged Western ways or ties.

The statement promised to speed up visa processing for Afghans who used to work with American troops and officials in particular. Underscoring the difficulty the US has had getting those Afghans out ahead of the Taliban, the statement could only assure “we will find” other countries to host some of those Afghans.

To many, however, the evacuations, and last-ditch rescue attempts by Americans and other foreigners trying to save Afghan allies, appeared far from orderly.

An Italian journalist, Francesca Mannocchi, posted a video of an Italian helicopter carrying her to the airport, an armed soldier standing guard at a window.

Mannochi described watching columns of smoke rising from Kabul as she flew. Some were from fires that workers at the US embassy and others were using to keep sensitive material from falling in Taliban hands.

She said Afghans stoned an Italian convoy. She captioned her brief video: “Kabul airport. Evacuation. Game Over.”

Hundreds or more Afghans crowded in a part of the airport away from many of the evacuating Westerners. Some of them, including a man with a broken leg sitting on the ground, lined up for what was expected to be a last flight out by the country's Ariana Airlines.

US officials reported gunfire near the airport on Sunday evening and urged civilians to stop coming. US military officials later announced closing the airport to commercial flights, shutting one of the last avenues of escape for ordinary Afghans.

US C-17 transport planes were due to bring thousands of fresh American troops to the airport, then fly out again with evacuating US embassy staffers.

The Pentagon intends to have enough aircraft to fly out as many as 5,000 civilians a day, both Americans and the Afghan translators and others who worked with the US during the war.

But tens of thousands of Afghans who have worked with US and other Nato forces are seeking to flee with family members. And it was by no means clear how long Kabul's deteriorating security would allow any evacuations to continue.

Security Personnel Among

on Sunday, bringing an unprecedented end to efforts made by the US and its allies to transform the war-ravaged nation in the last two decades.

None of the stranded Indian nationals including Foreign Ministry staff and paramilitary soldiers tasked for their protection have not

been evacuated yet from Kabul, sources said.

According to unconfirmed reports there are around 200 Indians in Kabul alone and among them are 100 personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police or ITBP, tasked with protecting the Indian mission in Afghanistan.

According to an India Today report, an Indian Air Force (IAF) C-17 Globemaster aircraft landed in Kabul around 5 pm on Monday to bring back Indians stranded in the country, including embassy staff.

The report said that the aircraft had to land in Tajikistan on Monday morning due to the chaos at Kabul airport. The aircraft was able to make its way to Kabul once the American forces were able to regain control of the airfield.

US and NATO forces continue to facilitate military evacuations in Kabul, though operations for civilian flights have been halted on Monday.

The Indian contingent in Afghanistan has also been talking to officials on ground to be able to move to the airport and fly back to India, sources said.

India closely monitoring situation in Afghanistan: MEA

Meanwhile, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) today said that the government has been closely monitoring all developments in Afghanistan.

India will help members of Afghanistan's tiny Sikh and Hindu community to come to India, the foreign ministry said on Monday. “We are in constant touch with the representatives of Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities.”

“We have been issuing periodic advisories for the safety and security of Indian nationals in that country, including calling for their immediate return to India,” MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

He also said that they had circulated emergency contact numbers and had also been extending assistance to community members. “We are aware that there are still some Indian nationals in Afghanistan who wish to return and we are in touch with them,” he said.

Ready For All Possible

He, however, described the developments in Afghanistan as that country's internal matter.

Deswal, who was on a visit here to flag off the “freedom rally” of 100 cyclists of the Border Security Force (BSF) from Jammu to Gujarat as part of the 75th Independence Day celebrations, was replying to a reporter's question on the fallout of the Taliban's near-total take-over in Afghanistan on the Indo-Pak border in Jammu and Kashmir.

“What is happening in the neighbouring country is its internal matter, but we are keeping a close watch on the situation,” he told reporters at the Oterio Border Out Post (BoP) in the R S Pura sector.

“We are ready for all possible consequences,” he added.

Replying to another question on infiltration and the increased use of drones from across the border to ferry weapons, the BSF DG said as a responsible country, India is acting in accordance with the ceasefire agreement with Pakistan.

