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Quote!

Some ideas are so stupid that only intellectuals believe them
— George Orwell

NEWS DIGEST

BSF Shoots Down Pak Drone

NEW DELHI: The Border Security Force (BSF) has shot down a drone along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, the force said on Saturday. The Chinese-made drone was "detected and downed" on Friday around 11.10 pm near **More on P10**

Soldier Dies Of Cardiac Arrest

SRINAGAR: A soldier died after suffering a cardiac arrest in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Saturday. 35-year-old Lance Naik, Dubukwad Balaji posted with 101 Territorial Army battalion (MLI) died of cardiac arrest at Rampura, Baramulla on Saturday **More on P10**

Leopard Mauls 16 Sheep To Death

SRINAGAR: A leopard mauled at least sixteen sheep to death and injured over half a dozen more in Ashmuqam area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district, reports said Saturday. The leopard barged inside the shed of Ghulam **More on P10**

PDD Lineman Loses Battle For Life

SRINAGAR: A PDD lineman who fell from an electric pole at Rajpora area of Pulwama district died after battling for life for 11 days at a hospital here on Saturday, officials said. A father of five daughters and a son, the 50-year-old **More on P10**

Kashmir Reels Under Intense Cold Wave

Srinagar Records Season's Coldest Night At -6 Deg Celsius



Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Cold conditions intensified in Kashmir valley as Srinagar experienced the coldest night of the season so far at minus 6.0°C on Saturday. A meteorological department official here said that the mercury in the summer

capital was down from previous night's minus 3.8°C by minus 2.2°C and overall it was below minus 4.5°C than the normal for this time of the year, according to reports. Barring last year, it is for the first time in last decade that mercury has plunged to minus 6.0°C or more **More on P10**

Cold Wave To Persist MeT Modifies Earlier Forecast

Weatherman on Saturday modified earlier forecast, now predicting "no" major snowfall in Kashmir and Ladakh next week. "Mostly dry and cold weather likely to continue till December 22 forenoon in both J&K and Ladakh,"

the meteorological department said in a statement, adding, "There's a modification in early forecast of snowfall. Now, there's no forecast of any major snowfall in both J&K and Ladakh." However, he said, light to Moderate snowfall is expected at many **More on P10**

Many Areas Plunge Into Darkness As PDD Strikes Work

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar: Amid nail biting cold, several areas of Srinagar city and other districts have plunged into darkness due to an indefinite strike by thousands of Power Development Department (PDD) employees seeking fulfilment of their four-point demands, including shelving a proposed joint venture between the Jammu and Kashmir Power Transmission Corporation Limited and the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited.

According to reports, people in several localities shivered in cold as the electricity supply was either partially affected or witnessed complete black



out due to snag in transformers and supply lines, a common feature in the Kashmir valley during winters as the power consumption rises. The PDD field workers, reports

said, did not repair the faults in the wake of a boycott called by the J&K Power Employees and Engineers Coordination Committee (JKPEEC). Many patients, especially

those under home quarantine faced a tough time due to breakdown of electricity supply.

"Since yesterday we have had no electricity. The 640KW transformer in our locality had a short circuit last night and since then we have been trying to get the PDD electricians to fix the line. But unfortunately, they're adamant on not fixing the line in the wake of their strike." Afaq Hakeem, a resident of Baghwanpora told Kashmir Observer.

He further added, "We have dozens of elders in our locality who are **More on P10**

WE HAVE DOZENS OF ELDERS IN OUR LOCALITY who are currently on oxygen support. The families are helpless as they have been forced to rent a generator from a local shopkeeper for 500 rupees per hour. The Government should try to end this stand-off with PDD employees immediately, so that, amid this bone chilling cold, our patients, elders and children may not suffer further."

J&K Logs 151 New Cases, 1 Covid Death

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported on Saturday 151 fresh cases of novel coronavirus while one more person succumbed to the deadly infection in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, 109 new cases of Covid-19 were detected in the Valley and the remaining 42 from various districts of the Jammu division, taking the total number of people infected since the outbreak of pandemic last year in J&K to 333722.

In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar reported the highest 55 new cases of coronavirus, Baramulla 17, Ganderbal 12, Budgam 9. **More on P10**

LAC STALEMATE

Ready To Send More Troops To Ladakh If Needed: IAF Chief

Press Trust Of India

HYDERABAD: The Indian Air Force is continuing deployment in Eastern Ladakh as the standoff with China still persists and the Force is ready to enhance the presence of troops if need arises, IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhary on Saturday.

Addressing reporters on the sidelines of a Combined Graduation Parade at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal near here, he said, Like you said, the standoff does continue. Disengagement has taken place in certain areas in Eastern



Ladakh. But, the complete disengagement has not yet been done I would not like to go into the details, but suffice to say we are deployed, we are prepared to take on any challenge that may face us in **More on P10**

NIA Summons PDP Leader To New Delhi

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has summoned People's Democratic Party (PDP) member and Vice Chairman District Development Council (DDC) Ganderbal, Bilal Ahmad, to New Delhi for questioning in connection with a case.

Bilal Ahmad has been summoned to New Delhi on December 23 at NIA office where he will be questioned. Bilal is the vice chairman of DDC Ganderbal and was elected to the council in DDC elections.

Bilal has been charged under Section 120 B and Section 124 A of IPC and will be questioned with regard to the same case, a local news agency KDC quoted sources as saying. **More on P10**

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Bukhari Seeks Rollback Of Changes In Land Use Policy

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Taking strong exception to recent changes in the land use laws announced by the Jammu and Kashmir administration, Apni Party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Saturday demanded immediate rollback of the decision, saying it is loaded with far-reaching consequences.

The agricultural land in Jammu and Kashmir is supposed to be safeguarded by the government against any kind of fiddling **More on P10**

NC To Attend Delimitation Meet, Sajad Lone Hits Out

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) leaders will attend the Delimitation Commission's associate members meeting in New Delhi next week, party MP Hasnain Masoodi said on Saturday.

He, however, said, there was no shift in the party's stand that the exercise "offends" the spirit of the Constitution.

"Seeing the overall scenario, the party has decided that its



MPs will attend the meeting," Masoodi, the MP from south Kashmir's Anantnag said. He said since **More on P10**

Mehbooba Has 'No Faith' In Delimitation Commission

Jammu and Kashmir PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said on Saturday that she had no faith in the delimitation commission which was "working on the BJP's agenda". She also accused the BJP of using National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) to demoralise her party because **More on P10**

Global Warming And Climate Change

Govt Running Campaigns To Combat Challenges: LG

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government is running several campaigns in collaboration with schools, non-government institutions, village panchayats and urban plantation committees to combat the challenges of global warming and climate change, the Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Saturday.

"UT administration has set a target of planting 1 crore 30 lakh saplings this year and this goal can be accomplished only with large scale participation of the responsible citizens" Sinha said Saturday.

He was addressing a gathering here at Trikuta Nagar after inaugurating the 'Adopt-A-Park' programme of Jammu Municipal Corporation, which will provide opportunity to local communities, welfare associations and other organizations to contribute in upkeep and clean up of neighbourhood parks, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, noted that the J&K government is running several campaigns in collaboration with schools, non-government institutions, village panchayats and urban plantation committees to combat the challenges of global warming and climate change.

Maintaining that there has never been a more urgent need



to revive ecology than today, the LG, as per the official spokesperson said that the Prime Minister has made many efforts to give a safe environment to the coming generations and has urged the people to make collective efforts for conservation of nature and its resources.

Sinha, he said, also asserted that it is "our collective responsibility" to build a resilient ecosystem to address the challenges of climate change. Conservation and protection of trees and plants is embedded in our ancient culture and traditions.

"We must follow our ancient cultural system which propagates environmental protection and talks about our coexistence in complete harmony with the nature," the LG said. **More on P10**

3D Effect: How Death, Disease, Distress Drive Begging In Kashmir

Jahanuma Tahir, Sheikh Mehvish

NASREENA a 28-year-old widowed mother of two children from Ganderbal, comes every Friday to Dargah Hazratbal Shrine for begging to meet the medical expenses of her ailing son.

Back in 2014, she had happily married the "love of her life", but two years later, her husband, a woodcutter, fell off a tree and died on spot. Besides a young widow, he's survived by a son and a daughter.

While Nasreena was still grieving the loss of her husband, little did she know another calamity was waiting to shake her life.

She wouldn't have resorted to begging if this calamity



wouldn't have struck her.

The year her husband died, his son got severely ill. Juggling between grief and worry, she took her son to hospital hoping that his reports would not be serious.

But fate had something else in store for her.

Her son's one kidney hasn't developed properly. Due to which his condition gets bad almost every day.

Struggling to make ends meet she now has to arrange money for her son's treatment costing her more than Rs500 a week.

"Even after juggling between various jobs, I fall short of money to even fulfil my basic needs," said Nasreena. "When our own people don't look out for us, what're we supposed to do if not beg."

In many parts of Srinagar, begging is turning into a serious social issue and a matter of concern. Due to the situation deteriorated by the last three-years of lockdown, many people are suffering at hands of poverty and thus making them beg for their livelihoods.

According to the 2011 census, the number of beggars in Jammu and Kashmir stands at 834, out of which 231 are women.

Apart from local beggars, the

valley has witnessed a huge flow of mendicants from other states of India. A rough survey done in 2019 showed that around 100 non-local beggars, most of them children, are stationed at various points from Regal Chowk to Amira Kadal. Most of them are from Rajasthan and its adjoining state.

But it's the current situation—exacerbated by various factors—that is literally forcing natives to 'beg for life'.

Zaiba, a 87-year-old widow from Rainawari, Srinagar lives in a rented accommodation in Gulab Bagh, Dargah. She usually begs outside Jammu & Kashmir Bank, and goes to Hazrat Syed Merak Shah Kashani's Shrine Shalimar on Fridays.

Back in nineties, her husband's blood cancer **More on P10**





Poor service of Jio broadband irks subscribers in Humhama

Agencies

Srinagar): Jio Broadband subscribers have accused the service provider of giving very poor service to them for the last 15 days in Humhama and its adjoining areas.

Subscribers alleged that the broadband service is so poor that it takes hours to open and web page, thereby putting them into a lot of inconvenience.

They said that the service provider had claimed of providing high speed internet service in the area, but for the last 15 days the service is down.

They also alleged that the service provider have paid no heed to their complaints as they are unable to restore the service even after being apprised about the issue umpteenth times.

The subscribers appealed to the management of Jio to look into the issued at an earliest and help resolve their genuine grievance. (KNS)

Div Com Reviews Progress Of Semi Ring Road

KO News Service

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 18: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole on Saturday chaired a meeting to review the progress of Semi Ring Road, Srinagar, besides NOC clearance for mining, land acquisition for road, tree cutting, clay extraction and other issues.

The meeting was attended by DC Budgam; ADC, Srinagar; ADC, Baramulla; ADC, Pulwama; Director, Geology and Mining, Kashmir; Project Director, NHAI, Srinagar; JD, Geology and Mining, Kashmir; Collector Defense, Budgam; District Mining Officer, Srinagar, Baramulla, Budgam and Pulwama; Chief Project Manager, NKC Ltd and other officers.

On the Occasion, Div Com directed officers to speed up the clearance of

Speed Up The clearance of NOCs for mining, processing of documents of tree cutting, identification of soil extraction Land, acquisition of land for Semi Ring Road and handing over it to company and address objections of land owners, if any, in a week's time.

NOCs for mining, processing of documents of tree cutting, identification of soil extraction Land, acquisition of land for Semi Ring Road and handing over it to company and address objections of land owners, if any, in a week's time.

He directed DC's to identify hundred Kanals of land in each district for soil extraction. Besides, he directed them that each halqa patwari should

prepare a list of land which could be available for soil extraction.

The meeting was informed that a bulk of 110 Lakh metric ton soil is required of which only 5 lakh metric ton soil has been made available, so far.

He said that in view of volume of work, pendency needs to be cleared and permissions should be granted within stipulated time.

He also enjoined DC's to appoint nodal officers who would guide concerned officers of NHAI for processing documents for tree cutting.

Div Com directed DC Budgam to address the issue of municipality entry passes for vehicles carrying material for Semi Ring Road as the contractor has projected that instead of paying entry fee every time on the entry of vehicles they would pay in lump sum or installments.

Srinagar To Have E-rickshaws Soon

KO News Service

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 18: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Pandurang K Pole today chaired a meeting regarding operation of taxi stands from SDA lands at Haft Chinar, Srinagar and introduction of E-rickshaws, here.

The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner, Kashmir; Commissioner, SMC, Srinagar; ADC, Srinagar; Chief Town Planner; VC, SDA; SSP Traffic; RTO, Kashmir and other officers.

The meeting de-

liberated over the identification of routes on which E-rickshaws shall ply, operation of the service besides charging stations at terminals.

The meeting was informed that besides E-rickshaw charging stations at route terminals, the vehicle can easily be charged at home by the owner. Be-



sides, the meeting was told that rickshaws shall ply on the routes which usually see less vehicular movement.

Further, the meeting discussed the allotment policy and operation of stands. Moreover, the meeting also discussed regulation of traffic movement to decongest the city by restricting movement through intra and inter district permits.

Meanwhile, Div Com directed concerned officers for a detailed report of bottlenecks on the routes and roads in Srinagar which are creating hurdles for smooth urban mobility.

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

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar); 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)
Website: www.jkbopee.gov.in E-mail: coejakbopee@gmail.com/helpdeskjakbopee@gmail.com

Subject :- Amendments in Rule 14 & 15 of Reservation Rules 2005 in respect of Children of Defense Personnel (CDP). Issuances of SO-277 dated 13-08-2021 of Social Welfare Department, UT of J&K. thereof:

Reference:- i) F.No.6(I)/2017/D(Res.II) dated 30-11-2017 from Government of India Ministry of Defense, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, New Delhi.

ii) Letter No 536/ADM/DSW/7862-76 dated 12-11-2021 from Directorate of Sainik Welfare Jammu, Government of J&K.

iii) SO-277 dated 13-08-2021 of Social Welfare Department, UT of J&K.

Notice No:- 083- BOPEE of 2021

Dated:- 16-12-2021

Pursuant to the amendments made by the Social Welfare Department, UT of J&K vide SO-277 of 2021 dated 13-08-2021 in rule 14 & 15 of J&K Reservation Rules 2005, the reservation to Children of Defense Personnel (CDP) under this Rule shall be governed by inter-se priorities as may be notified by the department of ex-servicemen welfare, Ministry of Defense, Government of India from time to time.

Further, the reservation / preference to the wards of armed forces personnel UT of J&K for admission to Medical / Professional Courses shall be, as identified by the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Ministry of Defense, Government of India and Government of J&K, Directorate of Sainik Welfare, Ambphala, Jammu.

The SO-277 of 2021 and letters dated 12-11-2021 & 30-11-2017 are available on website of the Board (www.jkbopee.gov.in) only as Annexures "A & B" respectively to this notification.

The willing / desirous candidates, if any, are hereby informed to keep their documents / certificates ready for submission of the same as and when notified by the Board :-

E & O.E.

Sd/-
(Dr. Sunil Gupta),
Controller of Examinations,
J&K BOPEE

No.:- BOPEE/Exam-23/2021 Dated:- 16-12-2021

DIPK-NB-5969/21



UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

For and on behalf of the University of Kashmir, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Electric Contractors registered with Govt. of J&K/ other union territories and CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of E-Challan (Rs.)	Time of completion	Time and Date for Submission of E-Tender	Date for Opening of Bid	Class of Contract
1.	Electrification for Bio resources and Bioinformatics Department (Phase III) at Zakura Campus.	Rs. 15.64 Lacs	Rs. 600/-	02-months	17-12-2021 to 27-12-2021 (11.30 AM) (6.00 PM)	28-12-2021 (11.30 AM)	"AAY"

The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the web site www.kashmiruniversity.net/ www.jktenders.gov.in.

NIT No: - F (UCD)(Elect. B-Res. B-Inf. At ZC)/KU/74/21
DATED:17/12/21.

Executive Engineer

DIPK-NB-5972/21

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

(Tele-fax No: 0194-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)

(Short-term)

Gist of e -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22 /242/e-tendering
Dated:-16.12.2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Registered , reputed & experienced firms as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of completion (in days)	AAA	TS.NO	Position of Funds	Earnest Money (in Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Various Electro Mechanical works to be carried out at Central Heating System at GMC Baramulla	2.50	500	10	GMC/	160 of 12/21	Available	5100.00
Wet servicing of ACs of different capacities at GMC Baramulla	0.98	200	05	GMC/	171 of 12/21	Available	2000.00

- The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 16.12.2021 (18.00 hrs).
- The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 16.12.2021 (18:00hrs) to 23.12.2021 (14:00 hrs) in two (02) cover.
- The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 24.12.2021 (14.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

No: MHCHD/ TS/ 8372-76
Dated:16.12.2021

DIPK-15156/21

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Kashmir

Estates Wing, Main Campus Shalimar – 190 025

Short-term Notice Inviting e-Tender

E-NIT NO. (41) Of 2021

Dated: 13.12.2021

For and on behalf of Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST(K), e-tenders (in single-cover system) are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Electric contractors whose cards are valid up to 31-12-2021 registered with State PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Govt. departments for the following work:-

S.No	Name of the work	Estimated Cost (in lacs)	Class of Contractor	Cost of Tender documentation	Time of completion
1.	Supply, Laying of 150 sq mm 3.5 core Al cable from 250KVA substation at ARIS to Registrar & Comptroller Office for providing of independent power supply for load up gradation etc at Shalimar SKUAST Kashmir	2.60	A class	500/-	05 days
2.	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Prodigy Energy Meter 200 Amp at RRS Khudwani SKUAST Kashmir	0.35	A Class	500/-	05 days

Position of AAA: Accorded

a) Position of T.S : Sanctioned

b) Position of funds: Available

1. The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions and other details can be downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per following schedule:-

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	13.12.2021
2.	Date of start of downloading	13.12.2021
3.	Pre-bid meeting date	NA
4.	Bid submission start Date	13.12.2021
5.	Bid submission end date	20.12.2021 (06:00 PM)
6.	Date & Time of opening of Technical bid (online)	21.12.2021
7.	Date & Time of opening of Financial bid (online)	22.12.2021

Further information can be had from the Office of the undersigned

Sd/-
Estates Officer SKUAST-K

No. Au/Estates/E-NIT(41)/518
Dated: 17.12.2021

DIPK-NB-5961/21

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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



HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI

CALENDAR

14 Jumada al-awwal

1443

PRAYERS

FAJR 6: 02

ZUHR 12:27

ASR 3:48

Magrib 5:29

ISHA 6: 54

This Day In History

- 1448 - Pope Nicholas V appoints Rudolf of Diepholt, Bishop of Utrecht, as cardinal.
- 1522 - Suleiman the Magnificent accepts surrender of the surviving Knights of Rhodes, who are allowed to evacuate. Eventually settle in Malta, become known as the Knights of Malta.
- 1585 - English fleet & Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, reach Vlissingen.
- 1626 - Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and Prince of Transylvania Gabor Bethlen sign Peace of Pressburg (Bratislava).
- 1661 - Corporation Act enforced in England.
- 1669 - 1st jury trial in Delaware; Marcus Jacobson condemned for insurrection & sentenced to flogging, branding & slavery.
- 1688 - Prince William of Orange's troops arrive in London.
- 1694 - Frederik van Brandenburg flees Schweiben
- 1699 - Russian Tsar Peter the Great ordered Russian New Year changed from Sept 1 to Jan 1.
- 1780 - Britain declares war on Holland.
- 1790 - 1st successful US cotton mill to spin yarn (Pawtucket, RI).
- 1830 - Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria and Russia recognize Belgium.
- 1860 - South Carolina secedes from the Union (US Civil War).
- 1879 - Tom Edison privately demonstrated incandescent light at Menlo Park.
- 1880 - Battle at Bronker'sSpruit, Transvaal: Farmers beat Britten.
- 1892 - Pneumatic automobile tire patented, Syracuse, NY.
- 1900 - Giacobini discovers a comet (will be 1st comet visited by spacecraft).
- 1915 - Russian troops overrun Qom, Persia
- 1917 - Cheka formed - Soviet state security force and forerunner to the KGB, under Felix Dzerzhinsky after decree by Lenin.
- 1922 - 14 republics form Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics (USSR).
- 1924 - Adolf Hitler freed from jail early.
- 1933 - Bolivia & Paraguay sign cease fire
- 1941 - Adolf Hitler takes complete command of German Army
- 1943 - Military coup in Bolivia

From KO Archives

No need to talk to Hurriyat: Abdullah

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Terming Hurriyat Conference leaders as black crows, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah today said there was no need to talk to the conglomerate as they would only toe the line led from across the border.

