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P5 STATE

CHARGESHEET AGAINST 3 FOR DUPING YOUTH ON PROMISE OF JOBS IN NZ

The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against three people for allegedly duping unemployed youth by promising them jobs in

THINK

OMICRON MIGHT EVADE ANTIBODIES – BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T HAVE IMMUNITY

With the highly mutated omicron variant spreading rapidly, people want to know if immunity from vaccination or a prior infection will be enough to protect them against getting



P11 SPORTS

ICC T20I 'PLAYER OF YEAR': MARSH, RIZWAN, HASARANGA & BUTTLER SHORTLISTED

Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh and Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan were on Wednesday named among four players shortlisted for the



Quote!
If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you
Fred DeVito

NEWS DIGEST

PM's UAE Visit Put Off Over Omicron Fears

NEW DELHI: The visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to UAE, expected to take place in the first week of January, has been postponed amid a spike in Omicron cases, sources told news agency ANI. The sources said the PM Modi was scheduled to visit UAE from January 6 on his first foreign visit in the new year. India and UAE are holding talks for **More on P10**

450 Apple Boxes Stolen In Shopian

SRINAGAR: Thieves stole apple boxes from the premises of a person in South Kashmir's Shopian district. The incident of theft took place in Ramnagri area of Shopian during the intervening night of December 28 and 29. The owner of the apple boxes who identified himself as Manzoor Ramzan claimed that over 450 apple boxes kept in the **More on P10**

Scooty Rider Killed In Hit And Run Accident

SRINAGAR: A 35-year-old scooty rider died in a road accident in Laroo village of South Kashmir's Kulgam on Wednesday evening, an official said. An official said that an unknown vehicle hit a Scooty in the Laroo area of the district, resulting in critical injuries to the Scooty rider. He was immediately **More on P10**

Patwari, Agent Caught With Rs 1L Bribe

SRINAGAR: The Anti-Corruption Bureau on Wednesday trapped and arrested a Patwari Halqa Kathwar, Khansahib, Budgam, Raja Mudassir Ali Khan, and his "agent" Nawaz Hussain Mir while demanding and accepting bribe Rs 1 lakh for mutation of land records. "Anti Corruption Bureau **More on P10**

3 Militants Killed In Kulgam Encounter

Two Soldiers, Cop Injured In Ongoing Gunfight In Anantnag

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Three unidentified militants were killed while two soldiers and a policeman were injured on Wednesday in two separate encounters in the twin districts of Anantnag and Kulgam in south Kashmir.

According to a police spokesperson, a joint search operation was launched by police and army in Mirhama of Kulgam on Wednesday night on the basis of information suggesting presence of militants in the area. When the joint team started

claimed to have killed three unidentified militants.

"#KulgamEncounterUpdate: 01 unidentified #terrorist killed. #Operation going on. Further details shall follow," the police posted on its official Twitter handle.

"#KulgamEncounterUpdate: 02 more unidentified #terrorists killed (Total 03). Search going on. Further details shall follow," the police said in another Tweet.

The encounter in Kulgam broke out hours after militants and government forced traded gunfire in Verinag area in the



File Photo

advances, the police spokesperson said, the hiding militants fired upon them in a bid to escape from their dragnet. In the exchange of fire, police

neighboring Anantnag district in which two soldiers and a policeman was injured.

The encounter raged on in Nowgam village **More on P10**

Govt Puts Cap On Conversion Of Agri Land

DCs Told Not To Grant Permission Beyond 12½ Acres

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir government has directed district collectors that they shall not grant permission for conversion of land more than twelve and a half standard acres (12 ½) in accordance with the procedure notified by the Revenue Board.

In an order, the government has directed district collectors that while exercising powers under The Land Revenue Act, they shall not grant permission for conversion of land more than 12 ½ acres.

".....In exercise of the powers conferred by section 141 of Jammu and Kashmir

Land Revenue Act, Svt. 1996, the Government hereby directs that the district collector while exercising powers under section 133A of the Act shall not grant permission for conversion of land more than twelve and a half standard acres in accordance with the procedure notified by the Board in this behalf," reads an order issued by commissioner-secretary, Revenue department, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri.

Under section 133-A of The Land Revenue Act, no land used for agricultural purposes shall be used for any non-agricultural purposes except with the permission of the district collector.

According to the order, the ceiling limit for which the district collector shall grant permission for conversion of agricultural land into non-agricultural land has not **More on P10**

..Hyderpora Killings

Police Warns Political Leaders Of Penal Action

Says, 'Speculative Statements Of Political Leaders Have Tendency Of Provocation, Fear'



File Photo

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Police on Wednesday warned politicians for making speculative statements over the probe into the controversial

Hydepore encounter, saying such remarks have tendency to create provocation, rumour, fear and alarm among the general masses or particular section of society.

In a hard hitting statement issued here **More on P10**

ALL SUCH PERSONS MAKING STATEMENTS should have approached the enquiry officer with genuine evidences they have, for corroboration or contradiction of the facts surfaced in the case" --SIT Chairman

J&K Logs 104 New Corona Cases

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Over a hundred more people tested positive for coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday even as no Covid-19 caused death was reported from the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to officials, Kashmir Valley reported 65 fresh cases of novel coronavirus while the remaining 39 were detected from various districts of Jammu division, taking the number of people infected by the virus in the UT to 341028.

In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar **More on P10**

Police Foil PDP's March Against 'Brazen Sale Of Resources'

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Two days after the Jammu and Kashmir administration signed 39 MoUs with the country's real estate investors, PDP's youth wing on Wednesday tried to march to the Raj Bhawan here against what it called brazen sale of resources to corporate houses.

However, they said the police stopped them from marching ahead. The Jammu



and Kashmir government on Monday opened the Union Territory to the country's real estate investors **More on P10**

Bukhari's Protest Against Delimitation Proposals Scuttled

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Wednesday foiled a protest march by Apni Party against the draft proposals of the Delimitation Commission. Scores of party leaders and activists led by Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari assembled at the party office at Sheikh Bagh area in Srinagar and tried to take **More on P10**

Gulmarg Shivers At Minus 10.4 Deg Celsius

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The cold wave conditions intensified across Kashmir as Gulmarg skiing resort witnessed season's record low with mercury plunging more than 10 degrees below the freezing point, officials said on Wednesday.

Kashmir valley is currently under the grip of the 40-day harshest winter period known as 'Chilla-i-Kalan'

which began on Tuesday.

Gulmarg, the famous skiing resort in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 10.4 degrees Celsius. It was down one degree from minus 9.4 degrees compared to the previous night, the officials said. Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 6.6 degrees Celsius up from minus 7.9 degrees Celsius the previous night Srinagar saw a low **More on P10**

Govt Working For Welfare Of All: LG

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday that his government is working with the vision to protect the rights and promote the welfare of all.

Sinha made these remarks while interacting with Ramesh Arora, former MLC at Raj Bhavan, here on Wednesday, an official spokesperson said.

He said that the former MLC accompanied by Chander Mohan Sharma, Chairman, Tawi Andolan, and Shaminder Kumar, Retired Director, AIR projected the



concerning issues of Loktantra Senanis and demanded due recognition to them.

"The Lt Governor, while interacting with the members of the delegation observed that the J&K

Government is working with the vision to protect the rights and promote the welfare of all," the official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, assured the delegation that **More on P10**

Chairs Meeting Of Amarnath Shrine Board

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday chaired a meeting of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board and discussed various issues related to new Yarti Niwas Bhawans at Srinagar, Jammu, and Ramban, at Raj Bhavan here. The eminent members of SASB- Swami Avdeshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, Pt. Bhajan Sopori, Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty, D. C. Raina, Prof. Anita Billawaria, Mrs. Tripta **More on P10**

2 Get 3 Years Jail For Promising MBBS Seat To Youth In 2005

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A court in Anantnag Tuesday convicted and sentenced two persons to three years jail for duping a person to arrange MBBS seat for his son against Rs 15.30 lakhs in a Karnataka college in 2005.

A spokesman of the Crime Branch Kashmir said that the Court of Special Mobile Magistrate Anantnag convicted two accused persons— Muzaffar Ahmad Khan son of Mohammad Abdullah Khan of Anchidora, Anantnag and Fayaz Ahmad Bhat son of Mohammad Rajab Bhat of Dialgam at present Anchidora, Anantnag under section 420, 120-B-RPC.

Besides sentencing them to three in jails years, the court also

imposed a fine of Rs. 5000 each, in case FIR No. 25/2005 of Police Station Crime Branch Kashmir, the spokesman said in a statement.

The case was registered by Crime Branch Kashmir based on a written complaint from one Ali Mohammad Dar son of Haji Mohi-Ud-Din of K. Kalan Bijbehara Anantnag alleging therein that one Fayaz Ahmad Bhat and other motivated him for paying Rs 15.30 lacs for the purpose of arranging MBBS seat for his son namely Rameez Ali Dar in MRI College Gulbarga, Karnataka.

The complainant also stated that neither MBBS seat was arranged, nor the amount was repaid to them, he said.

"Enquiry conducted into the matter revealed **More on P10**

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2.	TRAINEE ENGINEER (MECHANICAL)	20
3.	TRAINEE ENGINEER (ELECTRICAL)	04
4.	TRAINEE OFFICER (FINANCE)	12
5.	TRAINEE OFFICER (COMPANY SECRETARY)	02

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For complete details please visit our website: <http://www.nhpcindia.com/career.htm>. Only Online mode of application is accepted.

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PRESS RELEASE

Today on 29.12.2021 an awareness program on Labour Laws was organized at Pulwama, in collaboration with NGO M/s Voluntary Organization on Environmental & Socio-Economic Planning (VO-ESEP) in which Mr. Ahmad Hussain Bhat worthy Dy labour Commissioner, Kashmir, Hafsa Qayoom Assistant Labour Commissioner, Mr.Parvaiz Ahmad Labour inspector, Mr. Farooq Ahmad Senior Assistant, Pulwama and other dignities were present and participated in the program. The worthy Deputy Labour Commissioner Kashmir discussed the important aspects pertaining to the Labour clause and made the laborers aware about their rights as guaranteed under constitution of India and in other Labour Laws. The Assistant Commissioner, Pulwama highlighted the social schemes with related to the labour clause and assured the employees who participated in the event that they will be given first preference in acquiring the benefits guaranteed in different labour related schemes. The program was concluded with the vote of thanks from President VOESEP and other colleagues.



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PRESS RELEASE



Nehru YUVA Kendra Anantnag organized two days Block level sports meet of block Larnoo w.e.f 28-12-2021 to 29-12-2021. At GDC Larnoo. A large number of students from various sports Club and Mehla Men-dals of the Block participated in the various events. Prizes were awarded to the Winners and Runners up teams and Third Places.

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Public Notice

This is inform general public that I have applied for pesticides license. In this regard any person having any objection He/She may contact office of the PPO Lal Mandi Srinagar within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained after that.

Name: Riyaz Ahmad Bhat S/O: Mohd Anwar Bhat
R/O: Khiram Anantnag

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J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD,

Hema Complex, Adjacent to Gauri Shanker Mandir,
Channi Himmat, Sect 03, Jammu.
(www.jkssb.nic.in)

NOTIFICATION

Subject:-Revised schedule for SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) for the posts of Junior Scale Stenographer, Personal Assistant and Steno Typist, Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06 and 07 of 2020 and 01, 02 and 03 of 2021 (Kashmir Based Candidates).

The Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) vide Notice No SSB/COE/2021/9044-54 dates 23-12-2021, notified schedule of SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) for the posts of Junior Scale Stenographer, Personal Assistant and Steno Typist, UT Cadre, Divisional Cadres and various Districts, Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06 and 07 of 2020 and 01, 02 and 03 of 2021. However, it has come to the notice of JKSSB that some inadvertent technical error has crept in, in the aforesaid schedule. Accordingly, the Board has examined the matter and decided to treat aforesaid notice as withdrawn ab-initio. Now there in view of the above it is hereby notified for the information of all such candidates who have qualified Type Test (Skill Test) and figuring in annexure "A" to this notice, are hereby called for SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) for the posts of Junior Scale Stenographer, Personal Assistant and Steno Typist, UT Cadre, Divisional Cadres and various Districts, Advertisement Notification Nos 04, 05, 06 and 07 of 2020 and 01, 02 and 03 of 2021, w.e.f 03-01-2022 onwards at NIELIT (formerly DOEACC), Old Airport Road, Rangreth, Budgam for Kashmir based candidates as per the dates/time shown against each.

Candidates who are scheduled in the SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) are advised to download their Admit Cards from our official website of the Board i.e (www.jkssb.nic.in) from 27-12-2021 onwards. The candidates will not be permitted entry into venue without the Admit Card and a valid photo identity which shows the photo clearly. Please again note that apart from Admit Card, the candidates shall be required to produce a photo identity card (Aadhar/Voter Identity Card / Driving License / Passport / Pan Card / Ration Card / Student Identity Card / Identity Card Issued by Competent Authority) as proof of your identity at the time of the exam. The candidates must note their admit Card will be checked at a registration counter at the Venue. Any candidate found guilty of impersonating or submitting fabricated / tampered documents / testimonials or making false, incorrect or suppressing material information shall render him / her liable for criminal prosecution under law and may be debarred permanently or for a specific period for consideration of any or all recruitments made by the Board. Also canvassing / lobbying in any form will entail disqualification of the candidate(s). The candidature of candidates appearing in the Shorthand Test (Dictation & Transcription) shall be provisional and subject to fulfillment of eligibility and other conditions prescribed for the post. Mere participate in in the aforesaid test will not confer any right upon the candidate for consideration against the post and the Board is reserving the right to cancel candidature of any candidate at any stage if found ineligible. A candidate, who fails to appear in the SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) on the scheduled date & time, shall not be allowed to appear in the test for the mentioned notifications on any subsequent date and shall be disqualified for any further consideration on this account. No supplementary Shorthand-test (of the candidates who happen to miss their Shorthand-test scheduled herein) shall be conducted by the Board, in whatsoever circumstances. The candidates who qualify the SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) shall be considered for Computer Based Written Test.

NOTE:-
1) The candidates are advised to bring two recent photographs and Photostat copy of each certificate self-attested by the candidate for depositing with the Board on the scheduled date and time in addition to original documents, failing which no claim / objection in this regard shall be entertained.
2) The candidate(s) who fail to appear in the SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) on the given date shall forfeit his right of consideration.
3) The candidates are hereby directed that Wearing of masks is mandatory during type test and also advised to carry hand sanitizer for their personal use.
4) Mobile phone is not allowed in the office premises.
5) The Jammu based candidates schedule for SHORTHAND-TEST (Dictation and Transcription) shall be issued separately.

(Ashok Kumar) JKAS
Controller of Examinations
J&K Services Selection Board
Jammu

DIPK-15782/21

No. SSB/COE/2021/9107-17

Dated: 27-12-2021

از نیابت ساکام با اجلاس انگریز کمیٹی جسٹریٹ دیوال ساکام درخواست منجانب:- مصطفیٰ گوہر پیر محمد رقیب گوہر ساکنہ ہلرا آربامہ بغرض حصول ST سر فقیٹ۔

اشتبہا برمودا گاہی ہر خاص و عام۔ معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول ST سر فقیٹ دفتر ہذا میں پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل کا کنبہ بذیل افراد ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	نام و ولدیت	عمر	پیشہ	آمدنی
1	محمد رقیب ولد محمد قاسم گوہر	55 سال	مزدوری	5000/=
2	زرینہ تنہ زوید محمد رقیب گوہر	52 سال	گھریلو کام	
3	مصطفیٰ پیر محمد رقیب گوہر	28 سال	مزدوری	5000/=
4	محمد جان زوید مصطفیٰ گوہر	26 سال	گھریلو کام	
5	بسمہ جان دختر مصطفیٰ گوہر	03 سال		
6	آسان جان دختر مصطفیٰ گوہر	01 سال		

اس طور پر سائل کا کنبہ 06 افراد پر مشتمل ہے۔ لہذا سر فقیٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہوگا وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک ہفتہ کے اندر درودان دفتر کی اوقات میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کرے۔ معیاد گزرنے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

RNA

از نیابت ساکام با اجلاس انگریز کمیٹی جسٹریٹ دیوال ساکام درخواست منجانب:- عبدالرحیم ولد چاندی کاسل، ہلال احمد، وہ جہاگر احمد و واسمہ جان اولاد دن عبدالرحیم کاسل ساکنہ چوگام (شانلاراز) بغرض حصول ST سر فقیٹ۔

اشتبہا برمودا گاہی ہر خاص و عام۔ معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول ST سر فقیٹ دفتر ہذا میں پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل کا کنبہ بذیل افراد ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	نام و ولدیت	عمر	پیشہ	آمدنی
1	عبدالرحیم ولد چاندی کاسل	50 سال	مزدوری	6000/=
2	نبیرہ زوید عبدالرحیم	47 سال	گھریلو کام	
3	ہلال احمد ولد عبدالرحیم	14 سال	زیر تعلیم	
4	جہاگر احمد ولد عبدالرحیم	12 سال	زیر تعلیم	
5	عاصمہ جان دختر عبدالرحیم	06 سال	زیر تعلیم	

اس طور پر سائل کا کنبہ 05 افراد پر مشتمل ہے۔ لہذا سر فقیٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہوگا وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک ہفتہ کے اندر درودان دفتر کی اوقات میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کرے۔ معیاد گزرنے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

RNA

رسم چہارم

یہ خبر نہایت دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ اہلیہ مرحوم غلام محمد نذرہ 2021ء میں 28 سالہ ختم مزید وکلا شہرہ فقہر عیالات کے بعد اس دنیا سے رخصت کر گئی۔ مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 31 دسمبر 2021ء بروز جمعہ المبارک 30 دسمبر 2021ء کے آگے اپنی مقبرہ واقع نزد گاہک باغ ملکہ انجام دی جائے گی۔ تقویٰ مجلس مقبرہ سے یہی اہتمام پڑے ہوگی۔
نوٹ: مستورات سے گلہ زار ہے کہ اپنے ساتھ کسی قسم کی چیز نہ لائیں۔

سوگواران : نذرہ خاندان مخدوم منٹو

Public Notice

I have lost the RC of my vehicle bearing Regd No; JK22A- 9148 . Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Shopian within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Sabzar Ahmad Bhat
S/O Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Bhat
R/O Mantribugh Shopian

AST

Name Correction

My parentage has been wrongly written in my JKBOSE Certificate as (Father: Mujaddad Nayazee Jan, Mother : Roshan Jan While the correct name is Mujaddad Niyazi Jan (Father) Roshan (Mother) which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection at the JKBOSE within 7 days . Thereafter no objections shall be entertained.

