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NEWS DIGEST

CRPF Man Found Dead In Ramban

JAMMU: The body of a CRPF man bearing a gunshot wound was found in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Tuesday morning, official sources said. Constable Rajeev Ranjan was found dead at the 84th Battalion camp in the Boom Chanderkoot. **More On P10**

Policeman Hangs Himself

SRINAGAR: A police constable allegedly committed suicide on Tuesday by hanging himself at his home in Shalimar area of this capital city. Bilal Ahmad Dobhi was found hanging inside his room in Pazwalpora locality of Shalimar on Tuesday morning, an official said. Dobhi, who was a **More On P10**

22 Kashmiri Prisoners Shifted To Agra Jail

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government shifted 22 detainees, booked under the controversial Public Safety Act (PSA), from Kashmir to the high-security jail in Agra city of Uttar Pradesh. The transfer of detainees from Kashmir to the outside jail was carried out on the orders of the Home department issued on October 16. However, no specific reason has been given for the **More On P10**

Young Labourer Found Dead

SRINAGAR: A young labourer was found dead on Thursday under mysterious circumstances in a hotel in Qazigund area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district. 25-year-old man Mohammed Haneef Gogar was found dead inside a hotel room in Chaimulla, Qazigund along Srinagar-Jammu highway this morning, an official said. **More On P10**

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Amit Shah Briefs PM On Kashmir Situation

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and informed him about the steps taken by the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the Union Home Ministry to improve the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Shah reached PM Modi's official residence 7, Lok Kalyan Marg in the morning to brief him

about the situation in Kashmir.

The two leaders discussed the atmosphere of fear created due to target killings by militants in Kashmir. The Home Minister also informed the Prime Minister about the exodus of fear driven migrants from the Valley.

During the meeting with the PM, the Home Minister also briefed him about other important issues related to internal security.

In the last 16 days, militants have killed **More On P10**



NIA To Probe Killing Of Minority Members

The NIA is likely to take over cases related to the killing of minority community members, including those of two teachers and a pharmacy owner, who were among 11 civilians shot dead in targeted attacks by militants in different parts of Kashmir this month, officials said on Tuesday. **More On P10**

BATTLE OF BHUTAN DURIAN

Army Plans Major Offensive Against Militants In Poonch

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: In an apparent preparation for a major offensive against the militants who have been evading armed forces for more than a week after killing nine soldiers in deadly ambushes, the police on Tuesday made announcements in the Bhata Durian area in Poonch asking locals to bring back their cattle from the

fields and stay indoors.

According to reports, as the operation entered its ninth consecutive day on Tuesday, the police made repeated announcements over public address systems in the mosques in Bhata Durian directing people not to venture out.

While a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) and four other security personnel were killed in a fierce gunfight **More On P10**

Army Chief Takes First Hand Account Of Situation

Army chief General M M Naravane visited forward areas along the LoC in Jammu region on Tuesday and was briefed on the ground situation in the region and ongoing counter-infiltration operations, officials said here. Naravane arrived in **More On P10**

Cops Seize Hundreds Of Bikes In A Major Crackdown

Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir police on Tuesday intensified its crackdown against bikers here and seized hundreds of two-wheelers allegedly without any "reason or rhyme" causing much inconvenience to the city residents.

Eyewitnesses told Kashmir

Observer on Tuesday that police and CRPF personnel confiscated hundreds of scooters, bikes and other two-wheelers without assigning any reason.

The intense crackdown on bikes, they said continued in the jurisdiction of several police stations in the city including Nehru Park, Dalgate, Foreshore Road, Nishat, Barzulla, Shaheed Gunj, Rajbagh, Rainawari. **More On P10**



KO Photo

Devotees from across Kashmir Valley converged at the Dargah Hazratbal here on the occasion of Eid-e-Milad, the birthday of revered Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on Tuesday.

Thousands of men, women and children thronged the lakeside shrine to have a glimpse of the holy relic of the Prophet, displayed after every prayer at the shrine five times a day. Despite cold conditions, people in large numbers stayed overnight for night long prayers reciting Durood-o-Azkar.

However, the biggest congregation was witnessed at the afternoon prayers with devout converging at the shrine and its adjacent sprawling lawns along the banks of Dal Lake. Most people were seen with folded hands while some had tears trickling down their faces as they had the glimpse of holy relic while praying for their wishes to be fulfilled on the occasion.

Besides Hazratbal, congregational prayers were also held at Asarisharif Kalashpora, Jenab Sahib Soura, Lal Bazar, Punjura Shopian, Khiram Sirhama Anantnag, Seer Hamdan Kaba Marg Qaimoh Ahmshrief Bandipora and Hazrat Janbaz Wali (RA) Baramulla. Nightlong prayers were held across the Valley where clerics threw light on the pious life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Taking People-Centric Steps For J&K's Development: LG

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday that his administration is taking various people-centric initiatives for the holistic and equitable development of every area of the Union Territory.

Sinha, made these remarks while interacting with former ministers of J&K and representatives of different political parties from district Ganderbal, at **More On P10**

Govt Okays Rs 50K Relief To Covid Victims Kin

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday approved release of Rs. 50,000 as an ex-gratia relief to the families of the people who died of coronavirus pandemic.

The decision in this regard was taken in a meeting of the Union Territory Executive Committee for Disaster Management chaired by the Chief Secretary; **More On P10**

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There Is Too Much Fear, Say Migrant Workers Waiting To Board Train Out Of Valley

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: It was cold under the open skies but the group of migrant workers at the station here bore the chill autumn winds with stoicism through the night, the presence of security forces dispelling somewhat the fear that was propelling them to leave Kashmir ahead of schedule.

Anxious to return home after the spate of killings targeting minorities, non-locals and other civilians in the



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Valley, about 50 migrant labourers, many of them from Bihar, arrived at the Nowgam railway station late on Monday night from nearby Budgam district where they worked

in brick kilns.

"We spent the night in the open but we felt more secure due to the presence of security forces guarding the railway station," **More On P10**

It's Question Of Survival

How to make both ends meet is a question that is haunting 28-year-old Jehangir, a small-time carpenter in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur, after his father was shot dead by militants last Saturday in south Kashmir, triggering an exodus of migrant labourers from the area. "Together with Abba (father), we used to run the household. **More On P10**



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2

Living near oil, gas wells increases air pollution exposure and worsens negative health outcomes: Study

The scientists analysed local air quality measurements in combination with atmospheric data and found that oil and gas wells are emitting toxic particulate matter (PM2.5), carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide, ozone and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The findings will help researchers determine how proximity to oil and gas wells may increase the risk of adverse health outcomes, including preterm birth, asthma and heart disease.

"In California, Black and Latinx communities face some of the highest pollutions from oil and gas wells. If we care about

environmental justice and making sure every kid has a chance to be healthy, we should care about this. What's novel about our study is that we've done this at a population, state-wide scale using the same methods as public health studies," said lead author David Gonzalez, who conducted research for the study while a PhD student in Stanford's Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources (E-IPER). The findings align with other smaller-scale studies that have measured emissions from a handful of wells. At least two million Californians live within one mile of an active oil or gas well.

"It's really hard to show air quality impacts of an activity like oil and gas production at a population scale, but that's the scale we need to be able to infer health impacts," said senior study author Marshall Burke, an associate professor of Earth system science at Stanford's School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences (Stanford Earth).

"While it's not necessarily surprising that drilling and operating oil and gas wells emit air pollutants, knowing the magnitude of the effect improves our broader understanding of who is exposed to what and how to intervene to improve health out-

comes," added Burke.

The research has revealed that when a new well is being drilled or reaches 100 barrels of production per day, the deadly particle pollution known as PM2.5 increases by two micrograms per cubic meter about a mile away from the site.

A recent study published in 'Science Advances' found that long-term exposure to one additional microgram per meter cubed of PM2.5 increases the risk of death from COVID-19 by 11 per cent.

"We started in 2006 because that's when local agencies started reporting PM2.5 concentrations. We're very concerned about the

particulate matter because it's a leading global killer," said Gonzalez, who is now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Berkeley.

The team evaluated about 38,000 wells that were being drilled and 90,000 wells in production between 2006 and 2019. They developed an econometric model incorporating over a million daily observations from 314 air monitors in combination with global wind direction information from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to determine if the pollutants were coming from the wells.

Reactivating memories during sleep improves motor skills: Study

Agencies

According to the findings of new research, practice makes one perfect, but sleep helps, too. Learning and executing a new motor skill can be enhanced if a person can get additional memory processing during sleep.



The findings of the study were published in the journal JNeurosci. Researchers at Northwestern University compared how well participants performed a challenging motor task with and without the extra processing during sleep. The participants played a computer game using a myoelectric computer interface, which enabled them to move a cursor by activating specific arm muscles.

Each command to move the cursor in a particular direction was paired with a unique sound; after practising, the participants played the game blindfolded and moved the cursor based on the sound cue alone.

After completing a test round, the participants took a 90-minute nap. The researchers played half of the sound cues during the nap, reactivating the motor memories associated with each cue. After the nap, the participants performed the motions cued during sleep better than the uncued ones. It took less time to move the cursor, the cursor travelled a more direct route, and fewer superfluous muscles were activated.

These results show people can improve the performance of new motor skills by reactivating memories during sleep. This approach could be a way to enhance rehabilitation for stroke or other neurological disorders.

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FOR THE SECOND DAY in a row women commuters were asked to disembark from minibuses and undergo frisking in the city centre on Tuesday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Complete Demarcation Of Wetlands: Div Com To Officials



KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Pandurang K Pole on Monday took a review meeting for effective implementation of directions of National Green Tribunal and action taken by the concerned departments, here.

During the meeting, Div Com

directed officers to complete the demarcation of eight wetlands and two lakes including Wular and Dal. He directed them to remove the encroachments within fifteen days and besides complete the process of deweeding, de-silting in a time bound manner and asked them to take concrete action for sewerage treatment and solid waste man-

agement.

The meeting deliberated over Comprehensive restoration plan of wetlands, fencing of wetlands, biomass resource utilization, budget support and demolition of intersectional bunds.

Meanwhile, Div Com directed concerned officers that no paddy shall be allowed on the land belonging to the wetlands from the next season.

The meeting was attended by District administration officers of Baramulla, Srinagar, Pulwama, Bandipora, Ganderbal Budgam besides Commissioner SMC, VC LAWDA, Director Rakhs and Farms, CED WUCMA, Regional Wildlife Warden, Chief Engineers I&FC and R&B Kashmir and Regional Director State Pollution Control Board.

Over 3 Lakh Unorganized Workers To Be Registered Under Scheme In Srinagar: DC

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: - In order to review the implementation and registration of unorganized workers on National Database for Unorganized Workers (NDUW)-e-SHRAM portal in Srinagar district, the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, who is also the Chairman of District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) Monday chaired a meeting of concerned Officers at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Joint Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, General Manager DIC, Programme Officer, ICDS, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Assistant Labour Commissioner, District Social Welfare Officer, Block Development Officer, District Informatics Officer and officers from Fisheries, National Health Mission, SSA, State Rural Livelihood Mission, State Urban Livelihood Mission, besides representatives of various workers Unions and Associations were present in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC said e-SHRAM portal launched by the Government is aimed at facilitating better execution of various Social Security schemes for all unorganised sector workers. He said the portal will not only register more than 3 lakh unorganised workers but also be helpful in delivering various social security schemes being implemented by the Government.

The DDC said it is the initiative of the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment for building a national database of unorganised workers and is an effort towards formalisation of unorganised workforce that will help to identify unorganized sector workers of about 3.29 lakh and is a much-needed step towards ensuring benefits of all Government Security schemes reaches to the tar-



geted workers and their families.

The DDC stressed the officers to ensure holding of regular registration camps at the district and CSC level for the unorganised workers. He said such awareness camps would prove helpful to disseminate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) amongst the prospective beneficiaries of e-SHRAM and their implementation through the Labour and Employment department and other official machinery.

The DDC further asked the concerned officers to work in proper coordination in monitoring of mobilisation of target sub-groups of unorganised workers like MGNREGA workers, SHG members under NRLM and NULM, street vendors, Auto drivers, construction (BOCW) workers, mid-day meal workers, domestic workers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, Agricultural labourers, Fishermen and Brick-kiln workers through respective line departments for registration under e-SHRAM in terms of defined targets.

The DDC also stressed the representatives of various Workers Unions and Associations present in the meeting to convince and mobilise their respective members to register under the e-SHRAM portal to get benefits of Government schemes.

Earlier, Assistant Commissioner Labour Department, Arshid Qadir gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation about the use of the e-SHRAM portal. He apprised the chair that till date 9200 unorganised workers have been registered in Srinagar district since the launch of the e-SHRAM portal.

EARLIER, ASSISTANT Commissioner Labour Department, Arshid Qadir gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation about the use of the e-SHRAM portal. He apprised the chair that till date 9200 unorganised workers have been registered in Srinagar district since the launch of the e-SHRAM portal.

DC Reviews Implementation Of “TEJASWANI” Scheme

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: - In order to review the implementation of Tejaswani scheme in Srinagar District, a meeting of District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) was held under the chairmanship of the District Development Commissioner (DDC), Srinagar Mohammad Aijaz Asad here today in the meeting Hall of the DC Office.

The meeting held threadbare deliberations on the implementation of Tejaswani scheme in the District and several cases of unemployed eligible female entrepreneurs of Srinagar district were brought before the Committee for approval.

The DDC after detailed review approved 10 cases of the eligible female entrepreneurs of Srinagar district under Tejaswani scheme.

Highlighting the importance of the scheme, the Chairman DLIC said “TEJASWINI” scheme is aimed to provide financial assistance to young women entrepreneurs for setting up profitable self-employment ventures suited to their skill and training aptitude. He said the purpose of the scheme is also to empower and encourage young women in the age group of 18 to 35 to start their business for income generation activities either in manufacturing, service, trading or small busi-

THE DDC AFTER detailed review approved 10 cases of the eligible female entrepreneurs of Srinagar district under Tejaswani scheme.

ness to earn livelihood.

The DDC exhorted upon the Deputy Director Employment to screen the remaining applications and bring more progressive women entrepreneurs under the ambit of the scheme by disseminating awareness so that more and more aspiring women entrepreneurs are brought under the scheme so that they are benefited from the Government schemes.

The meeting was informed that beneficiaries under the TEJASWANI scheme under Mission Youth are provided financial assistance of Rs 5 lakhs under the age group of 18 to 35 years to start their business. The beneficiaries are also provided 10% of the project cost by Mission Youth.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Deputy Director Employment, Mohammad Rauf, General Manager DIC, Srinagar, Mrs Hamida Akhtar, LDM, Abdul Majeed and officers from other concerned departments.

‘Delay In Exams’ KU’s 6Th Semester Students Allege Varsity Of Jeopardizing Careers

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Kashmir University, the highest hub of education in the valley has always been in the news for many reasons especially having failed to streamline the conduct of semester wise exams of the undergraduate students enrolled in degree colleges across Kashmir.

This time again, end semester students enrolled for various courses at different colleges affiliated with Kashmir University are agast over alleged delay in the conduct of terminal semester exams as the varsity is yet to take a call on it.

A delegation of aggrieved students told news agency that they had taken admission in 2018. “Our degrees were supposed to be completed in 2020 but frequent delays from the varsity have jeopardized our careers. We are already one year late,” they said.

Though the stipulated period has elapsed but students say they were yet to know about when the exams would be conducted.

“We have been approaching the varsity officials for a long time now requesting them to conduct our exams as our precious time is being wasted but it seems that it has been falling on deaf ears,” they said.

AAC Grieved Over Demise Of Mian Muhammad Amin

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee (AAC) has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of Mian Muhammad Amin of Anzimar Khan- yar, who was a senior leader and among the founding members of the organisation.

The deceased was also the maternal uncle of “Shaheed-e-Millat” Mirwaiz Moulana Muham-

mad Farooq (RA).

AAC in a statement said that upon hearing the news of the demise of Mian Muhammad Amin, an emergency condolence meeting was held at the organisation’s headquarters to pay homage to the deceased for his long and sincere political services and activities.

Mian Muhammad Amin at a

very young age had a long and hard struggle under the enthusiastic leadership of the Shaheed-e-Millat (RA) in accordance with the constitution and manifesto of the Awami Action Committee, the meeting observed.

From the very first day, the deceased not only stood side by side with the Shaheed-e-Millat (RA) and the AAC leadership on every

front but also rendered all kinds of sacrifices to promote the cause of the organisation, the statement said.