I welcome the extension of cease-fire by the government but that does not mean that we will remain blind-folded towards the civilian killings by militants, Abdullah said addressing the Fakhr-e-Kashmir (pride of Kashmir) function here organized in memory of veteran Kashmir leader Mirza Afzal Beigh.

Taking a dig at Hurriyat leaders, Abdullah said these people are like black crows, no matter how much detergent you apply, they will remain like that hinting that these leaders wanted only Pakistan and nothing else.

If the Centre feels that it should initiate talks with Hurriyat Conference, I will not create any hindrance. But for God sake one should understand that talking to them means talking to Pakistan, the chief minister said. He said he was not averse to talking to Pakistan but let them first stop killings of the innocent in our state.

About Pakistan's decision to reduce the troops at the line of Control (LoC), the chief minister advised the audience to take it with a pinch of salt as history is witness when we were initiating friendship in Lahore, Islamabad was pushing its troops and stooges in Kargil.

Describing the Centre's extension of cease-fire as a bold initiative, Abdullah said this is to tell world that India has always adopted the path of nonviolence and will stick to it.

Farooq, Centre's Surrogate
All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) chairman, Prof Ab-dul Ghani Bhat, Thursday described the conglomerate as the heartbeat of the people. In an oblique reference to the chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, who described the Hurriyat leaders as 'black crows', Prof Bhat said it (APHC) would not like to represent the interests of government of India as a surrogate of the Centre.
(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 19 DECEMBER, 2000)

Settlers Attack Palestinian Villages After West Bank Killing

Agencies

Jewish settlers have burst into several villages in the occupied West Bank, smashing homes and cars and beating up at least two people, Palestinian officials have said.

Friday's attacks came a day after Palestinian gunmen killed an Israeli man in a shooting ambush in the territory.

The death of settler Yehuda Dimentman, killed when gunmen opened fire on his car near an illegal settlement outpost in the occupied West Bank late on Thursday, threatened to ignite further violence between Palestinian residents and Israeli settlers.

Two other passengers in Dimentman's vehicle were lightly wounded on Thursday.

Ghassan Daghlis, a Palestinian Authority official who monitors settlement activities, said groups of settlers entered several Palestin-

find the assailants behind Thursday's shooting and the army deployed additional forces to the area.

According to Wafa, at least three men from Burqa were arrested in overnight raids.

The army said Friday the manhunt for the Palestinian gunmen was ongoing but gave no further details.

Dimentman's car came under fire after leaving a Jewish seminary in the illegal outpost of Homesh, a former settlement evacuated as part of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

The latest attacks come amid an uptick in Israeli-Palestinian violence across the occupied West Bank and in East Jerusalem.

Earlier this month, an ultra-Orthodox Jew was left seriously injured after being stabbed by a Palestinian attacker outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City.

A week earlier, a Hamas member



ian villages near the northern city of Nablus early on Friday, smashing up cars and homes. Two wounded Palestinians were taken to hospital.

In the Palestinian village of Qaryout, settlers broke into one house and tried to abduct a resident, Wael Miquel, according to Daghlis.

Photos shared on social media showed Miquel with bruises and swelling across his face, while other videos and photos published online showed confrontations between armed settlers and Palestinian residents.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Jihad Salah, the head of Burqa village council in northwestern Nablus, said the settlers assaulted the village using firearms.

He added that they set the village's barracks on fire and stoned a number of Palestinian homes.

The Palestinian Wafa news agency reported that settlers attacked Sebastia town, north Nablus, and smashed a number of Palestinian-owned vehicles and a car maintenance workshop.

Israeli leaders have pledged to

opened fire in the Old City, killing an Israeli man. Both attackers were killed by Israeli forces.

This week, Israeli troops killed another Palestinian man during a raid in the Ras al-Ain area in Nablus, occupied West Bank.

Earlier this month, Israeli troops also killed a Palestinian man in the village of Beita, occupied West Bank, during a protest against illegal settlements. Israeli forces killed a Palestinian minor after an alleged car-ramping at a military checkpoint in the northern occupied West Bank.

Israel captured East Jerusalem and the West Bank in the 1967 Middle East war. The territories are now home to more than 700,000 Jewish settlers living in 164 settlements and 116 outposts, which Palestinians seek as parts of their future independent state.

Under international law, all Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are considered illegal.

Palestinians, along with most of the international community, consider settlements to be a major obstacle to peace.



SCIENTISTS WARN OMICRON poses 'a major, imminent threat to public health' [File: Gaelen Morse/Reuters]

'No Evidence' Omicron Milder Than Delta, British Researchers Say

Agencies

British researchers say they have found "no evidence" that the Omicron coronavirus variant is milder than Delta, casting doubt on the cautious optimism of some experts that the new strain may not be as virulent and not overwhelm healthcare systems.

The study by Imperial College London (ICL) on Friday - released just as British officials reported record COVID-19 cases for the third consecutive day, with a rise to 93,045 new infections - also found that the risk of reinfection with Omicron is more than five times higher than Delta.

The non peer-reviewed research was based on UK Health Security Agency and National Health Service data on people who tested positive for COVID-19 in a PCR test in England between November 29 and December 11.

"We find no evidence (for both risk of hospitalisation attendance and symptom status) of Omicron having different severity from Delta," the study said, although it added that data on hospitalisations remains very limited.

"Controlling for vaccine status, age, sex, ethnicity, asymptomatic status, region and specimen date, Omicron was associated with a 5.4-

THIS LEVEL OF immune evasion means that Omicron poses a major, imminent threat to public health."

fold higher risk of reinfection compared with Delta," the study, which was dated December 16, added.

In South Africa, whose scientists were the first to identify Omicron last month, early anecdotal accounts have suggested that the new variant is causing less severe illness than previous ones - but scientists say it is too early to draw firm conclusions.

The country reported a record number of daily infections earlier this week.

"We believe that it might not necessarily just be that Omicron is less virulent, but ... coverage of vaccination [and] ... natural immunity of people who have already had contact with the virus is also adding to the protection," Health Minister Joe Phaahla told a news conference on Friday. "That's why we are seeing mild illness."

However, ICL said in a statement that protection afforded by past infection against reinfection with Omicron may be as low as 19 percent, according to its research.

The study, which involved AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines, also found a significantly increased risk of developing a symptomatic Omicron case compared with Delta for those who were two or more weeks past their second jab dose, and two or more weeks past their booster dose.

Depending on the estimates used for vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection from the Delta variant, this translates into vaccine effectiveness of between 0 percent and 20 percent after two doses, and between 55 percent and 80 percent after a booster dose.

"This study provides further evidence of the very substantial extent to which Omicron can evade prior immunity given by both infection or vaccination," study lead Professor Neil Ferguson said in ICL's statement.

"This level of immune evasion means that Omicron poses a major, imminent threat to public health."

But Dr Clive Dix, former Chair of the UK Vaccine Taskforce, said it was important not to overinterpret the data.

"The conclusions made are based on making assumptions about Omicron where we still don't have sufficient data," Dix said. "For example, we have no data on the cellular immune response which is now probably driving effectiveness of vaccines."

New Drug Identified May Help Effectively Treat Covid-19 Pneumonia: Lancet Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON: A newly identified drug may be used to effectively treat some patients hospitalised with COVID-19 pneumonia, according to a study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine journal.

The team, including researchers from the University of Birmingham and the University of Oxford, UK, tested namilumab - an antibody already in late-stage trials to treat rheumatoid arthritis - in patients hospitalised with COVID-19 pneumonia.

The patients were receiving 'usual' care, as well as having high levels in their blood of a marker of inflammation known as C-reactive protein (CRP).

CRP levels rise when there is inflammation in the body, and elevated levels of CRP have been found to be a potential early marker to predict risk for severity of COVID-19, the researchers said.

"Our research has provided important proof-of-concept evidence that namilumab reduces inflamma-



tion in hospitalised patients with COVID-19 pneumonia," said Ben Fisher, co-chief investigator of the trial at the University of Birmingham and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (UHB).

"However, our sample size is too small for a definitive assessment of clinical outcomes and further studies are required for this, as well as to understand better the population that may benefit most," Ben Fisher said.

Namilumab targets a 'cytokine' which is naturally secreted by

immune cells in the body, but in uncontrolled levels is believed to be a key driver of the excessive and dangerous lung inflammation seen in COVID-19 patients.

The trial carried out between June 2020 and February 2021 involved patients aged over 16 with COVID-19 pneumonia either being treated on a ward or Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at nine hospitals across the UK.

The study involved 54 patients receiving 'usual care' - treatment with steroids and oxygen or ventilation - and 57 patients given usual care as well as a single intravenous dose of 150mg of namilumab.

As well as COVID-19 pneumonia, all study participants had CRP levels greater than 40mg/l.

The researchers compared the probability of the reduction of levels of CRP in patients.

Compared to usual care alone, the researchers found that there was a 97 per cent probability of CRP being reduced over time in those given namilumab when compared with usual care alone.

Russia Tells Nato To Stay Out Of Former USSR

Agencies

Russia said on Friday it wanted a legally binding guarantee that the Nato military alliance would give up any military activity in Eastern Europe and Ukraine, part of a wish list of ambitious security guarantees it wants to negotiate with the West.

The demands form a package that Moscow says is an essential requirement for lowering tensions in Europe and defusing a crisis over Ukraine, which Western countries have accused Russia of sizing up for a potential new attack - something it has denied.

But they also contained elements - such as an effective Russian veto on Nato membership for Ukraine - that the West has already ruled out.

Presenting the demands in detail for the first time, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters that Russia and the West must start from a clean sheet in rebuilding relations.

"The line pursued by the United States and Nato over recent years

politics at King's College London, said on Twitter that President Vladimir Putin was "drawing a line around the post-Soviet space and planting a 'keep out' sign. It's not meant to be a treaty; it's a declaration."

"But that doesn't necessarily mean this is a prelude to war. It's a justification for keeping Moscow's hair-trigger stance, in order to keep Washington and others off balance. Question is, how long can that be maintained, before it loses its efficacy?"

Ryabkov told reporters that Russia was not willing to put up with the current situation any more. He urged the United States to take the proposals seriously and come up with a constructive response fast.

Ryabkov said Russia was ready to start talks as soon as Saturday, with Geneva as a possible venue, and that its negotiating team was ready.

When asked about the US response to Russia's proposals so far, Ryabkov said: "As far as the broader picture is concerned, they haven't said 'no'. They haven't said 'yes' to



to aggressively escalate the security situation is absolutely unacceptable and extremely dangerous," he said.

"Washington and its Nato allies should immediately stop regular hostile actions against our country, including unscheduled exercises, dangerous rapprochements and manoeuvres of military ships and planes, and stop the military development of Ukrainian territory," he said.

Sam Greene, professor of Russian

us, but they haven't said 'no' either."

Moscow handed over its proposals to the United States earlier this week amid soaring tensions over a build-up of Russian troops near Ukraine.

Russia says it is responding to what it sees as threats to its own security from Ukraine's increasingly close relations with Nato and aspirations to join the alliance, even though there is no imminent prospect of Ukraine being allowed to join.

Iranian Minister Promises 'Good News' On Launch Of Satellites



Agencies

Iran will have "good news" about its launch of satellites before the end of the current Persian year in March 2022, the country's minister of communications and information technology says.

Issa Zarepour said on Sunday that Iranian youths have made good efforts to build and launch satellites in the past decade.

"We will speed up work so that we can become one of the six countries that can launch satellites into the geocentric orbit," he told in his first news conference in Tehran.

Zarepour, who supervises Iran's space program, reiterated that the project to reach the higher orbit was planned to be accomplished in 10 years, but Iran's President Ibra-

him Raeisi asked to speed up the program.

Last month, President Raeisi chaired a meeting of Iran's Supreme Space Council attended by the ministers of defense, communications and information technology, foreign affairs, and industry, where he described the space program as a strong front against the enemies.

"All capacities have been used to develop the space industry, and launching the satellites is just the beginning of this roadmap," Zarepour said.

He said several satellites are in line to be launched. "We intend to run a satellite program for civilian needs so that the production and construction of satellites can play a role along with other industries in the country."

Pakistan To Rally Muslim Countries To Help Afghanistan



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pakistan is rallying Muslim countries to help Afghanistan state off an economic and humanitarian disaster while also cajoling the neighbouring country's new Taliban rulers to soften their image abroad.

Several foreign ministers from the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are meeting in Islamabad on Sunday to explore ways to aid Afghanistan while navigating the difficult political realities of its Taliban-run government, Pakistan's top diplomat said Friday.

The new Taliban administration in Kabul has been sanctioned by the international community, reeling from the collapse of the Afghan military and the Western-backed government in the face of the insurgents' takeover in mid-August.

"The OIC meeting is an engagement that does not constitute an official recognition of the Taliban regime," said Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

He said the message to the gathering on Sunday is: "Please do not abandon Afghanistan. Please engage. We are speaking for the people of Afghanistan. We're not speaking of a particular group. We are talking about the people of Afghanistan."

Qureshi said major powers—including the United States, Russia, China and the European Union—will send their special representatives on Afghanistan to the one-day summit. Afghanistan's Taliban-appointed Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi will also attend the conference.

Afghanistan is facing a looming economic meltdown and humanitarian catastrophe in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover. Billions of dollars worth of the country's assets abroad, mostly in the US, have been frozen and international funding to the country has ceased.

The world is also waiting before extending any formal recognition to the new rulers in Kabul, wary the Taliban could impose a similarly harsh regime as when they were in power 20 years ago—despite their assurances to the contrary.

In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Muttaqi said that Afghanistan's new rulers were committed to the education of girls and women in the workforce.

Yet four months into Taliban rule, girls are not allowed to attend high school in most provinces and though women have returned to their jobs in much of the health care sector, many female civil servants have been barred from coming to work.

NEWS MAKERS

Alimihan Seyiti, Oldest Person In China Dies At 135

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING: China's oldest person, Alimihan Seyiti, has died at the age of 135 in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, local authorities said on Saturday.

Hailing from Komuxerik township of Shule County in Kashgar Prefecture, Seyiti was born on June 25, 1886, according to the county's publicity department.

In 2013, she topped the list of China's oldest living persons issued by the China As-



sociation of Gerontology and Geriatrics, formerly known

as the Gerontological Society of China, the state-run Xin-

hua news agency reported.

She had a very simple and regular daily life until death on Thursday. She always ate on time and enjoyed basking in the sun in her yard. Sometimes, she helped look after her great-grandchildren. Komuxerik is known as a "longevity town," with many el-

derly aged above 90.

The improvement of health services has partly contributed to their longevity.

The local government has provided contracted doctor service, free annual physical checks, and monthly advanced age subsidies for the elderly aged above 60, the report said.

OMICRON THREAT

DAK Demands Genetic Testing Lab In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With India reporting 101 cases of Omicron variant of Covid-19 so far, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Saturday has reiterated its demand to set up a genetic testing lab in Kashmir.

"That would help detect and track the new variant of Covid-19," said DAK President and Influenza expert Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

The DAK President said genetic testing lab will not only help in identifying Omicron that might have sneaked into the valley, but will also check whether any new mutant has emerged in the region.

"Detecting the mutant would help plan appropriate and effective public health strategy to prevent and control the spread of the new variant in the valley," he said.

Dr Hassan said tracing the variant early would be critical to prevent another deadly wave of Covid-19 like the one we saw earlier.

"Genetic testing can serve as an early warning system to guide public health response. It can help in identification of hotspots which is critical to plan targeted public health interventions to control the spread of the disease," he said.

"Genome sequencing is imperative to understand how the variant

is behaving in terms of infectivity, severity, response to treatment," said Dr Nisar adding "we have seen how previous variants behaved differently in different populations."

General Secretary DAK Dr Arshad Ali said Jammu and Kashmir is seeing a rise in the number of infections in fully vaccinated persons which could be due to the variant.

"We need to ramp up "random" genetic testing. Travel history alone should not be the deciding factor for sequencing the samples as Karnataka doctor, who was among the first two cases of Omicron had no travel history," he said.

Spokesperson DAK Dr Riyaz Ahmad Dagga said with no genetic testing facility in Kashmir, samples are sent outside valley for sequencing which results in delay of test reports. "If we don't know the changes in the genetic structure of the virus, we are running blind; fighting a pandemic without doing adequate genome sequencing is almost fighting an unknown enemy," he said.

"Omicron, a highly mutated variant appears to be more infectious than the previous Covid-19 variants. First identified in South Africa, the new variant has been detected in 85 nations. The virus is causing a massive spike in cases across Europe," he added.

Bookings For Kargil Air Service To Go Online After Highway Closes



Press Trust Of India

LEH: Online booking, check-in and issuing of boarding passes have been introduced for a key air courier service that serves the people of Kargil once the strategic 434-km Srinagar-Leh national highway closes in winter months, officials said on Saturday.

The subsidised AN-32 Kargil Courier Air Service, provided by the Indian Air Force, is operated under a special arrangement when the highway is shut for five months during winters due to heavy snowfall, they said.

Ladakh Civil Aviation Secretary Saugat Biswas chaired a high-level meeting here on Friday to ensure adequate arrangements be put in place for smooth operations of the air service, an official spokesman said.

There will be a major departure from the past practices as several operations will now be handled digitally, Biswas said.

These include booking sys-

tems, check-ins, issuance of boarding passes, cancellations, re-allocation of seats, payments and refunds, he said, adding that a robust portal has been put in place by the administration for the purpose.

Chief Coordinator of the AN-32 service, Aamir Ali, gave a briefing on the preparedness at the Jammu and the Srinagar airports for the smooth operations of the service, the spokesman said.