Hassnain Riza Jan
S/O Mujaddad Niyazi Jan
Contact:- 7006068582

MKS

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for Aadhar Enrolment of my Son, Hamza Iqbal Who was born on 27-02-2020. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in Police Station Bijbehara Within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Iqbal F/o Hamza Iqbal
R/O Guree Bijbehara Anantnag

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FFC Orders Top Private School To Charge Fee As Per Rates In Aug 2014

Agencies

Srinagar:- The Committee for Fixation and Regulation of Fee of Private Schools in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday directed a leading school here to charge fees from its students as per rates in August 2014 as the educational institute had failed to have its fee structure regulated.

In an order, FFRC chairperson, Justice Muzaffar Hussain Attar directed the management of Minto Circle Higher Secondary School in Aloochoi Bagh area of the city to charge and collect fees as it stood in August 2014.

The Principal/Chairman/Management of Minto Circle Higher Secondary School, Aloochoi Bagh, Srinagar, shall charge and collect all types of fee as it stood in August 2014 and students/parents shall pay the fee accordingly, the order read.

The FFRC also asked the school to display the fee structure including the tuition fee and annual fee, as it stood in August 2014, on its notice board within two days.

Any breach of this order, which implements only Supreme Court/ High Court judgements and statutes, will result in penal action, as also, recommendation for de-affiliation of the school, the FFRC said.

The order came after parents of some of the students studying in the school complained to the committee about the school's fee structure.

The FFRC said the school has not at any point of time submitted its record for regulating its fee structure and has thus violated the mandate contained in the Supreme Court and High Court judgement and has shown non-compliance of the statute.

The J-K High Court in its judgement on June 1, 2015 has given liberty to managements of unaided Private Schools to approach the Committee for fixation of fee structure of each class.



Street Vendors Continue To Occupy Roads, Create Chaos In Batamaloo

Syed Burhan

SRINAGAR: The street vendors continue to hamper the pedestrian and vehicular movement in Batamaloo area of Srinagar city with the authorities doing little enough to free the roads from their occupation.

Commuters travelling towards the city centre Lal Chowk via Batamaloo have to face frequent traffic jams due to the choking of roadside and pavement space by vendors. They can be seen sprawling their carts across the vital stretch which often results in traffic jams.

Although Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has launched an anti-encroachment drive, they seem to find it difficult to clear encroachment given the vast number of carts across the busy stretch.

Similar scenes were witnessed on Wednesday, although authorities swung into action and restrained the street vendors from occupying the main road, street vendors were still seen occupying the pavement and roadside of the busy junction.

Frequent travellers on the Batamaloo road have long complained of traffic jams but the

pleas seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

“Traffic jams on this stretch have become a norm and I am used to it, as a motorist I find a way to go through. For cars and buses, it is a long journey, Syed Mutahar a commuter.

Talking to Kashmir Observer, SSP Traffic Muzaffar Ahmad Shah agreed that vendors are the main reason for traffic jams in Batamaloo. “Our primary role is the regulation and management of traffic. In order to regulate traffic, we need roads and pavements free from encroachments. It is a

prerequisite that all intersections are free from encroachments”, he said.

Shah further said that the removal of encroachers and hawkers is under the domain of SMC. “Our area of responsibility is vehicles and their movement on the roads” he added

Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation Athar Aamir said that they have started a drive to remove encroachments.

“In Batamaloo also we are taking action, we are entitled to remove roadblocks and the drive to remove encroachments will continue”he added.

Amid Omicron Threat GMC Mulls To Go For Winter Vacation

Agencies

Srinagar: Amid the threat of new variant omicron, the authorities at the government medical college Srinagar are mulling to go for winter vacations from 1st January 2022.

A circular issued in this regard by GMC Principal reads that All the Heads of Departments of various Disciplines of Govt. Medical College Srinagar are requested to furnish the Winter Vacations Roster for the year 2022 of Faculty Members for (28) days and submit the same to this office within a period of (02) days positively from the date of issue of this circular, so that the Roster for Winter Vacation-2022 is completed and issued well in time.

As per the circular the first Half Vacations w.e.f 01-01-2022 to 28-01-2022 and second half vacations w.e.f 01-02-2022 to 28-02-2022 besides that (29, 30 and 31 January, 2022 will be the common working days for all the Faculty mem-

bers and no kind leave whatsoever for these days will be entertained).

Some of the important instructions/guidelines as per circular include that as far as possible an equal number of faculty staff in each department will remain present during both the halves of the vacations, so that the work will be carried on smoothly.

“Faculty members on duty during any of the halves of winter vacations shall not be entitled to attend conference/ workshops/seminars etc. unless otherwise the same is unavoidable and the alternative arrangements thereof are ensured by the concerned HOD, no faculty members shall be allowed to avail of the vacations in excess in any case,” it said.

Meanwhile officials at the GMC Srinagar maintain that in order we have ensured that the patient care, as well as the academic activities, don't not suffer.

“GMC has decided to announce winter vacations to its

faculty members in two separate halves,” officials said.

However, talking with news agencies, experts and senior doctors believe that this move of the authorities is taking a heavy toll on the patients and this elite practice must be stopped.

"It is ironic that senior doctors and consultants in Kashmir are allowed for holidaying en masse at a time when their services are needed the most due to which planned surgeries are cancelled and treatments are delayed," they said.

“If senior doctors will be allowed to go for vacation, the entire health sector will rely on juniors, most are students and putting them under pressure can prove costly,” experts said.

“On one hand the government is extending the retirement age of doctors and other paramedical staff by one year but on the other hand allowing senior staff to go for summer holidays seems a contradictory step,” they said.

Humhama residents protest against demolition drive

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar: The residents of Humhama and its adjoining areas on Wednesday held a protest demonstration against demolition drive being carried out in the area by the Budgam district administration.

The protesting residents said that two months ago tehsildar Humhama had issued a notice to around 1700 households of Humhama to vacate the land.

"Our property land was taken by the government for construction of the airport, though compensation was provided for the same, however, many residents of the area were left with no

land, so they constructed their houses on Kahcharai. Now the government is asking them to vacate this land and have started a demolition drive for the same," they said. They also said that if the government is asking them to vacate the land, they should give back their own land first.

Meanwhile, one of the protesting residents said that even though they met Assistant Commissioner revenue Budgam, he, however, asked them to go to the court as he cannot do anything

He said that the ACR informed them that the solution of the matter lies with the court alone.

Covid-19 vaccination for 15-17 age group: DC reviews preparedness

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR:- In wake of the recent Government announcement regarding COVID-19 vaccination of teenagers in the 15-17 age group to begin from January 03, 2022, the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Wednesday chaired a meeting to finalize the arrangements in the meeting Hall of the DC office Complex, here. Mission Director National Health

Mission, Chaudhary Mohammad Yas-een was also present in the meeting.

The meeting held threadbare discussion with regard to formulating a smooth process to inoculate the teenagers in the age group of 15-17 years.

On the occasion, the DC asked the Chief Education Officer, ZEOs, Principals/Headmasters to submit school wise details of the students enrolled in Srinagar based Schools.

Public Notice

I Adeeba Hameed D/o Dr Abdul Hameed do hereby inform every concerned through the medium of this notice that I want to change my name to Adeeba Hameed D/o Dr Abdul Hameed from Adeeba Hameed Kathoo D/o Dr Abdul Hameed Kathoo as per my J&K Board of School Education records for renewing my passport.

If anybody has any objection regarding the same he/she should approach the Passport Kendra Srinagar within a period of 7 days from this date.

No objections would be considered after the expiry of this period.

Public Notice

During shopping at Qamarwari chowk, I lost my purse containing some money, I-Card, Passport (E 56 433 04) and Aadhaar card on 28/12/2021 somewhere in the said market. I searched for the same but couldn't trace the purse/other documents. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the said documents and anybody having any objection in this regard may contact the concerned departments within seven days from the publication of this notice. After that no objection will be entertained.

Syed Bashir Ahmad S/o: Syed Noor Ud Din
R/o: H.No 16 B/A Nund Reshi
Colony B, Bemina Srinagar

hko

سانحہ ارتحال

یہ خبر انتہائی دلخیز اور افسوس کے ساتھ دی مسابئی ہے کہ ہمارے رفیق و رفیق سرپرست اعلیٰ محترم غلام نبی خان ساکنہ باگڈون محلہ سالہ 27 دسمبر 2021 سوموار مطابق ۳۳ رجبہ الاول ۱۴۴۳ھ درہ پشمال کو دھڑک کر دوسرے انتقال کسمسما گئے اور کوڈ پے وو کوئل ملاملوں پر لگان کی گھبراہٹ میں لگان کی اوری بھی تعزیت کی گئیں کا انجام نہیں کیا گیا۔ اسب 1 3 دسمبر 2021 مطابق ۳۴ رجبہ الاول ۱۴۴۳ھ اجرتی قاتحہ خوانی بعد از نماز جمعہ آجانی قبرستان واقع محلہ چنگ نزدیکی ڈی پشمال انجام دی جائے گی اور قبرستان پر قاتحہ خوانی انکسار نہ ہوگی۔ دولت خاد پے کوئی تعزیت یا کھس نہیں ہوگی۔

غزورگان۔ غلام رسول بنگلی۔ بخیر احمد بنگلی۔ باہمدہ خان فریدہ خانو۔ جیس احمد۔ ڈاکٹر یونس۔ ڈاکٹر بھاد۔ جمیدہ اختر۔ وحیدہ اختر۔ یونس رندا و جملہ راکین وافر اور خاند۔

9469847188, 6005721990

از نیابت ساگام بااجلاس انگریزیکٹیو جسٹریٹ درجہ اول ساگام درخواست منجانب: پیگزار احمد پیر محمد علی خان ساکنہ ملہڑا رامہ بنرض حصول ST گرفتیت۔

اشتبہار برادرہ گای ہر خاص و عام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بنرض حصول ST گرفتیت دفتر پڑائیں پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پڑائی حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن کا کتبہ پڑیل افراد ہیں۔

نام ولدیت

عمر

پیشہ

آمدنی

1 گزار احمد پیر محمد علی خان 48 سال سرکاری ملازم =/48018

2 خدیجہ بیگم پیر گلزار احمد 40 سال گھر بیگام

3 سرتاج احمد پیر گلزار احمد 18 سال زیر تعلیم

4 اصغر احمد پیر گلزار احمد 16 سال زیر تعلیم

5 مصباحہ دختر گلزار احمد 14 سال زیر تعلیم

6 سیرت جان دختر گلزار احمد 12 سال زیر تعلیم

7 بسندہ جان دختر گلزار احمد 10 سال زیر تعلیم

اس طور پر ساکن کا 07 افراد پر مشتمل ہے۔ لہذا سرعقبت اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہوگا وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک ہفتہ کے اندر دروان دفتری اوقات میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کرے۔ معیار گذرنے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

RNA

نائب تحصیلدار۔

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 - (Closed)

Srinagar- Leh- (Open)



HIJRI

CALENDAR

25 Jumada al-awwal

1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	6: 46
ZUHR	12:17
ASR	3:46
Magrib	5:27
ISHA	6: 50

This Day In History

- 1786 - Grand Duke of Tuscany Leopold II promulgates a penal reform, making his the 1st state to abolish the death penalty. November 30 commemorated as Cities for Life Day.
- 1803 - Spain cedes her claims to Louisiana Territory to France
- 1864 - Battle of Franklin, Tennessee: Confederate attack fails, 7,700 casualties
- 1864 - Battle of Honey Hill, South Carolina (Broad River) 96 dead, 665 wounded
- 1876 - Archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann finds the gold Mask of Agamemnon at Mycenae (modern Greece) "the Mona Lisa of prehistory"
- 1908 - The US Secretary of State and Japan's ambassador to the US exchange notes in what becomes known as the Root-Takahira Agreement: they affirm support for an independent China with an 'open door' policy and for the status quo in the Pacific
- 1909 - British House of Lords rejects David Lloyd George's 'People's Budget', which tried to shift tax burden to the wealthy. Leads to the Parliament Act; intent to stop unelected house overruling will of the elected house.
- 1916 - Costa Rica becomes a signatory to the Buenos Aires copyright treaty.
- 1922 - 1st speed test of 1st genuine Japanese aircraft carrier Hosho.
- 1922 - Hitler speaks to 50,000 national-socialists in Munich.
- 1944 - Biggest & last British battleship HMS Vanguard launched.
- 1950 - US President Harry Truman threatens China with atom bomb.
- 1961 - USSR vetoes Kuwaits application for UN membership.
- 1962 - U Thant of Burma becomes the 3rd Secretary-General of the United Nations.
- 1964 - USSR launches Zond 2 towards Mars; no data returned.
- 1967 - People's Democratic Republic of Yemen declares independence from the UK.
- 1967 - The Pakistan Peoples Party is founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who becomes its first Chairman later as the Head of state and Head of government after the 1971 Civil War.

From KO Archives

4 kids among 6 killed in JK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Six people, including four children, were killed and two others injured in separate incidents across Jammu region since yesterday.

According to reports, unidentified gunmen barged into the house of a village defence committee (VDC) member, Gyan Singh, after hurling a grenade towards it and resorted to indiscriminate firing on the inmates killing four of his minor children and injuring two others at Sharjao village in Mahore area of Udhampur district last night.

Official sources said today that about 10 suspected militants first threw grenades on Singh's house at Jailanmarh-Sharjao village at around 2245 hours and then barged into it. The victims were sleeping at the time.

The victims were identified as Hoshiar Singh (15), Bika Devi (12), Anju (3) and Darshana Devi (12). Singh and another member of his family, who were injured in the attack had been admitted to hospital, the sources said.

However, a NAFA report said Singh's house was adjacent to an army camp. Security forces cordoned off the entire area this morning. However, no arrests were made.

In an encounter between the security forces and militants, two militants were killed at Gudesa in Banihal area of Doda district yesterday. The deceased were identified as Muhammad Hasil alias Usman r/o Banihal and Muhammad Raliq alias Bambar s/o Gulam Tarqal.

Unidentified gunmen intruded into the compound of the house of Abdul Rasheed Peer at Churan in Kellar area of Shopian last night. The inmates raised an alarm at which some neighbours came to their rescue. However, while fleeing from the place, the intruders fired some shots without any harm. Official sources said they intended to kill Mst Malla, wife of Peer who they accused was an 'Informers'.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 30 DECEMBER, 2000)

Case Against Accused Can't Be Stopped Merely Because Others Not Charged: Supreme Court



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Criminal proceedings against an accused cannot be stopped merely because some of the persons who might have committed the offences are not charge-sheeted, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and BV Nagarathna said during the trial if it is found that other accused persons are not charge-sheeted, the court may array them as accused in exercise of powers under Section 319 CrPc.

"Merely because some of the persons who might have committed the offences are not charge-sheeted, cannot be a ground to quash the proceedings against the accused charge-sheeted after having found prima facie case against him after investigation," the bench said in a recent order.