The AAC termed the demise of Mian Muhammad Amin as a great loss which would be felt in the ranks of the organisation.

During the meeting, the participants expressed condolences with the deceased’s son Mian

Faisal Amin along with his brothers Prof. Mian Manzoor and Mian Qaiser; and also with the organization head Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq, who continues to be under illegal and arbitrary house arrest for the last 26 months.

They also prayed to Allah for the forgiveness of the deceased and his ascension to Jannat-ul-Firdous.

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

This Day in History

- 1786 - Harvard University organizes 1st astronomical expedition in US.
- 1899 - Battle at Talana Hill, Natal: British army vs Boers
- 1902 - The Chamber of Deputies appoints a committee to consider questions on the separation of Church and State in France
- 190 - 3 US wins disputed boundary between District of Alaska & Canada
- 1904 - Bolivia and Chile sign a treaty ending the War of the Pacific; ecognizing Chile's possession of the coast, providing for construction of a railway linking La Paz, Bolivia, to Arica on the coast
- 1905 - Great General Strike in Russia begins; lasts 11 days
- 1905 - Russian Tsar allows Polish people to speak Polish
- 1910 - The hull of the RMS Olympic, sister-ship to the ill-fated RMS Titanic, is launched from the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast, Ireland.
- 1921 - Germany and Allies comes to an agreements over reparation payments in a meeting at Wiensbaden
- 1921 - The French and Mustafa Kemal nationalists sign a treaty at Ankara fixing the Turko-Syrian border
- 1935 - Communist forces end their Long March at Yan'an, in Shaanxi, China, bringing Mao Zedong to prominence
- 1936 - Spanish government moves to Barcelona
- 1941 - Nazi occupiers murder 500 inhabitants of Kragujevac Serbia.
- 1944 - Revolution by workers & students in Guatemala
- 1944 - Soviet and Yugoslav troops free Belgrade
- 1944 - US 1st army wins battle of Aachen
- 1944 - US forces under General Douglas MacArthur return to the Philippines with the landing of the US 6th army on Leyte
- 1950 - Chemists Archer John Porter Martin and James Lovelock give the first demonstration of gas chromatography at a meeting of the Biochemical Society. The technique is rapidly adopted by the petrochemical industry.
- 1952 - Emergency crisis proclaimed in Kenya
- 1965 - Mass arrests of communists in Indonesia
- 1971 - Senator in the US Congress Edward Kennedy calls for a withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and all-party negotiations to establish a United Ireland.
- 1973 - US president Nixon fires Watergate accuser Archibald Cox
- 1975 - Supreme Court rules teachers could spank their pupils after warning
- 1982 - Nobel Prize in Economics awarded to George Stigler
- 1982 - Sri Lanka President Jayewardene re-elected
- 1986 - Tupolev-134 crashes in Southern Africa
- 1988 - Britain ends suspects' right to remain silent in crackdown on IRA
- 1989 - Pakistan win Sharjah Trophy over India & WI on round-robin
- 1990 - Antiwar protest marches begin in 20 US cities (US-Iraq)
- 1996 - Wasim Akram (257) & Saqlain Mushtaq gets cricket Test record 313 for 8th wicket, vs Zimbabwe at Sheikhupura
- 1997 - US accuses Microsoft of violating pact forcing IE browser on computers.
- 2011 - The former leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, and his son Moatassem Gaddafi are killed shortly after the battle of Sirte (2011) while in the custody of NTC fighters.
- 2013 - 30 people are killed by a suicide truck bomber in Hama, Syria
- 2013 - 37 people are killed in a suicide bombing in Baghdad, Iraq
- 2013 - 78 people are killed by cattle raiders in Jonglei, Sudan
- 2014 - Joko Widodo becomes President of Indonesia
- McDonald (17) is shot dead by Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke while jaywalking, the murder caught on video footage
- 2015 - Migrants arriving in Greece top 500,00 for the year, according to the UN

From KO Archives

Kashmiri Student Murdered In Delhi

SRINAGAR- A Kashmiri student was stabbed to death by unknown assailants in Delhi last week. According to reports Naseer Ahmad Sofi, son of Ghulam Rasool Sofi, hailing from Baramulla, was doing an X-ray tech-nicians’ course in Mahipalpora.He was stabbed to death on Friday last week. The killers have not been identified so far. The victim’s kin left for Delhi today to bring back the body. The incident has left parents of students study-ing outside the state deeply perturbed.

(Kashmir Observer, October 20, 2000)

"Unprecedented" Crackdown On Free Speech During Covid Pandemic: Amnesty

Agencies

London: Oppressive regimes around the world have used the coronavirus pandemic to crack down on critics, Amnesty International said Tuesday.

The rights monitor said there have been "unprecedented" curbs on freedom of expression since last year, and lives may even have been lost due to a lack of proper information.

"Communication channels have been targeted, social media has been censored, and media outlets have been closed down," said Rajat Khosla, Amnesty's senior director for research advocacy and policy.

"In the midst of a pandemic, journalists and health professionals have been silenced and imprisoned.

"As a result, people have been unable to access information about Covid-19, including how to protect

this year but had denied the virus was circulating in the country, maintaining it had been driven out by prayer.

The Nicaraguan authorities used emergency legislation against cybercrimes to punish anyone critical of the government's response to the virus, Amnesty said.

President Daniel Ortega's government has rejected claims of a shortage of hospital beds and surging numbers of cases and deaths.

In Russia, the introduction of anti-"fake news" laws and criminal penalties in relation to Covid-19 were likely to stay in force once the pandemic is over, Amnesty warned.

The London-based group said such measures were part of an "onslaught on human rights" across the world in recent years, and called for them to be lifted im-



themselves and their communities.

"Approximately five million people have lost their lives to Covid-19, and lack of information will have likely been a contributory factor."

Amnesty said that by February 2020 in China, where the virus first emerged just months before, 5,511 criminal investigations had been opened into individuals for "fabricating and deliberately disseminating false and harmful information" about the nature and extent of the outbreak.

Tanzania's government under former president John Magufuli used laws prohibiting and criminalising "false news" and other measures to restrict media coverage.

Magufuli, who shunned face-masks, died suddenly in March

mediately.

It also took aim at the role of social media platforms for not doing enough to stop the spread of false and misleading information about the virus.

That made it "increasingly difficult for individuals to have a fully informed opinion and make educated choices about their health", the group said in a new report, "Silenced and Misinformed: Freedom of Expression in Danger During Covid-19".

"States and social media companies must also ensure the public has unfettered access to accurate, evidence-based and timely information," said Khosla.

"This is a crucial step to minimise vaccine hesitancy driven by misinformation."



The annual training exercise that the PLA carries out there has seen some increase in the level of activities in the depth areas. Some of the reserve formations which the PLA mobilised continue to remain in their training areas that are in the operational depth areas

'China Is Increasing Activities In Depth Areas Of Eastern Sector'

Press Trust of India

Arunachal Pradesh: China has increased the intensity of carrying out military drills and deployment in its depth areas opposite the Arunachal Pradesh sector and India has correspondingly readied contingency plans to deal with any security challenges in the region, Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen Manoj Pande said on Tuesday.

Giving an account of India's overall military modernisation, Lt Gen Pande also said that an in-principle approval has been given to new combat formations called the Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) which can mobilise fast with a more effective approach.

The IBGs will comprise a mix of infantry, artillery, air defence, tanks and logistics units and the new set up is expected to revamp the Army's war fighting capabilities, particularly along the borders with China and Pakistan.

Lt Gen Pande added that the plan to operationalise the 17 Mountain Corp has been implemented in sync with a plan finalised in 2014.

"The annual training exercise that the PLA carries out there has

seen some increase in the level of activities in the depth areas. Some of the reserve formations which the PLA mobilised continue to remain in their training areas that are in the operational depth areas," he said.

"Both sides are attempting to develop infrastructure closer to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that create certain issues at times," he said, adding there has been an increase in deployment of troops following the development of new infrastructure.

The commander said India has taken a number of steps and the foremost among them is enhancing surveillance both close to the LAC and the depth areas by synergising all surveillance resources right from the strategic level to the tactical level.

"We have adequate forces that are available in each sector to deal with any contingency that may arise. We are practising and rehearsing various contingencies that may arise," he said.

On China violating various border agreements and protocols, Lt Gen Pande indicated that the issue is being discussed at a higher level.

UNICEF: 10,000 Children Killed Or Maimed In Yemen Since 2015

Agencies

Sanna: Ten thousand Yemeni children have been killed or maimed since a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened in March

Unicef said on Tuesday.

"The Yemen conflict has just hit another shameful milestone. We now have 10,000 children who have been killed or maimed since ... March 2015," Unicef spokesper-



2015 after the Iran-aligned Houthis ousted the government, the United Nations children's agency

son James Elder told a UN briefing in Geneva after returning from a visit to Yemen.

"That is the equivalent of four children every single day," Elder said, adding that many more child deaths or injuries went unreported.

Four out of every five children - a total of 11 million - need humanitarian assistance in Yemen, while 400,000 are suffering from acute malnutrition and more than 2 million are out of school, Elder said.

UN-led efforts to engineer a nationwide ceasefire have stalled as Saudi Arabia and the Houthis both resist compromise to end more than six years of a war that has caused what the UN calls the world's largest humanitarian crisis.

Hundreds of Yemenis are trapped by fierce fighting between government and Houthi forces in the northern Marib governorate, residents and a local official said last week, after battles for control of the gas-rich region displaced some 10,000 people.

Iran Resumes Exports To Saudi After One-Year Hiatus

Agencies

Tehran: A report of Iran's six-month trade with neighboring countries released by IRICA spokesman Rouhollah Latifi put Saudi Arabia on the list of export destinations.

According to the official, trade between the two countries reached zero in the last Iranian fiscal year ending on 20 March 2021 after years of decline.

In remarks published by the Financial Times on Friday, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud signaled his country's desire to repair relations with Iran, saying the kingdom is "serious" about talks with the Islamic Republic.

gotiations as "exploratory" but "cordial".

"For us it's not that big a shift. We've always said we want to find a way to stabilize the region," he said.

week, deputy minister of Export Development Organization Farhad Nouri said Iran was ready to resume exports to Saudi Arabia if tensions eased between the two neighbors.

Nouri touched on the active presence of Iranian exporters in the Saudi market when relations between the two countries were normal, saying if the current raprochement efforts succeeded, traders would be the immediate beneficiaries and exports would significantly rise.



The two Middle East heavyweights have held four rounds of talks since April, including a first meeting last month with the government of new President Ebrahim Raeisi.

"We are serious about the talks," he said, describing the ne-

"The Saudi market is very wide in terms of consumer goods, and given the cultural proximity, the issue of Hajj and holy shrines and the traditional presence of Iranian traders in the Saudi market, our exporters know the taste of this market," he said.

Fabindia Withdraws Jashn-E-Riwaaz Promo After Right-Wing Backlash

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Clothing brand FabIndia has removed a promotional capsule about its new festive line after a backlash from right-wing groups.

While the brand was accused of "defacing" the Hindu festival of Diwali by naming its festive collection as Jashn-e-Riwaaz (celebration of tradition), the company insisted that it is not a Diwali collection, which will be soon launched under 'Jhilmil si Diwali' promo.



FabIndia was trolled on social media for what some said was unnecessarily uplifting secularism and Muslim ideologies in a Hindu festival, saying it hurt their religious sentiments.

After it put on Twitter the Jashn-e-Riwaaz collection on October 9, some social media users called for a boycott of the brand, making their campaign one of the top trends. "We at FabIndia have always stood for the celebration of India with its myriad traditions in all hues," a company spokesperson said. "Our current capsule of products under the name Jashn-e-Riwaaz is a celebration of Indian traditions. The phrase means that, literally. The capsule is not our Diwali Collection of products. Our Diwali collection is called 'Jhilmil si Diwali' is yet to be launched."

Jashn-e-Riwaaz is a phrase in Urdu, a language that was born in India. The tweet, which went viral on Monday, said: "As we welcome the festival of love and light, Jashn-e-Riwaaz by Fabindia is a collection that beautifully pays homage to Indian culture".

This was deleted after the backlash.

BJP Yuva Morcha President Tejasvi Surya was among those who slammed the ad in a post on Twitter. "Deepavali is not Jash-e-Riwaaz. This deliberate attempt of abrahimisation of Hindu festivals, depicting models without traditional Hindu attires, must be called out. And brands like @fabindiaNews must face economic cost for such deliberate misadventures," he said on Monday afternoon.

CBSE Extends Last Date For Registration of CTET 2021 to Oct 25

Agencies

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has extended the last date to submit the online application for the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) from October 19 to October 25.

As per the official notification, candidates can submit their fees by October 26 (3:30 pm).

CBSE will conduct the 15th edition of the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) from December 16, 2021, to January 13, 2022.

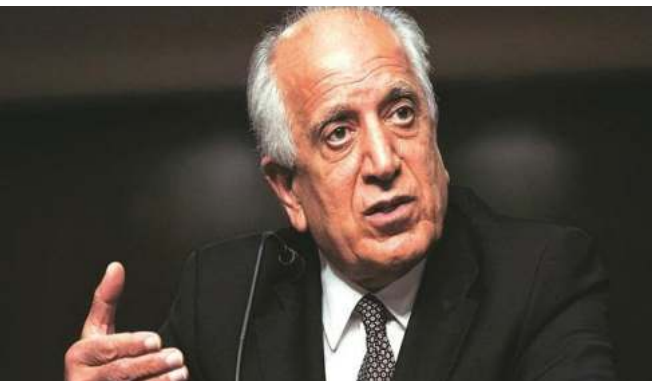
The test will be conducted in CBT (Computer Based Test) mode only. The online application pro-

cess for the examination started on September 20 this year.

As per the notification, one more examination city has been created at Leh for the convenience of aspirants. Moreover, candidates who wish to make corrections to their particulars in the online application form or change their city can do so from October 28 to November 3.

Candidates with a post-graduation qualification with a minimum of 55 per cent marks or equivalent grade and three-year integrated BED-MED can also apply for the exam.

US envoy to Afghanistan resigns in wake of chaotic withdrawal



ity that Khalilzad submitted his resignation on Friday.

His departure follows his exclusion from the Biden administration's first formal talks with the Taliban after the US pullout,

which were held in Doha earlier in October.

In a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Khalilzad defended his record but acknowledged that he came up short and

said he wanted to make way during the "new phase of our Afghanistan policy".

"The political arrangement between the Afghan government and the Taliban did not go forward as envisaged," he was quoted by the AFP news agency as saying.

"The reasons for this are too complex and I will share my thoughts in the coming day and weeks."

'Face of diplomatic failure'

Born in Afghanistan, Khalilzad had held the post since 2018 and spearheaded the negotiations with the Taliban that led to the February 2020 agreement for the withdrawal of US forces this year.

Despite his Republican affiliation, Khalilzad was kept in place when Biden defeated Donald Trump and decided to go ahead with the withdrawal.

He then pressed the hardline armed group and the Western-backed government of former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to negotiate a political settlement to decades of strife.

96-Year-Old Ex-Nazi Death Camp Secretary Who Fled Trial To Face Court

Frankfurt: A 96-year-old former Nazi concentration camp secretary who absconded before her trial was set to begin is due to appear in court in Germany on Tuesday.

The first woman to be prosecuted for Nazi-era crimes in decades, Irmgard Furchner is charged with complicity in the murder of more than 10,000 people at Stutthof camp in occupied Poland.

However an arrest warrant was issued by the court on September 30, in the northern town of Itzehoe after Furchner left the retirement home where she lives as her trial was set to begin, and headed to a metro station.

The pensioner managed to evade police for several hours before being apprehended in the nearby city of Hamburg and temporarily held in custody by

Roughly 65,000 people died at the Stutthof camp near Gdansk, among them "Jewish prisoners, Polish partisans and Soviet Russian prisoners of war

whereabouts.

Camp secretary

Between June 1943 and April 1945, the accused worked in the office of camp commander Paul Werner Hoppe. Prosecutors say she took dictation of the SS officer's orders and handled his correspondence.

Roughly 65,000 people died at the Stutthof camp near Gdansk, among them "Jewish prisoners, Polish partisans and Soviet Russian prisoners of war", according to the indictment.

A teenager at the time the alleged crimes were committed, Furchner's trial is being held in juvenile court.

In a letter sent ahead of her first scheduled hearing, the defendant told the presiding judge of the court that she did not want to appear in person in the dock.

NEWS MAKERS

Top United States envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad is stepping down, the State Department has announced, less than two months after the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover of the country.