Representatives from the Leh Air Force Station and the Udhampur Air Command highlighted the issues and concerns of the air force during the meeting, he said.

The issues were discussed with the directors of the respective airports for plugging gaps, the spokesman said.

Biswas asked the Kargil deputy commissioner for quick appointment of liaison officers and assistant nodal officers in Jammu, Srinagar and Kargil for coordination.

Committed To Provide Best Transport Facilities To People: LG

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Asserting his administration is committed to provide quality transport facilities to the people in Jammu and Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Saturday that the unprecedented augmentation of the public transport system will boost revenue generation as more and more viable and lucrative routes will be included in the operational network of transportation.

Sinha made these remarks after undertaking a ride in Olectra Greentech's electric bus from Raj Bhavan till Trikuta Nagar here on Saturday, an official spokesperson said. The electric bus is on a trial run in J&K to augment inter-city and intra-city transport facilities.

According to the official spokesperson, Arun Kumar AGM Sales and Marketing, Olectra Greentech Ltd, briefed the LG about the functioning, features and technical aspects of the bus during the ride.

Kumar, he said, apprised the LG that it is a seven meter Olectra K6 electric Bus which has seating capacity of 24 plus driver, and single charge range of 160 KM with 80% status of charge.

"Briefing about the other features, the AGM apprised the Lt Governor that the bus has many



other modern features like GPS, Public Announcement System, Air Conditioner, Smart Ticketing, 2 USB ports per seat, Emergency Stop etc," he said.

While enquiring about the performance of the bus, the official spokesperson said that Sinha suggested the representatives of the company to keep proper luggage space to facilitate the passengers during their journey.

"The Lt Governor said that the J&K Government is committed to provide quality transport facilities to the public in the UT and said that the unprecedented augmentation of the public transport system will boost revenue generation as more and more viable and lucrative routes will be included in the

operational network of transportation," he said.

The Electric Bus will be on trail run on different inter-city and intra-city routes to access its technical, mechanical stability and other practical aspects.

Pertinently, the official spokesperson said that during a meeting with the Chairman of Olectra Greentech Ltd, the LG had asked him to send two electric buses on a trial basis, one each for Srinagar and Jammu.

"Depending upon the trial outcome, the government will decide future course of action for inter-city and intra-city transport facilities and 150-200 e-Buses would be introduced in the transport sector soon in a phased manner," he added.

3 Skill Dev Trainings For Rural Youth Conclude At SKUAST

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The newly appointed Vice Chancellor of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST-Kashmir), Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie on Saturday said that the climatic conditions in the Valley are conducive for making it a leading producer and exporter of quality seeds to the major parts of the world.

Ganie, who assumed charge of VC SKUAST on Thursday, said these remarks on the concluding day of three training programmes on skill development conducted by directorate of extension in collaboration with the division of vegetable Sciences SKAUST-K and MAN-AGE Hyderabad for rural youth (STRY) here on Saturday, an official spokesperson said.

The three trainings were conducted on "Kitchen gardening - a way towards Nutritional Security an economic empowerment", "Quality seed production of vegetables crops with special reference to tissue culture techniques" and "Production of Organic Manure with special reference to vermicomposting technology"

Prof Ganie was Chief Guest on valedictory function and Prof. Dil Mohammad Makhdoomi, Director Extension was guest of honour. The programme was also attended by Prof Sarfaraz A. Wani Director Research, HoD Vegetable Science Dr. Sumiti Narayan, Associate Directors of Directorate Scientists of Division of Vegetable Sciences, the official spokesperson said.

He said that Ganie in his maiden address to the rural youth and extensionists from SKUAST-Kashmir appreciated the interest shown by the participants form far flung areas of the Valley in advanced scientific farming for quality produce and choosing agriculture as an enterprise.

The Vice-Chancellor, he said, stressed upon the fact that agriculture if taken on scientific lines can lead the UT of J&K to self-sufficiency and nutritional security citing the examples from the west.

"He stressed that the climatic conditions in the valley are conducive for making it a leading producer and exporter of quality seeds to the major parts of the world. Besides he stress upon the organic farming practice for production of healthy

vegetables and other agricultural products for healthy and prosperous society. He promised a complete support for undertaking all such programmes for empowering rural youth," the official spokesperson said.

He further said that the Vice-Chancellor appreciated the efforts of Directorate of Extension under the leadership of Prof. Dil Mohammad Makhdoomi in taking the extension services to newer heights.

According to the official spokesperson, Makhdoomi informed the house that SAMETI of Kashmir under Director Extension SKUAST-K has been rated at number one in the country as it has surpassed the target of STRY programmes assigned particularly in aspirational districts of Kupwara and Baramulla.

"We have completed such programmes with a total of 58 programmes with wonderful outcome with a number of rural youth turning out as entrepreneur," he said.

The feedback obtained from the participating rural youth impressed Vice-Chancellor and participants. The function ended with vote of thanks to chair, the official spokesperson said.

Mehbooba Tells Youth 'No Guns Or Stones, Fight For Snatched Rights Peacefully'

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday called on the youth to join the struggle for restoration of their rights "snatched

by the Centre and said non-violence, not "stones or guns", was the way ahead.

The former chief minister also said the BJP-led government had intelligence inputs about the civilian killings by militants, but it deliberately refrained from cracking the whip.

You have to understand the situation and become our voice if you do not show courage today, the coming generations will raise a question as our land, jobs and even minor minerals are going to outsiders. It is imperative for us to stand up and struggle for our rights..., Mehbooba said at the youth convention in the border district of Rajouri.

Insisting on a peaceful struggle for the cause, Mehbooba said, God forbid, I will never ask you to pick up stones or guns. I know they have a bullet ready against those treading this path. You have to raise your voice and join us in a democratic struggle for our snatched rights.

Referring to the recent killings of civilians, including those belonging to minority communities, in the valley by terrorists, she said the government had prior intelligence inputs about the attacks but did nothing.

Those who were killed were our own people, but 900 Kashmiri youth were arrested. Another 1,000 youth were picked up when the home minister visited Jammu and Kashmir (last month). Our jails are packed and hence, those arrested are now being shifted to the Agra jail, she said. Mehbooba said the government is coining words such as like white collared militants,

OGW (over ground workers) and hybrid militants to justify the arrests and killings.

She asked the youth why the Kashmir issue, with "thousands of sacrifices over 30 years", can-

not be resolved peacefully when the farmers peacefully protesting against the three farm laws could convince the government to repeal them.

Mehbooba said she had full faith in the words of her father, who was proud over the granting of a separate flag, constitution and land rights by India to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Accusing the BJP of being anti-Muslim, she told the youth, For them, we are the sons of (Mughal emperors) Babur and Aurangzeb, termites and cancer...you have to be our voice as they will continue their attempts to divide people to give legitimacy to its illegitimate decision of August 5, 2019.

Such a decision was the only prerogative of the constituent assembly. Only it could have taken a decision on Article 370. So, the decision taken on August 5, 2019, was illegitimate and unconstitutional, Mehbooba said.

She said the people of Jammu are now realising the fallout of the decision as their land and jobs are going to outsiders, while the land in Kashmir is being provided to make concrete homes to security forces.

Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim majority state, though the people of all faiths lived in complete harmony with each other. They are making attempts to change its demography through the August 5, 2019, decision, Mehbooba said.

The PDF chief said she had not come to seek votes but wanted to caution the people about attempts to divide them on the basis of religion and caste.

19 More Absconding Criminals Held In Reasi

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: After arresting over 100 absconding criminals in the past seven months, police in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district have apprehended 19 more absconding criminals, police said on Saturday.

The arrests were made during the past 24 hours in a special drive, "Frari Ki Giraftari" (arrest of absconders), and with this, a total of 121 absconding criminals, including many who were eluding the law for decades together, were brought to book, a police spokesperson said. He said a number of criminals also surrendered before courts due to pressure built by teams of the Reasi Police.

The spokesperson said nine of the criminals were arrested from

different parts of Reasi, Jammu, Poonch and Rajouri by teams from Katra police station, five by Mahore police station, three by Reasi police station and two by Arnas police station. Reasi Senior Superintendent of Police Shailender Singh said the arrests of these criminals is an important work to maintain peace and tranquility in the district.

"The police will leave no stone unturned to arrest and produce them in concerned trial courts of law," he said.

Under the drive, the officer said the police remained successful in nabbing hardcore, notorious and habitual criminals who were evading the due process of law for years and against whom general warrants of arrest were issued by the local courts and were pending execution.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT FBI DIVISION TANGMARG

Fresh Short term E-NIT No:55 2021-22 of FBI Division Tangmarg

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti FBI Division Tangmarg on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT invites e-tenders in single cover system from reputed, experienced and resourceful Structural Designers for framing structural design for the Job hereunder fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in this e-NIT for the works detailed below. Bids need not to be accompanied by EMD however, the participating bidders has to submit bid security declaration as per format attached with this e-NIT. The complete bidding process is online. However, hard copies of technical document are to be submitted only by the L-1 in the office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti FBI Division Tangmarg on the day which shall be communicated to lowest bidder. No financial bid shall be accepted in physical form:-

S. No.	Name of the JOB/Work	Adv. Cost Rs (Lacs)	Earnest Money	Time of completion (Days)	Cost of Tender Doc. Rs(.	Major Head of Account	Class of Consultancy
1.	Complete Hydraulic and structural design calculations of various components for Rapid Sand Filtration Plant for WSS 1. 0.15 MGD Gobarpora Kashipora. 2. 0.42 MGD Ferozpora Shrai. 3. 0.30 MGD Gulabdalji Poshtkar	2.50 Lacs	Bid security form to be sworn on affidavit duly notarized be attached with the Bid	15 days	200/-	NABARD	Registered Consultants/ Designers

Position of AA Accorded : Position of funds: Assured

1	Publishing date:	18-12-2021	05:00 PM
2	Download date start:	18-12-2021	06:00 AM
3	Bid Submission date start:	19-12-2021	10:00 AM
4	Bid Submission date Ends:	25-12-2021	04:00 PM
5	Date of Opening	27-12-2021	11:00 AM

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website:- WWW.jktenders.gov.in

Terms/ Conditions & procedure for uploading of tender:-

- The bidder should be registered and experienced having experience in designing similar nature of jobs to undertake such job for satisfaction of the department.
- The bidders have to pay tender document fee of Rs.200/= in the shape of Treasury Challan favouring Executive Engineer Jal Shakti FBI Division Tangmarg MH-0215-PHE.
- The bidders must upload the following technical documents in support of his financial bid:- a) Registration certificate duly renewed. b) Experience certificate having executed similar nature of jobs. c) PAN and GST registration with latest GST clearance certificate. d) Treasury Challan e) Bid Security declaration.
- The tender opening authority reserves the right to accept/reject the bid without assigning any reason thereof.
- In case of delay in completion of work beyond stipulated period of completion, penalty of the maximum 5% of the contract value shall be imposed upon the agency.
- The taxes viz. Income tax, & Cess shall be deducted from the bidders claims as admissible under rules.
- The bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities). In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling item rate inclusive of all taxes & it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
- The unit rates & prices shall quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes up to completion of work unless otherwise specified.
- The qualifying bidder shall pursue the said designs /Drawings /BOQ's and reply / clarify / amend etc any queries / questions /clarifications etc. which may be raised in the Design Directorate till the said Designs/Drawings/BOQ's are approved /vetted by them and other competent authority etc, as the case may be.
- In case of delay in completion of work beyond stipulated period of completion, penalty of the maximum 10% of the contract value shall be imposed upon the agency.
- Other terms and conditions shall be the same as laid down in the PWD form-25 tender document.
- Performance guarantee 3% of allotted cost in the form of CDR/FDR shall be submitted to the Executive Engineer FBI Division Tangmarg before the allotment is issued which will be released after the successful submission and vetting of the Design.

Gen. Conditions:

- 1/- Certificate of execution of similar nature of job for at least 02 sites to be uploaded.
- 2/- Any vetting charges for the design at J&K Research Laboratory, GogjiBagh Srinagar/ NIT Hazratbal Srinagar shall be paid by the Department.
- 3/- The necessary inputs shall be made available to successful bidder.
4. The complete bidding process will be online.

5. Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website http://jktenders.gov.in. Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications.

No: FBID/CC/6961-68
Dated:-18-12-2021
DIPK-15278/21

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
FBI Division Tangmarg

DIRECTORATE OF AYUSH, J&K (NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION)

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

(BEMINA SRINAGAR/INDIRA CHOWK JAMMU)

Tele/Fax: 0194-2490443, 2490455 (May-Oct) | 0191-2543988, 2543955 (Nov-Apr)
Subject: Hiring of Medical Officers (Community Health Officers)-AYUSH on contractual basis under National Ayush Mission.
Ref (i): Approval conveyed by the Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India vide communication No. S.16012/3/2021-NAM (Part) Dated 20-09-2021.
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for hiring of Medical Officers (Community Health Officers)-AYUSH on contractual basis under National Ayush Mission, J&K as per the details given below. Application forms complete in all respects can be submitted in the Directorate of Ayush, J&K Indira Chowk Jammu / Bemina Srinagar by or before 31-12-2021 (5 PM) except Saturday(s) & Sunday(s).

S.No.	Post	No. of Posts / Remuneration	Eligibility Criteria	Selection Criteria
1	Medical Officer (Community Health Officer)- AYUSH (List of Ayush Dispensaries is available on the official website of Directorate of Ayush, J&K)	50 Monthly Consolidated Remuneration Rs. 25,000/- plus Rs. 15,000/- per month as Performance Linked Payment	Bachelor's Degree in the concerned subject i.e. BAMS/BUMS/BHMS/BNYS or equivalent from any Institute recognized by the National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine / National Commission for Homeopathy (as the case may be) and registered with J&K Board of Ayurvedic/Unani/ Sowa Rigpa (Amchi) / Yoga & Naturopathy or J&K Board of Homeopathy (as the case may be). Age: Upto 45 Years	A. Graduation =80 Points on pro-rata basis B. Viva-voce =20 Points Selection of the candidate(s) will be made on the basis of District wise merit. However, in case of non-availability of candidate(s) within Home District, candidate(s) anywhere from UT of J&K will be considered. Note: Possession of merit alone will not confer any right of the candidate(s) of outside district(s) for final selection against the post as Merit + Option regarding preference of the District will decide the final selection of the candidate(s) for the Post of Medical Officer (Community Health Officer)-AYUSH.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- The candidate should be domicile of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The engagement will be purely on contractual basis. Initial contract for hiring shall be upto 31-03-2022 and further extension on year-to-year basis will be subject to satisfactory performance of the contractual employee which will be evaluated by Director Ayush J&K (Mission Director National Ayush Mission J&K) & approval of the post by Ministry of Ayush, Government of India.
- In case of poor performance, services of the candidate(s) is/are liable to be terminated with one month's prior notice.
- The Selection of the candidate(s) will be made on the basis of District wise merit. However, in case of non-availability of candidate(s) within Home District, candidate(s) anywhere from UT of J&K will be considered. Possession of merit alone will not confer any right of the candidate(s) from outside district(s) for final selection against the post as Merit + Option regarding preference of the District will decide the final selection of the candidate(s) for the Post of Medical Officer (Community Health Officer) AYUSH.
- Application form is available on the official website of Directorate of Ayush, J&K (www.jkdism.in) which is the only and authentic source of information with respect to Directorate of Ayush, J&K. This office shall not be responsible for inconvenience caused to anybody due to misleading / false information made available by any other website(s) and purportedly claimed to be associated with Directorate of Ayush, J&K, in any manner whatsoever.
- The number of vacancies are only indicative and may increase or decrease.
- List of the self-attested documents to be attached with the application form:
 - (i). Date of Birth Certificate.
 - (ii). Domicile Certificate.
 - (iii). Qualification Certificate / Marks Sheet (as per Eligibility Criteria).
 - (iv). Registration Certificate of J&K Board of Ayurvedic / Unani / Sowa-Rigpa (Amchi) / Yoga & Naturopathy or J&K Board of Homeopathy (as the case may be).
- Applications not falling in the prescribed eligibility / selection criteria or without aforesaid documents shall be rejected outrightly.
- Any further information including short-listing of candidate(s), date of interview / Test, etc. shall be uploaded on the official website of Directorate of Ayush, J&K (www.jkdism.in). Candidates are advised to keep themselves updated through the website. No individual communication to the candidate(s) shall be made in this regard.

DIPK-15170/21

Sd/- (Dr. Mohan Singh)
Director Ayush/ Mission Director NAM J&K, Jammu

KASHMIR

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Twitter Talks

twitter

“Electricity outages in many Srinagar areas since last night. Patients who are on O² Concentrator support should wait no further for restoration of power. Attendants should immediately fetch Oxygen cylinders from NGOs. We are open till 7PM today for the purpose. #OxygenKashmir”

@sro_kashmir

“Never talking about women who go thru mental and physical abuse in our society, but discuss why wearing tilla pheran is haraam shows how sensitive people are! This is a fact we all know. Why majority of women are annoyed is also because men selectively trend things here!”

@ainulrhrb

“Government should enforce blanket ban on private practice of doctors working in Govt sector like in other parts of country.This will improve patient care in govt hospitals and will create jobs in private sector as well”

@GowharDr

ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Revamp At Top Needed

There appears to be a glaring disconnect at the higher levels in the government between the real situation and sentiment prevailing in Kashmir and the pursuits of the powerful. It still has not struck home that the Shopian episode is that defining moment which serves as a reference point separating the “before” from the “after.” Or that the incident would be the government’s most visible identification mark for a long time to come.

Had the government, or more particularly the chief minister, Omar Abdullah, really been fine-tuned to the sentiment on the ground, they would have been moving heaven and earth not to let anyone in the uniformed services aggravate an already explosive situation. There would have been concerted drives by the chief minister and his cabinet to impress on the unified command the dire need to act with extreme caution and circumspection in handling the Shopian fallout, and to give no fresh cause for attrition. The police leadership would have been specially singled out for concentrated doses of advice for the force to maintain restraint and strict discipline and to put itself on a tight leash. This was doubly important in view of the massive resentment against the police and the “needle of suspicion” pointing towards it which does not often miss the mark.

Instead, raging public anger was naively sought to be contained by a commission of inquiry, while the security system in its entirety was left to its old devices. If anything, the police has been more willful in breaching discipline in an extremely delicate atmosphere where one would have expected it to conduct itself with extraordinary care. Significantly, the state police chief who does not hesitate to make his mind known on lesser occasions has not been forthcoming with assurances of any sort with regard to the Shopian outrage and the investigations the force is conducting in the incident. This silence in the backdrop of the general impression of the police being involved in the incident speaks volumes about the contempt in the police leadership towards the honour and self-respect of Kashmiris and their sensibilities. The state police chief should have been the first to take serious note of the dereliction of duty by his officers in Shopian in handling the immediate aftermath of the tragedy and the subsequent crude cover up sought by them, but instead, the badly delayed and insufficient suspensions have come only as a thinly-disguised, and futile, attempt to mollify and pacify the enraged masses.

Recent events like the reprehensible indecent advances by a police officer towards a woman supplicant in Baramulla – which sparked of large scale violence leading to the death of four persons in police and CRPF firing – and Wednesday’s crushing

of two villagers by a police driver just serve to underline the inveterate character of the forces in Kashmir.