“We have not violated the ceasefire,” he added.

Referring to the use of drones, Deswal said security forces have thwarted most of the attempts to airdrop and smuggle narcotics and weapons.

“The drone threat is a challenge and we are handling it. In the coming days, technologically, we will be dealing with the issue more efficiently. Systems are being put in place,” he said. On cross-border infiltration, Deswal said these incidents have been taking place for long and the security forces have foiled such attempts in the past.

He said matters between the two sides are resolved peacefully at flag meetings.

Senior Police

“Now, Therefore, in exercise of powers under Rule 31 of the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1956, Maqsood ul Zaman is placed under suspension, with immediate effect,” the order reads

“It is further directed that during the period of suspension, he shall remain attached with the Police Headquarters, and shall be paid subsistence allowance and DA, as admissible in terms of Article 108-A of the J&K, CSR, 1956,” it adds.

Govt To Impose

Meanwhile, other police stations along the route from Guru Bazaar to Dalgate haven't received any instructions for imposing restrictions on Muharram procession in their areas.

“For now, we haven't received any communication from our higher ups for imposing restrictions in areas falling under my jurisdiction.” SHO Nehru Park, Ghulam Mustafa told Kashmir Observer. Another official from Kothi Bagh police station, who wished anonymity, told Kashmir Observer that there may be restrictions on 8th Muharram procession but we haven't received any official order to impose restrictions in our area.”

Pertinently, on August 2, the administration modified the directions issued last month regarding the Muharram processions /gatherings stating that appropriate decisions for suitable action will be taken by the District Magistrates in consultation with police, health and other stakeholders.

While talking to Kashmir Observer, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, P K Pole said, “If the district administration orders restrictions on any Muharram procession tomorrow, that's completely based on what the Police and

health officials would have suggested in order to curb the spread of Covid.”

“People will have to follow whatever decision the local administration makes, in order to maintain Law, order and SOP's,” he added.

On Monday last, officers from police station Shaheed Gunj had visited Guru Bazar area and informed the residents that the traditional 8th Muharram procession from Guru Bazar to Dalgate will not be allowed.

The two major processions of 8th and 10th Muharram were banned in 1989 by the then Governor Jagmohan after militancy broke out in the Valley. Only small mourning rallies and processions are allowed in a few areas with sizeable Shia population.

In Valley, the Shia Muslims used to take out processions from several parts of uptown Srinagar on 8th and 10th Muharram that culminated at Dalgate and the historic Zaidal Imam Bara. However, after the onset of militancy, the religious processions were banned by the government.

J&K Logs 77 New

of people infected since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K to 323499.

Giving district-wise details, officials said, Srinagar reported 14, Baramulla 12, Budgam 8, Pulwama 8, Kupwara 2, Anantnag 2, Bandipora 6, Ganderbal 7, Jammu 4, Udhampur 4, Rajouri 8, Doda 6 and Samba 1 new case of coronavirus. No fresh case of Covid-19 was detected in the seven districts of the Union Territory, including Shopian, Kulgam, Kathua, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban and Reasi.

Also, the officials said, one coronavirus related death was reported from Jammu thus taking the overall fatality count to 4398—2158 in Jammu and 2240 in Kashmir.

Govt Working On

Safina Baig and Dr Shamshad Khan at Raj Bhavan here on Monday, an official spokesperson said.

He said that the DDC Chairperson from Baramulla Safina Baig apprised the LG about various developmental demands of her constituency, besides other issues of public importance.

Similarly, DDC Chairperson, Ramban, Dr. Shamshad Shan submitted a memorandum of issues and demands pertaining to construction of mini Hydro Power Projects at various locations of Ramban; sanction of new bank branches; strengthening of health infrastructure and creation of new Education zones in Ramban. The LG, he said, while interacting with the DDC Chairpersons observed that the Government is sensitive towards the issues of the people and is taking comprehensive measures for the redressal of the same at the earliest.

“We are working with the agenda of holistic development of all the regions of the UT, besides putting in concerted efforts to meet the developmental aspirations of the people,” Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

The LG, he said, also urged the visiting DDC Chairpersons to continue their sustained endeavours for promoting the welfare of people on all fronts.