Khalilzad will be replaced by his deputy, Tom West, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Monday, noting that West will work closely with the US embassy, which is now based in Doha, on US interests in Afghanistan.

"As Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad steps down from his role, I extend my gratitude for his decades of service to the American people," Blinken's statement said.

"I thank Ambassador Khalilzad for his service and welcome Special Representative West to the role."

A person familiar with the matter told the Reuters news agency on condition of anonym-

CS Chairs Meeting Of Executive Committee For Disaster Management

Sanctions ex-gratia financial relief to COVID victims



OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the UT Executive Committee for Disaster Management to review the requirement of funds for proper COVID management.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Finance, Home, and Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) participated in the meeting.

The UT Executive Committee approved the release of ex-gratia relief of Rs. 50,000 to the next of kin of the casualties of the COVID pandemic, besides sanctioning the release of Rs. 35 crore to districts for its disbursement. The Committee directed DMRRR to formulate the guidelines, in this regard in consultation with the Health & Medical Education Department.

It was informed that so far 4,176 people have died due to

COVID-19 and the relief will be disbursed in favour of the families through a transparent verification process via Aadhar linked direct benefit transfers (DBT).

Further, the Committee reviewed the status of utilization of funds that were earlier released to Divisional and District Commissioners for COVID management as well as SIDCO for establishing a COVID helpline. The Disaster Management Department was asked to obtain utilization certificates for the same and conduct audit of the concerned accounts.

The State Executive Committee authorized DMRRR to assess the division-wise requirements of snow clearance machinery including snow ploughs and cutters for their subsequent procurement. DMRRR was also asked to technically vet the specifications of snow clearance machinery as per the latest technological sophistication and efficiency.

Amid COVID-19, Dengue Outbreak In Jammu Division

378 cases confirmed so far, says Director Health Jammu

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Jammu and Kashmir, many parts of Jammu region have been hit by dengue fever outbreak.

Official figures have revealed that so far over 300 cases of dengue have been reported among them two persons have died which includes one from Udhampur and other from Rajouri.

So far, the Jammu division has recorded 378 cases, Director Health Services Jammu division, Dr Reenu Sharma told KNO.

Officials said that most of the cases have been reported from Rajeev Nagar, Rehari Sarwal, Bhagwati Nagar, old city Jammu.

They said that children and even elderly people have also been infected with dengue.

"We have been monitoring the situation very closely and the situation is under control and all appropriate steps are being taken in this regard to control it further," they added.

Notably, Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by the dengue virus. Symptoms typically begin three

to fourteen days after infection. These may include a high fever, headache, vomiting, muscle and joint pains, and a characteristic skin rash. Recovery generally takes two to seven days. In a small proportion of cases, the disease develops into a more severe dengue hemorrhagic fever, resulting in bleeding, low levels of blood platelets and blood plasma leakage, or into dengue shock syndrome, where dangerously low blood pressure occurs.

It is pertinent to mention here that Chief Secretary Dr. A K Mehta had already impressed upon the Department to issue cautionary advisories/alerts and carry out an extensive IEC drive highlighting the Do's and Don'ts to contain and mitigate the disease by preventing water pile up; mosquito breeding; mosquito bites, besides, making operational a dengue helpline to extend telephonic consultation on dengue-like symptoms.

The Health and Medical Education Department was also asked to ensure proper treatment facilities for dengue patients through dedicated cell/wards and appropriate human resource deputation.

Union MoS Piyush Goyal Concludes Kashmir Visit



OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

ANANTNAG: Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs & Food & Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal on Tuesday concluded his two day visit to Pahalgam as part of the public outreach programme of the Central government.

The Union minister inaugurated tourist hut of Pahalgam Development Authority at Golf Course Pahalgam. Goyal also inaugurated Forest Departments Deodar sapling plantation drive being conducted under the banner of Green JK Drive. A total of 1 lakh saplings will be planted as part of the drive.

Addressing a gathering at Pahalgam, the Union minister thanked the people of Kashmir for their participation in the development process and

appreciated their dedication towards promotion of tourist activity.

The minister discussed developments in the tourism landscape and was happy to observe that there is brisk tourist activity in Pahalgam. He highlighted the need to up the tourist infrastructure to attract more foreign tourists.

The Union Minister inaugurated 250mm Seer Water supply scheme. The project will benefit around 10000 people and will be completed under the ambit of Jal Jeevan Mission within three months.

Goyal also visited Rahi Shawl Unit located at Akad Park. He interacted with the local artisans and examined various handicrafts like zari, sozni, tapestry, etc. The minister appreciated the intricate work being put up by the artisans. He said

that handicrafts of Kashmir tell a symbolic story and the government is committed to ensure this story reaches all parts of the world.

The Union Minister also visited the Sun temple at Martand. Located atop a hillock, the temple is one of the earliest known sun temples much older than Konark and Modhera.

While appreciating the historical significance of the place, the minister passed directions to the district administration to give wide publicity to the temple and bring it on the tourist map. He also underlined the need to bring other such lesser known historical places on the tourist map.

Principal Secretary, Commerce and Industries, DC Anantnag and other officials of the district administration were present on the occasion.

Union MoS Karandlaje Concludes 2-Day Kathua Tour

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

KATHUA: Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shobha Karandlaje on Tuesday concluded her two day tour to district Kathua as part of Central Government's Public outreach programme.

Shobha Karandlaje flagged off a rally from the premises of Chenab Textile Mills, with over 200 students and members of Youth Clubs participated in the rally which culminated at Govindsar.

The minister also met various deputations of DDCs, BDCs, and ULBs besides members of different political parties.

While assuring members of DDCs for taking up various issues highlighted by them at appropriate forums, the minister said the issues related to payment by FCI to those farmers who do not have documents supporting their ownership rights will also be looked into.

Regarding the demand of opening of sugar mills in the border belt of Kathua put forth



by BDCs, the minister advised to rope in private players through PPP mode. About the demand of dedicated mandi for basmati paddy crop, the minister said efforts should be made to utilise the platform of APEDA for exploring the scope of exporting local basmati of Kathua district.

The other demands highlighted by the elected members of PRIs, ULBs and other groups include utilising Lakhampur civil infra for creating job opportunities for local youth,

improved water availability in kandi areas, promotion of aromatic, medicinal and citrus plants, sanctioning of new bore-wells and establishment of more mandies in scattered areas of the district.

Later the minister visited Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kathua where she met with VC SKUAST Jammu who apprised her about the need to open another KVK in the hilly belt of Kathua district to cater the demand of the farming community.

Various Ganderbal Delegations Call On LG

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Former J&K Ministers, Khemlata Wakhlu, Haji Nisar Ali, and representatives of different political parties from district Ganderbal on Tuesday called on LG Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhavan.

Khemlata Wakhlu presented her book to the LG. The LG appreciated the endeavour of Wakhlu for writing the book on the social and cultural aspects of Kashmiri life.

Former Minister Haji Nisar Ali along with members of Al Mehdi Committee Khomeini Chowk Bemina met the LG and put forth the demands and issues pertaining to development and welfare of people.

A delegation of district heads and representatives of different political parties from Ganderbal also met the LG and apprised him of various developmental issues and demands of the people of the District. The delegation comprised Sheikh Ish-

faq Jabbar of JKNC; Sheikh Abdul Rashid and Ghulam Hassan Rather of BJP; Mohd. Amin Shah, Javid Ahmad Mir and Sheikh Showkat of JKAP; Ghulam Nabi Khatana and Farooq Ahmad Dar of JKNPP; and Saahil Farooq Ahmad, Sheikh Aijaz Ahmad and Abdul Hameed Magray of INC.

The demands included timely completion of power augmentation projects and water supply schemes of the district, besides removal of encroachment from roads and forests, development of infrastructure at Central University of Kashmir, granting ST status to Pahari-speaking people, and others.

The LG interacted with the political leaders assured the delegations that all issues and genuine demands projected by them would be taken up with the concerned departments for their redressal on merit. He impressed upon them to keep projecting the issues of public welfare and development of the region.

3 Lakh Children In J&K Suffering From Malnutrition

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: In a major concern, around three lakh children below five years of age have been suffering from two different stages of malnutrition in Jammu and Kashmir during the year 2019-20, a survey has revealed.

NITI Aayog in a study titled 'State Nutrition Profile of Jammu and Kashmir' released earlier in September has said that at least 183,259 numbers of children of less than five years of age were wasted and 94,091 were severely wasted during the year 2019-20.

Wasting of children is a danger sign and refers to the malnutrition or illness.

The wasted children data in the report reveals that in J&K 19 out of 20 districts shows public health concern.

As per the data, Anantnag is the highest-burden district of such cases with at least 24,350 numbers of wasted children followed by frontier district Kupwara with 22,158 cases.

Srinagar stands at the third position for having around 13,911 numbers of wasted children, 13,902 in Baramulla, 13,812 in district Jammu, the news agency KNO reported.

Similarly, the report reveals that at least 94,091 children were severely wasted during the time period with 20 out of 20 districts showing health concern.

The severely wasted children include 13,691 cases in Anantnag followed by 12,977 cases in Kupwara, 7,980 cases in Jammu district, 6,722 cases in Baramulla and 6,460 such cases were found in central Kashmir's Budgam district.

Farmers Worried As Traditional Paddy Varieties Fetch Low Yield

AGENCIES

PULWAMA: Owing to the low paddy yield this year, farmers in south Kashmir are worried as many families earn their livelihood from the produce.

According to KNO, farmers from different areas of south Kashmir have said that this year the yield is very low as compared to the last few years as the produce was full of diseases.

Mohammad Maqbool, a farmer from Lassipora area of Pulwama, said that the crop usually gets ready in the second fortnight of September, "but this year's crop wasn't ready even months after its usual time."

"At time of threshing, we are witnessing very low yield this year due to which farmers are very much worried as thou-

sands of families depend directly on paddy," he said.

Subzar Ahmad, another farmer from Anantnag said that many farmers haven't threshed their crop this year.

Subzar said that blasts and brown spot diseases were prevalent for the last few years but this year the effect of such diseases was very high.

Farmers from Awantipora, Tral, Pampore, Kakapora, Litter, Watchi and other areas of South Kashmir also expressed the same concern following the low produce of crop this year.

Experts believe that the less rain is the main reason for the low crop production this year.

Meanwhile, officials said that despite dozens of awareness camps, farmers are still sticking to old traditional varieties.

SHORT TAKES

3 OGWs From Baramulla Rearrested In Arms Recovery Case

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Three alleged OGWs have been rearrested and subsequently shifted to Kot Bhalwal Jail, Jammu in an arms and ammunition recovery case pertaining to the year 2019, official sources said.

They said that during the intervening night of October 18 and 19, a police party from Dangiawacha arrested Waseem Manzoor Qazi, 22, son of Manzoor Ahmad Qazi, Rayaz Khaliq Parray, 24, Abdul Khaliq and Rameez Ahmed Malla, 26, son of Abdul Majeed – all residents of Watergam, Baramulla.

"The trio was intercepted on November 19, 2019 by 32 RR and SOG Chajama in the local market, which led to the recovery of a Chinese Pistol, a Pistol Magazine, 5 Pistol Rounds and two Hand Grenades from their possession", they told GNS.

A case (FIR 161/2019) under section 7/25, I A ACT, 18/39 UAPA was registered at Police Station Dangiawacha. A police officer also confirmed to the agency about the re-arrest of the trio.

Works On Tawi Barrage To Be Completed In 10 Months

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Administrative Council (AC), which met here on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, approved the revised project for Construction of Balance Works of Tawi Barrage at an estimated cost of Rs.73.34 crore.

Farooq Khan and Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisors to the Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG attended the meeting.

The proposed gated barrage on river Tawi is one of the three sub-projects of the prestigious Artificial lake Project - which was conceptualized to give a boost to regional tourism in Jammu by creating recreational activities like boating and water sports, besides enhancing the overall aesthetic look of the city. The other two sub-proj-

ects, viz Tawi River Development Project and Beautification and creation of tourist facilities are to be executed by Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD) and Tourism Department respectively.

The project was originally sanctioned in the financial year 2010-11 at a cost of Rs.70.00 crore by dovetailing funds from various sources with an aim to create pondage for creation of artificial lake. However, the project was stalled on account of contractor's inactivity for 7 years leading to cancellation of awarded tender and related cost escalation.

The Administrative Council has sanctioned the revised project which will be completed within 10 months of allotment through e-tendering at an estimated cost of Rs. 131.53 crore which includes the additional grant of Rs. 73.34 crore and already incurred expenditure of Rs. 58.19 crore.

Drowned Bandipora Shepherd's Body Recovered After 6 Days

AGENCIES

SOPORE: The body of a 20-year-old shepherd was recovered from river Jhelum at Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Tuesday.

Officials told CNS that the body of shepherd identified as Nazir Ahmad Cheechi, son of Muhammad Yousuf Cheechi of Bandipora was recovered from river Jhelum at Seer Jagir area of Sopore. They said that the body was handed over to the family after conducting all legal medical formalities.

Notably, the shepherd drowned into river Jhelum on last Wednesday following which a rescue operation was launched however the drowned boy couldn't be found immediately.

Ex-Minister Quits NC, Extends Support To Rana

AGENCIES

JAMMU: One more leader from National Conference on Tuesday quit the party and declared to extend support to former party member Devender Singh Rana, who joined the BJP recently.

Former NC leader and Minister Prem Sagar Aziz was the NC's Bani Assembly constituency in-charge. He said in a statement that he is resigning from the primary membership of the party, along with his supporters.

"I was in the Congress for 45 years and joined the National Conference only because of Rana. As I know that he is working for the cause of Jammu, I support his cause unequivocally. Now that Rana has dissociated himself from the National Conference for the sake of Jammu, I cannot continue in the party and extend my support to Rana," he said.

Minor Drowns After Falling Into Pit In Kupwara

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: A 6-year-old boy drowned to death after falling into a water-filled pit in Sulkot in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Tuesday evening.

According to reports, Mohammad Musa, 6, son of Abdul Qayoom Payer was playing with children near an under construction building of Women's Degree College Salkote, when the incident occurred. The child was evacuated by Fire and Emergency Services Department and rushed to nearby hospital, where the doctors however declared him as brought dead on arrival.

Meanwhile a police official has confirmed to news agency about the occurrence of the incident.

Man Dead, Younger Brother Injured In Poonch Accident

AGENCIES

POONCH: A 28-year-old youth was killed and his younger brother was injured when a motorcycle they were riding met with an accident near Eidgah Chowk in Poonch, officials said.

The accident took place at about 23:45 hours last night, leading to injuries to two persons—Sukhvinder Singh (28) and Manjot Singh (14-15) sons of Charan Singh of Dara Dullian Tehsil Haveli in Poonch. Both of them were shifted to District Hospital Poonch where doctors declared Sukhvinder Singh dead while Manjot is under treatment. A police official told GNS that a case has been registered and further investigations taken up.

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

K O V I E W

Taming The Virus

With every passing day, the situation on Covid-19 front is getting better. The much-feared third wave has not materialized. The vaccination of a majority of the population has drastically reduced the infections. India is reporting now less than 15000 cases and under 150 deaths, according to the data by the Union Health ministry. The country's overall active caseload has gone below 2 lakh after more than seven months. This shows a steady decline in numbers. If this trend continues, India could be rid of the pandemic in a month or two.

This has given confidence to India to relax Covid-related restrictions and reopen its borders to foreign travellers after 19 months. The country has already started granting tourist visas to travellers arriving on chartered flights. The facility will be extended to those arriving on commercial flights from 15 November. India had stopped issuing tourist visas since March 2020 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi enforced the lockdown rein in the coronavirus pandemic.

Be that as it may, the decline in numbers is a positive development. There is hope now that the daily caseload shows a progressive decline. But there is a need to be careful. Government should continue to invest in a world-class healthcare infrastructure to increase the capacity of the hospitals and the medical personnel to deal with the pandemic. There is also the need to continue to vaccinate people. India's Covid vaccination count is set to cross the 100 crore-mark. The Centre will launch a song produced by Kher on the occasion of the achievement of 100 crore vaccine doses administration in the country. Even the World Bank president David Malpass has congratulated India on a successful vaccination campaign against the Covid-19 pandemic as he met finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and appreciated India's international role in vaccine production and distribution.

But this is no guarantee that the Covid-19 pandemic could be reigned in anytime soon. The only way to stave off a fresh outbreak, the government needs to upgrade healthcare, enforce strict adherence to SOPs in public and keep running an advertisement blitz to create more awareness about the contagion. The coming few months are crucial. If the government is able to keep the daily caseload low and ensures it tapers off, it would have more or less won the war against coronavirus. For now, however, there is no room for complacency. The government and for that matter, even the people can't afford to let their guard down.