When Peter appears to be just as bad as Paul, the move to replace the CRPF at the forefront by the police is nothing more than a cosmetic exercise. Move the CRPF out, certainly, but they are to be replaced by a force more sensitive to the needs of the hour. Why the state government stubbornly sticks with the current police leadership when it is demonstrably unable to discipline the force and civilize it defies explanation. Unless, of course, the government does not dare to make a move contravening the diktat from Delhi.

The “re-working” of the roles of the security agencies, which is trumpeted so loudly in sections of the press, is just old hat, as is the endless debate on making the police more responsive and accountable. This process has been going on in successive governments for long decades without any discernable outcome – apart from the brief respite during the PDP regime.

It is difficult to answer those who dish out facts and figures to claim that the forces go out of control particularly when the NC is at the helm in the state. This could have something to do with the long years the NC has enjoyed power without really feeling accountable to the people or being sympathetic to public sensitivities. This ingrained callousness makes the NC and its leadership unsuitable to manage a state rife with so many troubles.

What is to be marveled at is that the chief minister still categorizes the situation in Kashmir as a law and order problem, when in reality it is a full blown mass rebellion born out of the excesses of the forces. Regrettably, the government appears to know only the language of force in reply to genuine massive public discontent. Had that not been the case, it would not have taken days to announce an inquiry commission in the Shopian tragedy and weeks to order the suspension of the police officers mishandling the incident on every count. Had the commission of inquiry not been constrained by circumstance to issue strictures against the police officers, they would still have been enjoying plump postings elsewhere.

Many regard the situation as irretrievably lost for the government, and those who still harbour any hopes, howsoever faint, feel let down by the business-as-usual approach by the rulers. If the chief minister is really serious about the police making a difference by taking the forefront in Kashmir, he has nothing to lose by putting the force under the leadership of officers who have a holistic understanding of Kashmir and do not break up their brief into isolated segments.

The article is an Editorial from KO Archives

Ghulam Or Azad?
Estranged Top Congress Leader’s Entry Threatens To Upset The Political Apple Cart In J&K

RIYAZ WANI

Top Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad’s re-entry into an otherwise crowded political arena in Jammu and Kashmir has all the makings of changing the political game in the union territory. In recent weeks, Azad has addressed around ten impressively attended rallies in parts of the Jammu division and southern Kashmir, something that has greatly contributed to the revival of political activity. This has also prodded the regional parties to resume their public outreach with the NC Vice president Omar Abdullah holding a rally at Chatroo in Kishtwar district of Chenab Valley. Mehbooba Mufti who has, by and large, been more visible publicly since her release has also tried to up her game. Ever before Azad’s arrival on the scene, Mehbooba was making some loud political noise in Jammu. She later held a small protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

Over the last two years, the political position taken by Mehbooba on the demand for the return of Article 370 has veered to the extreme. In one rally in Chenab Valley, she went even to the extent of warning New Delhi that it should restore Article 370, if it wanted “to keep Kashmir.” The National Conference has been more restrained but steadfast in its demand for restoration of autonomy. The People’s Conference led by Sajad Lone, on the other hand, has grown increasingly non-committal on the issue since the party suddenly parted ways with the People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration. Lone has, instead, focussed on strengthening his party by poaching upon the leaders from the PDP and the NC, some of them with significant support bases in their respective constituencies. Whether this translates into any winnings for his party in the future Assembly polls is in the realm of speculation. More so, when a party that is most vocal about the demand for return of J&K autonomy is likely to resonate with the people both in the Valley and the Muslim dominated areas of Jammu.

From the PC onwards, there is the Apni Party which apparently has all but reconciled to the post-Article 370 state of affairs. Jammu-based parties, including Congress which has some presence in the Valley too, see the withdrawal of Article 370 as a good riddance and their position enjoys wide support among the region’s majority community. In fact, the more extreme the position on the issue as the one the espoused by the BJP, the more uncritical support the party can expect from a majority of the majority community in Jammu.

It is in this convoluted political arena that Congress leader Azad has tossed his hat in. Although Azad has given no indication that he is floating a new party, he has also not ruled it out. “In politics, no one can predict what will happen next,” he told the media in a not so cryptic statement about his future plans should his party alienate him further. Congress has already removed him from its

Feature Image Credits: PTI

disciplinary committee. And in J&K, twenty of Azad’s loyalists have quit the party in so far starkest signal that the cohort has plans up her sleeve if the high command doesn’t go along with their demand, which seems unlikely.

An impossible demand on the part of the rebel group could also be a

circumstances for him is to launch a new party. And should he do that, it has the potential to redraw the political map of J&K - it could very well be a throwback to the advent of the PDP in 1999. And there are reasons for it. While Azad may have lost the last parliament election to the current union minister Jitendra Singh,

hostile public response.

Azad has also been smart enough to locate his politics at the only conceivable political meeting ground between the Valley and the majority community in Jammu: He doesn’t demand restoration of Article 370 which faces opposition in Jammu’s Hindu dominated areas but he wants protection for jobs and lands, something that resonates with both the regions.

This is where Azad threatens to emerge as a dark horse. And to his advantage, if things don’t go well enough for the BJP, the saffron party would be content with a potential cameo role by Azad for one important reason: he could help splinter further Muslim vote and potentially stymie a Valley based party’s or a coalition’s bid to get a reasonable number of seats let alone a majority, the BJP’s mortal fear.

But there are many other factors at play whereby Azad’s entry could even weaken the BJP’s stranglehold in Jammu. It would be difficult then to predict how the post-election scenario will pan out. More so, in the event that the BJP goes on to lose Uttar Pradesh early next year. Azad might then get a maneuvering space to strike on his own - in an Azad way. Otherwise, he will continue to be seen as subservient to the BJP’s agenda in J&K - a Ghulam.

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

The author is the Political Editor of Kashmir Observer

ONE POSSIBILITY THAT IS BEING BANDIED about is that Azad is on course to do an Amarinder Singh in J&K. And he could very well do it. And he seems to have every reason to choose this course, one of them being his current abysmal relations with the Congress high command

calculated ploy to pursue a different political course. One possibility that is being bandied about is that Azad is on course to do an Amarinder Singh in J&K. And he could very well do it. And he seems to have every reason to choose this course, one of them being his current abysmal relations with the Congress high command. Second, the existing state of Congress in the country gives little hope that the party will pose any credible challenge to the BJP’s pan-India sway in the next year’s five Assembly elections, let alone in 2024 general elections. Third, this leaves Azad nowhere in terms of his political career. Joining the BJP may be an option and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s perceived soft corner for him may make the entry easier and even earn him some post in the government but politically this will be a suicidal move. It can politically deracinate Azad.

Only plausible option under the

he enjoys a good deal of goodwill in parts of Jammu and Kashmir if not an easily identifiable support base. This is because he has always deftly straddled the political divide between Jammu and Kashmir. In Jammu, his pro-India credentials remain impeccable - an attribute now even certified by PM Modi.

And, in Valley, his advantage is that no one expects him to be adversarial towards New Delhi, a characteristic that is expected of every Kashmir based leader. In fact, a Kashmiri leader’s popularity is directly proportional to how aggressively he challenges New Delhi’s hegemonistic policies - real and perceived - towards Kashmir. Azad is not burdened by such expectations and therein lies the secret of his modest acceptability in the Valley. Also, for all his ideological contradictions with the drift of the political discourse in the Valley, Azad’s politics has invariably had a benign orientation which trumps a

Cricket Crisis

Jyotsna Mohan

Is Indian cricket in a crisis? It is unlikely, but all does not seem to be well and Kohli’s contradiction of Ganguly has only compounded the ambiguity the cricket board confidently thinks it can always get away with. It is an open secret that BCCI as an organisation is a closed book.

There is a toss-up on what makes more eyebrows rise – between lack of accountability and the resurgence of an age-old discord.

But the media has found its moment and the unfolding events are being likened to another rivalry from the past. Many minutes of prime time are being filled with the resurrection of an age-old discord between the Haryana Hurricane Kapil Dev and the little master, Sunil Gavaskar.

Superstars and egos don’t really need a deep

NOTHING JUSTIFIES THE WAY VIRAT KOHLI was sacked as the captain. Anyone who has held that post deserves the respect of being asked to leave with dignity

ity and BCCI communication – both are like cricket on a rainy day at Lords. Instead over the last many weeks information from ‘sources’ have been periodically leaked as though BCCI just discovered an alternate art of storytelling.

Murmurs of a rift between Virat and Rohit are as new as Prashant Kishor in politics but on the rare occasion that BCCI addresses the issues, it leaves others to clear the ball from around the wicket.

Virat’s press conference though shows, the real rift lies somewhere else. India’s best batsman says he is tired of answering the same question while promising his “full support and cooperation” to Rohit.

dive into Freud and only those playing gully cricket will presume that everyone in a team is a BFF. Sometimes, what happens in the dressing room should stay in the dressing room.

Kapil and Gavaskar though brought us the 1983 World Cup. For now, an ICC trophy has been a long time coming and the BCCI would do well to address the concerns. For starters, it needs to communicate, especially when the senior most player of the team contradicts.

If nothing else, the one thing cricket teaches is timing and this controversy comes just as the team gets ready to depart for the South Africa tour.

Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri were a coterie that ruled Indian cricket for a long time but by staying lonely at the top. Over time the team selections and the unstructured manner in which they often unfolded became controversial as the captain forgot the first rule – every player however great will one day take the last walk to the pavilion.

In cricket, the rise is sometimes quick, but the fall is almost always quicker. Under the charmed spotlight of power and popularity, it is easy to forget that what comes around, goes around. If a Kohli can replace MSD, then a Rohit can also take over from a Virat.

But nothing justifies the way Virat Kohli was sacked as the captain. Anyone who has held that post deserves the respect of being asked to leave with dignity. “The chief selector (Chetan Sharma) discussed with me the Test team, to which we both agreed.

And before ending the call, I was told the five selectors have decided I will not be the ODI captain, to which I replied, ‘OK, fine’. In the selection call afterwards, we chatted about it briefly. That’s what happened. There was no communication before that at all.”

A press conference before a tour usually talks business, but Virat Kohli has instead opened a Pandora’s box. The eyes will also be on another person, someone who at the best of times prefers to let only his work do the talking. New coach Rahul Dravid may have been left wondering if this was also in his coaching memo.

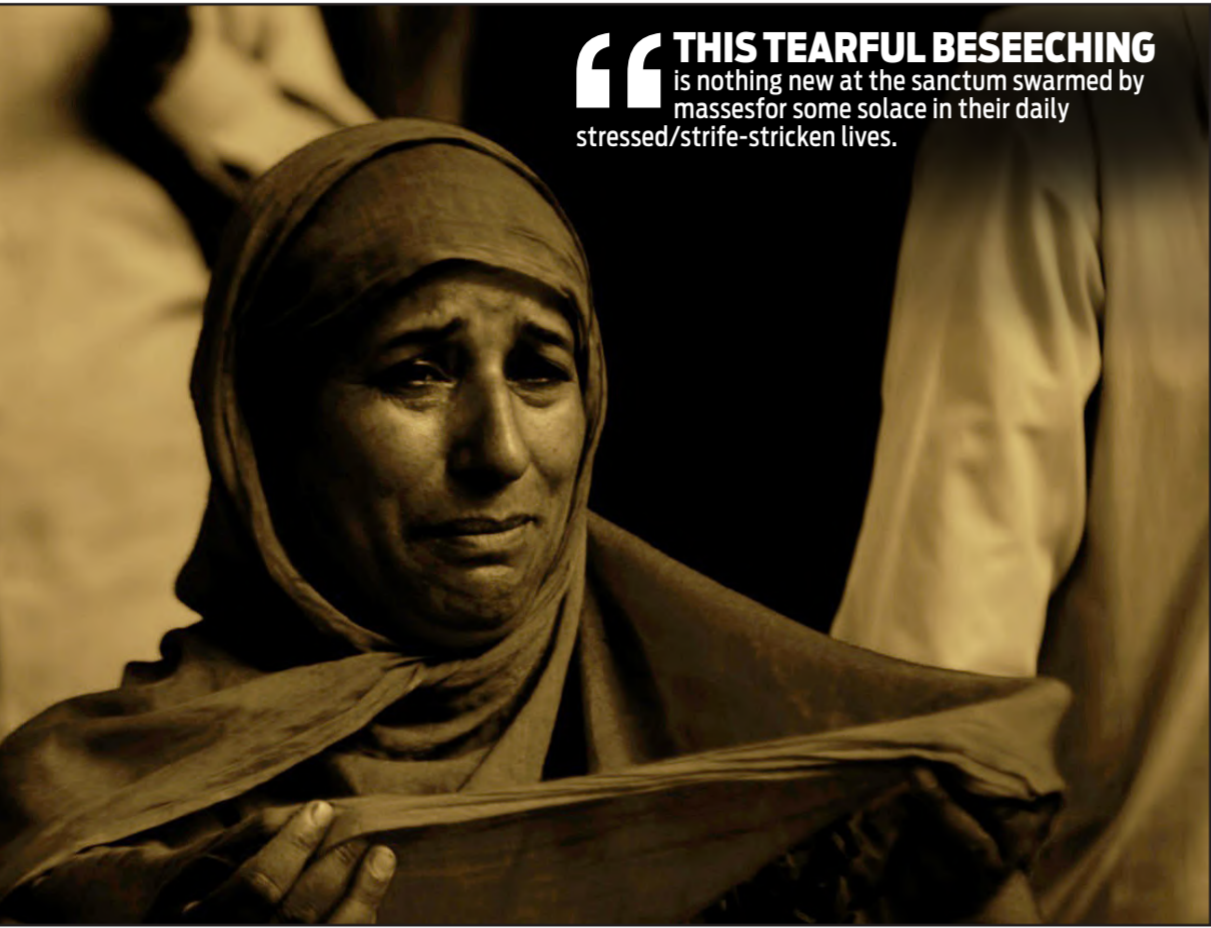
Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The author is a journalist and writer. The article was originally published by The Guit News

Kashmir's Leap Of Faith

Meditative Musings At Khanqah-E-Moula

Strewn With Shrines And Sanctums, Kashmir's Faithful Landscape Revolves Around The Places Being Frequented For Life Musings Besides Meditations.



Aayat Trambo, Saniya Zahoor

Beyond Khanqah-e-Moula's fortified gate scrutinized by stern sentry, pigeons are fluttering around the shimmering spire while the faithful in the horde meditate near rows of sunlit stairs.

It's a late fall day and the spiritual vibes of Kashmir's revered sanctum look like a signature in its spirit. An azan in the air uplifts the essence of the congregation, while a pack of paupers cooling

“WHEN DEATH AND DISAPPEARANCE became an order of the day in Kashmir during the nineties, Wani says, sanctums like Khanqah-e-Moula began hosting an growing rush of distressed lots.

their heels near the porch and portico summons the spirit of offerings.

In this mystic ambience, some devotees are musing in the intricate wooden exterior of the sanctum. The syncretic architecture gives the faith center an unmatched elegance, with its interior adorned with Papier-mâché.

Cutting through the fog of faith, Haleema is making the misty banks of Jhelum melancholic with her dirges. She has come with a plea for her Pir: “Bo-ethilaag tam pira/Winnikeniki waqt-tikipaasi” (Help me reach my goals, my guide, for the sake of the times).

This tearful beseeching is nothing new at the sanctum swarmed by masses for some solace in their daily stressed/strife-stricken lives.

“My son developed a speech disorder when he was 7,” Haleema says. “I moved from shrine to shrine praying for his wellbeing. It was only after I prayed for his recovery in the abode of Amir-e-Kabir that my son got cured of it.”

This faith in the “Almighty's own” is a deep-rooted ethos in Shehr-e-Khaas, where Khanqah-e-Moula is one of the oldest sanctums built by Sultan Sikan-



to his old guards.

“It took us one invisible bug like coronavirus to know how hollow we are without these sanctums,” Kaiser says, commenting on Pandemic's padlocked period. “These places have always acted as stress-busters for the society and when the same spaces came under a lock and a key, masses in the valley became weary and woeful.”

When death and disappearance became an order of the day in Kashmir during the nineties, Wani says, sanctums

like Khanqah-e-Moula began hosting an growing rush of distressed lots.

“Suddenly, a sentimental swarm arrived to seek the saint's intervention in order to locate their disappeared loved ones or seek some solace from the loss inflicted by the brutal situation,” the faithful continues. “Mothers who lost their sons, widows who lost their husbands and young lovers who lost their beloveds in the war became the shrine regular.”

Atiq Amin became one such regular of Khanqah-e-Moula twenty five years ago.

She first came to nurse her “bleeding” heart in the summer of 1996 when her beloved was subjected to enforced disappearance. And since then, she has been weekly visiting the sanctum for some spiritual solace.

“During Covid that routine got disrupted and gave me a hard time, but thankfully the gates are open again,” Atiq, who has transformed into a battered woman from a beaming girl in the last 25 years of her struggling life, says.

“I can't explain the feeling of being closer to the sanctum and its spiritual healing.”

The sanctum's serenity attracts visitors of different faiths who adore its aesthetics and aura, says Sakeena, a caretaker.

“The holy place sees endless numbers of hopeful devotees drawn to it every day,” she says. “But on 6th of every month, a holy ritual is held which holds great significance among the believers and is attended by people in hundreds seeking peace and fulfillment of their desires.”

With another azan, the prayers and pleadings surged the sanctum's spiritual sentiments.

Haleema is done with her dirges, while pigeons have returned to rooftops. But the sentry is still alert and guarding the faith within the horde.

In this freeze frame, each entreating arrival and departure spreads the spiritual vibes in the sanctum as well as in the settlement that has come to house the grand old address of Kashmir's faithful transformation.

THE QARAWIYYIN PROJECT

Seven months in, 2020 has proven a hard year for influencers. The coronavirus pandemic that swept across the world saw many millionaire YouTubers and Instagrammers struggling to make ends meet[1], as advertising contracts were cut and lockdown measures limited content production. The industry was also the target of criticism in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests across the world, after many social media stars failed to voice their support for anti-racist demonstrations and were observed using the protests as a photo opportunity[2].

Finally, controversy erupted in the Muslim community last month after another prominent hijabi influencer announced that she had decided to remove her hijab.

Such events warrant a now well-worn series of responses: the news that a famous Muslim woman has removed her hijab is first met with anger and abuse from followers, and increasingly “reaction videos” from fellow YouTubers. Many Muslim women then take understandable offense to the way in which a fellow sister is being treated for what they claim is a private decision. A discussion then begins on whether the hijab constitutes a private or public action, whether it is fair to attribute “role model” status to fashion bloggers, and if public concern is understandable given the hijab businesses many influencers profit from.

Yet, in the never-ending cycle of unan-

swerable questions surrounding individual YouTubers and their decisions, there seems to be little engagement with the Islamic validity of the concept of “influencers” as a whole. A discourse often biased towards female influencers, the fact remains that men as well as women — including Islamic figures — are consuming and creating social media content, often generating vast incomes from such work. With 40% of millennials believing that their favourite creators understand them more than their friends[3], influencer culture warrants an interrogation in light of Islamic ethics.