The Supreme Court was hearing an appeal filed by Suvarna Cooperative Bank Ltd against a Karnataka High Court order, which stopped criminal proceedings against a man for the offences under Sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 408 (criminal breach of trust by clerk), 409 (criminal breach of trust by public servant) 420 (cheating) and

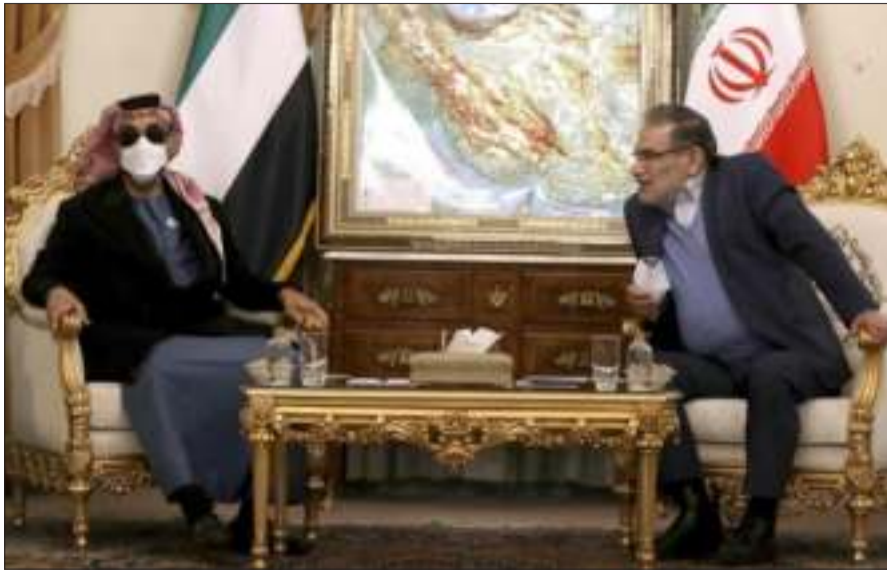
149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object) of the Indian Penal Code.

The complainant bank filed a complaint before the court of the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bangalore and an FIR was registered before the Chickpet Police Station under various sections of the IPC.

On completing the investigation, a charge-sheet was filed against the accused number one in the case.

The accused had approached the high court which stopped proceedings against him on the grounds that in the absence of original accused number two and three in the police report, the charge-sheet could not have been filed against only accused number 1. The Supreme Court said in this case nothing has been further observed by the high court on merits and/or on the allegations against the accused number one.

"Under the circumstances, the impugned judgment and order passed by the high court quashing the criminal proceedings against the respondent no.2 herein – original accused number one deserves to be quashed and set aside."



SECRETARY OF IRAN'S SUPREME National Security Council Ali Shamkhani, right, speaks with United Arab Emirates' top national security adviser Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan during their meeting in Tehran, Iran, Dec 6. — AP

Analysis: As US Focus Wanes, Middle East Turns Inward For Talks

Agencies

After years of looking abroad for answers, countries in the Middle East now appear to instead be talking to each other to find solutions following two decades defined by war and political upheaval.

The American withdrawals from Afghanistan and Iraq have played a part in that change. Once ostracised autocracies such as President Bashar Assad in Syria, and shunned former top figures such as Moammar Gadhafi's son in Libya, are back in the political arena amid the still smoldering ruins of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

Much remains unsettled and this inward search may not provide the answers most want. There are no quick fixes to Lebanon's unprecedented economic free-fall, the plight of Afghans desperate to flee the country's new Taliban rulers and Iran's increasingly hard-line stance over its nuclear programme.

But the diplomatic manoeuvring signals a growing realisation across the region that America's interest is moving elsewhere and that now is the time for negotiations that were unthinkable just a year ago.

THE CLOSING OF RANKS ALSO brought a return of realpolitik to the region, a decade after the Arab Spring movements that aimed to topple the region's autocrats.

The United States still maintains a strong military presence, including bases across the wider Mideast. Tens of thousands of American troops operate tanks in Kuwait, sail through the Strait of Hormuz and fly missions across the Arabian Peninsula.

But its Arab allies also watched in stunned horror as desperate people clung to the sides of departing US military cargo jets during America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years of war and the Taliban takeover of the country. Decisions by both the Trump and Biden administrations led to that moment — and upended strategic thinking calcified by the Cold War and the conflicts that followed the September 11 attacks.

American analysts now talk about the "great powers" competition and point at Russia's build-

up of forces on Ukraine's borders and China's posture toward Taiwan. Those flashpoints, they say, need some of the personnel and equipment long stationed in the Mideast.

Meanwhile, talks in Vienna aimed at restoring Iran's nuclear deal with world powers appear to be floundering. With Iran's uranium enrichment at levels never seen before, threats of military action by Israel have rekindled tensions and fears that an ongoing shadow war in could escalate into open conflict.

And with the border-locking chaos of the coronavirus pandemic largely behind them, Mideast leaders are now shuffling, talking face-to-face amid a flurry of diplomatic meetings, seemingly eager to hedge their bets.

The United Arab Emirates sent its national security adviser on a rare trip to speak to Iran's hard-line president, likely hoping to head off any other maritime attacks off its coast. Saudi Arabia, which cut off ties to Iran in 2016 following attacks on their diplomatic posts sparked by the kingdom's execution of a prominent Shia cleric, also has held talks with Tehran, hosted in Baghdad.

India May See Surging Cases Within Days, Cambridge University Says

Agencies

India may see a spurt in the Covid-19 growth rate within days and head into an intense but short-lived virus wave as the highly-infectious omicron variant moves through the crowded nation of almost 1.4 billion.

"It is likely that India will see a period of explosive growth in daily cases and that the intense growth phase will be relatively short," Paul Kattuman, professor at the Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge which has developed a Covid-19 India tracker, wrote in an email. "New infections will begin to rise in a few days, possibly within this week," he said, adding that it was hard to predict how high the daily cases could go.

Kattuman and his team of researchers, developers of the India Covid tracker, are seeing a sharp



rise in infection rates across India. The tracker spotlighted six states as a "significant concern" in a Dec. 24 note, with adjusted growth rate of new cases exceeding 5%. This had expanded to 11 Indian states by Dec. 26, according to the tracker, which corrects for "day of the week effects" and other variations.

India added 9,195 Covid cases Wednesday -- the highest new daily cases in three weeks -- pushing the total confirmed tally to 34.8 million infections. The total number of

fatalities so far is 480,592 deaths. The country is already gearing up to prevent another massive outbreak even though only 781 cases of the highly-mutated omicron have been identified so far.

Last week, it allowed booster shots and included teenagers aged 15 to 18 in the inoculation program. Two more vaccines as well as antiviral pill molnupiravir, developed by Merck & Co. with partner Ridgeback Biotherapeutics LP, were approved by the local drug regulator Tuesday.

New Delhi closed cinemas, schools and gyms and introduced restrictions on public gathering on Tuesday -- a day after it reported the most new cases in more than four months. Night curfew kicks in from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. and bars, restaurants as well as offices will have 50% occupancy. Mumbai, the country's financial capital, also reported a surge in new cases to 1,377 on Tuesday.

Trump Tops Blacklist Of Perpetrators Of Gen. Soleimani Assassination: Iran



Agencies

The secretary-general of Iran's Human Rights Office says three countries inside the region and three outside were involved in the 2020 assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander Qassem Soleimani, with former US president Donald Trump topping the list of criminals behind the terrorist attack.

In remarks on Wednesday, Kazem Gharibabadi pointed out that because the assassination was conducted by the US government, most of the perpetrators are American.

"The instigator of this terrorist act is the American regime, which has caused a large number of defendants in the case to be American," he said, days before the second anniversary of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani's assassination in neighboring Iraq.

Gharibabadi explained that more than 120 perpetrators have been identified, arrest warrants have been issued for more than 40, and judicial representatives have been sent to 9 countries for pursuing the case.

"Three countries in the region and three countries outside the region are involved in the case of the assassination of martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis."

Noting that Trump was the main perpetrator of the heinous act, the Iranian official said an international will and the cooperation of Interpol are needed to arrest the criminals.

Along with his companions, including the deputy chief of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Gen-

eral Soleimani was targeted in a US drone strike near the Baghdad International Airport on January 5, 2020.

The US assassination, directly ordered by Trump, drew a wave of condemnations from officials and movements throughout the world and triggered huge public protests across the region.

Early on January 8, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) targeted the US-run Ain al-Assad airbase in Iraq's western province of Anbar with a barrage of missiles to retaliate the assassination of General Soleimani.

Iran says its retaliation is not over. According to Gharibabadi, the trial of the perpetrators will be held in two months.

"The indictment of the perpetrators behind the martyr's assassination will be sent to the Tehran Court of Justice in two months," he said.

He also said Iran and Iraq have set up a joint investigation committee to follow up on the case, adding that the two sides have exchanged information on the US-orchestrated crime.

"We have asked Iraq to speed up the investigation so that the necessary verdicts can be issued [soon-er]," Gharibabadi remarked.

The Judiciary official also criticized international forums for their silence in the face of the atrocious act.

"As long as these double standards prevail in the world, administering justice will not be easy, but we have a responsibility to take action and try to persuade global public opinion, regardless of those contradictions and double standards," he added.

Poets' 'Allahabadi' Surnames Changed To 'Prayagraj' After UP Website Hack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PRAYAGRAJ: The website of UP Higher Education Service Commission was hacked on Tuesday with the hackers replacing the last name "Allahabadi" of some renowned poets with "Prayagaraj" in an "apparent resentment" of the change of the name this historical city, an official said.

The Prayagraj-based Commission, however, was able to restore its Hindi website and the work is on to restore its English portal, Commission chairman Ishwar Charan Vishvaarma told news agency PTL.

A complaint about the incident has been lodged with the Cyber Cell of the city police to nab the culprits, Dr Vishvakarma said.

"It was evidently a handiwork of some miscreants expressing their apparent resentment over the change of name of Allahabad," Dr Vishvakarma said, taking pains to explain that the Commission had no role in corrupting the website.

The renowned poets and litterateurs whose last name "Allahabadi" was replaced by "Prayagraj" included Akbar Allahabadi, Tej Allahabadi and Rasheed Allahabadi, the Com-



mission's chairman said, adding these names have been corrected in the Hindi website and the work is on to correct them in the English portal of the Commission.

The names of renowned poets and litterateurs had figured on the portal in one of its sections on the city of Allahabad whose name was recently changed to Prayagraj.

The litterateurs whose names figured on the Commission's website included Syed Akbar Hussain alias Akbar Allahabadi, Noor Nar-bee, Teg Allahabadi, Shabnam Naqvi and Rasheed Allahabadi.

Reacting to the incident, Prayagraj-based journalist Dhananjay Chopra, also a noted litterateur, said the city of Allahabad is recorded in the pages of history.

NEWS MAKERS

5-Year-Old Girl, Declared Brain Dead, Gives New Lease Of Life To Four

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

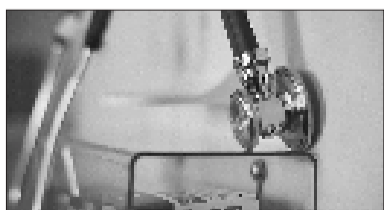
CHANDIGARH: A five-year-old girl, who was declared brain dead after falling from a height, gave a new lease of life to four patients after her parents decided to donate her organs.

Among the recipients were a person each in Mumbai and Delhi, and two at PGIMER Chandigarh.

"It's something no family should have to go through. We said 'yes' to organ donation because we knew this could help someone else and they wouldn't need to go through the heartache that we were going through. We knew it was the right thing to do," the girl's father said.

Prof Surjeet Singh, Director PGIMER, praised the girl's family, for the decision, saying such gestures bring a ray of hope to hundreds of patients.

"It is an extremely hard decision, but



the donor families are a silver lining in the dark lives of organ failure patients. It is through their generous acts of organ donation that hundreds of people each year are given a second chance at life," he said. According to the PGIMER statement here on Wednesday, on December 22, the girl fell unconscious due to a fall from a height and was rushed to a nearby civil hospital.

However, due to a worsening prognosis, the girl, who belongs to a hill state, was shifted to PGIMER in an extremely critical condition the same day.

Even Covid Positive Workers Will Work In This Canada Province. Here's Why

Agencies

Quebec, the second most populous Canadian province, has "no choice" but to allow some essential workers to continue working even after testing positive for COVID-19 to prevent staff shortages from impeding its healthcare services, Health Minister Christian Dubé said Tuesday.

Quebec, which has been setting daily records since the Omicron variant started a new wave of rapidly rising infections, recorded 12,833 new cases on Monday - the highest one-day count of any region in Canada during the pandemic.

"Omicron's contagion is so exponential, that a huge number of personnel have to be withdrawn - and that poses a risk to the network capacity to treat Quebecers," Dubé told reporters at a briefing.

"We made the decision that under a



certain condition positive staff will be able to continue working according to a list of priority and risk management," he said, adding that more information would be provided in the coming days.

Dubé said Quebec would also offer a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to everyone above the age of 18 from Jan. 4.

Last week, Quebec ordered bars, gyms and casinos to shut and directed people to work only from home. It also limited the size of gatherings at private homes and restaurants to six people.

Rape Convict, Sentenced To Life, Throws Shoe At Judge In Gujarat Court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SURAT: A court in Surat today sentenced a 27-year-old man to life imprisonment "for the remainder of his natural life" in a case of rape and murder of a five-year-old girl in April this year.

After the court of special POC SO judge PS Kala pronounced the sentence, the convict, Sujit Saket, got enraged and threw his slippers towards the judge. The footwear missed the target and fell near the witness box.

According to the prosecution, the convict, a resident of Madhya Pradesh, raped and murdered the girl on April 30. The victim was the daughter of a migrant labourer.

On finding the child alone, the convict kidnapped her under the pretext of getting her a chocolate.

He took the girl to an isolated place,



where he committed the crime and strangled her, the prosecution said.

A first information report, or FIR, was filed against the man.

The court considered the statements of 26 witnesses examined by the prosecution. The court also considered 53 documentary evidence before pronouncing the order.

Govt Failed To Resolve Issues Facing Sikh Community: APSCC

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee on Wednesday said that all governments of Jammu & Kashmir in the past have deliberately ignored the basic issues of Sikh community while taking refuge under the turmoil in the erstwhile state.

Jagmohan Singh Raina, Chairman APSCC said that the Sikh community has been neglected and discriminated against all long even in the new set of Union Territory.

"The government is not conducting elections of Gurdwara Parbandhak Committees. Since elections have not been held mismanagement and financial irregularities have come up in many districts with the same leading to litigation. By delaying elections of Gurdwara Parbandhak Committees Sikh community in Jammu & Kashmir feels bad about the government conduct

towards them," he said.

The APSCC demanded that the government should come forward and help the community in consolidating the property of the community attached with various Gurudwaras. Many vested interests have developed among influential people from within the community and outside the community to grab the property of Sikh community in both the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Despite repeated promises the Sikh community is not given the status of minority in Jammu & Kashmir," Raina said and impressed upon the government to shed away this irresponsible behaviour of treating the Sikh minority as second class citizens.

He said the agencies running the affairs of Jammu & Kashmir don't want to treat every citizen equally and at the same time they seem to be hell bent to carry out discrimination with the Sikhs.



AN ELDERLY MAN SMOKES hookah inside his boat on a cold Wednesday morning, while his friend looks on.

Pic: Abid Bhat/KO

Road To Every Village To Be A Reality Soon: Chief Secretary

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Wednesday directed the Public Works (R&B) Department to speed up execution of works under Capex, CSS and PMGSY to make road to every village in J&K a reality.

He made this observation in the course of a review meeting on the functioning of the department, which was attended by the Principal Secretary, PWD and other senior officers of the department, an official spokesperson said Wednesday.

While appreciating the performance of department, the Chief Secretary, he said, directed the department to ensure that the target of 1750 KM road length under PMGSY III is achieved during the next year.

"He laid emphasis on enhancing connectivity in the border villages including for border guarding forces and directed that all the border posts in J&K should be connected with the roads during the next year," he added.

In his presentation on Capex, Principal Secretary, PWD, Shailendra Kumar, as per the official spokesperson, informed that the department has spent 52 % of the funds released as on December, 2021, which represents a 22 % increase in expenditure over the same period during the last year.

He said it was further informed that there has been an expenditure of 95 % and 80 % against the releases made under Central Road Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) and PMGSY respectively.



"He further informed that out of 4355 works in which administrative approval stands accorded, 4239 works have been tendered and 3988 works stands allotted for execution," he added.

Giving details of the works completed under various schemes, the official spokesperson said that Kumar informed that a total of 2650 projects have been completed till date during the current year.

Against the target of 8000 roads, 5629 roads have been black topped while 2011 roads have been metalled/shingled during the current fiscal year.

Out of 819 projects sanctioned under NABARD, while 131 works were completed during the last year, 31 projects have been completed till date during the current fiscal year.

Under PMGSY I & II against the target of 322 roads, 226 roads were completed as on march 2021 while 103 long span bridge projects were completed against the target of 241 such bridges. Dr Mehta emphasized completion of rest of work at the earliest.