According to the official spokesperson, Mir Junaid, President Jammu & Kashmir Workers Party (JKWP) also called on the LG and highlighted various issues of public importance pertaining to execution of developmental projects in Handwara area; interior road connectivity in Srinagar; development of sports etc.

“He also appreciated the LG-led UT government for the efforts to reach out to the public at grassroot level. The Lt Governor assured Junaid that all the issues projected by him would be looked into meticulously for their early redressal,” he added.

Remembers Vajpayee On

minister, had passed away on this day in 2018.

“Humble tributes to Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji on his Punyatithi. A true statesman, and excellent orator, he will always be remembered for the immense contribution towards public life & nation's development. His thoughts & vision will continue to inspire coming generations,” Sinha said on Twitter.

The Lt governor also paid tributes to Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

“Tributes to Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Ji on his Punya-tithi. He was a great saint who embodied spirit of harmony & brotherhood. He will always be remembered for his indelible contributions to spiritualism & social work,” Sinha wrote. (PTI)

Fighting Stereotypes With

to a toy for a toddler.”

Her proper exposure to the sports life was through her teacher, Abdul Majeed Dar.

Dar being a “venerable coach” taught the playbook to Sabreena and her playmates.

With her teacher's mentorship, she improved her game, participated in more competitions and eventually realized her potential for the big matches.

“Playing at the district level and the inter-district level boosted my confidence,” she recalls.

“This strengthened my resolve to better my performance and participate in more events. But it wasn't easy given a lot of negativity around.”

By challenging those notions with her feats, she became an inspiration for other girls of her hometown. Sensing their eagerness towards the sports, she stepped forward as their trainer.

“Sabreena is my first sports teacher who taught me like a friend,” says Muneeza, a girl from Ganderbal's Sephora area, Sabreena's hometown.

“I stepped out of Kashmir for Physical Education because of Sabreena. She supported and empowered me.”

The sportsperson even took her coaching campaign to her family circles, and inspired her relatives, like Ulfat Jan.

Before becoming Sabreena's trainee, Ulfat used to watch her cousin's charm in the field.

“Her boldness in the field was impressive,” she says. “Seeing her go out of state for sports competitions sparked my interest and I enrolled in a Physical Education course myself.”

Sabreena even inspired her kid-sister and supported her sports activities.

“When someone in your family does something praiseworthy, it sets a bar in the house,” says Zoya Mir, Sabreena's younger sister. “Didi did it for me.”

Following her sibling's footsteps, smiling Zoya says, she has already outdone Sabreena – “at least in volleyball.”

After inspiring scores of girls with her sports feats, Sabreena is now planning to widen her sports canvas.

“A lot of my friends look up to me as an idol,” Sabreena says with a sense of gratitude.

“So, it's my duty to work for the welfare of sports and the sportspersons.”

2 JKAS Officers Posted

As per the order, one of the newly appointed members is Neelam Khajuria (JKAS) who was awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department.

The other, Narayan Dutt (JKAS), Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Kathua, has been transferred and posted to the Member, J&K Services Selection Board.

Train Service

measure on Sunday.

Today train run was resumed on Srinagar-Budgam-Baramulla route, they said adding train also chug on Budgam-Srinagar-Banihal track. (Agencies)

Militancy In Kashmir

was in Kathua, part of his Udhampur parliamentary constituency, to inaugurate a high-efficiency oxygen generation plant at Government Medical College, established through the PM-Cares Fund.

“There is a change in the thinking of the people (in Kashmir). The residents of Srinagar who are moving around in lanes and bylanes want a change and be part of (Prime minister Narendra) Modi's New India like the people in other parts of the country,” Singh told reporters after dedicating the oxygen plant to the public.

However, he said there is a “veil of fear” which is stopping the public from expressing themselves openly.

“I feel it is the last phase of terrorism there,” the minister said, responding to a question about the large scale Independence Day celebrations in the valley.

Flag hoisting ceremonies were held at many places in the valley Sunday.

Referring to the setting up of the fourth oxygen plant at GMC Kathua within a short span during the coronavirus pandemic, the minister said the prime minister has a special concern for Jammu and Kashmir, especially the gateway district of Kathua.