OTHER OPINION

On Fuel Prices And Inflation

The latest sets of data on industrial output and retail inflation are beguilingly heartening, with the former showing a double-digit year-on-year increase in production, and the latter positing a sharp slowdown in price gains. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures released on Tuesday show industrial output rose 11.9% in August, while inflation in September slowed by 95 basis points from the preceding month to 4.35%. The numbers seem to indicate a gathering recovery in economic momentum, even as CPI-based inflation eases towards the RBI's mandated target of 4%. The IIP constituents – mining, manufacturing and electricity – posted appreciable improvements of 23.6%, 9.7% and 16%, respectively. But a closer look shows the production figures were buoyed substantially by the contractions that occurred last year when the economy was still struggling to recover from the first COVID-19 lockdown. The eroded base in the case of the August 2020 IIP data disguises the fact that output actually shrank 0.2% on a month-on-month basis this year with mining and manufacturing, which together account for 94% of the index, posting sequential contractions of 0.8% and 0.5%, respectively. Only consumer non-durables and construction goods posted increases from July. The slowdown in the consumer durables category reflects the lack of demand for white goods amid the pandemic.

With last fiscal's IIP numbers showing output rebounding in September-October 2020, and some industrial sectors, including automobile manufacturing, hit this year by raw material shortages and logistic constraints, it is hard to see production sustaining the pace of growth. Inflation too has benefited from the elevated levels in the year-earlier period when the headline reading had accelerated to 7.3% in September 2020, and subsequently touched 7.6% last October. The CPI data mask the real extent of price pressures across major product categories. Undermining nutritional security especially among the sizeable number who have suffered job or income cuts, key protein sources including meat and fish and pulses and products recorded provisional inflation of 7.99% and 8.75%, respectively, while the vital cooking medium of oils and fats saw price gains accelerate to a punishing 34.2%. Transport and communication, which captures pump prices of petrol and diesel, also stayed stuck close to double digits at 9.5%. With global crude oil ruling near three-year highs, unless the Central and State governments deign to respond to the RBI's entreaties and cut fuel levies, there is little scope for inflation easing by much in this category. The coal crisis that is roiling power output is sure to also ripple across sectors and undermine price stability unless policy makers intervene post haste.

The Hindu

Bumpy Road Ahead



Image Credits: AP

Renu Kohli

The International Monetary Fund revealed its outlook for the world economy last week. A year and a half after the pandemic, global recovery remained reassuringly strong: the world economy is expected to grow a tad slower (10 basis points) this year at 5.9 per cent and at an unchanged pace – 4.9 per cent – next year. But the exit from the pandemic, cautions the IMF, is not unqualified. There are significant concerns, including strong inflationary pressures, raised unemployment, and more uncertainty than seen before. The recovery is also divergent because the initial differences due to vaccine access and quick, generous policy support have accentuated the divide between the high-income economies and the emerging, developing ones. In the forthcoming years, lasting injuries to the latter group are seen to be severest for Asian economies, barring China. The global picture is, thus, both encouraging and sobering; principally because all risks bear down than upwards as well as significant economic scarring from the pandemic.

For India, the IMF retained its 9.5 per cent real GDP growth forecast for the current year, followed by 8.5 per cent growth in 2022-23. This is similar to that projected by the Reserve Bank of India, which reviewed its monetary policy a week before the IMF's October World Economic Outlook. The outlook on inflation is directionally similar too. While the central bank sharply lowered its annual inflation forecast to 5.3 per cent from 5.7 per cent in August, the IMF sees it declining to 5.6 per cent followed by 4.9 per cent next year.

The upholding of growth predictions by these two institutions come amidst a steady build-up of optimism in recent weeks. Significant contributors to the elated economic expectations have been the sale of Air India, the ailing public airline, which has bolstered hopes of more successful sales of public entities in the pipeline; the revision of India's rating outlook to stable from the negative ranking earlier

THE RECOVERY IS ALSO DIVERGENT BECAUSE the initial differences due to vaccine access and quick, generous policy support have accentuated the divide between the high-income economies and the emerging, developing ones. In the forthcoming years, lasting injuries to the latter group are seen to be severest for Asian economies, barring China

by rating agency, Moody's; the up-trend in most lead economic indicators; improvements in business and consumer sentiments, albeit from abysmally low levels; robust tax collections, amongst others. Inflation anxiety also seems to be moderating compared to elevated fears a quarter ago. The highlight of India's placement as the world's fastest growing economy in the IMF's individual country forecasts even overlooks that this is from one of the world's deepest plunges last year.

Are there reasons to be tentative? Will the economic rebound maintain its strength and the momentum gathered forge ahead? There is valid concern that real incomes could be dented by the upsurge in prices. For the rebound isn't strong enough for consumption to remain unaffected. A 9.5 per cent growth will only be 1.6 per cent above the 2019-20 income level. The quarterly rebound in June was 20 per cent on annual basis, 9 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively, below the corresponding quarters of 2019 and 2018. This reveals the depth of the lost ground that is to be recovered and to be built upon. GDP growth has to be stronger and for longer to return to square up and rise further therefrom.

It is a challenge with increasing prices chipping away at the income gains. It is even harder when the biggest GDP component, private final consumption, has been more severely squeezed. In April-June 2021, real aggregate consumption was an alarming 12 per cent lower than its two-year ago level (April-June, 2019) and -5.2 per cent less than that of April-June 2018. Even if aggregate consumption grew at the same pace as full-year GDP growth forecast (9.5 per cent), the restoration would still be -0.5 per cent lower than the total

consumer expenditure in 2019-20. If higher price levels and unabated increases depress consumer spending in this while, the process could get stretched. Especially as fuel prices are soaring –about 18 per cent of final consumer expenditure was

FOR INDIA, THE IMF RETAINED ITS 9.5 per cent real GDP growth forecast for the current year, followed by 8.5 per cent growth in 2022-23. This is similar to that projected by the Reserve Bank of India, which reviewed its monetary policy a week before the IMF's October World Economic Outlook. The outlook on inflation is directionally similar too. While the central bank sharply lowered its annual inflation forecast to 5.3 per cent from 5.7 per cent in August, the IMF sees it declining to 5.6 per cent followed by 4.9 per cent next year.

upon transport before the pandemic, whose long run has increased preference for personal mobility and, possibly, skewed fuel demand. The necessity of this spending could cost consumption of other goods and services. The other fallout is the building burden of higher input costs upon producers; weak demand has so far held them back from these being passed on to final prices but the margins are being compressed.


The ebullience also needs to recognize that post-pandemic regains are uneven for individuals as well as firms, something not immediately visible in aggregate income growth. Listed companies, for example, have done very well; their

inner financial strengths have been handsomely bolstered by lower interest costs (monetary policy support). But little is officially known about the informal, small and medium businesses. Or the four-fifths of India's workforce engaged in informal, low-skilled, low-paying occupations that are mostly in the more-severely affected services such as travel, hotels and restaurants. There are visible signs and reports that the economic gains are unequally distributed – subdued two-wheeler sales against stronger ones for cars, sports utility and luxury vehicles; the pending return of unemployment to pre-pandemic levels; higher sales of upscale brands of durable goods, smartphones in the Navratri sales, amongst others.

Such effects, or the scarring, will linger for longer. That raises the additional question of the strength of the lift-off from the peak recovery this year. Forces bearing down upon consumption are serious and several. Minus a reassuring, strong pick-up, a restoration of private investment is hard to see. Exports are expected to do some heavy lifting; seeing their robust performance this half-year, the government is going all out to help. The IMF expects world trade volumes (goods and services) to grow 9.7 per cent in 2021 after a -8.2 per cent fall last year; a 6.7 per cent performance is expected next year. Here, the dependency upon world trade in which recovering economies all over the globe are contributing remains to be tested.

It may be more prudent to qualify growth optimism in this light. Expectations may be borne out in the near-term because of the past repression of demand and the festive season, which traditionally sees a rise in consumer spending. The ground realities may surface thereafter.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Telegraph India



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Women Shouldn't Relinquish Right To Inheritance

THIS is in reference to the recently released National Family Health Survey 2019-20 (NFHS-5) fact sheet for Jammu and Kashmir which states that only 57.3% women in the UT own a house and/or land, alone or jointly. Even though these figures might be read as "at least more than half women own property" but given that all women are coparceners in one or the other way, it should raise questions. J and K is a Muslim majority region and Islam entitles a sister to inherit half of what a brother gets as a coparcener. Despite this fact, the number of women owning a property is almost half of that of men.

Women asking for their coparcenary rights is considered taboo and a lot of women seem to have internalized that

WOMEN ASKING FOR THEIR COPARCENARY rights is considered taboo and a lot of women seem to have internalized that asking for inheritance rights will break their relationship with other members of the family, especially brothers. As a result, they sign relinquishment deeds without giving a second thought about it. This inheritance of property is mostly seen as a matter of money and wealth, but it goes beyond that, at least for women.

asking for inheritance rights will break their relationship with other members of the family, especially brothers. As a result, they sign relinquishment deeds without giving a second thought about it. This inheritance of property is mostly seen as a matter of money and wealth, but it goes beyond that, at least for women. Economically speaking, ownership of any kind of property by women is a very important determi-

nant in the quest for women empowerment. In the realist world wherever everyone is responsible for their own survival, women should not expect their male relatives to care for them. Unless women do not attach economic value to their lives, they will have no power. This is especially true for unemployed women who do not have financial independence. Since inheritance of property is a given- however small

value it may have, they do not have to get an education or work for getting it. The only thing they need to do is not to sign the relinquishment deed.

Relinquishment of coparcenary rights militates against women empowerment. It is high time that women ask for their inheritance rights that the constitution as well as the religion gives them. The right to inheritance also seems one of its kind means to women empowerment where people peddling religiosity may not find a reason to oppose it. Women should know that signing a relinquishment deed may lose them a lifetime opportunity for leading a respectful life in this patriarchal world.

Haris Rashid
Harisrashid2185@gmail.com

Chinese Naval Strategy’s Covert Dimensions

In Recent Times The Chinese Coercive Activities In The South China Sea And Its Global Port-Buying Spree Have Added Different Dimensions To Its Naval Strategy

Asad Mirza

Ever since Communist China came into existence in 1949, its belligerence over South China Sea – SCS, has been increasing and some recent events have increased its hostility in the regional sea and towards its neighbour Taiwan. China claims almost all of the SCS covering roughly 3.5 million square kilometres, and its estimated 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 11 billion barrels of oil, in addition to maritime resources such as fish, as part of Chinese territory. Though the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague had firmly rejected China’s sovereignty claim in 2016 but even five years after that ruling, China continues to reject the court’s authority.

China’s covert activities in the SCS

In the International Law Studies journal of 2021, Vol. 97, Captain Raul Pedrozo, Professor of International Law at the U.S. Naval War College says the term ‘sea areas under the jurisdiction of the People’s Republic of China’ is not defined in the law and is purposely vague.

Recently China revised its Maritime Traffic Safety Law (MTSL), effective 1 September, which requires certain foreign vessels sailing into Chinese “territorial waters” to notify Beijing in advance. Foreign vessels such as foreign submarines, nuclear-powered ships, ships carrying radioactive, toxic or hazardous materials and any other vessels that “may endanger the maritime traffic safety” of China are required to provide information including their ships’ names and numbers, recent locations, satellite telephone numbers and dangerous goods. “Article 2 of the MTSL expands application of the law from ‘coastal waters’ to ‘sea areas under the jurisdiction of the People’s Republic of China’, which means the SCS.

In September 2021, the PLA air force conducted troop transports with a number of large Y-20 transport aircraft to three airstrips in the Spratly archipelago, where China has built and militarised artificial islands on top of the reefs in the SCS, according to Chinese state media Global Times.

China’s claim to sovereignty over the South China Sea and its willingness and ability to pursue it has long been creating friction with countries in the area, which stake their own claims to parts



JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/Getty Images

CHINA ALSO REGULARLY DEPLOYS its large civilian fishing fleet to further its goals in the SCS. In March 2021, a huge Chinese fishing fleet descended on Whitsun Reef, which lies within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines. Almost seven months later more than 150 Chinese vessels reportedly remain in Philippine waters.

THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON THE SEA VERSION OF ITS BELT & Road Initiative (BRI). Under this programme Chinese companies, COSCO Shipping Ports and China Merchants Port, two state-owned enterprises which account for the operations of 81% of those ports, have acquired 95 ports globally out of which 22 are in Europe, 20 in the Middle East and North Africa, 18 in the Americas, 18 in South and Southeast Asia, and nine in sub-Saharan Africa

of the sea, including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

China also regularly deploys its large civilian fishing fleet to further its goals in the SCS. In March 2021, a huge Chinese fishing fleet descended on Whitsun Reef, which lies within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines. Almost seven months later more than 150 Chinese vessels reportedly remain in Philippine waters.

Tensions continue to rise in the SCS, as China, ramps up its military activities in the region. Within only the first four days of October, China conducted a record-breaking 150 incursions into Taiwan’s air defence identification zone (ADIZ) -- after China’s People Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) had already, in September, set another monthly record with 117 incursions, some with nuclear-capable bombers,

fighter jets and reconnaissance planes. Also in August and September, China conducted assault drills near Taiwan with war ships, early-warning aircraft, anti-submarine aircraft and bombers.

China’s Sea BRI

In addition to this, the Chinese government has embarked on the Sea version of its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). Under this programme Chinese companies, COSCO Shipping Ports and China Merchants Port, two state-owned enterprises which account for the operations of 81% of those ports, have acquired 95 ports globally out of which 22 are in Europe, 20 in the Middle East and North Africa, 18 in the Americas, 18 in South and Southeast Asia, and nine in sub-Saharan Africa.

If we analyse these acquisitions by China, which on the face of it looks

commercial, most of these investments come at a very high cost with very low RoI, but in reality these investments are driven by China’s geopolitical ambitions, thus the RoI does not matter to the Chinese state.

The paper “Weaponising the Belt and Road Initiative,” written by Daniel R. Russell and Blake H. Berger and published by Asia Society Policy Institute in September 2020, underlines this fact stating that, ““A deliberate military and strategic functionality seems clearly entrenched in the initiative.... there is abundant evidence it is developing a network of strategic strong-points that can significantly raise the costs of any U.S. military intervention and lower the willingness of BRI host governments to offer access or assistance to the United States.”

In addition the paper notes that the U.S. naval vessels might not be able to

call regularly at ports under Chinese management because of the risk that commercial port information-technology (IT) systems could be used to monitor or interfere with military systems and jeopardise U.S. information and cyber security. For this very reason, the US warned Israel that China’s management of the new Haifa port terminal could potentially damage US-Israeli security cooperation, as it might lead to US Navy ships refraining from docking at Haifa.

Further this investment in and ownership of ports worldwide creates economic and political leverage for the Chinese government, as it could affect local policy and decision-making. For example after Chinese acquisition of the port of Piraeus, Greece blocked an EU statement criticising China’s human rights record and also prevented a unified EU statement against China’s behaviour in the SCS besides opposing tougher screenings of Chinese investments in Europe.

The USN Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead said in 2019 that China’s port acquisitions and operations pose certain risks for US Navy vessels that call at ports under Chinese management.

If we put two and two together then the maritime strategy of China in the SCS and the rest of the world becomes quite clear. While on the one hand by show of strength it is trying to dominate Taiwan and other smaller countries in the region. Secondly, by buying and managing ports worldwide it has charted a route which ensures availability of gas and natural gas to the Chinese factories and if required the Chinese military vessels could be deployed there quite quickly, and the nation in which that port exists might not be able to even utter a whisper as it is already under the economic burden of Chinese loans and aid programme.

Overall, the Chinese aggression in the SCS and its port-buying programme are in fact a direct challenge to the U.S. in the global waters and China has been able to achieve this at a very little cost.

Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi.

He was also associated with BBC Urdu Service and Khaleej Times of Dubai. He writes on Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs.

How The West Co-Opts Human Rights Industry

Osama Tanous

While human rights reports might serve to document misery through data and statistics, the question remains: what impact do these reports truly have? Do they really change the political realities on the ground?

In her brilliant introduction to a special issue of the Journal of Palestine Studies focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, Danya Qato questions the efficacy of the health and human rights reporting industry in Palestine, arguing that it is commissioned and financed by European and American aid agencies, leading to reports that are predictable in both tone and content.