‘Amusing ourselves to death’

In 1985, on the cusp of the technological revolution, Neil Postman predicted that society would face its greatest threat not from an Orwellian-style invasive government, but through a mass preoccupation with mind-numbing entertainment.

Today, the meteoric rise of Snapchat, TikTok, and fleetingly House Party amongst ‘Generation Z’ is a testament to Postman's vision. The immense popularity of apps specifically designed to capture a viewer's attention for only a few seconds is changing the social media scene and simultaneously human nature, deliberately crafted to be addictive and rewiring key brain functions. Consequently, hours are wasted scrolling through feeds in which lives, likes

Critiquing Influencer Culture

“FINALLY, controversy erupted in the Muslim community last month after another prominent hijabi influencer announced that she had decided to remove her hijab.

(and lies) are displayed for all to see.

Whilst some Muslim lifestyle influencers attempt to use their platform to spread more beneficial content, most have conformed to entertainment production. From daily vlogs and challenges to skits and Q&As, the majority of output is little more than celebrity culture repackaged. Even those that attempt to deal with Muslim-specific issues often resort to the language of the industry; “exposed” and “reaction videos” generate buzz and gossip, as opposed to genuine exploration of issues in the Muslim community. The use of crude language or inappropriate jokes has become common place, even by figures who claim to engage in dawah work.

Additionally, as many social media formats are built for entertainment, they are often not appropriate mediums to convey religious or educational information, leading to important is-

sues being diluted in an effort to stay engaging. Just as television cannot replace reading a book, social media content cannot effectively translate the work of academics, lawyers or teachers into bite-sized social media snaps.

Interestingly, the notion of living a life of amusement is something specifically addressed by the Qur'an:

While a Muslim cannot be solely engaged in constant worship, she should be wary of useless diversions that distract her from seeking closeness to God. Constant entertainment consumption is one of the foremost challenges we face in developing a meaningful spiritual relationship with Allah.

Additionally Islam does not need to be a source of entertainment for people; the line between engaging and useful content, and clickbait, uninformative gossip needs to be recognised.

Neo-materialism

A cornerstone of the influencer industry is its unholy marriage to consumerism. With most influencers generating revenue through some form of advertising, the endless search for sponsorship has prompted a constant stream of information on consumer products.

“Hauls” and “unboxings” feature everything from designer clothing and Apple technology to IKEA furniture, with influencers admittedly striving to present their lives as rightly balanced

between aspirational and relatable. Free meals at restaurants and sponsored luxury holidays are sold as a dream just out of reach, inspiring the never-ending pursuit for material wealth.

Whilst advertising and third party access to data has come to be recognised as the defining feature of social media, what is less acknowledged is this complete incorporation of children as young as 10 into the structures of neoliberal corporate capitalism.

For the Muslim, such norms stand completely counter to the core message of the Islamic creed, which urges the repression of materialistic instincts with spirituality. There is constant encouragement for Muslims to emotionally detach from the dunya in pursuit of zuhd (asceticism), such that the delights of this world are only ever held in hand, not in heart.

But there is another angle with which to consider this. A quote attributed to Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, states:

Today, internet and WiFi services are more accessible than basic amenities. Roofs in India are dotted with satellites, even as they lack toilets and essential plumbing. In many sub-Saharan African states, phones are cheaper than basic medical treatment. Even in the West, families struggling to make ends meet still manage to secure internet access. Access to technology does not put their lives on par with those who constantly display their lives for all to see. This exposure heightens feelings of inadequacy and jealousy, and has resulted in endemic mental health issues among young people.

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: HDFC Ltd's Badhte Kadam Scholarship 2021-22

Description: HDFC Ltd's Badhte Kadam Scholarship 2021-22 aims to provide financial assistance to students to continue their education from Class 9 to graduation level (General and Professional), especially those who have been affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eligibility: Indian students who have either lost their parent(s)/earning members or whose family members have lost their employment (or livelihood) during the pandemic. Currently studying in Class 9 to Undergraduate (including general and professional courses) level. Annual family income must not be greater than INR 6,00,000 (6 lakh) from all sources.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 1,00,000
Last Date to Apply: 15-02-2022
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/HTPF1

Scholarship Name 2: IIT Gandhinagar Physics Discipline (PD) Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) 2021



Description: IIT Gandhinagar Physics Discipline (PD) Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) 2021 is a research opportunity offered to Ph.D. degree holders.

Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates who hold a Ph.D. degree in physics (preferably not graduated more than 3 years before) and have submitted their thesis or are about to submit it.

Prizes & Rewards: INR 50,000 per month
Last Date to Apply: 31-12-2021
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/GPF8

Directorate of Ayush, J&K (National AYUSH Mission)

(Bemina Srinagar/Indira Chowk Jammu)

Tele/Fax: 0194-2490443, 2490455 (May-Oct) 0191-2543988, 2543955 (Nov-Apr)

Subject: Hiring of Legal Consultant (Part-Time) on contractual basis under National Ayush Mission.
Ref (i): Approval conveyed by the Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India vide communication No. S.16012/3/2020-NAM Part-I Dated 26-03-2021.
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for hiring of Legal Consultant (Part-Time) on contractual basis under National Ayush Mission, J&K as per the details given below. Application forms complete in all respects can be submitted in the Directorate of Ayush, J&K Indira Chowk Jammu / Bemina Srinagar by or before 31-12-2021 (5 PM) except Saturday(s) & Sunday(s).

S.No.	Post	No. of Posts / Remuneration	Eligibility Criteria	Selection Criteria
1	Legal Consultant (Part-Time) UT-Level Post	01 Monthly Consolidated Remuneration Rs. 25,000/-	A. Bachelors Degree in Law (03 Years Regular LLB Course) from a recognized University. B. Minimum 05 Years Post Qualification Experience in ISM (Ayush) / Health (NHM) sector. Age Upto 65 Years	A. Bachelors Degree in Law (03 Years Regular LLB Course) = 60 points on pro-rata basis B. Experience= 20 Points (04 Points for each year after fulfilling the requisite eligibility criteria) C. Viva-voce= 20 Points Note: Selection of the candidate will be made on the basis of UT Level Merit.

Terms & Conditions:

- The candidate should be domiciled of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The engagement will be purely on contractual basis. Initial contract for hiring shall be upto 31-03-2022 and further extension will be on year-to-year basis subject to satisfactory performance of the contractual employee which will be evaluated by Director Ayush J&K (Mission Director National Ayush Mission J&K) & approval of the post by Ministry of Ayush, Government of India.
- In case of poor performance, services of the candidate(s) is/are liable to be terminated with one month's prior notice.
- The Selection of the candidate will be made on the basis of UT Level Merit.
- Application form is available on the official website of Directorate of Ayush, J&K (www.jkdism.in) which is the only and authentic source of information with respect to Directorate of Ayush, J&K. This office shall not be responsible for inconvenience caused to anybody due to

- misleading / false information made available by any other website(s) and purportedly claimed to be associated with Directorate of Ayush, J&K, in any manner whatsoever.
- The number of vacancies are only indicative and may increase or decrease.
 - The Candidate(s) who have obtained degree(s) through Distance Education Mode from the universities recognized by the UGC as mentioned in Govt. Order No. 252-HE of 2012 Dated 30-05-2012 issued by the Higher Education Department, Civil Secretariat J&K after 2005 shall have to submit a certificate from the concerned University along with application form stating that candidate had undergone the degree from their university head-quarters and not from the off-campus which have been established by these Universities beyond their territorial jurisdiction. Application shall not be accepted in absence of this Certificate.
 - List of the self-attested documents to be attached with the application form:
 - Date of Birth Certificate.
 - Domicile Certificate.
 - Qualification Certificate / Marks Sheet (as per

- Eligibility Criteria).
- Experience Certificate (as per eligibility criteria).
 - Certificate for condition No. 07 (Degree through Distance Education Mode), if applicable.
 - Applications not falling in the prescribed eligibility / selection criteria or without aforesaid documents shall be rejected outrightly.
 - Any further information including short-listing of candidate(s), date of interview / Test, etc. shall be uploaded on the official website of Directorate of Ayush, J&K (www.jkdism.in). Candidates are advised to keep themselves updated through the website. No individual communication to the candidate(s) shall be made in this regard.

Sd/-
(Dr. Mohan Singh)
Director Ayush/
Mission Director NAM
J&K, Jammu

DIPK-15169/21

SRINAGAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

TENDER NOTICE NO: 06/EE of 2021-22

For and on behalf of the Srinagar Development Authority, The Executive Engineer, Srinagar Development Authority, invites tenders by e-tendering system on item rate basis from Registered PWD contractors of J&K UT for below mentioned works:-

S. No	Name of work	Amount of work	Class of contractor	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion
01	Initial test pite for different locations within 40000 Sqm area for Vertical Housing colony "Shehjar Apartments" (Stilt+12) at Bemina Srinagar opposite Haj House;	Rs. 11.80 lacs	(A,B&C)	Rs.800/-	(60) days

Position Of Fuds: (Available)

- Date of Publishing 15/12/2021.
- The Bidding document can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 10.00 PM on 16/12/2021 to 06/01/2022 upto 4.00PM.
 - The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 20/12/2021 to 06/01/2022 upto 4 00PM. The bids received will be opened at 12.00 Ncor on 08/01/2022 on line
 - The complete bidding process will be on line

No:- SDA/EE/828-34
Dated / 15/12/2021

Executive Engineer,
Srinagar Dev. Authority
DIPK-NB-5978/21

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE KASHMIR

Tel : 0194-2473761, 2479645 Email : dirswkmr@gmail.com

NOTICE

Subject: - Extension in the Timeline for Scholarship Schemes on National Scholarship Portal (NSP) for the year 2021-22.

Sir/Madam,

It is inform all DSWOs that the Timeline has been extended on National Scholarship Portal (NSP) in the following manner.

S	Name of the Scheme	Timeline
1.	Online Applications for Post-Matric and Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Schemes	31st December, 2021
2.	L1 Verification (INO level) in respect of schemes mentioned above	15th January, 2022
3.	L2 Verification (DNO/ SNO/Ministry level) in respect of schemes mentioned above	31st January, 2022

Timelines for Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme will remain unchanged.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/=
Dr. Aafreen Wahid Ganai (JKAS)
Assistant Director
Directorate of Social Welfare
Kashmir.

No:- DSWK/Sch/Gen/ /2021/6102-51
Dated:- 17/12/2021
DIPK-15244/21

Health & Medical Education Department
Government Medical College, Srinagar

e-tender NOTICE 81 OF 2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT, Sealed Tenders affixed with Rs.5/- revenue stamps , NIT are invited from the reputed manufacturers dealing with Medical Equipments or their authorized Distributors / Channel Partners for "Establishment of Genetic Lab at GMC Srinagar with Necessary Gadgets & Turn Key " as per specifications of such equipments given in the tender documents.

S.No	Particular of the Tender	Cost of Tender Fee	Earnest Money	Date of Opening of Bid
1	"Establishment of Genetic Lab at GMC Srinagar "	Rs.750/-=For General	Rs.1,00,000/-for General	07-01-2022 (15:00 Hrs.)

- The tender document for the above job can be seen from 15-12-2021 (13:00: 00 hrs.) on the website www.jktenders.gov.in
- The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website from 15-12-2021 (13:00 hrs) to 06 -01-2022 (14:00 hrs).
- Any clarification will be entertained from 15-12-2021(13:00 Hrs) to 24-12-2021 (16:00 Hrs) and Pre Bid meeting will be held on 24-12-2021, 02:00 PM in the office of Principal Dean GMC Srinagar.
- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on website www.jktenders.gov.in from 24-12-2021 (16: 00 hrs) up to 06-01 -2022 (16:00 hrs) only.
- The uploaded bids on the website will be opened on 07-01-2022 (15:00hrs) in Office of the Convener, Rate Contract Committee, Govt. Medical College Srinagar in presence of bidders who wish to attend. In case of holiday on the date of opening of bid, bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- Cost of tender document (in shape of DD) favoring FA/CAO Government Medical College Srinagar) & earnest money (in shape of CDR/FDR) in original favoring FA/CAO Government Medical College Srinagar along with requisite documents in shape of Hard copy should reach in office of Member Secretary Rate Contract Committee, Govt .Medical College Srinagar through by person/ speed post/Regd. Post/Courier only before due date of submission of bid. Rate Contract Committee shall not be responsible for any delay due to any reason.
- Original copy affidavit on Rs.50/- stamp paper duly attested by Judicial Magistrate with the effect that:-
 - The documents/catalogues etc enclosed with the Tender are original & genuine and have not been tampered or fabricated.
 - The firm has not been blacklisted in the past by any Govt. / Private institution of the country and there is no vigilance/any other investigating agency, case pending against the firm/supplier.
- Complete bidding process will be on-line. (Price bid shall not be submitted in physical form)

Convener
Rate Contract Committee
Government Medical College Srinagar
DIPK-15123/21
No: NIT/e - Genetic /81 OF 2021
Dated:- 15-12 -2021

Health & Medical Education Department
Government Medical College, Srinagar

e-tender NOTICE 80 OF 2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT, Sealed Tenders affixed with Rs.5/- revenue stamps , NIT are invited from the reputed manufacturers dealing with Medical Equipments or their authorized Distributors / Channel Partners for the Supply of " Equipments / Instruments for Deptt of Ophthalmology / Neuro Surgery " as per specifications of such equipments given in the tender documents.

S.No	Particular of the Tender	Cost of Tender Fee	Earnest Money	Date of Opening of Bid
1	"Equipments / Instruments for Deptt of Ophthalmology / Neuro Surgery "	Rs.750/-=For General	Rs.1,00,000/-for General	07-01-2022 (15:00 Hrs.)

- The tender document for the above job can be seen from 15-12-2021 (13:00: 00 hrs.) on the website www.jktenders.gov.in
- The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website from 15-12-2021 (13:00 hrs) to 06 -01-2022 (14:00 hrs).
- Any clarification will be entertained from 15-12-2021(13:00 Hrs) to 24-12-2021 (16:00 Hrs) and Pre Bid meeting will be held on 24-12-2021, 01:30 PM in the office of Principal Dean GMC Srinagar.
- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on website www.jktenders.gov.in from 24-12-2021 (16: 00 hrs) up to 06-01 -2022 (16:00 hrs) only.
- The uploaded bids on the website will be opened on 07-01-2022 (15:00hrs) in Office of the Convener, Rate Contract Committee, Govt. Medical College Srinagar in presence of bidders who wish to attend. In case of holiday on the date of opening of bid, bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- Cost of tender document (in shape of DD) favoring FA/CAO Government Medical College Srinagar) & earnest money (in shape of CDR/FDR) in original favoring FA/CAO Government Medical College Srinagar along with requisite documents in shape of Hard copy should reach in office of Member Secretary Rate Contract Committee, Govt .Medical College Srinagar through by person/ speed post/Regd. Post/Courier only before due date of submission of bid. Rate Contract Committee shall not be responsible for any delay due to any reason.
- Original copy affidavit on Rs.50/- stamp paper duly attested by Judicial Magistrate with the effect that:-
 - The documents/catalogues etc enclosed with the Tender are original & genuine and have not been tampered or fabricated.
 - The firm has not been blacklisted in the past by any Govt. / Private institution of the country and there is no vigilance/any other investigating agency, case pending against the firm/supplier.
- Complete bidding process will be on-line. (Price bid shall not be submitted in physical form)

Convener
Rate Contract Committee
Government Medical College Srinagar
DIPK-15122/21
No: NIT/e - Equip/80 OF 2021
Dated:- 15-12 -2021

CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

E-mail ID :jkcivilaviation@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS NO.CAW- 06 OF 2021.
JAMMU, 15 December, 2021.

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, E-Tender for the Maintenance Contract of two helicopters (one Bell 407 Helicopter, VT-LJK and one Agusta-109E Helicopter, VT-JKA), are invited from reputed and registered aviation Maintenance Organizations, duly approved by the DGCA as per CAR- 145, for an initial term of one year w.e.f. 02.01.2022 for the Maintenance of Helicopters of the UT of Jammu & Kashmir, with an option for renewal/extension on same term & conditions for the period of one plus one (01+01) years after approval is granted by the competent authority.

Date of Publishing of Tender Notice	15/12/2021 05:30 PM
Period of Downloading of Documents	15/12/2021 06:00 PM
Date of pre-Bid Meeting	17/12/2021 12:00 PM
Start Date of submission of bids	18/12/2021 12:00 PM
Last date of Submission of bids	23/12/2021 02:00 PM
Date of Opening Tender	27/12/2021 12:00 PM

"Instruction for Online Bid Submission"

- The tender document along with other Terms and Conditions of the NIT and relevant documents can be downloaded from the Union Territory Website <http://jktenders.gov.in>
- The tender shall be deposited in electronic format on the Union Territory website <http://jktenders.gov.in>.
- The tender uploaded on the website will be opened on 27-12-2021 at 12:00 PM or any other subsequent date convenient to the Tenderer/Committee in the Office Chamber of Director Finance, Civil Aviation Department, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, Civil Secretariat, Room No. 3/50, Jammu.
- The complete bidding process will be online.
- Submission of hard copy is exempted.
- Documents required to be notarized for submission may be submitted on the letter head under the signature of the authorized signatory.
- Cost of the Tender document is Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten thousand only) in the shape of Demand Draft (non refundable) /Online in favour of Accounts Officer, Civil Aviation Department, J&K, Jammu. Earnest money Deposit/Bid Security exempted till 31/12/2021, however Bid security declaration for Rs Ten Lakhs (Rs 10/- Lakhs) to be given by bidder, as Governed by Circular dated 22/12/2020 of the Finance Department, UT of J&K. Tender Fee can be paid digitally. Bank details:
 - BANK: J&K Bank, Moving Secretariat, Civil Secretariat, Jammu & Kashmir, Jammu.
 - ACCOUNT NUMBER: 0110010100000281.
 - IFSC CODE: JAKA0MOVING.
 - MICR code: 190051062; JAMMU AND KASHMIR BANK MOVING SECRETARIAT, address: Civil Secretariat, Jammu & Kashmir; Branch code is Moving, Contact Number: 2455235.
- Scanned copies of all necessary documents as per tender documents need to be uploaded as part of the technical bid. These documents, in original, may be asked for submission subsequently.
- The Earnest Money/ Bid Security shall be forfeited if:
 - any tenderer withdraws his tender during the period of tender validity or makes any modification in terms and condition of tender; and
 - the company/MRO fails to execute the agreement within 10 days of signing of contract document.
- Instructions to bidder regarding e-tendering process: Bidders are advised to get Digital Signature Certificate as per Information Technology Act, 2000. Bidders can get Digital Certificate from approved vendor.
- Bidders have to submit their bids in two bid format i.e. Technical and Financial Bid online in electronic format with Digital Signature. Financial Bid and technical bid shall be submitted ONLINE only.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para 3 of an Annexure A.
- Bidders must upload the scanned copy of all necessary documents, like CDR/ PAN/ bid security declaration/Registration certificate duly renewed online as per dates mentioned above.
- The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission due to any reason.
- The Tender Committee shall reserve the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.
- The rates offered should be quoted in figures as well as in words inclusive of all taxes and levies or any other charge. Taxes/Charges not mentioned in the offers will not be allowed and admissible.
- The payment shall be released after successful completion of the contract.
- Any erasing/overwriting/mutilation in the tender form will result in outright rejection of the tender.
- Conditional and ambiguous tender will not be entertained.
- The terms and conditions as reflected in ANNEXURE "A" of section A , are mandatory and should be read very carefully by the intending tenderers while furnishing their tenders, which are enclosed and shall form a part of this NIT.