“The prime minister in his independence day speech of 90 minutes from the Red Fort deliberated in detail about J&K and northeastern states. He talked about the delimitation commission in J&K and assembly elections in the coming months,” Singh said.

The BJP government set up District Development Councils (DDC) for the first time and completed the elections to Panchayats in the past two years despite “hurdles”, the minister said without elaborating, but referring apparently to regional parties including National Conference and PDP which boycotted the panch and sarpanch elections besides the local bodies polls.

Asked about the developments in Afghanistan, the union minister said the “External Affairs Ministry is taking note of such things”.

“I am not supposed to comment on the issue but the concerned ministry has taken note of the happenings there,” he said.

The minister reached Kathua, which falls in his home constituency of Udhampur, and attended several functions in the district.

Teen Drowns

The body of the deceased was fished out from the water body and was later handed over to his family for last rites after completion of legal formalities.

Cab Injuries

of Rafiabad today afternoon, officials said.

The injured was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors shifted him to Srinagar hospital for advanced treatment.

However, police officials said the sumo has been seized while the investigation has been started—(KNO)

6 New Covid

All the six new cases were reported from Leh, officials said.No Covid-related death was recorded in Ladakh in the past 24 hours, officials said.The union territory has recorded 207 coronavirus-related deaths so far, with the worst-hit Leh accounting for 149 fatalities followed by 58 in Kargil, they said.

A total of 1,222 sample reports in Ladakh, including 647 from Leh and 575 from Kargil were found negative on Sunday, they said.

Officials said the total active cases in Ladakh stands at 82 -- 64 in Leh and 18 in Kargil district.



WE HAD A LONG CHAT HERE ON THE BOUNDARY talking about it and he's worried. He can't get his family out of Afghanistan and there's a lot of things happening for him."

Rashid Khan Is Worried, Can't Get His Family Out Of Afghanistan, Says Kevin Pietersen

Agencies

LONDON: Former England captain Kevin Pietersen has said that Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan is worried about the situation in the country and is unable to get his family out of there.

Commercial flight operations from around the world have been closed at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul due to the ongoing crisis. No flight can fly over the Afghan airspace since the Taliban took over the country on Sunday. Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani has resigned and left the country.

"We had a long chat here on the boundary talking about it and he's worried. He can't get his family out of Afghanistan and there's a lot of things happening for him," Pietersen told Sky Sports.

"For him to turn up and put on a performance like this under the pressure that he is currently under... for him to be able to forget that stuff and navigate his story and continue the momentum that he has – I think that's probably one of the most heart-warming stories of this Hundred so far," he added.

On Monday, Khan posted an Instagram story of an Afghanistan flag, praying emoji and two sad faces with "can't sleep" text at the end. The 22-year-old has been vocal about the worsening crisis in the country through his social media accounts.

Khan is currently in the United Kingdom playing for Trent Rockets in the inaugural edition of the Hundred.

He took three wickets during the win against Manchester Originals on Sunday to become the joint highest wicket-taker with 12 scalps alongside Adil Rashid in the competition.

Afghanistan Cricket Board CEO, Hamid Shinawari on Monday dismissed speculations saying the Taliban loved and supported the game of cricket.

He also hoped major cricketing powers including BCCI will play with them more often, providing a big push to their finances and overall health of the game in the country.

"We want to establish regular bilateral cricket ties with all cricketing giants including BCCI which has always been there for us," Shinawari said.

PM Modi Meets With India Olympic Contingent



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hosted the Olympic-returned Indian athletes for breakfast at his residence, a day after lauding their memorable performance at the Tokyo Games from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

Indian athletes returned from Tokyo with a haul of seven medals, including javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's historic gold in track and field. It was the country's best ever show at the Olympics.

Modi, who had applauded the Indian athletes' tremendous show during the 75th Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort on Sunday, was seen talking to Chopra and bronze medallist PV Sindhu, who become only the second Indian and first woman to win two Olympic medals.

The shuttler had also brought with her the silver medal she had won at Rio five years ago.