While stating that weather is a hindrance in the execution of works in some areas in the UT, the Chief Secretary as per the official spokesperson said that the department needs to devise a mechanism where in

technical vetting of the projects can be done in advance at the time of submission of projects to NABARD and administrative approval/technical sanction can follow later immediately after the projects are sanctioned by NABARD and funds for the projects are released by the Finance Department.

"He advised the department to think innovatively to cut down on time lost in awaiting various regulatory approvals and preparation of bidding documents by conceiving actionable protocols," he added.

Earlier, the official spokesperson said that while chairing a meeting of Union Territory Level Standing Committee (UTLSC), the Chief Secretary directed the department to ensure that the short closure of the projects under PMGSY is resorted to only in consultation with the concerned Panchayats.

"While agreeing with the departmental proposal for de-sanctioning of 9 projects under PMGSY I & II, Dr. Mehta asked the department to explore the possibility of considering all such projects, out of the de-sanctioned ones, as can be feasibly taken up under PMGSY IV," he said.

"The Chief Secretary directed the department to complete all 249 projects under PMGSY I & II by September, 2022," he added.

Chargesheet Against 3 For Duping Youth On Promise Of Jobs In NZ

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against three people for allegedly duping unemployed youth by promising them jobs in New Zealand.

Suresh Kumar and Tulsi Ram of Samba and Ghar Singh of Jammu were named in the chargesheet that was filed in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate here, a spokesperson of the Jammu Crime Branch said.

Ghar Singh is absconding, he said.

Puran Chand and Vinay Sharma, residents of Jammu, had in 2017 given a joint written complaint to the police alleging that Kumar, who runs 'Uncle's Visa Consultants' at Trikuta Nagar here, had taken several lakhs of rupees from them on the pretext of landing jobs in New Zealand, the spokesperson said.

The involvement of the three accused was fully established during the course of the inquiry, he said.

IUST Students Visit Hydel Powerproject



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To provide the first-hand experience of the hydro-electric power generation and processes involved, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, IUST organized a one day industrial visit to Upper Sindh Hydel Power Project-II, Srinagar for its 7th Semester students.

Head of Department Mechanical Engineering, Dr. Azher Jameel, who coordinated the visit underlined the objective of the visit and called on students to enhance their technical skills on a wide variety of platforms, a varsity spokesperson said. Jameel, he said, also emphasized the need to impart technical

skills by understanding the overall functioning, operation and maintenance of the power plant so that students would be better equipped for future.

The varsity spokesperson said that Dr. Azher also highlighted the key aspects of such visits called these visits an 'essential part of their undergraduate curriculum' and stated that more such visits would be conducted for the coming batches as well.

The students were accompanied by Assistant Professors of Mechanical Engineering Dr. Majid H Koul, Dr. Shuhaib Mushtaq and Dr. Ovais Gulzar, who briefed the students about the powerhouse functioning throughout the visit.

Missing Ramban Girl Recovered From Rajasthan

Agencies

BATOTE: Jammu and Kashmir police on Wednesday claimed to have recovered missing 19-year-old girl of Ramban district from Rajasthan.

A police spokesman said that on December 05, 2021, an application was received by the complainant that her daughter (name with held) was missing from her home since 04-12-2021.

"In this regard, a missing report was registered at P/S Batote and a

special team headed by PSI Harish Kumar was constituted under the supervision of Inspector Ajeet Singh, SHO Batote and Pardeep Singh Sen, DySP Hqrs Ramban under the overall supervision of Mohita Sharma, SP Ramban."

Police said that the team so constituted raided various locations in Delhi, Ghaziabad, Agra, Rajasthan and after connecting various leads and hectic efforts, the police team with the support of technical assistance finally recovered the missing girl from Jaipur, Rajasthan—(KNO)

Seminar On Drug De-Addiction Held At Sopore Law College

Khan Jahangeer

SOPORE : In order to awake the masses about drug addiction in society, District Administration Baramulla on Wednesday held a day long workshop cum awareness camp on drug de-addiction in Sopore town of North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The camp was organized by the Social welfare department Baramulla at Law college of this North Kashmir town.

The chief guest on the occasion was district Social Welfare officer Baramulla, Showkat Ahmad.

Besides Tehsil Social Welfare officer Sopore, Fayaz Ahmad Lone, Traders Federation Sopore, Principal Law College and students were present on the occasion.

The aim of the program was to show how we can eradicate drugs in our society so that our children can be mentally fit, said official. Adding that civil societies should come and play their role in eradicating the drug menace.

The official also stressed that such programmes should be held in every village so that we would be able to save this society from drug and mental disorders.

No Need For 'Black And Draconian' AFSPA In J&K: Soz

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister, Prof. Saifuddin Soz on Wednesday said that many innocent people have suffered immense 'miseries' through Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued here, Soz said that he felt extremely sad to know that Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha feels content with the continuance of this draconian Act.

"Today, I rose to the horror of AFSPA in J&K State, being in operation for more than 31 years since it was imposed in September, 1990. I had the privilege of challenging this law in the Lok Sabha on August 21, 1990 before its application to J&K State by calling it a Black and Draconian law potential enough to tarnish the image of Indian Democracy," he said.

"As per section 4 of this law, AFSPA, it gives soldiers sweeping powers to arrest without warrants and even shoot to kill in certain situations. I felt considerably surprised today when I came to know that the Lt.

Governor Manoj Sinha felt that there was no need to review this black and draconian law in J&K Union Territory," he added.

The former Union Minister also invited the attention of the J&K Union Territory Administration to what Justice SR Pandian (See Justice Pandian Commission Report – 2000) had said on AFSPA on 31st October, 2000.

"Justice SR Pandian had further said that in its (AFSPA's) operation in J&K State, many innocent people got killed and many others got injured in Chattisinghpura, Brakapora and Pathribal massacres," Soz said.

He said that Justice Pandian had further said in its report that, "it was nothing short of an unwarranted, brutal attack amounting to the murder without any justification and authority."

"I continue to think that this law is surely not needed when other laws like PSA are already available to maintain law and order on ground," he said.

"I lament the fact that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have suffered a great deal. No notice of their sufferings through this black and draconian law has ever been taken," Soz added.

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Former Deputy Chief Minister and BJP politician Dr Nirmal Singh on Wednesday said that Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah are tool-kits who operate on behalf of Pakistan. Singh's remarks came a day after Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) termed the police version with regard to the Hyderpora encounter as 'concocted, cover-up story'.

Four persons were killed in a contentious Hyderpora en-

counter in November.

On Tuesday DIG, Central Kashmir Range Sujit Kumar who head the Special Investigation Team probing the 'gun-fight' had said that though investigation is still under progress but prima facie it seems that Dr Mudassir Gul was killed by foreign militant while building owner Altaf Bhat lost his life in cross firing after militants made him human shield- assertions that invited sharp reaction from PAGD which reiterates its demand for a judicial probe into the incident.

Nirmal Singh said that the report with regard to the Hyderpora encounter submitted by SIT has made things clear and truth has finally surfaced.

"I want to tell Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti why they are putting question marks over the sacrifices being made by police, army and forces personnel to end militancy in Kashmir. They were claiming that police made the victims human shields but it has become now clear that they were made human shields by militants," Singh said. (KNT)

Advisor Bhatnagar Reviews Functioning Of DDRCs Across J&K

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar on Wednesday chaired a high level meeting to review the functioning of Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) across Jammu and Kashmir at Civil Secretariat here.

Speaking during the meeting, Advisor Bhatnagar highlighted that the Jammu and Kashmir Police is contributing significantly in drug de-addiction by providing required medical treatment and counselling at its De-addiction Centres across J&K. He lauded the efforts of JKP in combating this social menace and said that JKP is realising its social responsibility by such initiatives for the physical and mental develop-

ment of youth of entire J&K.

Remarking that drug addiction has emerged as a serious public health concern in J&K, Advisor Bhatnagar said that drug addiction is crippling the mental and physical well being of the youth by affecting cognitive control and ability of the youth who are easily influenced by vested interests to indulge in criminal activities. He remarked that it should be collective endeavour of teachers, parents, DDRCs and administration to overcome this social evil in our society for the betterment of our next generation.

Reiterating the governments commitment for welfare of youth, the Advisor delved upon the officers to organise special counselling sessions for those who are affected by drug abuse besides awareness programmes

and IEC campaigns on ill effects of drug addiction should be organised across the UT. He further directed the officers that training programmes must be initiated for volunteers of field departments, police and other forces whose services will later be used to train people at various levels.

While reviewing the facilities being provided at Drug De-addiction Centres, Advisor Bhatnagar directed the officers that all possible facilities on modern lines should be provided to affected persons for their timely recover.

He further asked them that Individual/family counselling, follow-up management, Work rehabilitation, Psycho social intervention and Pre-discharge counselling for all recovered patients should be done for their better care at home.

DELIMITATION EXERCISE

Oppn Resisting Proposals Involved In Communal, Sectarian Politics: Rana

Agencies

JAMMU: BJP leader Devender Singh Rana took a veiled dig at the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and National Conference (NC) for opposing delimitation commission recommendations for increasing assembly seats in Jammu region by six to 43 and in Kashmir region from 46 to 47 and alleged that these parties are involved in communal and sectarian politics. "Those people who are raising questions over the delimitation commission recommendations are involved in communal and sectarian politics. The decision has been taken on the basis of facts," Devender said.

The BJP leader further alleged that Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti opposing the delimitation commission recommendations wants the power to be limited to one community. "They (opposition)

say that they are leaders of Jammu and Kashmir, so why they are not happy that a community is getting its rights. This shows its mentality," Rana said.

"The Kashmiri Muslims are secular but the leaders there want to create a misbalance so that the power remains in their hands," he said. He further showed confidence that BJP will come to the power when the elections will take place in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Delimitation Commission, tasked with redrawing assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir, has proposed increasing assembly seats in the Jammu region by six to 43 and in Kashmir region from 46 to 47. It also proposed six additional assembly seats for the Jammu region and one for the Kashmir Valley as also nine seats for Scheduled Tribes and seven seats for Scheduled Castes in the Union Territory. (ANI)

School Staff Told To Help Admin In Combating Covid

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The government has directed the staff of School Education Department to continue to help the administration in preventing the transmission of new COVID-19 variant Omicron.

The Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction has said, that the divisional commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir and concerned deputy commissioners have setup COVID-19 Control Rooms and have deployed staff of School Education Department for containment management of COVID-19 outbreak in the Jammu and Kashmir.

The State Executive Committee (SEC) in an order has said, "The School Education Department on December-10 had ordered the cancellation of attachment of all teaching staff that were been deployed or attached for different administrative works in different departments and districts of Jammu and Kashmir." The committee however said that a detailed review meeting regarding current COVID-19 situation was held in Jammu by the Chief Secretary (Chairman SEC) of Jammu and Kashmir wherein it was decided that there is a need to continue and further strengthen the existing COVID-19 containment measures in all districts in view of newly discovered Variant B.1.1.529 (Omicron).

**KASHMIR
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K O V I E W

Mutating Pandemic

The World Health Organization has said the number of COVID-19 cases recorded worldwide increased by 11 percent last week compared with the previous week, revealing the steady rise in infections despite the world's best efforts to contain. One reason is the higher transmissibility of the virus than the Delta which preceded it. So far the largest spread has been in the Americas. In India, till Wednesday morning, 781 cases of the Omicron variant were recorded. Regular Covid infections also continue to take place, with numbers in Mumbai soaring over 4 percent. However, overall the infections are abating.

But the threat from Covid19 is far from over. There is every possibility that the world could face fresh waves of mass infections prompting renewed lockdown which then cripple the economy. The UN health agency said in its last weekly epidemiological report said there were nearly 4.99 million newly reported cases around the world from December 20-26.

Omicron is believed to be deadlier than the previous strains including the Delta. Even though, the countries are putting strict checks in place for the fresh visitors, some infected persons are slipping through the checks. There is, thus, fear that the new strain would be difficult to contain despite the restrictions.

Preliminary research has suggested that the COVID vaccines used in most of the world offer almost no defense against the highly contagious Omicron. Only the Pfizer and Moderna shots, when reinforced by a booster, have been found to have some success at stopping infections. But these vaccines are not available in most parts of the world. India, so far, has only locally produced Covishield and Covaxin which have mercifully proved effective against the coronavirus including the delta variant. This helped the country stave off the otherwise expected third wave.

So, India needs to get its act right. At the same time the world has to work together to stamp out what is otherwise an abating pandemic. Over the last two years, the world has certainly acted in concert in so far as the vaccination is concerned which has brought the pandemic under control. That said, the governments in the different countries have to stick to complementing the vaccination with the upgrading of healthcare and strict enforcement of adherence to SOPs in public. In India, this is more critical in view of the emergence of new Omicron strain. This alone will help pre-empt more outbreaks in various parts of the country which, if unchecked, could create conditions for a third wave.

OTHER OPINON

A Blurred Focus

The Centre has set a January deadline to merge four public-funded institutions — the Films Division (FD), National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF), and Children's Films Society of India (CFSI) — with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). This is an ill-conceived move. Each of these bodies has its separate mandate and all of them need to be strengthened further with funds and infrastructure updates so that they can deliver.

The primary reason behind the push for restructuring these institutions seems to be that they are loss-making entities. The NFDC is expected to turn around its finances once the merger takes place. This is a flawed assumption premised on comparing these cultural bodies with industrial units in the red. The NFAI, FD, DFF, CFSI are institutions with a history. They have been a part of independent India's nation-building process and have made stellar contributions to producing, disseminating and preserving the labour and creativity of diverse film cultures in the country. Take the NFAI, which was set up in 1964 to archive Indian cinema history. Despite its delayed birth — the first Indian film, Raja Harishchandra, was made in 1913 and the first talkie, Alam Ara, in 1931 — the NFAI has done a commendable job of preserving Indian cinema history, thanks to the vision and perseverance of its founder director, P K Nair. Like any national archive, it is involved in the task of protecting national heritage — countries such as the US and France allot public funds for their film archives precisely for this reason. In fact, the NFAI ought to be expanded so that it can do justice to the huge volumes of films produced in the country — India produces the largest number of films in the world annually. Each of India's major cinema production centres — Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai — has a long history, though much of it has been lost. Regional archives are necessary so that justice can be done to diverse vibrant cinema cultures in numerous languages.

All these years, India's public-funded cinema bodies have focussed mostly on nurturing an ecosystem to facilitate the making of arthouse cinema and documentaries that would not find support from the market. This approach, inadvertently perhaps, also facilitated the production of works that boldly questioned the very systems and processes that enabled their existence. The country was better off for this fine balance between a film industry that defined itself in market terms and a cinema that focussed on the politics and aesthetics of art production. Let it remain so.

The Indian Express

Everyday Should Be Good Governance Day

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Some days back, a Jammu based digital news portal TSL uploaded a very interesting video interview on its facebook page. A young man from a remote village of Ramban district was talking about his bad experiences in seeking information under RTI regarding works executed in his village under MG-NREGA. The young man who hails from Dehdah village of Gool tehsil of Ramban had been advised by officials in Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) office Ramban to travel all the way to Jammu to file a second in the non existent State Information Commission appeal under Right to Information Act (RTI). The ignorant officers of Rural Development Department Ramban seem to be unaware of the fact that there is State Information Commission (SIC) in J&K as the same has been shut down soon after abrogation of article 370.

Traveling from Ramban to Jammu

The aggrieved RTI applicant namely Shabir Ahmad Ganai, a resident of village Dehdah tehsil Gool district Ramban after traveling more than 150 kms reached Jammu some days back. When he went to Wazarat Road to file a second appeal before SIC, he was told that the said office had been shut down. Then he tried to meet Divisional Commissioner Jammu but he was denied the access. Poor Shabir has been in search of some information which should have been made available voluntarily in his village itself by the concerned Panchayat Secretary (VLW), but Govt officials even after 15 years of RTI enactment want to hide the facts from the public.

Shabir had sought copies of plans prepared by village panchayat for various works executed under MG-NREGA in his village during the last few years. This information was denied by the concerned Block Development Officer (BDO) who is the designated Public Information Officer (PIO) under RTI Act 2005.

Aggrieved, Shabir filed an appeal before Assistant Commissioner Development (ADC) Ramban; he too failed to provide the information. Finally, he was misled to file 2nd appeal in SIC Jammu. If this was a deliberate attempt to mislead Shabir, the officials should be taken to task. Shabir will now file 2nd appeal before Central Information Commission (CIC) New Delhi where his appeal will be listed only after a year or so.