Such reports document and tabulate violations of human rights, such as home demolitions, restrictions on freedom of movement, and the siege of Gaza, along with their effects on health. But while it is important to document the manifestations of settler-colonial violence in the 21st century, these reports unfortunately become, as Danya Qato describes them, “meaningless by inaction, duplication, and inefficiencies”.

Late last year, a report titled “A Life Exposed”, focusing on Israeli military invasions of Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank, was released jointly by Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHR-I), Yesh Din, and Breaking the Silence, and funded by the EU.

It elegantly presents an interesting collage of experiences from both sides of the gun, examining how home invasions are experienced by Palestinians on one hand, and Israeli soldiers on the other.

Yesh Din documented 128 separate home invasion incidents between March 2018 and May 2019. PHR-I conducted 31 interviews focused on the mental health effects of these invasions, and Breaking the Silence interviewed 40 soldiers and five officers who participated in the invasions.

The report sheds important light on

THE AUTHORS FOLLOW A COMMON pattern of trying to fit Palestinians’ experiences into western diagnoses, rather than trying to build on Palestinian scholarly work

the savage nature of home invasions. It shows that 88 percent take place between midnight and 5am - timing calculated to increase the horror for Palestinian families, who are ripped from slumber by heavily armed Israeli soldiers storming their homes.

Violating international law

Raids last for an average of 80 minutes, with soldiers ordering family members - including children - to gather in one room while issuing threats and pointing firearms at them. Getting approval for such invasions is easy; virtually every scenario can lead to an approval of an invasion and the arrest of Palestinians.

The report shows how this system contradicts the duty of the occupying power to preserve public order and safety in the occupied territories, in accordance with international law. It also emphasises that in many cases, the invasions are conducted merely for the purposes of mapping: taking photos and gathering intelligence. This has no legal basis, and often, the information gathered leads nowhere.

The report also explains how home invasions create a climate of fear and intimidation, causing post-traumatic stress symptoms among victims. The invasions shatter parents’ ability to protect their children and to create a feeling of security.

In so doing, the report avoids two common pitfalls of mental health research in Palestine. One is the unnecessary drive to calculate percentages in order to show a correlation between an “exposure”, such as a home invasion, and an “outcome”, such as mental distress.



NO NEED TO HEAR YOUR VOICE WHEN I CAN TALK about you better than you can speak about yourself ... Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own ... I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk.”

The second is the pathologising of Palestinians, labelling them as suffering from a “disorder” or as inherently resilient. Indeed, their reactions are normal reactions to an abnormal reality.

But at the same time, the authors follow a common pattern of trying to fit Palestinians’ experiences into western diagnoses, rather than trying to build on Palestinian scholarly work in the field of mental health, which integrates organic concepts of insecurity, humiliation, or feeling broken or destroyed - work that challenges the validity of western concepts in grasping the Palestinian experience.

Occupation and ethnic cleansing

What is more important than the report itself is the context in which it lies.

Renowned sociologist Start Hall once said: “The ball, which is a physical object, only becomes meaningful as a football within the context of the rules of the game..... that determines what you can and can’t do with it.... which the ball didn’t make up”.

Such reports clearly lie within a larger context, in which EU countries and the US provide diplomatic and military support to Israel in order to conduct its wars, occupation, and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. These same countries create and fund a health and human rights reporting industry, which documents and studies the impacts of political violence on Palestinians’ health.

This problematic structure amplifies the voices of Israeli human rights

groups as being experts, neutral and objective, while largely ignoring the voices of Palestinians. Palestinian human rights groups have been working on the ground for decades, documenting these violations and advocating for the rights of Palestinians, while having their own offices invaded and their workers arrested.

As Haneen Maikey and Lana Tatour detailed in a previous article for MEE, Israeli human rights reports circulate in a larger racist structure, where Palestinians’ experiences are the raw data and Israeli human rights NGOs are “the natural representatives and framers of Palestinians’ lived reality”. As such, Israeli NGOs become the experts, with more valuable and legitimate voices.

Or, as Black feminist bell hooks brilliantly laid out:

“No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself ... Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own ... I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk.”

Palestinians have been narrating, writing, and shouting their experiences under settler-colonialism for decades. Palestinian human rights groups, such as Adameer, have long been documenting military raids of homes and reporting on them in detail, including the health impacts. The Badil Resource Center has detailed the excessive use of force during home invasions, while Defense for Children International - Palestine has narrated how these invasions are experienced by children.

But the market value of such Palestinian reports in the supermarket of human rights reports generally prevents them from making headlines in western media.

The author is a Palestinian pediatrician based in Haifa and a board member of Physicians for Human Rights – Israel. Currently he is a Hubert H. Humphrey fellow of public health and health policies at Emory University, Atlanta. The article was originally published by Middle East Eye

Study suggests lower death risk linked to higher intake of fatty acid in nuts, seeds, plant oils

Agencies

A high intake of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), found mainly in nuts, seeds, and plant oils, is associated with a lower risk of death from all causes, and specifically from diseases of the heart and blood vessels, a new study has shown.

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

Higher ALA intake was associated with a slightly higher risk of death from cancer, but the researchers said further studies are needed to confirm this.

Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) is a type of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid found in plants, such as soybean, nuts, canola oils and flaxseed.

Previous studies have shown that a high ALA intake is associated with a lower risk of fatal coronary heart disease, but findings from other studies on ALA and the risk of death have been inconclusive.

To address this uncertainty, an international team of researchers analysed the results of 41 studies published between 1991 and 2021 on the associations between ALA and risk of death from all causes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Together, these studies involved around 120,000 participants aged between 18 and 98 years who were monitored for between two and 32 years, and they accounted for factors such as age, weight, smoking status, alcohol consumption, and physical activity.

After thoroughly assessing each study for bias, the researchers found that a high intake of ALA was associated with a 10 per cent, 8 per

cent, and 11 per cent lower risk of mortality from all causes, cardiovascular disease, and coronary heart disease, respectively.

This is equivalent to 113 fewer deaths per 10,000 person-years for all causes, 33 fewer cardiovascular disease deaths, and 23 fewer coronary heart disease deaths.

A higher intake of ALA, however, was associated with a slightly higher risk of cancer mortality, equivalent to 63 extra cancer deaths for the highest compared with the lowest levels of ALA intake.

A dose-response effect was found for dietary ALA intake and cardiovascular disease mortality, such that a 1g per day increase in ALA intake (equivalent to one tablespoon of canola oil or 0.5 ounces of walnut oil) was associated with a 5 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease mortality.

Higher blood levels of ALA were also associated with lower risks of mortality.

Due to the observational design of included studies, causality cannot be established, nor can the researchers rule out the possibility that other unknown factors or measurement errors of food and nutrient intakes might have affected their results.

Nevertheless, the use of stringent study inclusion criteria together with rigorous and systematic evaluation of study quality suggests their conclusions are robust.

As such, they say their study adds to evidence of the potential health benefits of polyunsaturated fatty acids.

And they concluded, "Further studies should examine the association between ALA and a



wider range of causes of death to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the potential health effects of ALA as well as to examine whether specific foods rich in ALA are differentially associated with mortality from cancer and other causes."

A linked article summarises the current evidence on dietary intakes of different types of

fatty acids and death.

Despite the beneficial effects of omega 3 fatty acids, it suggests that recommendations for intakes should be made cautiously because ALA intake might slightly increase the risk of cancer mortality. Further studies are, however, needed to confirm the increased risk.

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Covid-19 pandemic: Anxiety can affect academic performance

Agencies

Many kids across Australia are heading back into classrooms after months of lockdowns and remote learning.

Understandably, students may be anxious about what the uncertainty of the return may mean for them academically and socially.

Some may have existing worries at home, such as financial strain in the family, that can impact on their mental health.

Research has shown anxiety and depression grew among young people during the pandemic.

While social and emotional effects of anxiety are often explored, many people may not realise anxiety can have a significant impact on children's academic work too.

A panicky feeling

One in seven Australians are currently experiencing anxiety. The prevalence of anxiety among children is a cause for concern: 6.1% of girls and 7.6% of boys. And research shows the median age onset for anxiety is 11 years.

Importantly, these were statistics before the pandemic. In August this year, the Journal for the American Medical Association (JAMA) published research showing 25% of young people globally were experiencing clinical anxiety.

The study showed the prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms during COVID-19 had doubled compared with prepandemic estimates.

Anxiety is when you feel uncomfortable nervousness, worry, light-headedness, an increased heart rate, a churning stomach, restlessness, and/or a panicky feeling.

We are supposed to feel anxious or a little worried before stressful situations, such as taking an exam, as it motivates us to perform better.

But while anxiety serves an important function, it is a problem if it starts to become unbearable and interfere with our daily function.

How it can affect kids' academic abilities

Attentional control theory provides a well-supported explanation for how anxiety might play out in the classroom.

The theory holds that heightened anxiety impairs the efficiency of mental processes (executive functions) but does not always hinder the accuracy of performance.

Research demonstrates the negative impact of anxiety on executive functions in adults.

It can affect our inhibition (the ability to control an impulse), shifting (where we switch or shift between tasks or demands), and updating (monitoring and updating information in the cognitive system where information is stored and manipulated for us to complete a task — known as working memory).

Some studies have examined the consequences of anxiety-linked problems with executive function when it comes to academic achievement in children. But research is still limited.

One study found the ability to inhibit and shift attention, and update information in working memory, were associated with issues with literacy and numeracy.

For example, poorer updating (or working memory) was related to poorer maths, whereas poorer inhibition was associated with poorer overall grades.

Our laboratory is currently testing precisely how anxiety implicates children's cognitive processes and in turn, classroom achievement. But here is what we speculate so far.

How the theory can help explain classroom difficulties



Based on attentional control theory, it is likely the attention of a child experiencing heightened anxiety might be drawn towards worrisome thoughts rather than their classroom task.

A child might be unable to control their thoughts. For instance, they may think this work is too hard or they might fail. This can lead to trouble shifting their focus to concentrate on academic work.

When new information is presented, a child's working memory requires updating and their attention needs to stay focused on the task to absorb new material.

But, if attention is being drawn towards task-irrelevant information like the negative thoughts, then performance is less efficient (takes longer) and sometimes less accurate (of poorer quality).

So, what can teachers and parents do to help?

Tips for parents and teachers

There is a lot teachers and parents can do to help, but here are ten tips: Provide reassurance and normalise mistakes with statements like:

“It can affect our inhibition (the ability to control an impulse), shifting (where we switch or shift between tasks or demands), and updating (monitoring and updating information in the cognitive system where information is stored and manipulated for us to complete a task — known as working memory).

“Mistakes or minor set backs are a normal part of learning something new”.

Build confidence. This means praising a child's effort and reminding them of a time they did well.

Be proactive. Have difficult discussions about the divorce of their friend's parents or their fears related to the global pandemic, using age-appropriate.

Language. When talking to a five-year-old, you might say: “It sounds like you might be worried because Joey's parents have split up, yours might too? One thing is for sure, Joey's parents both love him very much just like we do as your parents”.

Or when talking to a 16-year-old, a teacher might say: “I can hear you are unsure whether to get a vaccine or not? Getting information from reliable sources, like doctors, will allow you to weigh up the pros and cons of your decision and feel more at ease.”

Reducing the unknowns makes us less inclined to worry

Be ready to listen and empathise

Make adjustments. Allow extra time. Provide larger tasks in smaller chunks

Provide structure and routine

Remove distractions and set a time to worry later. A parent might say: “OK let's get your homework done, have dinner, take Scooby for a walk around the block and then you and I will sit down and talk about what's bothering you. If you like we can schedule a regular 'worry time'.”

Practice mindfulness. Breathe, exercise, rest and eat well. Take regular breaks.

Remember anxiety is contagious. If the adults at school or home are anxious or worried, it has a flow on effect to the child.

Seek professional help if needed.

Keep in mind that providing a calm environment allows the child to improve their executive functioning and maximise their potential to achieve at school.

Importantly, taking this approach provides a feedback loop of improvement, that is, the more the child feels successful, the less they worry.

(The Conversation)

‘Illness related messages significant motivators for exercise’

Agencies

Fitness apps that emphasize illness- or death-related messaging are more likely to be effective in motivating participation than are social stigma, obesity, or financial cost messaging, according to a recent study led by researchers at the University of Waterloo.

The study, 'The Relationship between Perceived Health Message Motivation and Social Cognitive Beliefs in Persuasive Health Communication', was published in the journal MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute) and was authored by Oyibo, with Julita Vassileva, a Persuasive System Design professor at the University of Saskatchewan, assisting with the data collection.

Previous studies, especially on smoking cessation and risky sexual behaviour, found that messages related to mortality could be a barrier to acknowledging health risks, but the study found this is the opposite for fitness apps.

The study asked 669 research participants to indicate how persuasive these five types of messages were in terms of motivating them to work out at home with a fitness app, to uncover their effectiveness, connection with social-cognitive beliefs such as self-regulation (goal setting), self-efficacy, and outcome expectation, and seeing

what role male/female gender played.

"I did not expect only illness- and death-related messages to be significant and motivational," said Kiemute Oyibo, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Waterloo's School of Public Health Sciences.

Oyibo added, "Not only were illness- and death-related messages motivational, they had a significant relationship with self-regulatory belief and outcome expectation, and there was no significant difference between males and females."

Oyibo said he had expected obesity-related messages (such as "one in four Canadians has clinical obesity") to be motivational and have a significant relationship with self-regulatory belief, given that obesity is associated with the leading causes of global mortality.

"This study is important because it helps us - especially designers of health apps - understand the types of messages that individuals, regardless of gender, are likely to be motivated by in persuasive health communication, and that are likely to influence individuals' social-cognitive beliefs about exercise," Oyibo said.

Oyibo said future studies should consider other demographic characteristics besides genders, such as age, culture, race, and education, to uncover the role they play in persuasive health communication.

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

Tel/Fax: 0194-2433590- , 2437647 (srinagar) : 0191-2479371, 2470102 (jammu)

website: <http://www.jakbopee.org>, email: ceojakbopee@gmail.com

Subject: Provisional Select list of candidates for B.Arch. Course-2021 at School of Architecture, GCET Jammu/ GCET, Safapora, Ganderbal. Reference: i) Notification NO.088-BOPEE of 2021 dated 10-09-021.

ti) Notice NO.069-BOPEE of 2021 dated 24-09-2021.

iii) Notice No.070-BOPEE of 2021 dated 05-10-2021.

Notification No. 110-BOPEE of 2021

Dated: 18-10-2021.

Pursuant to Notification NO.088-BOPEE of 2021 dated 10-09-2021, read with Notice No.069-BOP-EE of 2021 dated 24-9-2021 and Notice No.070-BOPEE of 2021 dated 05-10-2021, the Board had invited offline Application Forms for admission to B Arch. Course-2021 for School of Architecture, GCET Jammu/ GCET, Safapora, Ganderbal. After examining the documents, the Board found that 01 candidate namely Sofia Rafiq is not eligible for the said course as per the eligibility criteria mentioned in the Notification NO.088-BOPEE of 2021 dated 10-09-2021.

The candidates figuring in Annexure "A" to this Notification have been provisionally recommended for admission to B.Arch. Course-2021 on the basis of their merit Score of NATA examination 2021 and as per the choices/ preferences submitted by the candidates.

The Principals of the concerned College shall get below mentioned original certificates verified by the Incharge College/ Admission Committee and countersigned by him/ her before allowing the candidates to complete their admission formalities. The provisionally selected candidates are advised to report to their respective Colleges for admission alongwith following documents w.e.f.19-10-2021 to 26-10-2021 (upto 04:00 P.M).

1. Domicile Certificate

2. Marks Card of 12th class examination or 10+3 Diploma with mathematics Marks Card, whichever is applicable.

3. NATA Score card-2021

4. DOB Certificate

5. Any other documents is required by the concerned Colleges.

The College shall submit shortfall of candidates, if any, to the BOPEE Office Jammu/ Srinagar on 26-10-2021 (upto 05:00 P.M).

Note: i) Due to less number of candidates all the seats have been filled under open merit category.

ii) The other terms and conditions shall remain same as notified in various Notifications/ Notices issued by the Board from time to time in this regard

E&OE

DIPK-NB-4309/21

No: BOPEE/Exam- 20/2021 Dated: 18-10-.2021.

(Dr. Sunil Gupta)

Controller of Examinations

J&K BOPEE

India, Israel, US And UAE Agree To Establish Joint Economic Forum



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JERUSALEM: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his counterparts from Israel, the US and the UAE have agreed to establish a forum for economic cooperation at a quadrilateral meeting during which they discussed possibilities for joint infrastructure projects in the fields of transportation, technology, maritime security, and economics and trade.