The members of the India men's hockey team that won a bronze after 41 also chatted with the PM, who was seen examining a hockey stick.

Also, present was the wrestling contingent, which returned from the Olympics with two medals. Ravi Dahiya won a silver and Bajrang Punia a bronze medal.

Vinesh Phogat who has been suspended by the WFI for indiscipline was also present along with young Anshu Malik, Seema Bisla and coach Jagminder Singh.

The other medallist included weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, who opened India's account at the Games on the first day competitions with a silver medal and bronze winning boxer Lovlina Borgohain.

The women's hockey team that exceeded all expectation by reaching its maiden Olympic semifinal was also present alongside the boxing, shooting and athletics contingents.

Lord's Test Headed For A Draw On Day 5 As India Sets England 272 To Win



Agencies

LONDON: India set England 272 to win the second Test after declaring their second innings at 298 for 8 on the fifth and final day here on Monday.

Mohammed Shami (56) and Jasprit Bumrah (34) shared an unbeaten 89 run partnership to bring India back in the game after after Rishabh Pant's (22) early dismissal. At lunch, India were at 286 for 8.

It was Shami's second Test fifty and India's highest ninth wicket stand in a Test in England.

England have to score the runs in 59.3 overs and were barely hanging on at 59 for the loss of 3 wickets after 19 overs. With Bumrah, Shami and Sharma taking one wicket each.

Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow were on the crease at the time of filing this report.

Brief scores:

India: 364 all out and 298/8 in 109.3 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 45, Ajinkya Rahane 61, Mohammad Shami 56 not out; Mark Wood 3/51) England 1st innings: 391 all out.

Taliban Love & Support Cricket, Says Afghan Cricket Board CEO



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Cricket will not be a casualty in the wake of drastic political change in Afghanistan, assured country's cricket board CEO Hamid Shinawari, saying the Taliban "love" and "support" the game.

Speaking to PTI from Kabul, Shinawari also assured that the members of the national team and their families are safe as the Taliban took over the reins of the country.

Star players including Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and Mujeeb Zadran are playing in the UK in the 'Hundred' tournament.

"Taliban loves cricket. They have supported us since the beginning. They did not interfere in our activities," said Shinawari.

"I don't see any interference and

expect support so that our cricket can move forward. We have got an active chairman, I remain CEO until further notice," added the top Afghanistan Cricket Board official.

Cricket's rise in the country coincided with Taliban's rule between 1996 and 2001 with many Afghan refugees in neighbouring Pakistan picking up the sport.

"It can be said that cricket flourished during the Taliban era. It is also a fact that many of our players practised in Peshawar and they made the sport mainstream in Afghanistan.

"The good thing is that we are heading towards normalcy. The people have started working. We will resume our office from tomorrow and the national camp which was underway ahead of

the Pakistan series in Sri Lanka will also resume after a two-day break with the change in regime," said Shinawari.

Talking about the players safety, he said: "Other than four or five players who are playing overseas the rest are all in Kabul. Like I said, they are safe and doing fine."

The BCCI is also keeping an eye on the developments and is hoping to see participation of Afghan players in the India Premier League.

"It is too early to comment but we are keeping a watch. For us, nothing changes and we expect Rashid and other Afghan players would be part of IPL," a BCCI source told PTI.

Afghanistan are scheduled to play a three-match ODI series against Pakistan in Colombo from September 1.

AIFF Lauds JKFA For Development Of Grassroots Football

R. Elahi

SRINAGAR: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has hailed Jammu & Kashmir Football Association (JKFA) for its efforts to develop grassroots football in J&K, revealing the Association stood on top of AIFF assigned activities to promote football.

The statement came on August 14 during a webinar between AIFF and JKFA officials. The webinar was held to commemorate the upcoming National Sports Day.

Organised by AIFF under the supervision of Ratn Saha, Senior Manager Grassroots AIFF, Chokey Nima, FIFA Regional Technical Consultant South Asia, Savio Medeira, Head of the Coach Education, Technical Director AIFF and Mr. Pushpargha, Head of the State Development, AIFF. Representing JKFA at the webinar were Prof. B.A Shah, Hon. General Secretary JKFA, Intikhab Alam, Grassroots Instructor, Bilal Punjabi and young AFC licensed coach and instructor, Masood Maqbool.