Good governance week

Recently, the Narendra Modi-led government launched a nationwide 'Good Governance Week' campaign aiming at taking good administration down to the villages. In a message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the government is committed to strengthening good governance that is "pro-people" and guided by a "citizen-first" approach. The good governance week concluded recently and the theme of Good Governance Week is "Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur" which was celebrated as part of the 75th 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebration. The campaign was aimed to redress public grievances and improve service delivery. Several programmes were held across all states and UTs in this regard. In Jammu & Kashmir also several programmes were held by Govt but majority of these programmes were held for photo ops as hardly any public griev-



THE J&K RTI MOVEMENT PERSUADED the National Conference (NC) and CPI (M) to make RTI an election issue in the 2008 state assembly polls. Both parties assured people they would enact a strong RTI law if elected.

ances were addressed. Govt officers were seen taking pics in front of flex banners in almost all the Govt offices. The Good Governance week flex banners were seen uploaded on almost all the Govt J&K department twitter handles. Even a layman could make out it was not anything else than photo sessions. In Reasi a boat rally was taken out in Chenab by the district administration with banners of Good Governance week. What kind of good governance delivery is possible while taking out a boat rally?

Guidelines for Good governance week

Over 700 district collectors were supposed to participate in the good governance week campaign and during the weeklong event, they were supposed to visit different villages, blocks or tehsils of their district to provide timely grievance redressal and improve service delivery. How many DCs in J&K did this?

Guidelines were issued by the department of administrative reforms and public grievance (DARPG) and the state governments on the activities that will be taken by the district collectors at tehsil/panchayat offices. December 25th was to be observed as 'Good Governance Day' to mark the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The progress of the campaign was being monitored on www.pgportal.gov.in/ggw.

Every district collector/ district magistrate was supposed to present one successful good governance practice of the district and one successfully redressed public grievance case on the portal. We are unable to know what kind of information has been uploaded by DCs from J&K on the designated portal about the activities they held during good governance week?

Misinformation Campaign

On one hand, the Govt of India

claims that central laws have benefited people of J&K after they were extended to J&K. Some laws are indeed beneficial but their benefits hardly reach people and I have already written a lot about a few such laws like Right to Fair Compensation Act (RFTCLARR) or Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA). When it comes to RTI Act 2005 extended to J&K post article 370 abrogation, it is now evident that this law has not at all helped citizens of J&K or even Ladakh.

The central RTI Act of 2005, extended to Jammu & Kashmir on 31 October 2019, was previously only applicable to central government authorities that operated within the territory of the former state of J&K, which included Ladakh. After withdrawing support from the government led by the People's Democratic Party in June 2018, several Bharatiya Janata Party leaders ran a misinformation campaign that led many to believe that the RTI Act was not applicable in J&K because article 370 had been removed.

Those outside J&K were unfamiliar with the fact that J&K had a robust RTI law in operation, which was stronger and easier to use than the central law. The J&K legislature enacted the RTI Act in 2004, and passed an improved version of the law five years later.

As it did with more than 160 other state laws under the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, the Government of India could have protected the J&K RTI Act of 2009. Some of the prominent laws of J&K that are still protected post 370 are the J&K Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA), 2011, the draconian Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978, and the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989.

RTI Movement in J&K

The J&K RTI law came after a similar national law, the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act was enacted in 2002 by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government but not passed because of opposition from RTI campaigners, especially

the National Campaign for Peoples Right to Information (NCPRI). The FOI Act 2002 didn't allow for an independent appeal structure and exempted many organisations. It was passed by both houses of Parliament and the President of India, but was never notified, meaning it did not take effect.

After the first United Progressive Alliance government enacted the RTI Act in 2005, the Jammu & Kashmir RTI movement, of which I was part, got in touch with activists espousing the right to information, such as Aruna Roy, Arvind Kejriwal, Shekhar Singh, Maja Daruwala and Wajahat Habibullah, who was appointed CIC commissioner that year.

The J&K RTI Movement persuaded the National Conference (NC) and CPI (M) to make RTI an election issue in the 2008 state assembly polls. Both parties assured people they would enact a strong RTI law if elected.

When the NC's Omar Abdullah was elected Chief Minister in 2008, he made the draft bill public and sought public comments. On 20 March 2009, the improved J&K RTI Act 2009 was enacted.

Under the RTI Act 2005, there is no time-frame to dispose of a second appeal when filed before the SIC or the CIC. However, the now repealed J&K RTI Act of 2009 made it mandatory for the J&K SIC to dispose of the appeal between 60 to 120 days. This time-bound legal provision helped appellants get quicker replies and reduced pending appeals at the J&K SIC.


In addition, under the J&K RTI Act 2009, the first appellate authority could recommend to the SIC the penalisation of an obdurate public information officer. The J&K State Chief Information Commissioner had the rank and status of a Supreme Court Judge and two other commissioners were equivalent to state chief secretary. This ensured the government did not interfere with the SIC.

Conclusion


After the repeal of article 370 and the closure of the SIC, J&K and Ladakh have been linked with the Central Information Commission-CIC New Delhi's CIC which is already overburdened with RTI appeals and complaints. All the pending cases in the J&K SIC were transferred to the CIC late in 2019. These cases are not even listed because thousands of appeals are already pending there. I have filed some RTI appeals before CIC more than a year back and till date not even a single appeal has been listed for even first hearing? More than 35,000 appeals are said to be pending in CIC, now imagine when shall Shabir's case be listed for hearing? Had every day been a good governance day, persons like Shabir would not have had to come all the way to Jammu from a remote village in Ramban to get information about works executed under MG-NREGA in his village. The way Shabir has been made to move from one office to another clearly indicates that all these good governance weeks and days is simply a mockery as many Govt officers continue to harass people who seek transparency and demand accountability.

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

The author is an Acumen Fellow. He had done PG Diploma in Climate Action from Anant National University Ahmedabad

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Rote Learning: A Curse

EDUCATION is both a bay and an end in itself. Both memorization and observations are necessary. The former opens up the closed sections of the brain, while the latter is all about exposing an individual to the realities of life. However, all purpose gets lost when memorisation is taken to be education in toto. Infact, in the long run, cramming manipulates the fundamental purpose of education.

This malaise is not a product of only some years and has reasons that have brewed up to worsen the rot over the years. An outdated syllabi is

the very first issue to begin with. For decades, a child-centered curriculum has been pushed by experts in vain. We've continued preferring evaluation over real education. The result is that for the sake of so-called learning, students memorize things without understanding it. Furthermore, notes are prepared by a third-party which makes even the little good go.

This culture has imbued lethargy into students who now rely and depend on ready-made stuff. Instead of following the process of reading, comprehending and analysing; they jump to mindlessly cramming what is typed

out on a handout given to them. This trend is encouraged by the system itself as rote learning is seen as a sure shot way to fetch good grades.

This race for merit is also one of the main reasons that education is going downhill. Instead of eliciting innovative thinking, our system makes students compete in such a way that they'd only want good grades by hook or by crook. Creativity, experimentation and observation is never rewarded, as a result, we end up creating a mass of incompetent students.

Our society is to be blamed at large

for this. They've made themselves believe as though reading and writing is education. They are themselves oblivious to the beauty and real essence of education. In an unequal society, to find equality is education. Finding beauty in ugliness is education. This aspect of education is completely overlooked. When students need life skills and freedom to make their lives better and our world better, we force them into a rat race of nothing.

Syed Mustafa Ahmad
and Syed Mehroosh

Omicron And Immunity

Mick Bailey - Nicholas John Timpson

With the highly mutated omicron variant spreading rapidly, people want to know if immunity from vaccination or a prior infection will be enough to protect them against getting infected or developing severe disease.

If prior immunity does provide sufficient protection, then precautionary measures to slow omicron's spread, together with vaccinating and boosting people, should prevent intolerable strain on healthcare systems. But if not, then increased social restrictions are inevitable as the variant spreads around the world and potentially replaces delta, which is currently the dominant variant.

Early studies – all of which are still preprints, so yet to be formally reviewed by other scientists – suggest that omicron is handled less well by existing immunity. But research also suggests that giving a third booster vaccine dose may provide protection. So, the bad news isn't as bad as it could be, but the good news also needs to be treated with caution. Here's why.

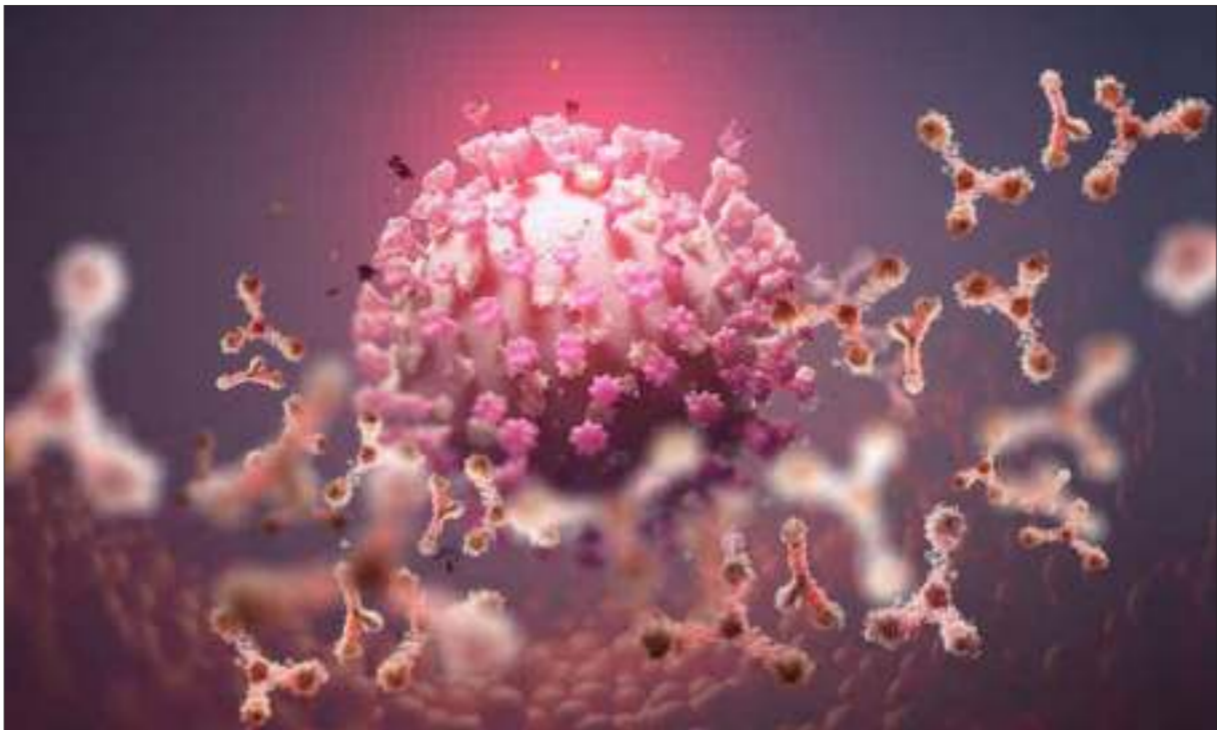
More to immunity than antibodies

Inevitably, early reports have focused on the most quickly accessible data, which is the amount of antibodies people have in their blood that are capable of neutralising the new variant.

Overall, the data consistently suggest that omicron can escape these neutralising antibodies to some extent: the reduction in neutralisation in double-vaccinated people is somewhere between 10- to 20-fold to 40-fold compared to delta. That said, in people who had received two vaccinations and had also been infected, the level of neutralisation of omicron was higher.

This may seem alarming. But it's not the whole story. In previous studies that have looked at earlier forms of the virus, levels of neutralising antibodies have correlated well with levels of protection – greater neutralising activity equating to better protection.

But lower levels of neutralising an-



EVEN IN THE INITIAL ABSENCE OF ANTIBODIES THAT CAN neutralise the virus, these mechanisms may also provide a level of protection against infection or symptomatic disease. This may still be sufficient to reduce the likelihood of omicron causing severe disease and limit its impact on health systems

tibodies doesn't necessarily mean people are completely exposed. Past studies have also found that many people with low levels of antibodies do still appear to be sufficiently protected, particularly against severe disease, even with the newer variants like delta. We may find that the same applies with omicron.

This is most likely because neutralising antibodies that attack and nullify the virus are just part of the immune response. There are also binding antibodies, which attach to the virus or to infected cells to flag them to other immune cells for destruction, and T cells and memory B cells, which can attack the virus directly and produce more antibodies to fight it.

Even in the initial absence of anti-

bodies that can neutralise the virus, these mechanisms may also provide a level of protection against infection or symptomatic disease. This may still be sufficient to reduce the likelihood of omicron causing severe disease and limit its impact on health systems.

A boost of good news?

Two of the recent reports also strongly suggest that a third booster dose of a COVID vaccine dramatically increases levels of neutralising antibodies against the widespread delta variant and that this would also increase neutralisation of the omicron variant.

One of these (a press release from Pfizer) suggests that a booster can

provide quite a marked increase in neutralisation of omicron, although this only included a summary of the results and not the full dataset.

A closer examination of what data is available in these studies reveals that reduced neutralisation of omicron can be extremely variable (which is why it would be helpful to see Pfizer's results in full). While some vaccinated or previously infected people are good at neutralising omicron, some have almost no neutralising antibodies, even after a booster dose.

So are these people still likely to be protected against infection or severe disease? It's hard to say. As discussed above, we don't know the extent to which the immune system's other mechanisms can provide protection.

However, we do know these other immune mechanisms target different parts of the coronavirus to neutralising antibodies. And while the part of the virus that neutralising antibodies target – the spike protein – is heavily mutated in omicron, the bits these other mechanisms focus on aren't so badly affected.

We can hope that people with low levels of neutralising antibodies, even after a booster, will therefore be protected by these other immune defences remaining largely undiminished. This, though, is not a given, and we need further studies to measure real-life protection.

Optimism rather than confidence

Overall, then, what we know so far is that vaccination or prior infection should provide some protection against omicron, and that for most people protection should be increased by a booster vaccine dose.

But the crucial message from these early studies is that we still need a lot more information to assess the national and global impact of the rapid spread of this new variant. We need more and larger studies on neutralising antibodies after different combinations of vaccines and previous infections.

We also need studies of the ability of other protective mechanisms (T cells, binding antibodies) to control infections and disease caused by omicron. And we need to know how much these mechanisms are also boosted by a third vaccine dose.

And above all, we need large, real-time studies of levels of infection and disease attributable to omicron to allow rapid, rational public health decisions to be made. Research groups around the world are addressing all these areas and, in the near future, we can expect their reports to make the situation clearer.

The author is a Professor of Comparative Immunology, University of Bristol and Professor of Genetic Epidemiology, University of Bristol. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation

Has Globalisation Of Technology Trivialised Conversations?

Gopika Nair

SOCIAL MEDIA'S PRIMARY

purpose was to facilitate effortless communication across borders and time zones. At that time, when Facebook messages, AIM chats and MSN Messenger were some of the popular players, people lamented that technology had made phone calls and even face-to-face interactions redundant to a degree. But now, the rapid advancements in technology have more or less destroyed the quality of human interaction



In early 2021, the tech space was buzzing with the kind of excitement that is only reserved for something new, something shiny and something that promises to be truly revolutionary.

That was Clubhouse – the social media app that positions itself as a “new type of social network based on voice”.

While images and videos reign supreme on Instagram and TikTok, Clubhouse's goal was to foster stronger connections among people by means of audio. And the premise worked. Soon after its launch, Clubhouse exploded in popularity, become the fastest-growing social media app in history.

Now that we're in the home-stretch of 2021, Clubhouse has been relegated to a “pandemic fad”. The app is still trudging along, but most of its users have abandoned it. In the months that followed Clubhouse's dramatic rise to popularity, its monthly downloads fell from 9 million in February to 920,000 in November. Part of the reason is that the app is facing stiff competition from major tech players, such as Twitter and Facebook.

Twitter launched Spaces, while Facebook introduced a short-form Soundbites feature. In an effort to fight back, Clubhouse removed its invitation-only requirement and became available on Android. Still, Clubhouse's future remains uncertain after a year that saw giant tech companies adopt some significant changes.

It might be safe to say that save for October 4, when Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook were inaccessible for hours, 2021 was the year nobody could escape the snares of technology. How could we when the small icons within our phones were snowballing with frequent changes?

Instagram's Reels continued to replicate some of TikTok's core features by introducing a new remix option, text-to-speech effects and a vertical feed. Twitter launched its Blue subscription service in addition to Spaces, the Clubhouse copycat that allowed users to have live audio conversations on the platform.

TikTok did what it does best and appealed to the younger crowd by introducing new playlist and livestream features, among oth-

ers. Facebook sought to undergo the most drastic transformation of all with its rebrand to Meta and a shift towards a “metaverse-first” outlook.

Thanks to the globalisation of technology, everyone everywhere now has a voice and something to say through a medium of their choosing, be it audio, video or text. And yet, because of the globalisation of technology, these conversations don't seem to matter much at all.

Social media's primary purpose was to facilitate effortless communication across borders and time zones. At that time, when Facebook messages, AIM chats and MSN Messenger were some of the popular players, people lamented that technology had made phone calls and even face-to-face interactions redundant to a degree. But now, the rapid advancements in technology have more or less destroyed the quality of human interaction.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic and the social restrictions that followed, modern life had made us all lonely. The cause can't be attributed to social media alone, but it certainly played a role.