Jaishankar, who is currently on a five-day visit to Israel, was accompanied by his Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid, during the virtual meeting on Monday. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan participated virtually as the four leaders also exchanged views on shared issues of concern in the region.

"The ministers decided to establish an international forum for economic cooperation, said a statement issued by the Israeli Foreign Ministry after the meeting.

It said the four ministers held a discussion on possibilities for joint infrastructure projects in the fields of transportation, technology, maritime security, and economics and trade, as well as for additional joint projects.

At the end of the conversation, it was decided that each minister will appoint senior-level professionals to a joint working group that will formulate options for cooperation in the areas identified by the ministers, the statement said.

The intention is to hold an in-person meeting of the ministers in the coming months at Expo 2020 in Dubai, the statement said.

"I think the word we're looking for here is synergy, because

this is what we're going to try and create starting with this meeting. Synergy that will help us work together on infrastructure, digital infrastructure, transport, maritime security and other things that preoccupy us all, Israeli Foreign Minister, who initiated the meeting during his visit to Washington, said at the start of the meeting Monday evening.

"The key to success is how quickly can we move from government-to-government" to business-to-business", Lapid said. How quickly can we turn this into a working process that will put boots on the ground, changing infrastructure around the world.

Jaishankar described the meeting as fruitful and said they discussed working together more closely on economic growth and global issues. Agreed on expedited follow-up," he said in a tweet.

"I think it is very clear that on the big issues of our times we all think very similarly and what would be helpful would be if we could agree on some practical things to work upon," he said.

Meanwhile, an article in the Jerusalem Post newspaper pointed out that there are economic and defence industry advantages to the new ties and the ability to synergise the network of ties between Washington, Jerusalem, Abu Dhabi and New Delhi.

"That means that the whole can be more than the sum of its parts, it said.

Citing the growing power of near-peer rivals such as Russia and China, as well as regional states that oppose US policy, such as Iran and Turkey, the article said That may be where the US-UAE-Israel-India connection comes together most of all, in presenting a moderate alternative to the aggressive extremist and authoritarian countries.

Bank Gross NPAs To Rise To 8-9%, Stressed Assets To Touch 10-11%: Report

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of banks will rise to 8-9 per cent this fiscal, well below the peak of 11.2 per cent seen at the end of fiscal, ratings agency Crisil said in a report.

The Covid-19 relief measures such as the restructuring dispensation, and the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) will help limit the rise, the report added.

With 2 per cent of bank credit expected under restructuring by the end of this fiscal, stressed assets-comprising gross NPAs and loan book under restructuring-should touch 10-11 per cent.

Krishnan Sitaraman, Senior Director and Deputy Chief Ratings Officer, CRISIL Ratings, said: "The retail and MSME segments, which together form 40 per cent of bank credit, are expected to see higher accretion of NPAs and stressed assets this time around. Stressed assets in these segments are seen rising to 4-5 per cent and 17-18 per cent, respectively, by this fiscal end. The numbers would have trended even higher but for write-offs, primarily in the unsecured segment."

The retail segment, which had a relatively stable run over the past decade, has been singed by the pandemic, with salaried and self-employed borrowers alike facing significant income challenges and higher medical expenses, especially in the second wave.

Thus, in a first-of-its-kind move, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced loan restructuring for retail borrowers to help them tide over the situation. This followed a six-month moratorium permitted by lenders last fiscal.

Despite the measures, CRISIL Ratings believes stressed assets in the retail segment will rise to 4-5 per cent by the end of this fiscal from 3 per cent last fiscal. While home loans, the largest segment, will be the least impacted, unsecured loans are ex-



pected to bear the brunt of the pandemic.

The MSME segment, despite benefiting from ECLGS and the recent limit enhancement and tenure extension, is likely to see asset quality deteriorate and will require restructuring to manage cash-flow challenges. In fact, restructuring is expected to be the highest for this segment, at 4-5 per cent of the loan book, leading to a jump in stressed assets to 17-18 per cent by this fiscal end from 14 per cent last fiscal, Crisil said.

The corporate segment, though, is expected to be far more resilient. A large part of the stress in the corporate portfolio had already been recognised during the asset quality review initiated five years ago. That, coupled with the secular deleveraging trend, has strengthened the balance sheets of corporates, and enabled them to tide over the pandemic relatively unscathed compared with retail and MSME borrowers. This is evident from restructuring of only 1 per cent in the segment. Consequently, corporate stressed assets are expected to remain range-bound at 9-10 per cent this fiscal.

The rural segment, which was hit harder during the second wave of the pandemic, has also seen a strong recovery. Therefore, stressed assets in the agriculture segment are expected to remain relatively stable.

Subha Sri Narayanan, Director, CRISIL Ratings, said: "While the performance of the restructured portfolio will definitely need close monitoring, the slippages from the restructured book are expected to be lower this time. Restructuring under various schemes in the past focussed on larger exposures and primarily involved extension of maturity without any material haircuts, resulting in high subsequent slippages. This time, the entry barriers for restructuring are more stringent. Also, recent trends indicate that a reasonable proportion of borrowers, primarily on the retail side, have started making additional payments as their cash flows improve, despite having availed of restructuring. MSMEs, however, may take longer to stabilise and we remain watchful."

The estimates of CRISIL Ratings are predicated on a base-case scenario of 9.5 per cent GDP growth this fiscal and continued improvement in corporate credit quality.

A virulent third wave and significant deceleration in demand growth could pose significant downside risks to these estimates. On the other hand, operationalisation of the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd by the end of this fiscal and the expected first-round sale of Rs 90,000 crore NPAs could lead to lower reported gross NPAs.

Moody's Revises Outlook For Indian Banking System To Stable From Negative

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: Moody's has revised the outlook for the Indian banking system to stable from negative suggesting that the deterioration of asset quality since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic has been moderate and an improving operating environment will support asset quality.

In its banking system outlook, Moody's Investors Service said that India's economy will continue to recover in the next 12-18 months with GDP growing 9.3 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2022 and 7.9 per cent in the following year.

"The pickup in economic activity will drive credit growth, which we expect to be 10-13 per cent annually. Moreover, weak corporate financials and funding



constraints at finance companies have been key negative factors for banks but these risks have receded," it said.

The basis of Moody's revision of outlook for Indian banking system has been limited impact that the pandemic has on deterioration of asset quality of banks despite relatively limited regulatory support for borrowers. The quality of corporate loans has improved, indicating that banks have recognised and provisioned for all legacy problem loans in this segment. The quality of re-

tail loans has deteriorated, but to a limited degree because large-scale job losses have not occurred.

"We expect asset quality will further improve, leading to decline in credit costs, as economic activity normalises," Moody's banking system outlook said.

The ratings agency said that capital ratios have risen across rated banks in the past year because most have issued new shares. Public sector banks' ability to raise equity capital from the market is particularly credit positive because it reduces their dependence on the government for capital. However, further increase in capital will be limited because banks will use most of retained earnings to support an acceleration of loan growth.

Dir Tourism Chairs Rate Fixation Meeting Of Services, Products

Impresses upon stakeholders to play their role, seeks their cooperation



OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G N Itoo Tuesday held a meeting of Chief Executive Officers and Resort Officers of various destinations and other officers of the Department to review and fix the rates of various services and products being provided by tourism services providers.

During the meeting, the Director Tourism took a detailed review of the services and products being provided at various destinations like accommodation, ponies, shikaras, sledges etc, their present rate pattern and the impact of Covid-19 on their services.

The meeting was informed that this year due to a severe second wave of COVID-19, very limited business was transacted by the service providers

leaving little scope for any revision or review.

Addressing the meeting, the Director Tourism underscored the need for early fixation of rates for all the services so that the same are notified well in advance and no tourist faces any inconvenience on this account.

Dr. Itoo also impressed upon the tourism stakeholders to play their role in stabilising the rates of tourism products so that the prospective visitors do not get the feeling that they have been overcharged or under facilitated. He sought cooperation from all tourism players in this regard.

The meeting was attended by CEOs of Sonamarg, Pahalgam, Gulmarg and other resorts, officers of Tourism Department, Assistant Directors of Gulmarg and Pahalgam besides representatives of several tourism trade bodies.

Govt To Set Up Refiners' Panel For Seeking Better Crude Deals



AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India is forming a group that brings together state-run and private refiners to seek better crude import deals, Petroleum Secretary Tarun Kapoor said on Tuesday, as the country grapples with soaring oil prices.

The world's third largest oil importer and consumer, India depends on imports for about 85 per cent of its crude and buys most of it from Middle East producers.

Initially the group of refiners will meet once in a fortnight and exchange ideas on crude purchases. "The companies can form joint strategies and they can even go for joint negotiations wherever possible," Mr Kapoor told Reuters. State refiners already jointly negotiate some crude oil purchases.

To date the one effort at a joint negotiation bringing together not only state-run but private refiners resulted in a deal that secured supply of Iranian oil at a steep discount. With local gasoline and petrol prices rising to a record high amid the country's worst power crisis in years, the

nation wants to redouble its efforts to buy wisely.

India's trade deficit in September surged to a record \$22.6 billion, its highest in at least 14 years, driven by expensive imports.

Mr Kapoor said the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, together known as OPEC+, should raise production to bring down global oil prices. "OPEC+ should realise that this is not the right approach, they must step up production. If the demand is going up and you are not increasing production, you are trying to create a gap," he said.

"Due to this, prices are going up and that's not fair," the Secretary added.

OPEC+ producers recently agreed to stick to a plan to increase November output by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) as it looks to phase out output curbs of 5.8 million bpd over time.

Mr Kapoor said rising oil prices would prompt oil consumers to "seriously start thinking of shifting to other forms or curtail their demand for OPEC oil somehow. These kind of prices are not sustainable".

Sensex Snaps 7-Day Winning Run On Fag-End Selloff; Itc Sinks 6 Pc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI: Equity benchmarks closed with modest losses on Tuesday after a seven-session winning streak as investors opted to pocket some gains at record levels.

FMCG counters led the losses after HUL's Q2 earnings missed estimates, while IT and private bank stocks stood tall.

After scaling the 62,000-mark for the first time, the 30-share BSE Sensex succumbed to selling pressure in fag-end trade to close 49.54 points or 0.08 per cent lower at 61,716.05.

Similarly, the Nifty shed 58.30 points or 0.32 per cent to close at 18,418.75. It touched a new intra-day record of

18,604.45 in early deals.

ITC was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, tanking 6.23 per cent, followed by HUL at 4.06 per cent.

FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) on Tuesday reported a 10.69 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,185 crore for the second quarter ended September 2021.

Titan, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement and PowerGrid were among the other laggards.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, HDFC Bank and Kotak Bank were among the gainers, spurring up to 4.12 per cent.

The market breadth was negative, with 16 of the 30 Sensex stocks closing in the red.

SHORT TAKES

Dir Agri Flags off Mobile Soil Testing Van

SRINAGAR: To provide accurate soil analysis to farmers of Kashmir Division at their doorsteps, Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal Tuesday flagged off a Mobile Soil Testing Van in presence of senior officers of the department, representatives of fertilizer and pesticide dealers and a group of farmers at Lalmandi Srinagar.

These Mobile vans can be utilized in different districts of the valley, so that farmers can get their soils analysed and tested at their door steps, so that they can make better use of fertilizers and other agriculture inputs to their fields as per requirement for better productivity and production.

Director Agriculture hailed the efforts of the company for mobilizing the resources for using mobile soil testing vans to enhance the efficiency and capacity for soil testing by the farmers at their door steps. He impressed upon the concerned to make the optimum use of these mobile vans so that the farmers can utilize the services at their doorsteps.

Airtel Launches 'Airtel IQ Video'

SRINAGAR: Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), India's premier communication solutions provider, Tuesday announced the launch of its Video Platform as a Service (CPaaS) - 'Airtel IQ Video'. The solution has been developed by Airtel's in-house engineering teams.

A company statement said, Airtel IQ Video allows businesses to build world-class video streaming products for large and small screens with minimal investment in infrastructure and technology.

It said, "Airtel IQ Video is an end-to-end managed solution that brings convenience along with cost benefits. It encompasses a variety of features ranging from app development, content hosting, curation and lifecycle management to search and discovery, analytics and monetisation models

(advertising, subscriptions, transactions)."

M Raajhendra, Managing Director at Raj Television Network, "We had a content library of over 30,000 hours with some of the best Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam films. But most of this content was on tapes/analog formats and audiences also want to access these through OTT. Using Airtel IQ Video, we have been able to digitize our content, host it on Airtel's cloud platforms and offer it to audiences both in India and across the global through our own OTT app. Importantly, we have been able to achieve this at the fraction of the cost in very quick time with access to the best technology that has ensured the user experience is excellent. We look forward to deepening our relationship with Airtel."

Gold Rallies Rs 256; Silver Jumps Rs 188

NEW DELHI: Gold in the national capital on Tuesday rallied by Rs 256 to Rs 46,580 per 10 gram in line with a jump in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 46,324 per 10 gram.

Silver also jumped Rs 188 to Rs 62,328 per kilogram from Rs 62,140 per kilogram in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,782 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.72 per ounce. "Gold prices traded higher where spot gold prices at COMEX rose by more than 1 per cent to USD 1,782 per ounce on Tuesday. Gold prices rallied supported by weaker dollar and fall in US bond yields," according to HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst (Commodities), Tapan Patel. (PTI)

IndiGo Cautions Candidates Against Fake Job Offers

NEW DELHI: IndiGo on Tuesday cautioned candidates to be cognizant of fake job offers, saying certain people are using the name of airline's employees to demand money in exchange for interviews, jobs or trainings.

In a statement, the airline stated: "The airline does not charge any money for conducting interviews, providing jobs, or imparting trainings on joining."

IndiGo "strictly" advises to report the matter to the police if someone asks for money and promises a job at the airline.

"IndiGo is also taking appropriate actions for cases that get reported, along with spreading awareness," the statement mentioned. The carrier said it is conducting anti-fake jobs campaign across social media to raise awareness on how certain people claiming to represent IndiGo are misusing the brand name and the names of its employees to demand money in exchange for jobs, interviews or trainings.

"We believe that as the market leader, it is our responsibility to identify and control such malpractices that not just impact IndiGo but also other companies in the sector," IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta said.

Rbi Imposes Rs 1 Cr Penalty On SBI

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 1 crore on the State Bank of India.

The penalty was imposed on the lender for non-compliance with the directions contained in 'Reserve Bank of India (Frauds Classification and Reporting by Commercial Banks and Select FIs) Directions 2016'.

"This action is based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers," the RBI said in a statement.

"A scrutiny was carried out by the RBI in a customer account maintained with the bank and the examination of the scrutiny report and all related correspondence pertaining to the same, revealed, inter alia, non-compliance with the aforesaid directions to the extent of delay in reporting of fraud in the said account to the RBI."

Consequently, a notice was issued to the bank, the RBI said, advising it to show cause "why penalty should not be imposed on it for such non-compliance with the said directions".

Pakistan Navy Claims It Blocked Indian Submarine From Entering Into Country's Waters

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's military on Tuesday claimed that its navy blocked an Indian submarine from entering into the country's waters last week.

The incident occurred on October 16 when an Indian submarine was detected by a Pakistan Navy (PN) patrol aircraft, the military said in a statement.

The navy "detected and blocked the Indian submarine on 16 Oct 21 from entering into Pakistani waters," according to the statement.

It said that during the prevailing security milieu, a strict monitoring watch has been kept by the Pakistan Navy to safeguard maritime frontiers of the country.

According to the statement, it is the third incident of its kind during which an Indian Naval Submarine has been prematurely detected and tracked by the Pakistan Navy's Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft.



The army also shared short footage of the purported incident.

An incident of this nature was last reported in March 2019 when the navy had detected and thwarted an attempted entry by an Indian submarine, the statement claimed.

"The Pakistan Navy used its

specialised skills to ward off the submarine, successfully keeping it from entering Pakistani waters," PN had said in a statement at the time.

It claimed that another reported attempt by an Indian submarine was made in November 2016 which was tracked and pushed clear out of Pakistan's waters.

Asked For Car's Documents, Greater Noida Man Abducts Traffic Cop; Arrested

Agenceis

NOIDA: A 29-year-old man in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida has been arrested for allegedly abducting an on-duty traffic policeman who had stopped him to check the documents of his car, officials said.

The car was suspected to have been stolen and the accused asked the traffic policeman to get inside the vehicle to see the documents, but forcibly took him on over a 10-km-long drive before dumping him near a police post, they said.