Director Finance,
DIPK-15140/21
Civil Aviation Department
E-file No.CAW/Estt/161/2021-5.
JAMMU,15 Dec, 2021

Govt Working On Providing Enabling Environment, Mkt Access To Jewellery Industry: Goyal

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The government is working on providing enabling environment and market access to the gems and jewellery sector, Union minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday said.

The commerce and industry minister was speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony for a mega common facility centre at Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone Special Economic Zone (SEEPZ SEZ) here.

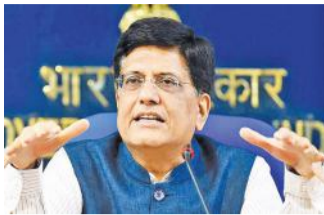
"We need to make this industry not a USD 40 billion industry alone but have a much much bigger ambition. We on our part will do everything to reach those truly outstanding numbers that you had shown to raise as the potential of this trade."

"We are working with many countries to give the enabling environment and market access particularly for the gem and jewellery sector," Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution and Textiles Piyush Goyal said.

This project is expected to be inaugurated on May 1, 2023.

"We aim to complete this project against the wind of Covid," the minister said.

Goyal further said the government is also working on deci-



sions to revamp and reconstruct the SEEPZ.

"Incidentally, we had made a lot of other decisions about the overall revamp and reconstruction of the entire SEEPZ zone... Ideally, we can use the same methodology that has been done for this project," he added.

The mega CFC will provide common manufacturing processes and related services to the jewellery industry.

"The new Mega CFC will give a fillip to small manufacturers to scale up their quality of production and this, in turn, will further contribute substantially to the exports of the country. The Mega CFC would not just be a facility for imparting training and skills, but a strong symbol of progression," SEEPZ SEZ Zonal Development Commissioner Shyam Jagannathan Shriram said.

This will help reduce the cost of production and lead to the transfer of know-how amongst these units, thereby providing a competitive advantage.

J&K Tourism Participates In 3-Day India Travel Mart At Jaipur

Visitors, tour operators evince keen interest in lesser known destinations, other products

Observer News Service

JAIPUR: The Department of Tourism is participating in the India Travel Mart which started here on Friday.

The three day B2B tourism event is also being attended by states like Goa, Tamil Nad, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat besides some renowned travel brands across the country.

The inaugural session marked the presentation of short films prepared by the J & K Tourism Department. The short films on the varied tourism potential of J&K including Leisure, Nature, Pilgrimage, Heritage, Adventure were deeply appreciated by the audience.

Deputy Director, Tourism, Jammu, Naresh Kumar and Deputy Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Ahsanul Haq Chishti are representing the Department at the ITM.

On the sidelines of the event, an interaction session was held on Saturday between the officers of the Department and tour operators attending the travel mart.

The officers of the Department gave an overview of the initiatives taken by the Department during the last year or so for strengthening the tourism sector particularly holding capacity building programmes and vaccination drives among local stakeholders.

The participating tour operators were also informed by the officers of J&K Tourism Department about the lesser known and upcoming destinations in the Union Territory being promoted by the Department. The tour operators evinced keen interest in the infrastructure, logistic details

and packages about these destinations and said they would include these destinations in their itineraries and packages for the upcoming tourist season.

The J&K stall at the event also witnessed a good activity with visitors particularly tour operators and potential tourists evincing keen interest in the tourism infrastructure, logistic details and packages.

Large number of visitors who visited the J&K stall evinced keen interest in the tourism products on display and enquired about the most sought after destinations like Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonmarg, Yousmarg, Patnitop, Mansar, Bhaderwah, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi ji and Katra.

The delegation, in a series of Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Client (B2C) meetings, also informed the visitors about the current status of winter tourism in the UT, particularly various snow activities being held.

Omicron Concerns, FII Outflows To Pull Rupee Lower; Likely RBI Moves To Stem Volatility

Agencies



NEW DELHI: Concerns over the new Omicron Covid-19 variant, as well as continued foreign fund outflows will keep Indian rupee subdued during the upcoming week, experts have opined.

Besides, high YoY trade deficit along with new US tapering measures will hamper any appreciation move. However, the downside will be capped by lower oil prices along with probable RBI interventions.

"On the positive side, falling crude oil prices around \$73 per barrel levels and accommodative monetary policy should provide some respite," said Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates at Edelweiss Securities. "Historically, some intervention shall be looked upon for any trend reversal in rupee."

The RBI is known to enter the markets via intermediaries to either sell or buy US dollars to keep the rupee in a stable orbit. "We expect the pair to trade between 75.50 to 76.50 next week with a lower bias for the pair."

Last week, the rupee closed at

76.09 to a USD weakening significantly on a weekly basis.

The Indian rupee has stabilised in the last two sessions this week after hitting lowest level of 20 months. "Rupee lost ground against dollar precipitously in early part of the week amid risk averse sentiments, policy divergence, foreign fund outflows and higher trade deficit numbers."

The RBI's policy divergence with Fed weighed on local currency along with higher imports," said Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

"Trading volumes are set to decline as forex markets head into the Christmas break. Spot USDINR expected to consolidate between 76.50 to 75.70 before heading higher towards 77."

ED Arrests NBFC CEO In Probe Against Chinese-Backed Loan Apps

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has arrested the CEO of a non-banking financial company (NBFC) in connection with a money laundering investigation against fintech firms "backed" by Chinese funds.

Pavitra Pradip Walvekar, promoter, director and chief executive officer (CEO) of Kudos Finance and Investment Private Limited, an NBFC, was taken into custody on Friday.

He was later produced before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Hyderabad that sent him to 15 days' judicial custody, the agency said in a statement.

The action is linked to the ED's investigation against a number of Indian NBFCs which are in the

business of instant personal loans through mobile apps (applications).

"Various fintech companies backed by Chinese funds have made agreements with these NBFC companies for providing instant personal micro loans of term ranging from seven-14 days," the statement said.

"Kudos NBFC purportedly engages fintech (digital lending partners) companies as a service provider to assist in identifying prospective customers, verifying their eligibility, collection of information/documents, conducting due diligence, collecting pre-disbursement documents, arranging execution of the loan agreement, assisting with collections/recovery of principal and interest payments and attending service requests or product related queries for the retail loans offered by the company," the agency said.



NBFC PCA To Bring Parity Between Banks, Non-Banks: Ind-Ra

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The prompt corrective action (PCA) framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) will bring a further parity in terms of the regulations between banks and non-banks, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

Accordingly, the ratings agency cited that the trend will be supported on the back of increased size and scale of NBFCs and interconnectedness with banks, along with the scale-based regulation implemented in October 2021 and the alignment of asset quality classifications implemented in November 2021.

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India introduced the PCA framework for NBFCs and it will come into effect from October 1, 2022, based on the financial position of NBFCs on or after March 31, 2022. "It also establishes a regulatory course of action in an event of a breach of certain parameters, thus acting as an early warning signal." "In case of any breach, the NBFC's performance will be measured over four consecutive quarters on risk threshold parameters to declassify the NBFC placed under PCA."

As per Ind-Ra, NBFCs breaching any of the risk threshold have time to course correct till March 2022 as the guidelines will be based on year-end numbers. "NBFCs with net non-performing assets of 6 per cent and higher may have to make higher provisions or sell assets to asset reconstruction companies during 2HFY22 to bring in the ratio outside the threshold, in line with the guidance."

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE SR. AQUACULTURE ENGINEER(XEN)

FISHERIES DEPTT SULEIMAN COMPLEX DALGATE SRINAGAR (J&K)

Telephone No 0194-3513051 e-mail:- sraquaengineer@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

SHORT TERM E-NIT No 38 OF 2021-22

For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir State, e-tenders are invited by Sr.Aquaculture Engineer(XEN), Fisheries Department J&K Srinagarbye-tendering mode on item rate basis from approved and the eligible registered Contractors registered with J&K Government, CPWD, Railways & other Central/State Governments of the classes mentioned here under in strict accordance with conditions noted below.

S. No	Name of work	Approx. Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Class of Contract	Cost of Tender Document	Time of opening of bid	Time of completion
01	Providing/Fixing of sanitary installation works/disposal system & other allied works to Watch & Ward Hut at Trout Rearing Unit Bela Uri Baramulla (Fresh -1)	Rs 5.90 lacs	C&D	Rs 300/-	23-12-2021 at 10:00 AM	One Month
02	Face-Lifting/Upgradation of JD Office Narwal Gujjar Nagar Jammu	Rs 3.00 lacs	D	Rs 200/-	23-12-2021 at 10:00 AM	One Month

Position of AA= Accorded Position of Funds = Available

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from www.jktenders.gov.in under ASH/Director Fisheries /Engineering Wing as per the schedule of dates given below.

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	16-12-2021
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	16-12-2021 from 6:00 pm to 22-12-2021 upto 4:00 pm
3	Bid submission Start Date	16-12-2021 from 6:00 pm
4	Bid submission End Date	22-12-2021 upto 4:00 pm
5	Date & Time of opening Bids (Online)	23-12-2021 at 10:00 am In the Office of the Sr. Aquaculture Engineer (XEN) Fisheries Deptt Suleiman Complex Dalgate -Srinagar

No:SAE/D/2021-22/1420-27 Sd/
Dated:- 16-12-2021 Sr. Aquaculture Engineer (XEN)
DIPK-15178/21 Fisheries Department Srinagar

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION VAILLOO

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No 173/ 7072-81 of R&B/Vailloo /2021-2022/e-tendering/ DATED:- 16.12. 2021

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory J&K e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works.

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc.in form of Treasury challen / Receipt (in Rs)	Time of completion	Time &Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Construction of Cement concrete drain and laying of RBM on Soaf Gratwalipora	4.41	200	20 days	24.12.2021 11.00 am	DEE class	District Secretor
2	Construction of cement concrete drain and stone masonry , Protection wall on Bidder Irmoo , Bindoo Adigam including Bindoo Rather Check road .	10.87	600	35 days	24.12.2021 11.00 am	BEE/CEE/ DEE	State Sector
3	Construction of cement concrete drain / R wall on Akingam and Satrishi Links at spots	10.57	600	35 days	24.12.2021 11.00 am	BEE/CEE/ DEE	State Sector

Position of AAA: Accorded
Position of T.S : Accorded

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	16.12.2021
2.	Period of Downloading of bidder documents.	From 17.12.2021 To 23.12.2021 4.00 pm
3.	Bid submission Start Date	From 17.12.2021 To 23.12.2021 11.00 am
4.	Bid Submission End Date	To 23.12.2021 4.00 pm
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	24.12.2021 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division vailloo

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Receipt/ challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division vailloo (tender inviting authority) (Name of work to be mentioned on the Treasury receipt/ challan)(Refer Govt. order No. A/ 24/2017)-65 DT: 07.06.2018 (The date of Treasury receipt / Challan should be between the date of start of bid end Bid submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Vailloo (Tendering receiving Authority) Minimum of Two bids are necessary to decide L-1 bidder in case of Contractors.

3. All the Bidders have to submit Bid Security Declaration form instead of Earnest Money as per the Circular issued of Finance Department (Bid security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below)

4. The Ist Lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance Security in the shape of CDR/ FDR within 03 days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

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

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

7. The earnest money shall be forfeited, If:-

- Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
- Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
- Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

15. The tender document issued this FY makes establishment of a mobile quality control lab by the contactor compulsory.

16. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PWD(R&B) Division

DIPK-15175/21

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR TOURISM (M&W) KASHMIR, SRINAGAR

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No. DT/M and W/K/ 59 of 2021-22, Dated 17.12.2021

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited by Deputy Director Tourism (M&W), Kashmir on (Aggregate Percentage Basis) from approved and eligible Civil Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/ Central Govt. for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc	Time of Completion	Class of Contract	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Development of Jamia Masjid at Sogam, Lolab Kupwara.(By way of upgradation / renovation of existing Ablution block)	15.26	800	60-days	BEE/ CEE	PLAN

Position of AAA/TS: Accorded Position of Funds: Committed

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:-

- The intending tenderers must have sufficient skilled /unskilled labour force.
- All Bidders have to upload Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below)
- Intending bidders shall upload scanned copies of documents of valid Registration card / PAN / GST registration and Treasury Receipt (1452-TSM Revenue Head). However successful bidder shall produce the original copies of same within 3 days after opening of tenders.
- The successful Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of Adv. cost as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR within 03 days after opening of tenders and same shall be released after successful completion of work / DLP.
- The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any tender or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	17/12/2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	17/12/2021 3.00 P.M to 23/12/2021,04.00 P.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	17/12/2021 From 3.00 P.M.
4.	Bid Submission End Date	23/12/2021 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids(Online)	24/12/2021 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Dy. Director Tourism, M&W

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

- The bidders will provide email ID and complete postal address including cell numbers.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Website in o/o Dy. Director Tourism, (M&W) Kashmir, Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 30 days from the date of opening of Bids
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, If-
 - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 7 days after fixation of contract.
- Bidders are advised to visit and examine the site / location of work, its surroundings and familiarize himself with existing facilities / difficulties and environment and collect all other information which he may require for preparing and submitting the bid entering into the contract. Claims and objections due to ignorance of existing conditions are in-adequacy of information will not be considered after submission of the bid and during execution of work.
- Bidders are advise to examine the departmental store before quoting the rates and ensure the condition of material available to be fixed and erected at work site any defect or damages in the material shall be rectified by the successful contractor at his own risk & cost.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid. Besides, original / photocopies of documents related to the bid.
- Labour Registration
- Successful bidder has to produce valid labour registration certificate issued by labour department at the time of award of contract.
- Schedule of payments:

The payment schedule shall be fixed as per standard norms in accordance with specification, terms and conditions of award of contract accordingly the claim shall be prepared and processed further for technical check. Payment shall only be released as & when funds are available with DDO.
- The tenderer should study all the terms and conditions of e-NIT in carefully and fill up the tender accordingly.

NIT No:- DT/M&W/K/ 59 / 291-95 /TD, Deputy Director Tourism (M&W), Srinagar
Dated: 17/12/2021 DIPK-15231/21

Jitendra Visits GMC Udhampur Construction Site, Wants Classes To Begin From Next Academic Year

AGENCEIS

Jammu: Union minister Jitendra Singh Saturday visited the construction site of Government Medical College (GMC) in his home constituency of Udhampur, which is being built at an estimated cost of Rs 255 crores at Bailli village.

During his visit, Singh asked the officials and agencies concerned to start the work without any delay so that the classes could commence from the next academic session.

Singh, the minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office, pointed out that Udhampur Parliamentary constituency is the only one in the country which has got three Medical Colleges from the Central grant.

He also attended the grand "Devika Utsav" held at the banks of river Devika Ghat in Udhampur.

The event was held to celebrate the completion of development works under "River Devika Abatement and Beautification Project" of National River Conservation Plan.

River Devika is not merely a project but a matter of faith for all of us, he said, reiterating that the holy project does not belong to a particular political party or an individual but it is equally owned by each one of us.

The minister said he had been repeatedly suggesting to the administration to entertain and accommodate inputs and suggestions coming from every person regardless of his ideological belief or political affiliation, as long

as they add value to the project.

Giving full credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said the Devika Project would have never got approval if Modi was not the PM.

"When Prime Minister launched the 'Nanami Gange' project in 2014 after sworn in as Prime Minister, a similar thought came to mind to start 'River Devika Abatement and Beautification Project' as Devika is considered the elder sister of Ganga," he said.

Singh said there has been delay in the execution of the project, partly because of COVID-19 and partly because of the lapses on the part of the contractor agency which has now been subjected to penalty and also issued a blacklist warning.

AGENCEIS

SRINAGAR: HDFC Bank today announced the launch of a Corporate Cricket League in Kashmir to celebrate the spirit of the game in the valley and give young and promising talents from corporate houses and government institutions an opportunity to showcase their skills.

The tournament was inaugurated by Muhammad Aijaz, District Development Commissioner of Srinagar, along with Iftikhar Ahmed, Senior Vice President and Circle Head – Kashmir, HDFC Bank. The games will be played at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Stadium in Srinagar.

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation will be the Chief guest for the closing ceremony and will give away the awards at the end of



the tournament.

The tournament will see participation from eight teams. The participation is only by invitation. The teams that

will participate in the tournament are District Development Commissioner Team, Secretariat Team, Government Medical College Team, Regional Passport

Office Team, Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences Team, Lower Court Team, HDFC Bank Team.

Commenting on the launch of the Corporate Cricket League DC Srinagar Aijaz Asadh said that sports is life line and very important part of life.

Iftikhar Ahmed, Senior Vice President and Circle Head – Kashmir, HDFC Bank, said: "For the first time HDFC Bank will be hosting a cricket tournament at this scale. The bank has always been a pioneer in improving the quality of life in the communities and geographies it serves. Corporate employees hardly get time to indulge in sporting activities. This initiative will provide a platform to the participating players to compete with their colleagues through a game they love." (KNT)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Reels

before the onset of the Chillai-e-Kalan, the 40-day long chilliest part of the season, starting on December 21. In last ten years, it has been four occasions when the mercury fell to minus 6.0°C or above in Srinagar.

On 19 December 2020, the mercury had plummeted to minus 6.6°C while as lowest in month of December was recorded on 30th day in 2019 at 6.6°C. In last ten years, the lowest was recorded 25 December 2017 when mercury plunged to minus 7.7°C. The lowest ever temperature in December was recorded on 13th of 1934 when mercury fell to minus 12.8°C.

Meanwhile, the mercury in Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district settled at minus 8.5°C, up by 0.1°C the previous night, the official said.

Qazigund had a low of minus 6.0°C against minus 3.2°C on the previous night, he said.

Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 8.3°C against minus 5.6°C on previous night.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 5.1°C against minus 3.5°C on previous night, the official said.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a minimum of minus 6.1°C against minus 4.4°C on the previous night, the official said.

Jammu city saw a low of 2.3°C which is minus 6.6°C below normal, he said.

Ladakh's Leh had a low of minus 15.3°C against last night's minus 14.2°C while automatic Kargil station recorded minimum of minus 13.1°C. Drass in Kargil, the second coldest place in the world after Siberia, recorded a low of minus 19.7°C, the official said.

The weatherman has forecast widespread "moderate to heavy" snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh from December 23 to 25. "As on date, widespread moderate to heavy snowfall (at some places) is most likely during 23-25th December. We are in for a White X-Mas (Christmas) in both J&K and Ladakh," he said.

For next few days, the night temperature is likely to fall further, the officials added.

Cold Wave

places of J&K and at scattered places of Ladakh especially along Sonmarg-Drass, Parkachik-Padum axis during Evening of December 22 to 25. He said that due to mainly clear sky, night temperature is most likely to fall further during next three days.