Young people, in particular, have grown hyper-aware about their daily interactions outside social media. Some of us can't even seem to form genuine connections with the people we see on a daily basis; instead, we turn to apps, such as Bumble BFF, to meet up with strangers and try to kindle some semblance of a friendship. The connections we do have are next to impossible to maintain.

Most interactions are a variation of “Let's catch up soon!” that goes unfulfilled, while others are simply a text that arrives once a year, which reads: “Hi, I saw that it was our Facebook friend anniversary today and that made me think of you.” We learn about graduations, job changes, weddings and babies through Reels, TikToks and Stories. In essence, we've forgotten how to reach out and talk to each other about the things that matter.

Social media may or may not be dumbing us down, but there's no denying that it has diluted our conversations. Moreover, when everyone is fighting for a space to be heard, no one has the means or ability to listen, and even if they do, social media has made it easy to be selective about what you hear.

The dying art of conversation makes a small appearance in Netflix's recent satire Don't Look Up, in which two astronomers try to warn the world about a comet that's going to destroy Earth. Their efforts are thwarted as the existence of the comet becomes a hotly contested political issue. Despite scientific warnings, one side simply does not believe in the doomsday scenario.

At one point, an exasperated Dr Randall Mindy (Leonardo DiCaprio) asks: “What the hell happened to us? How do we even talk to each other? What've we done to ourselves? How do we fix it?”

Of course, there's no real way to fix it, but perhaps the only solution is to embrace the joy of missing out and seeing technology for what it is – an enabler of connections, not the pandering ground for fragile egos.

Khaleej Times

4 New Year’s Resolutions For A Healthier Environment In 2022

Agencies

When many people think of New Year’s resolutions, they brainstorm ways to improve themselves for the year ahead. What if we expanded those aspirations to include resolutions that benefit our communities, society and the planet, too?

It might not be a typical approach, but it can broaden your horizons to show ways you can also be of service to others.

Here are four popular New Year’s resolutions with a twist for improving your relationship with nature in 2022 and beyond.

Exercise more consideration for how your actions impact the environment

We each have an environmental ethic reflecting how we value, manage and ultimately relate to nature. Balancing the scales of reciprocity between us and nature—how much we give and take—can improve this relationship in many ways. Whether it’s our addiction to one-use plastics that pile up in landfills or fossil fuels that warm the planet, a mishandled relationship with nature is not doing us or the Earth any favors.

In 2022, we can all take more responsibility for how our actions exacerbate environmental problems. We can also encourage governments and businesses to make it easier for people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to protect the environment. This includes making recycled goods affordable and reliable public transportation widely accessible.

Check out the US Environmental Protection Agency’s resources describing some very simple ways to reduce waste at home, work, in our communities and during the holidays. Tips from the website include turning off or unplugging lights during the



day, reusing packaging materials and using online billing services instead of paper mail.

Lose the weight of social injustice—it harms nature, too

The perils of social injustice stress multiple aspects of society. Racism and inequality can lead to health disparities, and they also have consequences for the natural environment.

A recent study described how practices such as redlining and residential segregation led to unequal access to nature, excess pollution and biodiversity loss. These

practices brought in highways and industries that harm environmental quality in marginalised communities. They also left neighborhoods with fewer parks and trees that provide cooling in summer and benefit the planet.

Perpetuating social ills like systemic racism and inequitable resource allocation is detrimental to the environment, marginalized people and society as a whole.

To help turn this around, you can speak out in your community. Join groups that are trying to promote environmental pro-

tection and social justice and are bringing nature back to communities. Call your city, state and Congressional leaders to urge them to take action. Also, refer to the Green 2.0 report’s section on making diversity initiatives successful for concrete ways that you can actualize this in your place of work.

Learn something new about nature and how to reduce harm to the environment and yourself

Clean air, water and soil are fundamental for our survival, but research shows many people lack basic environmental and health literacy to know how to protect themselves.

In 2022, get to know your own impact on the environment. Read more and start exploring ways to preserve the integrity of your area’s natural resources. For example, find out where you can stay abreast of local land-use decisions that impact the environment and your overall community.

You can also support local educators and encourage them to bring the environment into lessons. Environmental issues overlap many other subjects, from history to health. This website includes a framework and materials for educators to help students expand their environmental literacy.

Staying plugged in with media that discuss the latest research can enhance awareness. You can also try tying environmental facts and knowledge into your game night and team-building activities.

Spend more time with family and friends in nature

Studies show that spending time in nature, including urban green spaces, can improve your relationship with nature and with others.

Time in nature can increase social cohesion. Throughout the pandemic, many people discovered the outdoors as a place to de-

“We each have an environmental ethic reflecting how we value, manage and ultimately relate to nature. Balancing the scales of reciprocity between us and nature—how much we give and take—can improve this relationship in many ways. Whether it’s our addiction to one-use plastics that pile up in landfills or fossil fuels that warm the planet, a mishandled relationship with nature is not doing us or the Earth any favors.”

compress and reduce stress. Spending more time outdoors can encourage social interactions that benefit health, buffer emotional distress and encourage use of these spaces, which can help protect them for the future.

Here are some tools that outline best practices to enhance parks and recreation near you. Also, here are ways to make outdoor environments more inclusive for families in diverse communities.

Collectively, thinking about our relationship with nature and finding ways to protect the environment can help us be better stewards of the planet.

The Conversation

Study Suggests Storybooks Might Be An Early Source Of Gender Stereotypes For Children

Agencies

Studies have shown that children by age 2 start to develop beliefs about gender, including stereotypes that boys are better at math or girls are better at reading.

Children’s interactions with and observations of adults have been cited as the sources of these beliefs. However, a new study published in the journal Psychological Science examines a different, potentially under-recognized source of gender stereotypes and associations, popular children’s books.

Researchers found that storybooks contain many words that adults consider to be gendered and likely contribute to children’s gender knowledge.

“We found that many popular children’s books often read to young children, like Curious George and Amelia Bedelia, contain rich information about gender that is presented in subtle ways,” said Molly Lewis, a researcher with the Department of Psychology at Carnegie Mellon University and lead author of the study. “In some cases, the stereotypes in these books were stronger than in books targeted at adults.”

Previous research on children’s books and gender stereotypes has relied mostly on content analysis. Lewis and her team took a different approach. They collected a corpus of 247 books commonly read to children ages 5 and under and asked adults to rate on a 5-point scale how strongly the words in the books’ text were associated with masculinity and femininity. An overall gender bias score was calculated for each book.

Books with the highest feminine-bias scores included Chrysan-

themum, Brave Irene, and Amelia Bedelia, according to the study. Those with the highest masculine-bias scores included Curious George, Dear Zoo, and Goodnight, Goodnight Construction Site. The Polar Express, In the Night Kitchen, and Hippos Go Berserk were rated as “neutral.”

The researchers also used “word embeddings,” a machine learning method, to measure words’ gender associations beyond the adults’ ratings. This approach



identified patterns in gender-related “word neighbours,” which are terms that typically appear together across large bodies of text, such as “merry” and “Christmas” in American English. The analysis showed that children’s books vary widely in the number of gender associations they contain, from strongly male to strongly female.

“We found that books that we estimated to be gender-biased based on adult judgments also tended to be biased when we used this automated method,” Lewis said. “This is important because it suggests that some of the gender associations that emerge in adulthood begin to appear in the statistics of children’s texts and could potentially be learnable from exposure to children’s books.”

Machine learning was also used to examine whether gender stereotypes that social psychologists have uncovered in past behavioural experiments also appeared in children’s books. “For instance, we found that the statistical patterns of words in these books reflected the stereotype that boys are good at math, while girls are good at reading,” Lewis said.

“Another unexpected result was that children tended to be exposed to books that conveyed gender stereotypes about their own gender: girls tended to be read books about girl characters; boys tended to be read books about boy characters,” Lewis said. “These findings are important because they suggest that books may be inadvertently teaching young children about gender stereotypes.”

One unanswered question the research identified is how children learn stereotypes about other genders when they’re more commonly read books with stereotypes of their own gender. The researchers suggest that children garner this information from media depictions and personal interactions. And, since many kids receive more information about their own gender, they may have “less precise intuitions” about the stereotypes of other genders.

Overall, there were more female biases across the corpus than male biases. However, the research also revealed that gender portrayals varied across the books studied.

“One implication of this finding is that parents may be able to influence children’s development of beliefs about gender through their choice of books,” Lewis said.

An encouraging finding, she said, is that not all storybooks contain gender stereotypes and some feature gender information that contradicts stereotypes.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
R&B SPECIAL SUB-DIVISION URI

(NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER)

NIT No. 93/ SSDU/ 4451-60 / 2021-22/ R&B/Uri.

DATED: 27.12.2021

For and on behalf of the "Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K" e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following works:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of Tender Documents (Rs. Rupees)	Earnest Money (Rs. Rupees)	Time of Completion (In Days)	Date and Time of Opening of Bids	M.H.O./Accountant	Class of Contract
1.	Construction/Upgradation of Thala to Jadda road by way of widening & laying of W&V Grade-II and Grade-III (crushed) in Km 2 nd and Km 2 nd .	0.52	200/-	1428/-	10 days	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM	B&P	"DEE"
2.	Construction/Upgradation of road from Dachi to Upper Jachi by way of widening & laying of W&V Grade-II and Grade-III (crushed) in Km 2 nd and Km 2 nd .	3.61	200/-	1428/-	10 days	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM	Potholes	"DEE"
3.	Construction/Upgradation of link road from FHC Ganga to R&B Marwala Ganga by way of Construction of 3.3 walls in Km 1 st & 2 nd .	2.73	200/-	8180/-	10 days	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM	State Sector	"DEE"
4.	Construction/Upgradation of Peer Achala Nekwal Road by way of widening and laying of Halah Muck, W&V Grade II (Crushed) & Laying of RCC Pipes.	2.97	200/-	8804/-	10 days	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM	State Sector	"DEE" (N/A)
5.	Construction of Road from Mahomed Dars to Dulla (Spring) by way of widening & laying of grades, concrete and laying of well in the Road.	2.04	200/-	8510/-	10 days	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM	PR Grants	"DEE"
6.	Construction of well in the Road for Building for Primary School Lower Ganga.	0.79	200/-	2330/-	10 days	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM	District Sector	"DEE"

Position of A.A.A - Accorded

Position of funds - Available

1. The Bidding Documents Consisting of Qualifying Information, Eligibility Criteria, Specifications, Drawings, Bill of Quantities (B.O.Q), Set of Terms and Conditions of Contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the Departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice.	27-12-2021.
2. Period of Downloading of Bidding Documents.	From 27-12-2021, 02.30 P.M. to 03-01-2022, 4.30 P.M.
3. Bid Submission Start Date	27-12-2021 From 02.00 A.M.
4. Bid Submission End Date	03-01-2022 up to 4.00 P.M.
5. Date and Time of Opening of Bids (Online).	04-01-2022 at 11.00AM in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri.

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri (Tender Inviting Authority) and Bid security Declaration as per format given in SBD. The EMD has to be submitted by the lowest bidder LI (3% of quoted cost) within the period as specified in SBD. Performance Security shall be used in shape of CDR/FDR for tendering process.

3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on website 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 the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri. (Tender Receiving Authority).

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

5. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-
a. 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.
b. 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.

6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

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

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

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

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

6.6. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.
Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

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

8. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of treasury challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri and Bid Security Declaration must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The original treasury challan (cost of tender document), CDR/FDR (earnest money/ bid security) and relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of contract.

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

10. Price Escalation and Taxes: Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

No.: SSDU/2021/4451-60

Date: 27-12-2021

Sd/-

Executive Engineer.

R&B Special Sub-Division, Uri.

DIPK-15739/21

Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj

Office of the Block Development

Officer Srinagar (South) Qamarwari.

Email: bdoqamarwari@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applications are invited from the un-employed youth for the establishment of one Poultry farm & one Dairy Farm under District Capex Budget DDC Grants for the financial year 2021-22 at Halqa Panzinara-B

No:- BDO/Qam/PLG/Estt./616

Dated: 27.12.2021

DIPK-15794/21

Block Development Office
Srinagar South Qamarwari.

Indian Travellers Indulged In 'Workcation' Mode This Year: Report



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Indian travellers were busy indulging in 'workcation' -- working away from home in a scenic location -- this year as they tried to adapt and make up for lost vacations while working remotely after the coronavirus pandemic upended travel and tourism sector in 2020, according to OYO Travelopedia 2021.

Around 65 per cent of respondents in India have travelled in the past six months and a majority of them visited their loved ones, while some went for a getaway from their daily routines and travelled for leisure.

"Nearly 48 per cent of Indians worked from home during the year, out of which a whopping 85 per cent preferred taking workcations or working away from home in a scenic location. And out of these, 61 per cent took a workcation," according to OYO's fourth year-end annual index - OYO Travelopedia 2021.

Interestingly, nearly 27 per cent took a month-long workcation. Hill stations ranked top on the list of spots for these work and travel trips, followed by many who visited their hometowns and beach destinations.

The annual consumer survey by the hospitality platform to study travel intent and expectations among its user base across some of its core markets, including India, Indonesia and Europe, took responses of nearly 3,000 people this month.

The OYO Travelopedia 2021 found that with mass vaccination drives, travel intent and confidence among Indians is back with 60 per cent of respondents have planned vacations for the winter holiday season.

However, most seem to plan their trip closer to the date. "Nearly 31 per cent said they plan their trips a month in advance, whereas 26 per cent prefer planning their travel only a week in advance. This is a stark contrast from pre-COVID days," it said.

Small Stocks Score Big In 2021; Set To Sail Northwards In New Year

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Stock market minnows put up a stellar show in 2021 giving returns of up to 60 per cent amid Dalal Street dream run and are likely to continue sailing northwards in the New Year too.

Trumping pandemic-induced uncertainties, the Indian equity market posted stunning gains this year achieving several feats and smaller stocks benefited the most from the strong momentum.

From reaching the momentous 50,000-mark in January to scaling 61,000-level in October, the BSE Sensex had an epic journey this year.

Till December 28 this year, the midcap index gained 6,712.46 points or 37.41 per cent while the smallcap index zoomed 10,824.78 points or 59.81 per cent.

In comparison, the BSE Sensex jumped 10,146.15 points or 21.24 per cent.

"We are in a structural bull market where midcap and smallcap stocks tend to outperform. It was a very tough period for midcap and smallcap stocks from the beginning of 2018 to March 2020 because of the



announcement of Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG) and regulatory changes in the mutual fund industry therefore valuations were attractive."

"Major announcements of economic reforms are also leading many small companies to witness stellar growth," Parth Nyati, Founder of Tradingo, said. The record-shattering rally on Dalal Street came amid massive liquidity support from global central banks, large scale vaccination drive and favourable domestic economic policies.

The midcap index zoomed to its all-time high of 27,246.34 points on October 19, 2021.

In a similar fashion, the smallcap index jumped to its record high of 30,416.82 on the same day.

I-T Dept Relaxes Time Till Feb 2022 For Taxpayers To Complete Verification Of FY'20 ITRs

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Taxpayers who have not e-verified their ITRs for 2019-20 fiscal can complete the verification process by February 28, 2022, as the Income Tax department has given a one-time relaxation to assessees.

As per law, an income tax return (ITR), filed electronically without a digital signature, has to be verified electronically through Aadhaar OTP, or net-banking, or code sent through demat account, pre-validated bank account and ATM within 120 days of filing the return.

Alternatively, taxpayers can send a physical copy of the ITR filed to the Centralised Processing Centre (CPC) office in Bengaluru.

If the verification process, which is done through ITR-V form, is not complete, then it is considered that the return has not been filed.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in a circular dated December 28, said a large number of electronically filed ITRs for the Assessment Year 2020-21, still remain pending with the Income Tax department for want of receipt of a valid ITR-V Form at CPC, Bengaluru or pending e-Verification from the



taxpayers concerned.

"In respect of all ITRs for Assessment Year 2020-21 (fiscal 2019-20) which were uploaded electronically by the taxpayers within the time allowed... and which have remained incomplete due to non-submission of ITR-V Form... the Board... hereby permits verification of such returns either by sending a duly signed physical copy of ITR-V to CPC, Bengaluru through speed post or through EVC/OTP modes.

"Such verification process must be completed by February 28, 2022," the CBDT said.

This relaxation shall not apply in those cases, where during the intervening period, I-T

department has already taken recourse to any other measure for ensuring filing of tax return by the taxpayer concerned after declaring that the return has not been filed, it added.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said "non-compliant taxpayers would get ample time to come clean and complete the verification process, enabling the tax department to process the returns.

"However, such non-compliant taxpayers would not be compensated for interest for the intervening period under section 244A, as the reasons for delay are attributable to the taxpayer himself."

'E-Commerce Hiring Up 28% In 2021; 2022 Likely To Be Even More Promising'

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Employment opportunities in the e-commerce and allied industries witnessed a 28 per cent surge in 2021, and recruitment activities in this segment will gain further momentum driven by economic recovery and aggressive vaccination drive, according to TeamLease Services.