"Accused Sachin Rawal had stolen the Maruti Swift Dzire from a showroom in Gurgaon, Haryana two years ago on the pretext of taking the car out on a test drive," a police spokesperson said.

"Rawal, who lives in Ghodi Bacheda village in Greater Noida, had put on a forged number plate on his car, the number of which was same as that of a car belonging to a resident of his village," he said.

On Sunday morning, the

traffic police had started a vehicle checking campaign in Surajpur where Rawal's car was intercepted for inquiry following an input that he was travelling in a stolen vehicle, the official said.

Traffic constable Virendra Singh had asked Rawal to show the documents related to the vehicle. Rawal asked him to get inside the car and that he would show soft copies of the documents which he claimed were in his mobile phone.

"However, Rawal locked the car once the constable sat inside and took off. He later dumped the constable near Ajayabpur police chowki and sped away," the police spokesperson said.

An FIR was lodged at the Surajpur Police Station on Monday under IPC sections 364 (kidnapping), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 368 (wrongfully concealing or keeping in confinement, kidnapped or abducted person) and the accused was arrested later in the day, police said.

Rains batter Uttarakhand as 42 more die, UP sees 4 fatalities; Kerala dams open gates

AGENCEIS

New Delhi: Uttarakhand reported at least 42 rain-related deaths on Tuesday with many people still trapped under the rubble after landslides, while Uttar Pradesh witnessed four fatalities, even as heavy downpour in Kerala filled several dams to the brim and multiple districts were on alert.

In view of the incessant rains, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami reiterated his appeal to Chardham yatris to stay where they are and not to resume their journeys before the weather improved.

"The number of casualties in Kumaon region alone has crossed 40," DIG Nilesh Anand Bharné told PTI.

The hill state had reported five deaths on Monday.

Of the 42 fresh deaths, 28 people were killed in Nainital district, six each in Almora and Champawat and one each in Pithoragarh and Udham Singh Nagar districts, the official said.

Chief Minister Dhami

undertook an aerial survey of the rain-hit areas and later interacted with the affected people on ground zero to make an assessment of the damages caused.

He announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh each to the next of kin of those killed in rain-related incidents across the state over the last two days.

Director General of Uttarakhand Police Ashok Kumar, who accompanied Chief Minister Dhami on a visit to the rain-hit areas of the Kumaon region, said roads, bridges and railway tracks have been damaged in Kathgodam and Lalkuan in Nainital and Rudrapur in Udham Singh Nagar.

It will take at least four-five days to repair the damaged tracks, Kumar told PTI.

Three Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters have arrived in the state and are assisting in relief and rescue operations. Two of them have been deployed in Nainital district, which has suffered extensive damage due to cloudbursts and landslides, Dhami said.

CONTD. FROM 3RD PAGE

Amit Shah Briefs PM

11 non-local individuals in the Valley. Due to this an atmosphere of fear has been created there leading to the exodus of migrants.

Amit Shah will visit Jammu and Kashmir on October 23-25 and will hold important high-level meetings with regard to the security situation in Kashmir.

This is the first visit of the Union Home Minister to the union territory after the abrogation of Article 370. During this visit, the Home Minister will not only give tips to improve security situation but will also make various announcements related to the developmental projects.

Earlier on Monday, Amit Shah held a marathon meeting with senior officials including DGPs, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, IB Chief and discussed the situation of internal security in detail. —(IANS)

Taking People-Centric

Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday, an official spokesperson said.

Among those who called upon the LG included Ms Khemlata Wakhlu, former Minister Haji Nisar Ali, besides Sheikh Ishfaq Jabbar of National Conference, and Ghulam Hassan Rather of BJP.

While interacting with the political leaders, the LG, as per the official spokesperson observed that J&K government is taking various people-centric initiatives for the holistic and equitable development of every area of the UT. "The Lt Governor assured the members of delegations that all issues and genuine demands projected by them would be taken up with the concerned departments for their redressal on merit. He impressed upon them to keep projecting the issues of public welfare and development of the region," he said.

Earlier, the official spokesperson, Wakhlu presented her book titled "A Kashmiri Century" to the LG and also shared her views on the initiatives taken by the UT Government for promoting youth engagement and providing them opportunities for actively contributing to Nation building.

"The Lt Governor appreciated the endeavour of Ms Wakhlu for writing the book on the social and cultural aspects of Kashmiri Life and demonstrating how through the ages Kashmiri people have stood for an inclusive culture of love and brotherhood. He urged her to continue her noble efforts of furthering the interests of Jammu Kashmir and its people," he said.

He further said that former Minister Haji Nisar Ali along with members of Al Mehdi Committee Khomeini Chowk Bemina met the Lt Governor and put forth the demands and issues pertaining to development and welfare of people.

Govt Okays Rs 50K

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Tuesday, an official spokesperson said.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Finance, Home, and Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) participated in the meeting.

According to the official spokesperson, the UT Executive Committee approved the release of ex-gratia relief of Rs. 50,000 to the next of kin of the casualties of the COVID pandemic, besides sanctioning the release of Rs. 35 crore to districts for its disbursement.

"The Committee directed DMRRR to formulate the guidelines, in this regard in consultation with the Health & Medical Education Department," he said.

In the meeting, he said, it was informed that so far 4,176 people have died due to COVID-19 and the relief will be disbursed in favour of the families through a transparent verification process via Aadhaar linked direct benefit transfer (DBT).

"Further, the Committee reviewed the status of utilization of funds that were earlier released to Divisional and District Commissioners for COVID management as well as SIDCO for establishing a COVID helpline. The Disaster Management Department was asked to obtain utilization certificates for the same and conduct audit of the concerned accounts," the official spokesperson said.

The State Executive Committee, he said, authorized DMRRR to assess the division-wise requirements of snow clearance machinery including snow ploughs and cutters for their

subsequent procurement.

"DMRRR was also asked to technically vet the specifications of snow clearance machinery as per the latest technological sophistication and efficiency," he added.

NIA To Probe Killing

Five of those killed were non-local labourers and these included four residents of Bihar. The killings triggered panic among skilled and unskilled migratory workers who started leaving Kashmir a fortnight ahead of their normal schedule.

Lakhs of labourers from different parts of the country come to the Valley every year in early March for jobs such as masonry, carpentry, welding and farming, and go back home before the onset of winter.

Makhan Lal Bindroo, a prominent Kashmiri Pandit and the owner of Srinagar's most noted pharmacy, was shot dead at his shop on October 5. Two days later, two teachers -- Supinder Kaur, a Srinagar-based Sikh, and Deepak Chand, a Hindu from Jammu -- were killed inside a government school here.

The probe into the three killings, which drew widespread condemnation from across the country, is likely to be taken over by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the officials said, adding that the notification for take-over of the cases is yet to come.

They said that the NIA is also likely to take over the killing of non-local labourers.

On the same day when Bindroo was killed, two more civilians -- a chaat vendor Virendra Paswan from Bihar and a taxi driver Mohammad Shafi Lone -- were shot dead at Hawal in Srinagar and Naidkhai in Bandipora district, respectively. Besides the five killings, militants killed Majid Ahmad Gojri at Srinagar's Karan Nagar locality and Mohammad Shafi Dar at the city's Batmaloo area on October 2. Two non-locals -- Arvind Kumar Sah of Bihar and Saghir Ahmad of Uttar Pradesh were killed in Srinagar and Pulwama districts, respectively on October 16.

In another attack on non-locals on October 17, two labourers from Bihar were killed and another injured in Kulgam district of south Kashmir.

The officials said that the Counter-Intelligence Kashmir (CIK), a wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, is also likely to take over cases related to the killing of two members of the Gujjar gang along with a case related to the killing of Mehran Ali Sheikh, who was shot dead outside his house at Nawa Kadal locality here in July.

Sheikh and Gojri were friends and part of a group called "16 Gujjar Gang".

After a spate of civilian killings, security forces shot dead 13 militants in nine separate encounters this month till October 16. The dead included four militants who, according to police, were responsible for four civilian killings in the first week of October.

Army Plans Major

during the start of the counter-insurgency operation in Surankote forest of Poonch on October 11, four more soldiers including another JCO lost their lives in a separate encounter in Nar Khas forest in Mendhar on Thursday evening after the security forces extended the cordon and search operation.

An encounter was on in the adjoining Thanamandi forest in Rajouri district on October 11 when the armed forces confronted the militants who, however, managed to escape.

The entire forest belt is still under tight security cordon, the officials said, adding the area is mountainous and the forest is dense, making the operation difficult and dangerous.

Eight persons including a mother-son duo were detained for questioning from Bhatta Durrian suspected of providing logistic support to the militants. However, it is unclear whether the alleged support was given voluntarily or under duress, the officials said.

Earlier on Saturday, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Rajouri-Poonch range, Vivek Gupta said the presence of militants in the forest area connecting Poonch and Rajouri was observed two and a half months ago and accordingly tactical operations were launched to track them down.

"The joint security grid was tracking different groups of terrorists but sometimes operations take time, depending on the topography of the area. The contact with the terrorists was

established on three occasions during the start of the operation, based on the intelligence inputs," the officer had said, adding the terrorists are holed up and the joint forces are on the job to take the operation to the logical conclusion.

The army has already deployed para-commandos and a helicopter was also seen hovering over the forest area on Saturday for surveillance. The traffic between Mendhar and Thanamandi along the Jammu-Rajouri highway remained suspended as a precautionary measure for the fifth day on Tuesday in the wake of the ongoing operation.

Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu region have witnessed a rise in infiltration attempts since June this year, resulting in the killing of nine militants in separate encounters. (With PTI inputs)

Army Chief Takes

Jammu on a two-day visit on Monday amid a spurt in targeted attacks on civilians by militants in the Valley and an ongoing counter-insurgency operation in the forest belt of the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri, where nine soldiers have been killed over the past week.

"General MM Naravane #COAS (Chief of Army Staff) visited forward areas of #WhiteKnight Corps & undertook a first-hand assessment of the situation along the Line of Control. #COAS was briefed by commanders on the ground about the present situation & ongoing counter-infiltration operations," the Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) of the Indian Army tweeted.

Eleven people have lost their lives in targeted attacks by suspected militants in different parts of the Kashmir valley this month. The count includes five non-local labourers, two teachers belonging to minority communities and a renowned pharmacist.

Amid the spate of civilian killings, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday vowed to avenge every drop of blood shed by hunting down the "terrorists and their sympathisers".

The officials said the Army chief visited the border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, where a massive operation to track down militants hiding in the forest areas of Mendhar, Surankote and Thanamandi has been going on since October 11.

While five Army personnel were killed in an attack by militants in the forest area of Surankote on October 11, another four soldiers laid down their lives in a gunfight with the ultras in Mendhar last Thursday.

The operation to neutralise the militants entered its ninth day on Tuesday. So far, eight people, including a mother-son duo, have been detained for questioning in connection with providing logistic support to the militants

Cops Seize Hundreds

SK Park, Budshah Bridge, Maulana Azad Road, TRC and Sonwar.

Kashmir Observer received several calls from people complaining that their two-wheelers were confiscated for unspecified reasons.

"I had called an electrician to sort out the electricity issue in our control room of EMS Kashmir where a team is on duty for Critical Care Ambulance Service," Dr. Syed Riyaz told Kashmir Observer.

"The electrician was stopped at Zaina Kadal. His scooter was confiscated and he was asked to visit the concerned police station after October 26."

"While crossing through Ram Munshi Bagh, I saw bikers being manhandled without a valid reason," said an eyewitness. "Even the elders weren't spared. They were asked to handover keys of their two wheelers and wait outside the station."

Notably, the frisking of commuters had started on Saturday when targeted killings of non-local labourers triggered a sense of fear-flight among migrant workers in the valley. The crackdown in the aftermath of targeted killings escalated on Sunday when two more non-local labourers were shot dead in Kulgam district.

Pertinently, the unprecedented crackdown on bikes in the city has not just annoyed bikers but has also hampered the normal functioning of emergency services in the city.

The Chadar, a woman-run online business had to put out an uncanny message on Tuesday

for its customers amid the mass seizing of two-wheelers in Srinagar.

"Due to current situation in Kashmir, the bikes of most of the delivery executives are being seized. Kindly expect a delay in delivery," The Chadar brand said in its social media post.

While top cops are tight-lipped about the drive, a low-rung police official told Kashmir Observer that several of the recent targeted killings in Kashmir were executed using two wheelers and in the aftermath of it, the police have launched a crackdown on all the two wheelers.

"The two wheelers that are not registered on the driver's name have been confiscated and will be released only after a proper verification of the person driving it," the officer said.

"Whatever the police doing, is for the safety of our citizen. This crackdown has also dismayed our people but this is all for the security reason. This will continue for a few more days," he added.

There Is Too Much

Mithilesh Kumar told PTI at the station on Tuesday.

"We are leaving Kashmir earlier than usual... There is too much fear," he added.

Trains are the preferred route out of the Valley with many saying they will ensure their safety for the rest of the journey.

Kumar said the group will take a train to Banihal on the other side of the Pir Panjal range and then catch a taxi or bus to Jammu for the onward journey to Bihar.

"Nobody told us to leave but who will be responsible if someone among us gets killed. One moment we are told security will be provided and the next we are on our own," said Deepak Kumar, a resident of Bihar's Madhubani district.

On Sunday, two labourers from Bihar were gunned down when militants barged into their accommodation in Kulgam district, taking the number of civilians killed in targeted attacks in Jammu and Kashmir this month to 11. Another labourer sustained bullet injuries.

The killings of civilians have led to many migrant workers making their way back home though many in the city have decided to stay on in the search for work. The money, they said, is better and the local residents are kind.

The workers at Nowgam station, waiting to board a train out, agreed. Many praised the locals and said they ensured the group reached the station safely.

"People of Kashmir are kind but few people do politics and the masses have to suffer," Deepak Kumar said.

There were also reports of migrant labourers from other parts of the Valley leaving in taxis and buses early in the morning.

However, hundreds could also be seen at major intersections in the city, hoping to be hired for work.

Hawal Chowk, rechristened Bihari Chowk by city dwellers, has not witnessed any significant decrease in the number of migrant workers there.

The first migrant worker -- Virender Paswan -- was shot dead by militants in Hawal area.

The scenes were no different at Rambagh, less than two kilometres from where prominent Kashmiri Pandit businessman Makhan Lal Bindroo was shot dead at point blank range in his shop earlier this month.

Lakhs of labourers from different parts of the country come to the Valley every year in early March for skilled and unskilled jobs such as masonry, carpentry, welding and farming, and go back home before the onset of winter in November. This year, however, several are choosing to go back before they had planned to.

On Monday, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar condemned the targeted killing of Bihari migrant workers in Jammu and Kashmir and said the incidents had created an "environment of fear". He also spoke to Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and said senior Bihar officials are in touch with their counterparts in the union territory.

It's Question

Now I am wondering what to do as there is not much work over here and I can't think of taking up his job over there (Kashmir)," Jehangir told PTI over the phone from Saharanpur.

His father Sageer Ansari was shot dead by militants in Litter village of south Kashmir on

Saturday where he was working as a carpenter with a local unit for the last couple of years.

"We received a call that Sageer bhai is no more, and we were asked to collect his body from Jammu. We left that very moment and did the needful, and brought his body home," said Naseem, the younger brother of the deceased.

He made it clear that the body was brought from Jammu to Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh by the family as the Jammu and Kashmir administration had not made any arrangements to send it.

"Together with my father, we used to manage an income of around Rs 15,000 per month, but now after his death, I have no idea how to pull the family together," said Jehangir, who himself is married and has a small daughter.

Recalling his conversation with his father, he said Sageer was very happy working in Kashmir and often praised his employer who used his services for manufacturing bats and other wooden items.

However, the death of Sageer in Pulwama on October 16 and then two more non-locals -- Raja Reshi Dev and Joginder Rishi Dev -- in adjacent Kulgam on October 17 triggered a panic reaction among labourers from other states working in the volatile south Kashmir region.

The non-locals, engaged in apple orchards, and cardboard and bat factories, used to spend around six months in the Valley before returning home, an official said.

Another official from the security establishment claimed that around 600 people from south Kashmir have already moved towards safer places.

"Killing an unknown person creates more fear psychosis than killing a known individual, and I am afraid that the terrorists may have achieved that," the official, who chose to remain anonymous, said.

Sooraj, a resident of Bihar working at a garment shop here, has already packed his bags and is leaving the Valley soon. "I have no idea as I used to earn my livelihood from the shop and my owner was also nice. However, now I am stepping into a bleak future ahead of me," he said.