"A descriptive and informative interaction was held which included all the aspects of promotion of grassroots footballing events and programmes. Stress was laid on how local people, school kids, volunteers can create an eco system to promote football and grow participation,"



the JKFA said in a statement.

"The AIFF appreciated the work done by the grassroots leaders (focal points) who worked tirelessly for the promotion of grassroots football. The participants were informed that J&K topped the list for the assigned activities which was eminent from the graph and data shared by the AIFF," the statement said.

According to the data shared, Jammu & Kashmir ranked first in state-wise AFC Women's Day participation with 45 participants.

J&K also ranked first in state-wise National Girl Child Day participation with 34 participants.

"Besides 29 Focal Points of the UT of J&K, which included Focal Point from Leh, Ladakh also attended the webinar," the JKFA statement added.

"It was a great honour for JKFA to have stood at the top on the records in grassroots programmes. The House was informed that JKFA will try its level best to implement all the programmes of AIFF in letter and spirit," it concluded.

I'm Enjoying Myself, My Game And Challenges: Moeen Ali

Press Trust of India

LONDON: England all-rounder Moeen Ali is relishing every bit of his Test return in the ongoing second match of the series against India at Lord's here, saying at this stage of his career he just wants to take it easy and enjoy the game.

Drafted into the side after the drawn first Test at Trent Bridge, the 34-year-old is featuring only in his second Test in two years.

Dropped from the Test side after the Ashes opener in 2019, Moeen last played a five-day game six months ago against India in Chennai.

"I'm happy with myself, I'm happy with the way I'm playing... I'm not taking it too seriously anymore; I'm going to enjoy it," Moeen said after taking 2/52 on the penultimate day of the second Test on Sunday to leave the match wide open.

"I know there will be bad days, plenty of bad days in a series and I know there will be good days.

"I just wanted to be part of this series and do well, take wickets and a few runs, hopefully get some more runs. I feel all right with the bat so I'm just enjoying my cricket. It's more about enjoying myself and trying to enjoy the challenge as much as I could," he said.

"That was my aim really, it wasn't the runs or the wickets so much, although they help," added Moeen, who contributed a crucial 27 with the bat runs in the first innings.

In his last Test appearance in Chennai, Moeen dismissed India skipper Virat Kohli in both the innings to be England's highest wicket-taker (8) and was also their highest run-scorer (43) in a 317-run defeat.

"That is probably something I moved away from, going back a couple of years, but I've been doing all right. Even when I played the Test out in India, I did okay and I know that I had one bad game against Australia in 2019

but before that, I was doing well as well, so I'm all good with everything," Moeen said.

The off-spinning all-rounder dismissed a well-set Ajinkya Rahane (61) and Ravindra Jadeja (3) as India lost three wickets for 20 runs to finish the fourth day at 181 for six, leading England by 154 runs.

Apart from Moeen, it was paceman Mark Wood who made most of the impact as he dismissed both the Indian openers – KL Rahul (5) ad Rohit Sharma (21) before they could overturn the deficit.



Later, Wood returned with the old ball to get it rise sharply and take Chesterwar Pujara's wicket, breaking his dogged resistance with Rahane.

"I was very pleased for him (Wood). He was telling me in the first innings that he doesn't get the wickets he would like, and I said these things can happen and they will come. The way he bowled was fantastic and it was a great catch by me at deep square leg," Moeen said about Woods.

"He fully deserved his wickets and the wicket of Pujara was massive. The way he ran in and banged the wicket with a soft ball on a dead wicket – he was fantastic."

Wood had an injury scare to his shoulder while attempting to save a boundary on day four but Moeen said he seemed to be "alright."

West Indies Beat Pakistan By 1 Wicket To Win First Test

Agencies

KINGSTON: Veteran fast bowler Kemar Roach and his teenage protegee Jayden Seales combined in a dramatic 17-run partnership Sunday which carried the West Indies to a one-wicket win over Pakistan in the first cricket Test.