The e-commerce sector grew by 8 per cent in 2020 and 30 per cent in 2021. It is now poised to reach USD 111 billion by 2024 and USD 200 billion by 2026.

The stellar growth in this sector has provided the much-needed impetus to the economy and created a multitude of employment opportunities.

Looking at the employment ecosystem, there was a 28 per cent surge in employment opportunities in e-commerce and allied industries (e-commerce, social commerce, online grocery/ essentials) in 2021, according to TeamLease Services.

"With the aggressive vaccination drive pan India and economic activities gaining normalcy, next year is going to be very optimistic. Hiring activities have resumed in most of the industries, even the ones which faced maximum impact

last year," said Ajoy Thomas, VP & Business Head (Retail, E-Commerce, Logistics & Transportation), TeamLease Services.

For e-commerce and startups, which have been rewarding throughout, many new job



opportunities will be added in 2022, and hiring will further go up by 32 per cent, Thomas added.

Over the year, the demand was high for roles like supply chain management, warehouse roles, support services, and customer service management.

The report further noted that not only Tier I locations, but even Tier II to Tier IV regions witnessed a surge in hiring, especially as e-commerce has now gone deeper into the interiors of the country.

"Appraisals in these industries were at an average of 20 to 30 per cent. Many companies also introduced unique benefits and compensations like relax-

ing their attendance policies, providing flexibility in schedule changes, implementing additional sick leave and exploring back-up childcare options for employees," it said.

The year 2022 is going to be an even more promising year for e-commerce and tech startups, which are poised to reach a CAGR of 27 per cent, reaching USD 111 billion by 2024, TeamLease Services said.

While 2022 is going to be a promising year, some reforms and financial aid are required to help the sectors grow and flourish, it added.

In the coming year, especially during the next budget, the government should recognise and support new business models in both product and service segments, aimed at improving consumer experience and providing gainful employment to regular and gig workers with improved earnings, it said.

Additionally, much clarity is also required about the current e-commerce policies.

"From a policy perspective, reforms should not be stifled with red-tape, bureaucratic rigmarole and avoidable policy restrictions. All of this will help boost further growth in the segment," it noted.

RBI Warns Of Bad Loan Spike, Pencils NPAs At 8.1-9.5% By Sep

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Gross bad loans of banks may rise from 6.9 per cent in September 2021 to 8.1-9.5 per cent by September 2022 if the Omicron variant strikes the economy hard, as per the financial stability report of the Reserve Bank released on Wednesday.

The report also said that the rising stress level in the retail loan portfolio of banks -- the mainstay of bank credit for many years now -- was led by home loans, which grew in double-digits so far this fiscal.

While asset quality improved, with gross non-performing assets (GNPA) and net NPA (NNPA) ratios declining to 6.9 and 2.3 per cent, respectively, in September 2021, the slippage ratio inched up during the same period as private sector banks showed a higher rate of deterioration in asset quality, as per the report.

But, based on the stress tests, the report warns that the GNPA ratio may rise to 8.1 per cent by September 2022 under the baseline scenario and further to 9.5 per cent under severe stress, if the economy is hit by an Omicron wave.

Within the bank groups, public sector banks' GNPA stood at 8.8 per cent in September 2021



and may deteriorate to 10.5 per cent by September 2022 under the baseline scenario, while for private-sector lenders, the same may rise from 4.6 per cent to 5.2 per cent, and for foreign banks, it may increase from 3.2 per cent to 3.9 per cent over the same period, the report said.

Similarly, the overall provisioning coverage ratio moved up from 67.6 per cent in March 2021 to 68.1 per cent in September 2021.

Banks have not only improved their profitability, asset quality and capital adequacy but will also be able to comply with minimum capital requirements even in a severe stress scenario, as per the macro-stress tests.

However, the same tests on non-banks indicate that a significant number of them would be hit if there are liquidity shocks and the network analysis points to increasing inter-bank exposure, raising contagion risks.

Smartphone Industry Set For Smart Growth In New Year; Shipments Likely To Touch 190-200 Mn

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Indian smartphone industry might have hit speed bumps on component supply crunch but the resilient sector is poised to see 190-200 million shipments in 2022 with more 5G devices vying for consumers' attention.

When the pandemic forced people to stay indoors, smartphones became their window to the world, helping them stay connected with friends, Work From Home (WFH) and even learn new recipes.

As people embraced hybrid work models, binged on web series and shot innumerable 'Reels' to stay entertained, the demand for smartphones went up significantly even as supply faced issues.

According to Counterpoint Research Analyst Shilpi Jain, the Indian smartphone market has been experiencing a steady growth curve over the last five years, growing continuously to reach 158 million units in 2019. "The impact of COVID-19 saw the market experiencing a minor dip showcasing its resilience. The market is now set for an accelerated growth period realising the true potential of the Indian market in the coming years crossing the 200 million mark in 2022," she said.



CyberMedia Research (CMR) Analyst, Industry Intelligence Group Anand Priya Singh estimated the smartphone shipments to hover around a similar level of 187-190 million in 2022 with a further uptick in 5G device shipments, growing 129 per cent year-on-year from 28 million in 2021 to around 64 million in 2022.

Singh said there has been an 11 per cent year-on-year growth in smartphone shipments from 150 million in 2020 to 167-168 million in 2021.

While 5G networks may not be available yet, industry watchers say 5G smartphones are in demand as consumers consider 5G among their top 3 priorities while purchasing smartphones.

Realme India CEO Madhav Sheth said conversations around 5G technology and devices have been buzzing since 2019 and smartphone manufacturers introduced 5G devices in early 2020.

SHORT TAKES

Committed To Pursue PM's Vision Of Zero Budget Natural Farming: Dir Agri

SRINAGAR: The Department is committed to pursuing the Prime Minister's vision of promoting zero budget natural farming, to make the Agriculture sector economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable.

This was said by Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal while filing online for organic certification with Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) for accreditation.

He said the organic farming coupled with natural farming could be a game changer, to promote the natural farming and to increase the scope for trade of organic produce on national as well as international level and the product has to be certified by an authentic agency.

The Director said that the change in the feeding habits and lifestyle globally has increased the demand for organically produced food and other agricultural commodities. We are having one of the best agro climatic conditions

for the production of vegetables and other crops organically/naturally, therefore this potential has to be grabbed for the socio economic transformation of our farming community, he said.

Director Agriculture asked the concerned Chief Agriculture Officers of concerned districts to identify new areas for the promotion of organic/ zero budget natural farming. Farm Managers of Departmental farms were also given instructions to prepare a roadmap for the promotion of natural farming.

Earlier, Director visited Tahab, Pulwama and inspected the vertical farming intervention adopted by the farmers. During the interaction with the farmers technical guidelines were issued and every possible technical support from the Department was ensured to the farmers. Some farm machinery was also distributed among the farmers.

The Director was accompanied by Deputy Director Planning Mohammad Younis Chowdhary and other officers of the Department.

Paid All Dues To AAI: AirAsia India

NEW DELHI: AirAsia India said on Wednesday it has paid all its dues to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and the airline was making all payments as per credit terms on due dates from September 2021.

PTI had on December 26 reported that AirAsia India's dues to the AAI increased from Rs 1.47 crore in January 2020 to Rs 3.58 crore in October 2021, as per AAI's internal documents.

An airline has to pay for air navigation, landing and parking among others to the AAI, which is under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, to use facilities at its airports, numbering more than 100.

AirAsia India spokesperson told PTI on Wednesday, "We have paid all our dues as per the contract with AAI. We are making all payments as per credit terms on due dates from September and there are no dues as on date."

Operational costs always increase in proportion to the number of flights operated and guests flown, the spokesperson mentioned.

"In this period, from September to today, we have paid out Rs 59 crore within the due dates as per the policy of the Airports Authority," the spokesperson added.

India's six major domestic carriers -- IndiGo, SpiceJet, GoAir, AirAsia India, Air India and Vistara -- owed the AAI Rs 2,306.59 crore as on January 1, 2020, the AAI documents, accessed by PTI, stated.

These dues swelled by 14.29 per cent to Rs 2,636.34 crore by October 31, 2021, the documents mentioned. (PTI)

Apple Puts Foxconn's TN Facility On 'Probation' Until Standards Are Met

NEW DELHI: Tech titan and iPhone maker Apple on Wednesday said it has put Foxconn's Sriperumbudur facility on probation', and asserted it will ensure strict standards are met before the unit reopens.

Foxconn's Sriperumbudur factory hit headlines recently over mass-food poisoning at its offsite dormitory facility, an incident that led to workers' protest.

Apple supplier Foxconn, in a statement, said it is restructuring local management team and management systems to ensure it can achieve and maintain the high standards that are needed.

Foxconn Technology Group further in-

formed that all employees will continue to be paid while necessary improvements are undertaken before restarting operations.

Foxconn said that some offsite dormitory facilities did not meet the required standards.

An Apple spokesperson said: "We hold our suppliers accountable to the highest standards in the industry and regularly conduct assessments to ensure compliance."

Following recent concerns about food safety and accommodation conditions at Foxconn Sriperumbudur, Apple dispatched independent auditors to undertake additional detailed assessments. (PTI)

Rupee Snaps 9-Day Winning Streak, Slips 3 Paise Against US Dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee snapped its nine-day winning streak to settle 3 paise lower at 74.73 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, following weakness in domestic equities.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee started on a tepid note at 74.69 against the dollar. During the day, it witnessed a

high of 74.68 and a low of 74.86.

On Tuesday, the rupee registered its ninth straight session of gain and surged 30 paise to close at a one-month high of 74.70 against the greenback.

The rupee is expected to trade in a close range this week amid the year-end holidays, forex traders said. On the domestic eq-

uity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 90.99 points or 0.16 per cent lower at 57,806.49, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 19.65 points or 0.11 per cent to 17,213.60.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against the basket of six currencies, advanced 0.18 per cent to 96.37. (PTI)

Gold Declines Rs 216; Silver Tanks Rs 179

NEW DELHI: Gold price in the national capital on Wednesday declined by Rs 216 to Rs 47,010 per 10 gram in tandem with decline in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at Rs 47,226 per 10 gram.

Silver also tanked Rs 179 to Rs 61,348 per kg from Rs 61,527 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,804 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.07 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading at USD 1,804 per ounce on Wednesday. A stronger dollar also kept pressure on the precious metal for the day," HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst (Commodities), Tapan Patel said. (PTI)

Journalists must resist being ‘co-opted by ideology or state’: CJI

MUMBAI: The freedom of the press was a valuable and sacred right enshrined in the Constitution and a fearless media was essential for an efficient working of democracy, Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana said on Wednesday and maintained journalists must resist being “co-opted by an ideology or the state”.

He said a healthy democracy could thrive only with a fearless and independent press, but warned “news mixed with views is a dangerous cocktail”.

The CJI cautioned journalists against the trend of seeping

of ideological biases into news stories and said factual reports must keep aside interpretations and opinions.

“Another trend that I witness in reporting nowadays, is the seeping of ideological stances and biases into the news story. Interpretation and opinions are colouring what should be factual reports,” he said.

Underscoring the need for unbiased, fact-based reportage, particularly during the current 24 7 news cycle, and the vast reach of social media, the CJI said that journalists must resist being “co-opted by an ideology or by

the state”.

“It is often said that the legal profession is a noble profession. I can state that the journalist’s job is as noble and is an integral pillar of democracy,” CJI Ramana said.

“Like the legal professional, a journalist also needs to have a strong moral fibre and moral compass. Your conscience is your guide in this profession,” he said.

The CJI was speaking at the ‘Red Inks Award’ organised online by the Mumbai Press Club in the through a virtual interface. The top-most Supreme Court

judge lamented the increasing trend of “mixing views with news,” and publishing defamatory content without due verification. He said journalists must follow the principles of natural justice before making adverse comments against someone who was not in a position to defend himself.

“Allowing yourself to be co-opted by an ideology or the state is a recipe for disaster. Journalists are like judges in one sense,” CJI Ramana said.

“Regardless of the ideology you profess and the beliefs you hold dear, you must do your

duty without being influenced by them,” he said.

The Chief Justice of India also congratulated all the winners of the Red Ink Awards.

He said Mumbai had been at the “forefront of protecting the freedom of speech and expression,” and added the city had been home to some great patriots, freedom fighters, human rights activists and journalists.

It was, therefore, apt that the Mumbai Press Club organised the awards for fearless journalism, the CJI said.

“The media must have belief and trust in the judiciary. As a key

stakeholder in democracy, the media has the duty to defend and protect the judiciary from motivated attacks by evil forces,” he said.

“We are together in the Mission Democracy and in promoting national interest. We have to sail together,” the CJI said.

He added that the trend to “sermonise about judgments, and villainise judges,” needed to be checked. In his keynote address delivered during the event, CJI Ramana also paid tributes to late photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who was killed earlier this year in Afghanistan, where he was on an assignment when

foreign troops were withdrawing from the war-torn country.

Siddiqui was named posthumously as the ‘Journalist of the Year - 2020’ at the Red Ink Awards. “He (Siddiqui) was a man with a magical eye. If a picture can convey a thousand words, his photos were novels” CJI Ramana said.

He also paid a tribute to all journalists who had lost their lives while reporting during the coronavirus pandemic.

“Their reporting was integral for highlighting issues and to bring much needed attention to the plight of our citizens,” he said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

3 Militants

of Dooru on Wednesday evening when a joint team of police, army’s 19 RR and the personnel of CRPF 164 battalion laid a siege around the village and launched a cordon and search operation to hunt down the hiding militants, a police official said.

The holed-up militants, he said, opened fire upon the search team when the area was being cordoned off.

“The joint team returned the fire, setting off an encounter,” the official said.

According to reports, two soldiers and a policeman were injured in the initial exchange of gunfire with the holed-up militants. The injured identified as Rohit Yadav and Ishant of army’s counter-insurgency unit 19 RR and policemen Depak Kumar were shifted to nearby hospital for treatment.

Pertinently, the twin encounters came five days after police claimed to have killed five militants in three back to back gunfights in Pulwama, Shopian and Anantnag districts of south Kashmir on Saturday last. The five killed militants, as per police, were associated with ansar ghazwat ul hind (AGUH), Lashkar-e-Taiba and Islamic State of Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK) and were involved in a series of attacks on government forces and civilians.

Police Warns

on Wednesday, the SIT Chairman said that the probe panel came across with several posts on media from some political leaders and family members wherein they have casted doubts upon the evidence obtained by SIT so far.

“These people have tried to call it “Concocted Cover up Story”, “Ornamental Probe”, “Clean Chit to Killers”, “Fairy Tale of Police” etc,” he said.

Four persons were killed in Hyderabad here on November 15 and police claimed that all the slain men had links to militancy. The families of the three had, however, claimed that they were innocent and had alleged foul play, prompting the police to order the inquiry.

The SIT Chairman pointed out that the District Magistrate ordered a magisterial enquiry on November 18 (vide order NO. DMS/JUDINQUIRY/2838/2845/2021) under Section 176 Cr.Pc and accordingly the enquiry officer issued a general notice through the electronic and print media and invited members of the general public to record his/her statement if any such person has any acquaintance or knowledge or proof regarding the incident.

“All such persons making statements should have approached the enquiry officer with genuine evidences they have, for corroboration or contradiction of the facts surfaced in the case,” he said.

Maintaining that investigation in the controversial encounter is still underway, the SIT Chairman said that all such persons are once again advised to provide any type of evidence if they have regarding the incident so that every aspect of investigation is covered and concluded on merits.

“Such speculative statements from the political leaders have tendency to create provocation, rumour, fear and alarm among the general masses or particular section of society. This kind of approach is against the rule of law and may attract appropriate penal provisions as envisaged under law,” he said.

The SIT statement came a day after its head DIG Sujith Kumar Singh addressed a presser here and virtually gave a clean chit to the security forces but added the team was open to re-viewing its findings if any other evidence comes to light.

“Our investigation so far has revealed that Dr Mudasir Gul was killed by the foreign terrorist hiding inside the building as his body was recovered from the attic. The security forces did not go to the attic at all during searches or subsequent operation,” he said.

Giving details of the investigations, Singh said the probe has revealed that Amir Magray, the employee of Dr Gul, was closely associated with the foreign militant ‘Bilal Bhai’, who was killed in the operation while trying to flee.

“Mohammad Altaf Bhat (building owner) and Amir were killed in the

crossfire with security forces as they were used as a human shield by the foreign terrorist. It is substantiated by the fact the Altaf fell (after being hit by bullets) outside the door, while Amir had managed to run few more steps and the foreign terrorist’s body was found 83 feet away,” he said.

Asked why the civilians were sent in for house searches if the security forces had information about the presence of terrorists inside, the officer had said Bhat had volunteered to go inside as “he was very sure that there was no one hiding inside”.