Javed, who is from Hapur in Ghaziabad and works at a saloon here, is also planning to leave. "Fear is in the air. My owner takes care of me but he can't be with me 24 hours. My other friends working elsewhere have already moved out of the Valley. Unfortunately, I have to start something afresh," he added.

CRPF Man Found

area of the district around 8.40 am, they said. As per the sources, Ranjan, who was from Bihar's Chhapra district, allegedly shot himself with his service rifle.

Inquest proceedings have been initiated by police under section 174 of the CrPC, they said.

Policeman Hangs

constable in the Armed Police wing, was removed by his family to the SKIMS Soura in an unconscious state. However, the doctors there declared him dead.

When contacted a police official said that it apparently seems a suicide case.

"A case has been registered in this regard for further investigations into the incident", the official said.

22 Kashmiri Prisoners

shifting of the detained persons.

"In exercise of the powers conferred under section 10-B of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act 1978, the government hereby directs to remove/shift the 22 detainees who have been detained under the provision of Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act 1978 from their present places of lodgment to central jail Agra, Uttar Pradesh with immediate effect," reads the order.

According to the reports, the detainees shifted were lodged at Central Jail Jammu, and district jails of Udhampur and Kathua from last year. Among the detainees, nine are said to be from Anantnag, eight from Pulwama, three from Kulgam and one each from Doda and Baramulla.

Young Labourer

The body of labourer, who hails from Monhal Ukhral in Ramban was shifted to hospital for post-mortem while inquest proceeding in this connection has been initiated—(KNO)

Football Selection Trials For KIC Ganderbal On October 27

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: J&K Sports Council on Tuesday announced that it is going to conduct football selection trials for Under-17 boys and girls for Khelo India Centre at Madre Meharban Stadium Ganderbal on October 27 at 11:45 AM.

"Sports persons desirous in participating in selection trials should submit their entries to Qudsiya Altaf (football coach) at

Madre Meharban Stadium Ganderbal, at least one day before the scheduled date of trials. Further participants are directed to bring a photocopy of their Aadhar cards and two latest passport size photographs with them," a JKSC statement said.

The statement also informed the participants that strict COVID SOPs must be maintained.

"For more queries players can call on 7006299377," it concluded.

India To Face Australia In Final T20 WC Warm Up Game



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI: Their preparations for the T20 World Cup off to a smooth start, India would look to finalise their batting order for the tournament-proper when they take on Australia in their second and final warm-up game here on Wednesday.

India will clash against Pakistan in their main event lung-opener on Sunday. The tournament will be Virat Kohli's last as skipper in the format besides being the swan-song for head coach Ravi Shastri.

As pointed out by Kohli before the warm-up game against England on Monday, India's top three is already settled with KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma opening the batting and the skipper coming in at the crucial no.3 position.

Having made a stroke-filled 70 before retiring in the seven-wicket win over England, the young Ishan Kishan has also staked his claim for a place in the playing eleven.

Rishabh Pant (29 not out) was promoted ahead of Surya Kumar Yadav and it remains to be seen where the latter bats on Wednesday.

Rohit didn't bat against England and come Wednesday, the right-hander is expected to get a go against the Australians.

The talking point, however, remains all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who didn't look comfortable in his brief stay against England.

With Pandya not bowling, it remains to be seen whether the Indian think-tank will play him purely as a batter.

Sans his bowling, India will also miss the sixth bowling

option in case one of the five-strong attack has an off day on the field.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar had one against England on Monday, but Jasprit Bumrah was at his best.

Mohammed Shami picked up three wickets but went for runs, while Rahul Chahar was taken to task by the English batters.

And come Wednesday, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur and mystery spinner Varun Chakravarty are expected to get a look in before the main business begins. On recent form, since losing the home series against Australia 2-0 before the 2019 ODI World Cup, India were unbeaten in eight series in a row.

Since the 2016 T20 World Cup, India have played 72 T20 matches and won 45.

Australia too made winning start to their preparations with Josh Inglis hitting two fours in the final over to help his side beat New Zealand by three wickets a warm-up match in Abu Dhabi on Monday.

There was mixed news for Australia in their first warm-up as David Warner's horror run continued after he was dismissed for a first-ball duck.

Adam Zampa (2/17) and Kane Richardson (3/24) impressed with the ball, but a middle-order collapse meant the Australians needed late cameos from Ashton Agar (23 off 18 balls), Mitchell Starc (13 not out off 9) and Inglis (8 not out off 2) to secure the win.

The Aussies have never exactly been a huge force in the shortest format and it remains to be seen whether they are able to finally get things going at the biggest stage.

JKCA Announce Senior Squad, 8 From Kashmir Division Included

Pundir replaces Parvez as J&K Captain, Samad named VC

R. ELAHI

SRINAGAR: The recently formed, BCCI-mandated, "Sub-Committee" of JKCA on Tuesday announced J&K's Senior Men's squad for the upcoming domestic season, starting with the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy from November 4.

The 20-member senior squad, announced by Sub-Committee member, and BJP spokesperson, Brigadier (retired) Anil Gupta, will see 23-year-old Shubham Pundir lead the side, with Abdul Samad his deputy. Pundir replaces Parvez Rasool as the new captain of J&K cricket.

"The team underwent a tough selection process followed by a six-week preparatory camp which included a two-week physical and mental conditioning camp under the expert supervision of Nishanta Bordoloi, an internationally acclaimed Head High Performance and Strengthening and Conditioning Coach. He was assisted by Pawan Kumar Sharma, team's strength and conditioning coach and Chirag Pandya, a physiotherapist of national fame. To ensure that the players get adequate daily protein,



special meals were provided to the players by JKCA," Gupta said in a press release.

Another Sub-Committee member, and former domestic cricketer, Mithun Manhas, revealed more about the selection camp, which was held in Jammu.

"For its entire duration, the camp was supervised by the members of Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), the selectors, support staff and myself. Nine matches were played with Kookaburra balls," Mithun said.

Chief Selector, Vidya Bhaskar said, "It was a herculean task to finalise the team because of stiff competition for each slot in the team. We have tried to select the best possible combination."

Another Sub-Committee appointed CAC member, Ashwini Gupta, said that the team will attend a practice camp at Delhi

from October 21 to 26, before heading to Vadhdra. He further informed that the J&K team will play practice matches with Delhi and Services during the camp.

Meanwhile, the social media is abuzz with fans questioning and debating various selections and omissions, especially the replacement of Parvez Rasool as captain. Fans also pointed out that only 8 cricketers from Kashmir division have been included in the squad of 20.

J&K Squad:

Shubham Pundir (C), Abdul Samad (VC), Ian Dev Singh, Shubam Khajuria, Qamran Iqbal, Vivant Sharma, Henan Malik, Parvez Rasool, Manzoor Dar, Umran Malik, Abid Mush-taq, Yudhveer Singh, Mujtaba Yousuf, Irfan-ul-Haq, Suryansh Raina, Aqib Nabi, Waseem Raza, Ram Dayal, Jatin Wadhawan and Paras Sharma.

Umar Nazir has been kept on standby for Umran Malik, who is currently with Team India in Dubai preparing for the T20 World Cup.

J&K will begin its campaign on November 4 in a Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy match against Andhra Pradesh.



Premier Division: Police Win, Ali Jana Draw With Maharaja

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Two matches of the JKFA Premier Division League 2021 were played on Tuesday at Synthetic Turf TRC here.

The first match of the day was played between Kashmir Maharaja FC and Ali Jana FC. The match turned out to be a thrilling contest as the Maharajas took a 2-0 lead at the half time break. Adeel Tariq scored the first goal for Kashmir Ma-

haraja in 20th minute, while Bilal Ahmad doubled their lead in the 30th.

Ali Jana, however, came out of the blocks flying and scored two goals in the second half to bring the tie to 2-2. Bismark scored the first for Ali Jana FC in 53rd minute, while Shayik Ahmad scored the second in 75th minute of the match. The game ended 2-2 at full time whistle.

The second match of the day was played between J&K Police

XI and J&K Accountant General's (AC's) XI. The J&K Police dominated the match and won with a 2-0 scoreline. Faisal scored both goals for the Police team, with the first coming in the 47th minute and the second in the dying moments of the match.

Over in A-Division League, one second round match was played on Tuesday at the Gindun Ground, Rajbagh. The match between Yahya Warsi FC and Al-Ahram FC ended in a 1-1 draw.

Afghanistan Seek Support Ahead Of Crucial ICC Moot



AGENCIES

DUBAI: The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has requested the support of other full members of the International Cricket Council (ICC) ahead of next month's crucial meeting where the game's future in the South Asian country is likely to be decided.

The strife-torn nation's remarkable rise has been cricket's biggest fairytale story in recent times but Afghanistan risk isolation following the country's Taliban takeover in August.

Cricket Australia (CA) has already threatened to scrap next month's one-off Test in Hobart between the men's teams if the new government in Kabul did not allow women to play the sport.

World governing body ICC had taken a wait-and-watch approach on whether Afghanistan can continue as a full member — allowing them to play Test matches — but will discuss the issue at a board meeting after the Twenty20 World Cup in the Middle East.

"ACB is committed to work for the development of cricket in the country and hope the ICC full members will provide their

support," Afghan board chairman Azizullah Fazli said.

Fazli said last month the ACB was committed to women's cricket but was awaiting instructions from the Taliban government on its future.

Taliban officials have said they will not repeat the harsh rule of the previous Taliban government, which banned most girls' education and forbade women from going out in public without a male guardian.

CA chief executive Nick Hockley has said the Hobart Test was likely to be postponed until there was more clarity on the impact of the Taliban takeover on sports in Afghanistan.

Fazli said he would meet CA officials on the sidelines of the Twenty20 World Cup and try to convince them to continue with the match as scheduled.

"We are in touch with the CA management regarding the test match, and soon we will meet CA leadership to discuss it and further the friendship of CA and ACB," Fazli said in text messages.

The ACB chief added that the uncertainty would not affect the performance of the Afghanistan team under captain Mohammad Nabi.

T20 WC: Berrington, Davey Guide Scotland To 17-Run Win Over PNG



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AL AMERAT: Richie Berrington slammed a stroke-filled 70 while Josh Davey snapped four wickets as Scotland inched closer to the Super 12s with a comfortable 17-run win over Papua New Guinea in their Group B match of the ICC T20 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Scotland grabbed the top position in Group B with two wins having shocked Bangladesh in their opening game.

Berrington put on 92 runs off 65 balls with Matthew Cross (45) before adding another 33 with Calum Ma-

cleod (10) as Scotland posted a challenging 165 for 9 after opting to bat.

Kyle Coetzer's men then produced a splendid bowling effort to skittle out PNG for 148 in 19.3 overs with Davey (4/18) emerging as the standout bowler.

PNG thus made an early exit to their maiden campaign at the T20 World Cup following the second successive loss. They had lost to Oman by 10 wickets in their tournament opener.

Chasing 166 to win, PNG needed their batters to fire but they couldn't get any momentum and were soon reduced to 35 for 5 in 6 overs.

Harbhajan, Srinath Awarded MCC Life Membership

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON: India's Harbhajan Singh and Javagal Srinath were on Tuesday awarded life membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), joining 16 other cricketers who were given the honour this year.

The MCC, based at Lord's, is the custodian of cricket laws.

Harbhajan and Srinath both enjoyed fine international careers. Harbhajan is India's third-highest wicket-taker in Tests, with 417 dismissals in 103 Tests and more than 700 plus international wickets across formats.

Srinath, currently an ICC Elite Panel Match Referee, is one of the greatest fast bowlers with 315 ODI wickets and 236 Test victims.

"Eight of the 12 Test-playing nations are represented within this year's list, which includes some of the most recognisable names in the modern game," said the MCC in a statement.

England's leading Test run-scorer Alastair Cook, is joined by fellow countrymen Ian Bell and Marcus Trescothick, totalling more than 39,000 international runs between them.

A fourth England star, Sarah Taylor, returned to the field this year, appearing in the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy, Charlotte Edwards Cup and The Hundred, and is recognised as one of the finest wicket-keepers of her generation.

Four South African legends have been awarded honorary life membership, with Hashim Amla, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis and Morne Morkel all receiving the honour. Kallis' 13,289 Test runs puts him third on the all-time run-

scoring list.

Woman batter Alex Blackwell and the stylish Damien Martyn of Australia are also included.

Ian Bishop, Shivnarine Chanderpaul



and Ramnaresh Sarwan all represent West Indies. Bishop took 161 wickets in just 43 matches, while Chanderpaul is West Indies' most capped Test player (164) and only seven players have scored more than his 11,867 runs.

Sarwan racked up 15 Test centuries, and his 291 against England in 2009 equalled the highest individual score by a West Indian on English soil by Sir Viv Richards in 1976.

Rangana Herath of Sri Lanka took 433 Test wickets in a career spanning almost two decades, and features in the top ten of all time wicket-takers.

Sara McGlashan is the sole New Zealander on the list, appearing over 200 times for the White Ferns over the course of a 14-year career and Zimbabwean allrounder Grant Flower has been recognised for his 10,000 international runs in 288 matches.

"Once approved by the MCC Committee, letters of invitation are sent to the individual to accept. There is no set number per year. Nominees can accept and be granted the honour at any time," the statement added.

Madrid's Benzema On Trial In France For Blackmail

AGENCIES

LYON: Real Madrid forward Karim Benzema will stand trial outside Paris starting Wednesday after being accused of trying to blackmail former France teammate Matthieu Valbuena over a sex tape.

Benzema is on trial for complicity in attempted blackmail. Four other people, including one of the player's childhood friends, have been charged with attempted blackmail.

The charges are punishable by up to five years in prison and a 75,000 euro (\$87,400) fine. Benzema has denied wrongdoing.

During questioning, the 33-year-old Benzema acknowledged he had served as an intermediary between one of the alleged blackmailers, his friend Karim Zenati, and Valbuena, who now plays for Greek club Olympiakos.

But Benzema also told investigators that he took no part in blackmail and that his involvement was limited to simply telling Valbuena, out of friendship, about the existence of the sex tape.

It is unclear whether Benzema will be physically present at the trial from Wednesday through Friday in Versailles. Real Madrid was playing at Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League on Tuesday and Benzema traveled and trained with his team in Kiev ahead of the match.

Valbuena first filed a police complaint in June 2015. He said that while on international duty for France, at its training base in Clairefontaine, he had been telephoned by an anonymous caller who spoke about a sex tape and told him that they could come to arrangement. The caller told Valbuena to designate a trusted intermediary to work out the details.

With a police detective posing as a negotiator, the investigation initially identified three people: Axel Angot, Mustapha Zouaoui and Younes Houass, all now standing trial for attempted blackmail. Their communications were wire-tapped.

Benzema was subsequently brought in by Zenati, a friend who has previous drug and robbery convictions and had been released from prison in 2013.



T20 WORLD CUP Sri Lanka Eye 2nd Win In Clash Against Ireland



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ABU DHABI: Former champions Sri Lanka take on a confident Ireland in a tricky first round group match of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday, with the winning side moving closer to a Super 12 spot.

Both Sri Lanka and Ireland have come into the match high on confidence after convincing seven-wicket wins against Namibia and Netherlands respectively in their lung openers.

Sri Lanka brushed aside Namibia's challenge with the bowlers rising to the occasion while Ireland were far superior to the Netherlands as seamer Curtis Campher set them up by sensationally picking up a four wickets from four balls.

Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka will be aware

that a stiffer test awaits them when they square off against Ireland and that they can't afford any slip-ups.

The team will be expecting more from the opening batters -- Kusal Perera and Pathum Nissanka -- as well as from the experienced Dinesh Chandimal. Avishka Fernando and Bhanuka Rajapaksa showed what they are capable of against Namibia with contrasting knocks.

The spinners, Maheesh Theekshana and Wanindu Hasaranga in particular, proved more than a handful for the spirited Namibia batters and will be key to Sri Lanka's performance as the tournament goes on.

That apart, the pace attack, comprising Lahiru Kumara, Chamika Karunaratne and Dushmanta Chameera, came up with an impressive performance,

underscoring the fact that they could also be counted upon to make inroads into the opposition batting.

"We want to get through this qualifying stage. Winning all three games will definitely put us in a good state of mind, adjusting to conditions will help in the main tournament," Shanaka said after the Namibia match.

He, however, said his fast bowlers had the pace but not the execution "but going forward you can see a lot of good things".

Ireland, on the other hand, will be wary of the Sri Lankan Lankan threat after having made short work of the Dutch, riding on Campher's heroics.

Campher and his bowling colleagues have a bigger task at hand on Wednesday and need to step up against the Sri Lankan batting line-up which has experience and talent.

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