"Thereafter, due to the approaching Western Disturbance, we expect gradual fall in day temperature and slight rise in night temperature from December 21 to 26," GNS

Many Areas Plunge

currently on oxygen support. The families are helpless as they have been forced to rent a generator from a local shopkeeper for 500 rupees per hour. The Government should try to end this stand-off with PDD employees immediately, so that, amid this bone chilling cold, our patients, elders and children may not suffer further."

Like, Hakeem, there are hundreds of people who are facing difficulties due to shutdown of electricity in the city and beyond.

"The unscheduled electricity cuts and long scheduled power cuts have been a nightmare for my family which tested positive for Covid-19 a week back," Seerat Latif, a resident of Bota Kadal told Kashmir Observer.

"Covid comes with flu like symptoms such as fever, cold and chills. In the absence of a steady source of electricity, it has taken us time to recover. Since the electricity cuts are prolonged, our backup sources are also not enough for those hours," she added.

"I have covid and am extremely sick. It's worse because my symptoms aren't resolving as my room is extremely extremely cold. In the absence of electricity, I have found it difficult to recover", wrote Tawfeeqa a student from downtown in a Whatsapp message to Kashmir Observer.

Pertinently, in a move that deepened crisis within the PDD, thousands of employees and engineers across J&K went on an indefinite strike from Friday night seeking fulfilment of their four-point demands, including shelving a proposed joint venture between the Jammu and Kashmir Power Transmission Corporation Limited and the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited.

JKPEECC spearheading the agitation has also demanded a white paper on non-fulfilment of the recommendations of the unbundling report and the failure to create positions as mandated by the committee at gazetted and non-gazetted levels, regularisation of daily wagers and regularisation of all power development department engineers.

Besides, the JKPEECC has also asked for delinking the salary from grant in aid

and releasing a regular budget for all PDD employees on deputation to different corporations.

President J&K Electrical Engineering Graduates Association and convenor JKPEECC, Munshi Majid Ali told Kashmir Observer that all the employees of PDD whether they're technicians, daily wagers, need basis or engineers, are observing a strike across J&K today.

"The Government has decided to establish J&K Grid Company—a joint venture of JKTEL and PGCIL in J&K—where 50% of our assets including jobs will be handed over to the national company and thus we have decided to go on an indefinite strike from today," Ali said.

"Earlier, the association had tried to talk to the government but they refused, leading to the failure in yielding any result to break the stand-off and subsequently, all the employees were forced to go on an indefinite strike," he added.

Notably, last week, All India Power Engineers Federation had written a letter to Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha demanding withdrawal of the proposal of formation of JK Grid Company.

"AIPEF is of strong opinion that the experiment of unbundling and corporatisation has already failed in other States," reads the letter, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer.

The letter also warned of work boycott by the employees and engineers.

"When our department was converted into a corporation, the administration had assured us that there would be a timely release of wages and regularisation of daily wagers but it never happened," Ali said.

"Now that the administration is trying to privatise our grid stations, there is no way that we can believe that they won't sell the grid stations unless members of several employees associations are not made a part of these meetings conducted between the government and the national Company. This will provide a say to the employees who are feeling unsafe and left out," he added.

Members of JKPEECC have also said that they were sent to the Corporation on deputation, but here they are not paid salary on a regular basis and now, when power grids are their only assets, the administration is selling them. "We had already given enough time to the government but they are not ready to accept our demands which forced us to go on indefinite strike," a member of JKPEECC said.

"If the administration calls us government employees, then why aren't we being paid the similar way in which any other government employee is paid," Ali told Kashmir Observer.

He further added, "White paper of service conditions of PDD Employees on deputation to CVPPPL viz-a-viz the similarly situated employees deputed from NHPC and the complete management control usurped by NHPC is another demand".

He further continued and said "The path of confrontation was being pushed by the government and unless it comes up with a concrete resolution, the PDD employees will be forced to proceed with a work boycott of all the repair and restoration works at 11kV/33kV/132kV, feeder no 11kV/33kV feeder."

According to Ali, the standoff between the employees and the government has increased due to the one-sided approach adopted by the administration.

"This move will be opposed with all our might until the Government is willing to negotiate," he added.

Pertinently, this isn't the first time the PDD employees have raised concerns on alleged privatization of power grids in J&K. The employees had earlier raised concerns against the government's decision of introducing a joint venture company, CVPPPL that was floated on the same concept of harnessing the hydro-potential with PDD being an equivalent shareholders.

J&K Logs 151

Kupwara 7, Bandipora 6, Pulwama 2 and Anantnag 1. The twin districts of Kulgam and Shopian in south Kashmir registered no new cases of Covid-19.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu reported a maximum of 17 new cases of virus; Reasi 15, Ramban 4, Rajouri and Doda 2 each and one new case each in Udhampur and Kishtwar. No cases were detected in the three districts of

Kathua, Samba and Poonch.

"Moreover, 140 Covid-19 patients recovered during the time, 45 from Jammu Division and 95 from Kashmir," the officials said.

Also, the officials said that one more

person died of Covid-19 related complications in Jammu division thus taking the death toll in pandemic to 4511 in J&K—2194 in Jammu and 4510 in Kashmir.

The officials also said that no new confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) were reported Saturday. So far 50 black fungus cases have been confirmed in J&K, the officials added.

Ready To Send

that area with the shortest of notice.

The Air Force Chief was replying to a query on the standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh area.

He further said the status quo with regard to the deployment of forces in the region continues at the same level as April last, following the Galwan incident.

Of course, if necessary, there will be. We will enhance the deployment if the need arises, he replied when asked if there will be further deployment of forces.

To another query, Chaudharay said the IAF is aware of the threats which come in the form of multiple domains and not merely the physical and kinetic domains from the neighbouring country.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said the standoff was a result of China not following "agreements" and acting like a party that has "violated a contract."

Bukhari Seeks

with its land use status, he said, alleging that arbitrary decisions like the recent one would result in increased alienation of people.

"Such policy decisions are the prerogative of an elected government, and the present dispensation should desist from taking such unilateral moves that put a question mark on its mandate," Bukhari said.

In view of assurances given by the Centre from time to time, and in light of directions of the Supreme Court and the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, no permission should be granted for conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes especially for non-domiciles of Jammu & Kashmir.

"The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir has also barred the conversion of agricultural land in Jammu & Kashmir in view of the fast shrinking agricultural land mass and its repercussions on overall crop production that has witnessed a drastic fall over the years," he said.

The former minister said the latest decision on land use policy would open floodgates for non-agricultural activities and will further increase the dependency of the people of Jammu and Kashmir on import of foodgrains.

NC To Attend

the commissions cannot travel to the length and breadth of the Union Territory, they cannot hear what people have to say. "So, we will take the people's viewpoint to the commission," he said, adding all three MPs from the party -- NC president Farooq Abdullah, Akbar Lone and himself -- will arrive in Delhi.

The NC MP said the party had written to the commission seeking seek its agenda, but there was no response.

"We want to know what their agenda is. We had asked them to submit the agenda of the meeting as well as the relevant supporting material. But, they did not. So, we have to go there to see what their agenda is...," he said.

Stressing that the party had not changed its stand on the matter, he said, "...This is not something new. The party (had earlier) met the commission on its Srinagar visit, submitted memorandum saying it is not a permissible route in the Constitution. We stand by that. There is no shift in our stand that this exercise offends the spirit of the Constitution" he said. He said the "right thing" for the government would have been to restore the August 4, 2019, position -- a day before the Centre revoked the erstwhile state's special status -- and then proceed with the delimitation.

The NC had boycotted the first associate meeting of the commission in February saying the exercise was an outcome of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act-2019, which the party had challenged in the Supreme Court. It said participation in the proceedings of the commission was "tantamount" to accepting the August 5, 2019, changes.

Meanwhile, Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone hit out at the NC for "multiple speak".

"Please at least have the courtesy to show even some pretence and explain how it was tantamount to endorsement then and not now. Digital world. Digital proof. Chit bhi meri patt be meri won't work. Era of Multiple speeches in srinagar and Delhi-- in multiple places is over (sic)," Lone wrote on Twitter. The remarks of Lone, who was earlier in the separatist camp before switching over to the mainstream in 2009 and grew close to the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the run up to the

2014 elections, came after his party put out tweets criticising the NC.

"These are the utterances of Dr. Farooq Abdullah. What changed between then and now for the NC to now participate. Is it not tantamount to endorsing August 5 decisions now. There is a limit on monopoly on morality," the Peoples Conference tweeted referring to Abdullah's remarks that the party will attend the meeting.

Mehbooba Has

of its moves to expose the saffron party's "false narratives" but said "the PDP is not going to be cowed down by such steps".

"As far as the delimitation commission is concerned, it is BJP's commission. Their attempt is to pitch the majority against the minority and further disempower the people. They want to increase the (assembly) seats in such a way to benefit the BJP," Mehbooba told reporters after addressing a youth convention in Rajouri district.

She said the PDP has no faith in the delimitation commission.

Asked for her comment on the decision of the National Conference to participate in the delimitation commission's associate members meeting in New Delhi next week, the former chief minister said, "It is their decision and what else can I say about that."

On the Jammu and Kashmir government's changes in the land use laws enabling conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes, Mehbooba claimed that it is a wrong decision and part of a "conspiracy of the hidden agenda of the BJP".

"They want more and more people from outside to come and buy land here to engineer a demographic change," she alleged.

About NIA's reported summon to PDP district Development Council (DDC) member and vice chairman DDC Ganderbal Bilal Ahmad to New Delhi for questioning in connection with a case on December 23, Mehbooba said since her party is raising its voice against their narrative and debunks their claim of restoration of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, they are "using ED and NIA to silence the party".

"They don't have anything else against us. They cannot fight us politically and hence they are using ED and NIA to demoralise us. However, the PDP is not going to be cowed down by such moves and we are not going to stop," she said.

Govt Running

On the occasion, the official spokesperson said the LG congratulated Dr Mitali Gupta and Jammu Municipal Corporation for starting a new revolution with the unique and important initiative.

As many as 17 public parks have already been adopted by aware and responsible citizens at different places of Jammu city, under the initiative.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG said that 'Adopt-A-Park' is an opportunity to bring consciousness about environment conservation to every household. Sinha, he said, also stated that people's participation, community support is required to establish beautiful and well-maintained parks, clean and free of litter.

"Instead of slogans, conservation of trees and plants should become a part of our daily life to make our city more beautiful, pollution-free and eco-friendly," the LG said, while calling upon individuals, businesses and other organizations to adopt a park and make a difference in their neighbourhood.

3D Effect: How Death

forced her family to sell their house for his medical treatment but all went into vain when he died in year 1995.

Zaiba has five daughters of which three are married and had a son. "My son lived separately after his marriage but he used to give us some money for daily expenses," the old mother says. "But he passed away few months ago due to brain haemorrhage."

The octogenarian used to work from home to home for daily chores like 'tamul tchatun' (rice cleaning) but because of old age she can't see clearly now.

At her senile age, Zaiba barely survives on a widow fund launched by the government of J&K in 1995, with the aim to provide financial assistance to old age, destitute, widow, divorcee and others. The monthly assistance of this fund is Rs. 1000 only.

"But this money doesn't make much difference to us as inflation has gone up," says Zaiba. "Some people donate clothes or sometimes we get it from the wall [of kindness] and some donate food."

The place they're living in isn't suitable for living in winter so she's looking for another

place for shelter.

A quick ground review by these reporters reveals that in some cases, entire family is begging, while in many other cases, only children or elders beg. Most of them live in a temporary shelter and feel humiliation to face public. "That's why I hide myself in 'Burka' so that no one can recognize me," Naseema, a 33-year-old woman from Qamarwari, said.

She comes to Dargah Hazratbal Shrine every Friday to beg. Naseema's husband, Javid Ahmad was a labourer by profession. While working at some place he fell off the roof and broke his leg. He had undergone multiple surgeries but couldn't recover and has been bedridden since then.

As a single breadwinner for her family, Naseema has two little daughters and handicapped husband to look after. "Government relief or funds don't reach to us because those associated with it take advantage and don't let it to reach to us," she says. "I've to raise and educate my daughters and take care of my family."

According these women, they would not resort to begging if administration and NGOs provide for them. They believe that at least some monthly allowance should be given to them so that they can make two ends meet. Moreover, they also emphasised on the fact that locals should also come forward to help their own people.

But in absence of societal intervention, Shakeela Chauhan from Baniyar, Baramulla comes daily for begging in Lalchowk. She along with her husband, a labourer by profession and in-laws are living in a rented house in Bemina.

On 25 June 2021, Shakeela underwent surgery to remove kidney stones. But after a few months, she started having severe pain in her kidney after which doctors suggested her to get an ultrasound done, through which it was detected that she has a minor wound in her kidney. Shakeela is now on medication to heal her wound.

"My husband is a labourer, sometimes he earns money and sometimes not. How can he pay for my medicines, he has a family to feed," she said.

Unable to pay for her children's school education, Shakeela has sent them to a Darul Uloom at Hyderpora for Islamic teaching.

"Even if we would like to educate our children so they can help us to get out of poverty, we can't afford to pay for that," she said. "The situation gives us no choice other than begging."

BSF Shoots

the Wan border post in Ferozepur sector, it said in a statement.

The black-colour flying object was shot at a distance of about 300 metres from the international border and 150 metres from the border fence, the BSF said.

It said the drone, a hexa-copter with four power batteries, weighed around 23 kg and could carry a payload of around 10 kg.

It was, however, not carrying any payload like drugs, arms or ammunition.

The BSF said that a search operation is being carried out in the incident area. The border guarding force, in the past, has shot down two such drones that originated in Pakistan and were carrying arms and ammunition. (PTI)

Soldier Dies

evening, a local news agency GNS reported. This is the second death of a uniformed man in two days.

On Friday, Head Constable Sharvan Kumar of CRPF 19th battalion suffered a heart attack inside his camp in Akhara Building in Lal Chowk area of the city,

Kumar, who was a driver in the paramilitary force, was removed to the hospital for treatment. However, the doctors there declared him dead.

Leopard Mauls

Mohuiddin Mir in Ashmuqam, Nowgam battalion suffered a heart attack and attacked the herd, reports said.

"On hearing the noise I tried to save the sheep but the leopard even made bids on me", Mir said, adding he barely escaped the attack of the ferocious animal.

"Once the leopard left, I counted 16 sheep dead and seven others severely injured", Mir said.

PDD Lineman Loses

lineman identified as Bashir Ahmad of Yusmarg died at SMHS hospital here on Saturday morning, they said. He was admitted to the hospital after falling from an electric pole at Sikloo Rajpora in Pulwama district.

He remained in ICU for all these days before succumbing to the injuries, they said.

Police Organises Mega-Cycling Race In Budgam

DIG CKR Srinagar flags off event, winners awarded with cash rewards and prizes



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: A mega-cycling race under the aegis of Civic Action Programme (CAP) was organised by the Budgam Police on Saturday, flagged off by DIG CKR Srinagar Sujit Kumar Singh-IPS at Choon Crossing of Budgam Town and culminated at Tangnar Doodhpathri area of Budgam.

Over 150 cyclists including boys and girls from different parts of the valley participated in the event with fervour and enthusiasm.

SSP Budgam Tahir Saleem-JKPS, Addl. SP Budgam, DySP DAR, DySP Hqrs, and other police officers of Budgam were also present on the occasion.

During the flag-off ceremony, DIG CKR thanked participants, media persons and all those involved in organising the event for braving the morning chill and making the event doable. While interacting with the participants, DIG CKR said that youth should inculcate sportsman spirit and a healthy lifestyle.

Later on the culmination of the race at Tangnar Doodhpathri area of Budgam, the winners were awarded with cash prizes, trophies and participation certificates. In the male category first position was secured by

Waheed Ahmed from Kanihama, who completed the 25 KM race track in just 54 minutes. Saqib-ul-Rehman, Momin Ismail, Manzoor Ahmed, and Shabir Ahmed secured 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th positions respectively. The first winner was awarded with a cash prize of Rs 8000. Similarly, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th spots were awarded with a cash prize of Rs 4000, Rs 3000, Rs 2000 and Rs 1500 respectively.

Similarly in the female category, Sara Nakash of Safa Kadal, Srinagar secured the first position while Zubaya Tariq, Yameena Parvaiz, Anisa Muzafar, and Farah Ahad secured 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th positions.

SSP Budgam while interacting with the participants said that J&K Police will organise such kinds of activities in future also, so that the youth stay away from negative activities like drugs and their energy is channelized in right direction. ASP Budgam on the occasion also urged the participants to take part in such events and promote cycling habits to maintain their physical and mental fitness.

Notably, a cricket tournament is also being organised by the Budgam Police. Teams from across the district are taking part in the tournament.



Downtown Heroes Reach Kolkata

Accorded warm welcome by Mohammedan Sporting Club

Observer News Services

SRINAGAR: Downtown Heroes Football Club (DHFC) on Saturday reached Kolkata, West Bengal to participate in a national level training session to be held there.

The Heroes were given a rousing welcome at the Mo-

hammedan Sports Club by its senior officials. The Srinagar-based football club is scheduled to rub shoulders with some international level footballers and coaches, in which many other football teams of the country are scheduled to join them.

The tour is part of Down-

town Heroes' first maiden national participation programme, aimed to enhance the team's playing skills. Pertinent to mention the players and the coaches travelled to Assam last week and played many matches there in a national football tournament.

YSS Cup 21 Going On In Full Swing Across J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In the ongoing Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Cup 2021, Cricket, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and Volley ball matches were played in all 20 districts of J&K on Saturday here.

All the 20 district contingents participated in the four sports disciplines at different venues, in which hundreds of boys and girls on the 2nd day of YSS Cup 2021 participated in the discipline of Cricket, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho and Volleyball competitions.

The District Youth Service and Sports Officers of all the districts visited different venues and took stock of the departmental arrangements at different venues.

Pertinently, four games including Cricket, Volleyball, Kabaddi and Kho-Kho have been kept for the choice of both students and non-students for



taking part in the events.

Thousands of sports teams from different panchayats of the UT are taking part in the Inter-Panchayat Block Level competitions involving thousands of youths.

It is worth mentioning that thousands of field staff mem-

bers are involved in the successful progress of YSS Cup 2021.

YSS Cup 2021 is aimed at to tap sports talent in young boys and girls at panchayat level with a special focus on non-students by providing them the best possible opportunities.

Mitchell Starc In Control Along With Australia In 2nd Ashes Test

Agencies

ADELAIDE: Mitchell Starc's milestone in day-night Test matches has left Australia in command of the second Ashes Test, with the home side taking a 282-run lead to stumps on day three with nine wickets in hand.

England capitulated from 150-2 to be all out for 236 in reply to Australia's first-innings total of 473-9 declared.

Australia captain Steve Smith decided against enforcing the follow-on before the home side went to stumps Saturday at 45-1 with David Warner the man run out after a mid-wicket mix-up.

Under-pressure opener Marcus Harris survived both that and a crucial 17-over period under lights to finish unbeaten on 21 along with night-watchman Michael Neser (2).

Australia remains unbeaten

in the eight pink-ball tests it has played,

game management and partly because of skill. A large chunk of that day-night expertise can be attributed to Starc.