Seales earlier took 5-55, his first five-wicket haul in Tests, as the West Indies dismissed Pakistan for 203 in its second innings, a lead of 167. The home team then slumped to 16-3 before a half-century by Jermaine Blackwood helped it advance to 111-6.

The match was in the balance when Jason Holder was out to the last ball before the tea interval with the West Indies on 114-7, still 54 runs from victory. In a thrilling final session in which each run and each wicket altered the balance of the match, Roach shared a partnership of 28 with Joshua Da Silva before finally combining with Seales to see the West Indies home on 168-9.

Roach said his unbeaten 30 was the most important innings of his 66-test career "by far, by far."

He was full of praise for the batting and bowling efforts of the 19-year-old Seales, who became the youngest West Indies bowler to take a five-wicket haul in a test innings.

"He is a star for the future," Roach said. "His five wickets speaks wonders about our cricket."

Shaheen Afridi (4-50) and Hasan Ali (3-37) bowled almost 34 overs for Pakistan on the last day and shared seven wickets. Hasan produced an outstanding all-round performance, scoring 28 from 26 balls at No. 9 to help Pakistan go past 200 in the second innings before he was the last man out.

He then dismissed Blackwood for 55 to deal a major blow to the home team's hopes and bowled Holder (16). But Hasan was also involved in one of the pivotal moments of the match when he dropped Roach, then on 16, off the bowling of Shaheen. Roach's pull shot carried directly to Hasan at deep square leg, where a relatively simple catch was put down.

Hasan still had a part to play by dismissing Jonel Warrican to leave the West Indies on 151-9, some 17 runs from victory and with only Roach and Seales remaining. Warrican tried to pull a short delivery and the ball flew from the top edge. Wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan turned and dashed backward, almost to the boundary where he took a diving catch as the ball came over his shoulder.

Messi Gone But Not Forgotten As Barcelona Win Spanish League Opener

Agencies

MADRID: The post-Lionel Messi era began for Barcelona with fans chanting his name in the stands and players overcoming his absence on the field.

Barcelona's first season without Messi in 17 years started with a 4-2 win over Real Sociedad in the Spanish league on Sunday, with many in the crowd of more than 20,000 at the Camp Nou Stadium paying tribute to the Argentine star and protesting against the club for letting him go.

The majority of fans loudly chanted Messi's name in the 10th minute, a reference to the No. 10 jersey he used to wear at the club. Many fans were wearing or carrying Messi's jersey, and several banners honored the playmaker.



"Forever grateful to Messi," read one of them.

There were also some jeers against Messi, though, who was already in France with Paris Saint-Germain after Barcelona failed to give him a new contract because of its financial struggles. Some fans preferred to chant "Barça, Barça" instead of his name.

"We all know what Messi represented. He was the most important player in this club's history," Barcelona's Gerard Piqué said.

"But there's an end to everything and we have to move on. There is a lot of quality in this team. We will be very competitive and I'm convinced that we will be contending for all the

titles until the end."

Club president Joan Laporta was among those targeted by some fans who protested in and outside the Camp Nou, with banners accusing him of not doing enough to keep its greatest player. Some also complained about former president Josep Bartomeu, blaming him for the club's financial difficulties that led to Messi's departure.

On the field, Barcelona opened the scoring in the 19th with a header by Piqué, who also was loudly cheered by fans after agreeing to reduce his salary so the club could register other players in time for the opener.

Martin Braithwaite added to the lead with goals in first-half stoppage time and in the 59th. He also assisted in Sergi Roberto's final goal in second-half injury time. Memphis

Depay, the club's top offseason signing, helped set up two goals.

Sociedad, coming off a fifth-place finish last season, pulled closer with a goal from Julien Lobete in the 82nd and with a superb free kick – which Messi would have been proud of – taken by Mikel Oyarzabal three minutes later.

The last time there were fans at the Camp Nou was on March 7, also in a match against Real Sociedad. Spanish health authorities allowed the league to restart with crowds of up to 40% of the venues' capacity.

Fans had mixed feelings. "On one side I feel very bad because Messi is gone. I had a very hard time with all this," 23-year-old student Marta Gonzalez said. "But on the other side I am very happy to see a new Barça and to be here."

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