WFI President Slaps Over-Aged Wrestler Who Insisted On Competing In U-15 Nationals

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh courted a controversy during the Under-15 Nationals in Ranchi when he slapped a grappler, who insisted on competing in the tournament after being disqualified for being over-aged.

The incident happened on the concluding day of the tournament on Friday when the disqualified wrestler from Uttar Pradesh went to the dias and started misbehaving with the president, who lost his cool after a while.

Interestingly, the wrestler trains at the academy which belongs to the WFI president in Gonda.

"The wrestler wanted a favour from the president that since he was from UP and also from his centre, he be allowed to compete but the president wants to root out age-related corruption from grassroots level, so he did not let



WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh

him compete," WFI assistant secretary Vinod Tomar told PTI.

"The federation is now very strict and determined to ensure that only right-aged wrestler compete in the age-group nationals. We actually disqualified 60 to 70 over-aged wrestlers from the competition and he was one of them.

"After he started misbehaving with the president, he lost cool and slapped him," he said.

The WFI has been conducting Under-15 Nationals since 2018 and age fraud has been a major issue in the sport for long.

Semifinal Spot Assured, India To Clash With Japan In ACT Hockey



Press Trust of India

DHAKA: Assured of a place in the semifinals, defending champions India would look to continue their winning run when they clash with Japan in their final round robin match of the Asian Champions Trophy men's hockey tournament, here on Sunday.

After a slow start to the tournament, Olympic bronze-medallist India roared back into the five-team tournament with two consecutive wins.

Playing their first tournament after a historic Olympic campaign, India were held to a 2-2 draw by Korea in their opener. However the players lifted their games by leaps and bounds to trounce hosts Bangladesh 9-0 and then got the better of arch-rivals Pakistan 3-1 on Friday.

India are currently leading the

standings with seven points from three games ahead of Korea (5), Japan (2) and Pakistan (1).

Hosts Bangladesh are yet to register their presence in the scoresheet having lost both their games so far. Coming into the tournament as clear favourites, the Indians were by far the better side among all other teams, simply on the basis of form and world standings.

Having said that, India were slow to get off the blocks as they squandered a two-goal advantage to be held by Korea.

The match against Korea was a sort of wake-up call for the Indians. They looked completely different against Bangladesh, dominating the entire 70 minute contest with their superior display.

The match against neighbours Pakistan was expected to be a close match and it turned out to be so, albeit in the final two quarters.

IND vs SA Test Series

KL Rahul To Be India Vice-Captain: BCCI Secretary Shah

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Opener KL Rahul has been named as the Indian team's vice captain for the upcoming three-Test series against South Africa, starting December 26, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday.

Earlier, Rohit Sharma was made deputy to Virat Kohli for the series but he was ruled out due to a recurring left-hamstring injury.

The 29-year-old Rahul has played 40 Tests so far and has scored 2321 runs at an average of 35.16, with six centuries under his belt. Importantly, he is being looked at as a long-term potential leader.

"The All-India Senior selection committee has named KL Rahul as vice-captain for the upcoming 3-match Test series against South Africa. KL Rahul replaces Rohit Sharma as vice-captain, who was ruled out of the Test series owing to a hamstring injury," Shah said in a statement.

The PTI had reported on December 13 that Rahul is the front-runner for the vice-captaincy.



Rohit, who had replaced Ajinkya Rahane as the vice-captain for the Test series, suffered a left hamstring injury during the net session in Mumbai, which ruled him out for at least three to four weeks.

For the selectors, it was difficult to go back to Rahane who is no longer a certainty in the Test XI, and possibly, it is too early for Rishabh Pant to be elevated as vice captain of the national team.

Rahul, currently, is seen as one of the few all-format specialist batters. Rahul has the right age and experience to be groomed for future when Kohli relinquishes Test leadership. He can take over the mantle for a longer duration.

Lucknow Appoint Gambhir As Team Mentor

NEW DELHI:

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir was on Saturday appointed mentor of the new Lucknow franchise ahead of IPL 2022.

He had captained KKR to two IPL titles during his playing days.

"The fire to win a contest still burns bright inside me, the desire to leave a winner's legacy still kicks me 24x7. I will not be contesting for a dressing room but for the spirit and soul of Uttar Pradesh," Gambhir said in a statement.

Owner of the yet to be named franchise, Sanjiv Goenka welcomed Gambhir into the RPSG family.

"Gautam has an impeccable career record. I respect his cricketing mind and look forward to working with him," he said.

The 40-year-old played 58 Tests, 147 ODIs and 37 T20Is for India. (PTI)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in)

(Short Term)

GIST of E-NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/244/e-tendering Dated:-17-12-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of completion (in days)	AA Accorded Vide No:	TS No	Earnest Money in Rs.
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Providing of Central Heating facility to Counter No. 06 (Microbiology Department) F block of Govt. SMHS Hospital, Srinagar.	1.20	200	05	75-MCS of 2021, Dt: 15-12-2021	MHCHD/TS/162, Dt: 12/21	2400

- The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 17-12-2021 (18.00 hrs).
- The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 18-12-2021(10.00 hrs). to 24-12-2021(14.00 hrs) in two (02) cover.
- The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 24-12-2021(16.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar.

No: MHCHD/ TS/8440-45
Dated: 17-12-2021
DIPK-15222/21

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM, KASHMIR

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

Sub:- Application for change of name and style of the Guest House from "Yaadgar" to "Apple Orchid Resort".

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Guest House under name and style "Yaadgar" situated at Chandpora Harwan, Srinagar is registered with the Department Tourism, in the name of Ms. Gulshan Ara D/o Mr. Abdul Rehman Mir R/o Chinar Colony Chandpora, Harwan Srinagar since 2016 bearing registration No. Reg/1030/156/DTK dated 10.06.2016 and the registration certificate is valid upto 31.03.2021;

Whereas Ms. Gulshan Ara D/o Mr. Abdul Rehman Mir R/o Chinar Colony Chandpora, Harwan Srinagar has approached this office for change of name and style of the said Guest House from "Yaadgar" to "Apple Orchid Resort";

Whereas, the applicant has submitted NOC from the concerned Bank and an undertaking that the application has been submitted purely for promotion of the business at her Unit;

Whereas, grant of registration or change in the name and style of any registered Unit do not confer any right of ownership of the Unit or absolve the applicant from settlement of any out-standings, whatsoever, as grant of registration by this Department is purely for purpose of running the tourist trade as per provisions of the J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act;

Now, therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/2012, before changes are made in the registration records of this Department in respect of name and style of the Guest House "Yaadgar" situated at Chandpora Harwan, Srinagar to "Apple Orchid Resort" the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Financial Institutions/ Banks/ Development Authorities/ PHE Department/ Electric Department that in case of any objection/s, the same should reach the office of undersigned within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections beyond a period of 07 days will be entertained and the request of the applicants will be considered under rules, after submission of requisite documents and norms.

No: Reg/GH/1030/529/DTK
Dated: 18.12.2021

Deputy Director Tourism,
Registration

DIPK-15251/ 21

Is Modi 'Scared Or Ashamed' To Utter Indira Gandhi's Name, Asks Shiv Sena

Agenceis

MUMBAI: In a sharp attack, the Shiv Sena on Saturday pointedly asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "scared or ashamed" of uttering the late PM Indira Gandhi's name during the recent 50 years celebrations of the liberation of Bangladesh.

The Sena also took note that President R. N. Kovind visited Dhaka for the victory celebrations but did not even mention the name of Bangladesh's creator, Indira Gandhi there.

"By ignoring Indira in such a manner you can write neither the history of India nor the world. But who will explain this to such narrow-minded rulers of our country. Its an insult to woman-power," the Sena asked in a stinging edit in the party newspapers, 'Saamana' and 'Dopahar Ka Saamana'.

The Sena said its 50 years since the Bangladesh War of 1971 was won by India, and the sacrifices of our brave soldiers was remembered, but Modi "did not show the courtesy" of even making a mention of Indira Gandhi on December 16.

"If Indira Gandhi had not shown guts, Pakistan would never have been taught a lesson of a lifetime. She divided Pakistan into two pieces and effectively avenged the Partition of India in 1947," the edit said.

Even the then leader of the Jan Sangh, and later the PM, Atal Behari Vajpayee, hailed Indira Gandhi as a 'Durga' and the entire world saluted the bravery of Hindustan.

"After Bangladesh, she emerged as a powerful world leader, with a clear warning that if you look at India with crooked eyes, we shall break you into pieces. When she achieved the feat, the current ruler in New Delhi may have been kids in bed," the Sena said lavishing praises on Indira Gandhi's prowess.

Taking another swipe at Modi, the Sena said a ruler can build temples or buildings and clean up a river, "but cannot dismember Pakistan to create a Bangladesh" which only Indira Gandhi had the courage to do.

"Instead of indulging in 'surgical strikes', Indira Gandhi ordered



a direct attack by the Indian Army to teach Pakistan a lesson. Even the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy were used, Karachi Port was destroyed," the Sena added.

Finally, 90,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendered before India on December 16, 1971, and it was only Indira Gandhi who was the 'power' behind that victory, and nobody could ever attempt a pathetic defeat of Pakistan since then, hence forgetting her is akin to ignoring Mother India, the Sena said.

On the other hand, the Kargil War (1999) took place on Indian soil and to drive out the Pakistani infiltrators, 1,500 of our soldiers were sacrificed in their motherland, "yet we celebrate it as 'Vijay Divasa'," the Sena pointed out.

"Today, the Chinese Army has entered Ladakh and we are unable to push them back, while in 1971, the entire world was stunned by the valour displayed by a Hindu woman who made even the US retreat when it came to help Pakistan."

"The 1971 War bestowed the 'real identity of India' to the world. It was pettiness on the part of the current leaders not to acknowledge the courage of Indira Gandhi. You may have ideological differences with the Congress, but showing hatred towards leaders who built the country is not the sign of a 'true Hindustani'," the Sena said.

"The edits showed how the BJP sought votes in elections by beating the drums of surgical strike, but now China has entered, Nepal, Afghanistan are also our adversaries and the country is surrounded by guns on all four borders.

At such a time, it's the memory of Indira Gandhi's historic victory in the 1971 Bangladesh War that will always serve to inspire," the Sena said. — IANS

Rohini Court Blast: DRDO Scientist Arrested For 'Planting Explosives To Kill Neighbour'

Agenceis

A senior DRDO scientist has been arrested for allegedly planting an improvised explosive device (IED) in a tiffin box with an intention to kill his neighbour in the Rohini district court here earlier this month, police said on Saturday.

The IED that triggered a low-intensity explosion in courtroom number 102 on December 9 had left a person injured. The accused, Bharat Bhushan Kataria (47), was arrested on Friday, police said.

According to Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana, Kataria, who is a senior scientist at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), entered the court premises at 9.33 am on the day of the

incident with two bags and left one of those behind inside courtroom number 102. The accused left the court premises at 10.35 am.

Kataria had planted the IED in a tiffin box and left the bag containing the tiffin box inside the courtroom as he wanted to kill his neighbour, who is a lawyer, police said.

"Both the parties had lodged several cases against each other. They live in the same building. Prima facie, it seems that Kataria had a grudge against the lawyer," a senior police officer said.

The lawyer lives on the ground floor of the building while the accused lives on the third floor. Five civil cases were filed by Kataria against the lawyer, while the latter had filed seven civil cases against the accused, police said.

Indira Gandhi Let Bhutto Off Hook On Kashmir After 1971 War: Karan Singh

Agenceis

Veteran Congress leader Karan Singh on Friday, December 17, 2021, said India could not have won the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War "without the strong and decisive leadership of Indira Gandhi" but said she let then Pakistan prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto "off the leash rather generously".

Mr. Singh, who was a minister in former prime minister Indira Gandhi's cabinet during the 1971 war, said she could have used the opportunity to put pressure on Bhutto over the Kashmir issue.

His remarks came after the Congress accused the Narendra Modi government of indulging in petty politics by not remembering former prime minister Indira Gandhi during Vijay Diwas celebrations and termed it of being "misogynist".

"As the only surviving member of Shrimati Indira Gandhi's cabinet during the Bangladesh War, I would like to say that there can be no doubt whatsoever that without Indira Gandhi's strong and decisive leadership we would not have achieved this victory," Mr. Singh said in a statement.

India on Thursday celebrated the 50th anniversary of its victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war that led to redrawing of the political map of South Asia and ended the horrific violence unleashed by the Pakistani army on millions of Bangladeshi people.

"Vajpayee's praise" "Of course credit must go to our armed forces, but, I reiterate, it was Indira Gandhi's strong and decisive leadership that culminated in India's first victory after a thousand years. Rightly was she called Durga by the great Atal Bihari Vajpayee," Mr. Singh said.

"Having said all this, I must



admit that I did feel she let Zulfikar Ali Bhutto off the leash rather generously.

"Although the purpose of the war was the liberation of East Pakistan and not directly linked with Jammu and Kashmir, she could perhaps have used the opportunity to pressure Bhutto regarding that beautiful state founded by my ancestors. But that is another story," the former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir said.

Mr. Singh, a former Rajya Sabha member, said the armed forces under outstanding soldiers as Lt Gen J S Aurora, Lt Gen J F R Jacob, Lt Gen Sangat Singh and many others created history by their brilliantly planned and co-ordinated campaign.

The Chief of Naval Staff Admiral S M Nanda and Chief of Air Staff P C Lal also deserve full credit for the significant role played by the Air Force and the Navy, he said.

Recalling the events in 1971, Mr. Singh said, "I have vivid memories of that day in the Lok Sabha. Indira Gandhi, who seldom showed any emotion, was clearly overjoyed and almost ran into the House and took her seat. My seat happened to be

immediately behind her's." "As soon as she entered, the House immediately fell silent. She got up and said Mr Speaker, Dhaka has fallen to the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini. The House exploded in joy and had to be adjourned," the former union minister recalled.

He said it is difficult for later generations to appreciate the emotional intensity with which Indians followed events in Bangladesh, including the terrible Tika Khan massacres, culminating in the extraordinary victory.

"It is often forgotten that during that year Indira Gandhi did make genuine efforts to encourage a political solution to the conflict between East and West Pakistan," he said.

She sent her ministers around the world to meet Heads of State and impress upon them the necessity to persuade the rulers of Pakistan and come to a political settlement with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Singh recalled that he was sent to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia "where I met up with Field Marshal (Josip Broz) Tito whom I had accompanied around India during his State visit earlier. On the way back I met the Shah of Iran with whom also I had travelled India, he said.

In these meetings, Mr. Singh said he carried Indira Gandhi's message on the importance of bringing about a political solution to prevent an armed conflict.

"She also, in a brilliant masterstroke, signed The Treaty of Friendship with the USSR which played an important role in preventing China or the United States from intervening during the War," the veteran Congress leader said.

Akhilesh Compares Lakhimpur Violence With Jallianwala Bagh, Says BJP Will Be Swept Away In Assembly Elections

RAE BARELI (UP): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday sought to equate the Lakhimpur Kheri violence with Jallianwala Bagh massacre, and said the British had fired bullets from the front, while the BJP ran over a jeep from behind.

Yadav, who is in Rae Bareli on a two-day tour as part of the seventh leg of 'Samajwadi Vijay Yatra', claimed that the BJP will be wiped out in the upcoming 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

Speaking to reporters here, the former Chief Minister said, "In Uttar Pradesh, the incident of a jeep being run over on farmers took place. If the pages of history are turned back, then one is reminded of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, when the British fired (at people) from the front.

"But the BJP ran over the jeep on them from behind. No action has been initiated against the accused. The Union Minister of State for Home (Ajay Mishra) has not been removed so far. For



those who are accused, bulldozers have not been run over their house. This government is working in a discriminatory manner," the SP chief said.

Violence had erupted in Lakhimpur Kheri on October 3 when farmers were protesting the visit of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya to Mishra's native place. Four agitating farmers were allegedly run over by a vehicle while four others, including a

journalist and two BJP workers, were also killed in the violence that ensued.

Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra, has been named as accused.

The SP chief also said as the elections approach, the BJP puts up a lens of religion, and sees everything from that perspective.

He also said people are feeling insulted today, and the BJP, which is in power, is insulting the people. PTI

Traders Brace For Third Wave As Omicron Cases Rise In Delhi



With the gradual spread of Omicron variant of coronavirus in the national capital, the impact of dwindling number of shoppers is not lost on traders as they get ready to face an impending third wave of the pandemic.

Twelve more people tested positive for the Omicron variant in Delhi on Friday, taking their number to 22, and officials said most of them are "fully vaccinated" and "asymptomatic".

Sanjay Bhargava, president, Chandni Chowk Vyapar Mandal said they are "waiting and watching" for now, even as they have requested authorities to increase the police presence in the area.

"We have verbally requested the authorities to increase the number of police personnel in the area who can enforce the Covid protocol among those taking it casually. Mostly hawkers and beggars do not follow any such norms," he told PTI.

While observing a "visible decrease in footfall", he said the market association will soon be sending circulars to shopkeepers in the area to enforce Covid protocols.

"We will soon be asking all our traders to enforce Covid protocols in their shops. In the last 10 days, there is visible decrease in footfall in the market. The business is slowing down due to the increasing cases of Omicron in the city," Bhargava added.

Atul Bhargava, president, National Delhi Traders Association said even though the risk of a crowded and congested area is small in Connaught Place (CP), they have already sent out circulars to all traders.

"We have asked them to strictly adhere to Covid protocols in the shops like sanitising, insisting on wearing masks and taking temperature of people coming in. Since CP is a large and open area, it is not much of a problem. And with police presence, people usually follow Covid protocols," he said.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain had on Thursday said many international travellers

were turning out Covid positive upon arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here.

On Tuesday, he had said that the Omicron variant of the coronavirus had not spread in the community so far and the situation was under control.

In view of the threat posed by the Omicron variant, the Delhi health department Friday evening issued an order directing hospitals to augment human resource, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, sanitation and security staff, on contract or through existing outsourcing agencies against the vacant posts and extra 25 per cent of the sanctioned strength till March 31.

Traders in Sarojini Nagar, another bustling market area of south Delhi, have been asked to paste social distancing circles outside and follow all Covid protocols inside their shops.

Ashok Randhawa, president, Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders Association, said they have sent out a circular asking shop helpers to get their second doses as soon as possible.

"Almost all our traders are fully vaccinated, those who are not have been asked to do it as soon as possible. We have told everyone to follow Covid norms inside the shops," Randhawa told PTI.

Even though the crowds have gone down 20-25 per cent in the area, he added that people were rushing to do their shopping now for the next wedding season in case another lockdown is announced.

"Most of the buyers are those who want to finish their shopping now. We too our apprehensive about another lockdown since we have just started picking up business," he said.

The official added that the association has also requested the authorities to increase the number of civil defence volunteers and police personnel in the area.

"Shopkeepers can only manage people inside the shops, there are barely any policemen in the market. If people see police, they put on their masks. The authorities need to ensure that proper norms are followed," he added.

WE HAVE ASKED THEM TO STRICTLY adhere to Covid protocols in the shops like sanitising, insisting on wearing masks and taking temperature of people coming in. Since CP is a large and open area, it is not much of a problem. And with police presence, people usually follow Covid protocols."



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