“At no point of time did any of them tell the security forces about the presence of the terrorist inside or seek any help,” he added.

The SIT chief said the investigation was still going on and the team was open to reviewing its findings if any evidence, suggesting so, comes to light.

However, hours after his presser, several mainstream politicians, including former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti alleged that SIT inquiry was to cover-up a botched operation.

“SIT’s clean chit to armed forces in the Hyderabad encounter isn’t surprising. It was purely a charade to cover up a botched up operation & absolve those culpable for killing innocent civilians. How can one expect justice when they themselves are judge, jury & executioner?” she tweeted.

Hours after police gave clean chit to the cops and central forces in the controversial Hydepore encounter, the People’s Alliance on Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) on Tuesday termed the police briefing a repetition of old story and alleged a concocted cover up story.

PAGD, an amalgam of several mainstream parties, also cast aspersions over the probe by the special police team.

“Today’s press briefing of J&K police about last month’s Hydepore tragic incident is only a repetition of old story . It does not even, slightly give any objective picture of this shocking incident,” PAGD spokesperson, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said, in a statement issued here on Tuesday.

“There is a strong public perception that the civilians killed in the incident were made human shields by the security forces and the latest statement of the police seems to be a concocted cover up story. It will not suffice the legitimate concerns of the people at large and family of the slain victims,” he said.

“The administration must without any further delay, order a time bound judicial probe,” he added.

Besides the politicians, the families of the killed men also rejected the police findings and maintained their loved ones were innocent and killed in an alleged fake encounter.

Why Rush To Press

details if the investigations into the controversial Hydepore encounter was underway.

“If the SIT is “still investigating the matter” then what was the need to rush to the press with a statement yesterday? I don’t recall reading anywhere that yesterday’s report was an interim one,” tech savvy Omar posted on his Twitter handle.

“As to the “threat of penal action”. Criticising the report, whether interim or final is the right of any citizen & it does not behove J&K police to be trying to threaten people in to submission. If the SIT wants people to believe the report it should report the truth, period,” he wrote in another Tweet.

Apni Party, PC

Apni Party president, Syed Altaf Bukhari and Sajad Ghani Lone led Peoples Conference on Wednesday said that they don’t accept the probe conducted by police, saying that the killers should be brought to book.

“Who is police to give clean chit in Hydepore incident? Judicial probe has to be conducted in this regard and the killers will be identified,” Bukhari told reporters.

Earlier, Bukhari led his party workers to protest against the Delimitation Commission’s draft with regard to addition in assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir, which, however, was foiled by authorities.

After the protest was foiled, Bukhari

said that the future course of action will be decided in a meeting today.

Meanwhile, J&K Peoples Conference, while rejecting the findings of the SIT on Hydepore killings has termed the probe as ‘one more case of providing official legitimacy to violence’.

The party said that ‘this is just one of the thousands of probes since last three decades, which has revealed nothing apart from justifying murder’.

“There are no surprises in the probe, the results are as predicted. No change in comma or a full stop and a reiteration and replication of thousands of probes held in the past. We don’t even have a single modicum of belief that the government will actually have the moral courage to own a wrong and apologise for the same”, PC spokesperson said in a statement.

He said that the gist of all probes in the past has always been that the government of the day can never be wrong.

“Keeping up with tradition, care has been taken to type out a report devoid of any human emotions and disregard for all human sensibilities including the families who lost their loved ones”, he added.

He further stated that the onus to save oneself is on the common man or common woman not on the government of the day.

“The government of the day has the right to fire bullets and any victims of the past or of the future better ensure that they are not caught up in the wrong place at the wrong time or even right place at the wrong time.”

“We appeal to the government to stop pretending to be just and allow the families to mourn in peace and not reopen the ugly wounds that were inflicted on them on that dreadful night”, he added.

Amir’s Father Rejects

Jammu and Kashmir Police within the city limits.

“I outrightly reject the police probe as my son can never be a militant or a militant supporter,” Magray’s father Mohd Latief, who has received state award for killing a Lashker-e-Taiba militant in 2007 and several citations for helping security forces to finish militancy from his Gool-Sangaldan block, told PTI.

Latief said he is moving a petition in the Jammu wing of the High Court through his lawyer Deepika Singh Rajawat for the return of his son’s body and will also discuss the next course of action.

Rajawat said all the formalities have been completed and they are placing the petition for the return of the body before the registry on Thursday morning.

On Tuesday, SIT head DIG Sujith K Singh, who had led the operation on November 15, virtually gave a clean chit to the security forces but added the team was open to reviewing its findings if any other evidence came to light.

“Our investigation so far has revealed that Dr Mudasir Gul was killed by the foreign terrorist hiding inside the building as his body was recovered from the attic. The security forces did not go to the attic at all during searches or subsequent operation,” Singh told reporters in Srinagar.

Giving details of the investigation, Singh said the probe had revealed that Amir Magray, the employee of Dr Gul, was closely associated with the foreign militant Bilal Bhai who was killed trying to flee.

Mohammad Altaf Bhat (building owner) and Amir were killed in the crossfire with security forces as they were used as a human shield by the foreign terrorist. It is substantiated by the fact the Altaf fell (after being hit by bullets) outside the door, while Amir had managed to run a few more steps and the foreign terrorist’s body was found 83 feet away,” he said.

However, the witnesses on the fatal day including the daughter of the house-owner had claimed on various social media platforms that her father and others were pushed into the house by the army and police personnel and had termed it as a murder.

Lt Gen D P Pandey, commander of strategically located XV corps, had termed the doctor and the businessman as a “hybrid terrorists” but after the public outrage following which the

bodies of two civilians were handed over, the senior army officer had to eat a humble pie.

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Hydepore encounter threatened legal action against political leaders in Jammu and Kashmir for making “speculative” statements about the probe.

J&K Logs 104

reported the highest 33 new cases of coronavirus, Baramulla 12, Ganderbal 8, Budgam 4, Pulwama 3, Kupwara, Bandipora and Kulgam 2 each. No fresh cases were reported from the twin districts of Shopian and Anantnag.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu registered a maximum 22 fresh cases of virus, Doda 8, Udhampur, Poonch and Samba 2 each and one new case in Rajouri, Kathua and Ramban. Kishtwar and Reasi detected no new cases of Covid-19.

“Moreover, 124 Covid-19 patients recovered during the time, 21 from Jammu Division and 103 from Kashmir,” the official said.

Also, they said that no death was reported from the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. So far 4525 persons—2197 in Jammu and 2328 in Kashmir—have died due to the virus.

Police Foil PDP’s

by signing Memorandum of Understanding for projects pertaining to housing, hotel and other commercial activities worth nearly Rs 19,000 crore.

Raising slogans against the BJP and lieutenant governor administration, protesters from the Peoples Democratic Party alleged that the Centre, under the garb of bringing investment, was selling resources of the erstwhile state to corporate houses.

On the one hand, the BJP government has assured to secure the culture identity and jobs of people of Ladakh region while on the other, Jammu and Kashmir is being thrown open for non-locals endangering its unique culture and ethnical identity, a party leader said.

He alleged that the BJP government lacked vision for Jammu and Kashmir and that the biggest issue in the Union Territory was unemployment, which according to him has shot up to 18 per cent.

Those in Delhi are using Jammu as a laboratory. BJP’s vision is only to divide and rule, to make people fight against each other and to sell our resources to outsiders, the leader said.

He said the PDP will not be a mute spectator to the brazen loot by the administration which has no stake in the society.

The PDP members accused the officers of making policies without understanding the ground realities.

The only duty the administration is discharging is to blindly follow and implement dictates from Delhi and Nagpur, the leader said.

Bukhari’s Protest

out the march towards Civil Secretariat. However, a posse of policemen stopped the protesters just outside the party office and did not allow them to move towards Lal Chowk. Wearing black masks and bands, the protesters tried to resist the police action, but could not succeed.

The party, however, staged a silent protest march in Jammu and sought the intervention of the central government in the matter which it said posed a threat to the integrity and soul of our constitution .

The Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) also said the Real Estate Summit held in Jammu recently undermines the domicile law that has been introduced to safeguard the rights of the natives of J-K.

Such moves require majoritarian consent of the locals which can thereafter be implemented by a government elected by the people, it said.

The issues were highlighted in a memorandum, addressed to Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, and handed over by the party leaders led by senior vice president Ghulam Hassan Mir to Divisional Commissioner (Jammu) Raghav Langer.

The Delimitation Commission, set up to redraw the assembly seats of the Union territory, is learnt to have proposed six additional seats for Jammu region and one for Kashmir in its ‘Paper 1’ discussed with its five

associate members - three parliamentarians of the National Conference and two of the BJP from J-K - in Delhi on December 20.

The panel report defeats the very idea of a secular India...the party takes a strong exception to such unprincipled edicts that primarily are aimed to disturb the harmony in J-K where people of different religious beliefs and ethnicities have continued to live together in peace,” the party alleged.

The JKAP also demanded that the Union government desist from censoring the media in Jammu and Kashmir.

The media outlets and press are facing immense hurdles in reporting from the ground and numerous policies are being introduced every now and then which impedes it to function properly, it said.

Lashing out at the Centre, Bukhari said they tell the world that there is democracy and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, but they did not allow a peaceful protest.

This protest was to represent the aspirations and wishes of our people. The draft report by the Delimitation Commission is totally against the mandate of the Commission. They (the Centre) formed the Commission, otherwise the delimitation was not to happen till 2026, he told reporters.

The Apni Party leader demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah intervene in the issue and reconsider the proposals and bring a new draft before the people .

Referring to the Real Estate Summit held in Jammu recently, Bukhari said the party’s protest was also against the way the domicile was omitted through backdoor .

If the government is trying to allow non-state subjects to buy land or houses here, then it is against the order which the Government of India issued after creating the Union Territory (UT). We were given an assurance that there will be no demographic change and the land and jobs here will only be for state subjects, he said.

On the J-K police special investigation team’s clean chit to security forces in Hydepore encounter, Bukhari said inquiry or no inquiry, Hydepore is a murder .

Gulmag Shivers

of minus 2.3 degrees Celsius last night down from the previous night’s 1.4 degrees Celsius.

Qazigund recorded the minimum of 0.6 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag recorded a low of minus 0.4 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of 3.2 degrees Celsius.

‘Chilleh Kalan’ is a period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies including Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy to very heavy snowfall.

Govt Puts Cap

been prescribed under section 133-A of the Land Revenue Act.

The order states that The Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act-1976 provides the ceiling area to extent of land measuring twelve and a half standard acres for the purpose of Act.

“It has been felt that the competent authority may face difficulty in proper implementation of the provision of section 133A of The Jammu and Kashmir Land Revenue Act, Svt. 1996,” the order states.

According to the order, the government is empowered under section 141 of The Land Revenue Act to make provisions for removal of difficulties in implementation of the Act.

“If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the government, may be order, published in the official gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as it appears to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of removing the difficulty,” reads section 141 of the law— (KNO)

2 Get 3 Years Jail

that above named Fayaz Ahmad in connivance with Muzaffar Ahmad Khan have cheated the complaint for wrongful gain for himself and his associate,” the spokesman said.

On receiving this information, he said, a case FIR No. 25/2005 U/S 420, 120-B-RPC was registered in Crime Branch Kashmir and investigation set into motion. On completion of investigation, the charge-sheet was filled before the court against the accused persons and consequently two accused persons mentioned were convicted by the Court.

Govt Working

their demand would be considered on merit and necessary measures will be taken in this direction.

Chairs Meeting

Dhawan, Dr. Sudershan Kumar, Prof Vishwamurti Shastri- presented valuable suggestions for optimum utilization of the Yatri Niwas Bhavans & facilities for pilgrims.

Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta; CEO, Amarnathji Shrine Board, Nitishwar Kumar; CEO, SMVDSB; Additional CEO, SASB; former Additional CEO, SASB, and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

PM’s UAE Visit

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and there were reports that the agreement could be announced during the Prime Minister’s visit. It would be India’s first CEPA in the gulf region. The foreign ministers of India, Israel, the United States and UAE, a new quad bloc focused on economic and infrastructure issues, are expected to hold a meeting on the margins of Expo 2020 in Dubai.

India Pavilion at the Dubai Expo is creating a lot of buzz. Dubai Expo is slated to continue till March next year. The world is witnessing a rapid spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, especially in Europe and the United States.

The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention on Wednesday reported 2,234 cases of the Covid-19 coronavirus, along with 775 recoveries. India reported 9,195 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours and has reported 781 case of Omicron variant.

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450 Apple Boxes

premises have been stolen by unidentified persons. He said these boxes were kept in a shed.

“We have reported the incident to a nearby police station,” he said. (KNT)

Scooty Rider

shifted to the hospital but succumbed to the injuries, he said.

The deceased has been identified as Jahangeer Ahmad Dar, son of Mohammad Shaban Dar of Shurat Kulgam—(KNO)

Patwari, Agent

received a complaint alleging therein that Raja Mudasir Ali Khan, Patwari, Halqa Kathwar, Khansahib, Budgam is demanding Rs. 1,00,000 (one lakh) as bribe for affecting transfer of land in favour of the maternal cousins of the complainant,” the ACB said in a statement.

On receipt of the complaint, a spokesman of the ACB said that a case (FIR No. 38/2021) under section 7 PC Act 1988 was registered in this Bureau and investigation taken up.

“During the course of investigation, a trap team was constituted by ACB. The team laid a successful trap and caught red-handed Raja Mudasir Ali Khan, Patwari, Halqa Kathwar, Khansahib, Budgam while demanding and accepting bribe amount of Rs 1,00,000/-(Rs 10,000 cash + Rs 90,000 via cheque) from the complainant through agent namely Nawaz Hussain Mir of Khanpora Budgam,” he said, adding, “The bribe money was recovered from the possession of the accused in presence of independent witness.”

Accused Raja Mudasir Ali Khan along with agent Nawaz Hussain Mir were arrested on spot, the ACB said. “During the search of personal vehicle of the accused Rs 82,000/- (cash) was also recovered and seized,” the ACB said, adding, “Search was also conducted at the house of accused public servant.”

Further investigation into the case is going on, the ACB added.

India Set 305-Run Target For South Africa To Win 1st Test



Press Trust of India

CENTURION: Indian batters struggled to cope with uneven bounce but did enough to set up a stiff 305-run victory target for South Africa as they managed to score 174 runs in their second innings on the fourth day of the opening Test, here on Wednesday.

On an ever-deteriorating surface, South Africa were 22 for 1 at the tea break. The hosts lost opener Aiden Markram (1) with Mohammed Shami drawing first blood when the batter failed to remove his blade only to be played on.

India's struggling senior troika of Cheteshwar Pujara (16), skipper Virat Kohli (18), Ajinkya Rahane (20) played some indiscreet shots while some of the others were done-in by widening cracks that led to deliveries rearing up awkwardly from short of length.

KL Rahul (23), Rishabh Pant (34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (14) got snorters that grew

big on them as Kagiso Rabada (4/42), debutant Marco Jansen (4/55) and Lungi Ngidi (2/31) looked menacing during the one and half sessions that the Indians battled.

South Africa have more than 140 overs to score 305 but on this Supersport Park track, it will be a Herculean task to make a match of the target with highest successful chase here being 251 by England back in 2000-01.

For South Africa's batting lineup that distinctly lacks class of bygone era, facing Jasprit Bumrah, Shami and Mohammed Siraj will be more than a tall order.

Indian team certainly owes it to openers on Day one and the ever-consistent fast bowling unit that has helped them gain control of proceedings.

As last reports came in, South Africa were tottering at 94/4 after 41 overs, with Siraj removing Keegan Peterson 17 (36) and Bumrah taking the wickets of van der Hussen 11 (65) and Maharaj 8 (19). Captain Dean Elgar 52 (122) was on the crease.

US-Ireland Cricket Series Ends Due To COVID-19 Concerns



Agencies

The ODI leg of the white-ball cricket series between the United States and Ireland was cancelled on Tuesday because of coronavirus-related concerns.

Two members of the Irish team's support staff have tested positive, as well as several partners of players, resulting in two Ireland players being deemed as close contacts. All players returned negative test results in the latest checks overnight.

The first game of the three-match series had already been canceled, and the second one-day international put back a

day, after COVID-19 cases were detected among the umpiring team and members of the U.S. squad. The second and third games were due to take place on Wednesday and Thursday.

In a joint statement, USA Cricket and Cricket Ireland said "the risks and concerns about further spread have meant that both Boards have regrettably agreed to cancel the remaining two scheduled matches."

The teams split the Twenty20 series 1-1.

The Ireland squad is scheduled to depart Florida for Kingston, Jamaica, on Friday for a series against the West Indies. (AP)

Novak Djokovic Withdraws From ATP Cup In Australia

Agencies

SYDNEY: Novak Djokovic has withdrawn from the ATP Cup in Australia ahead of the first Grand Slam tournament of the season, organisers said on Wednesday.

No reason was given but the top-ranked Serb has declined to comment on his vaccination status in recent months and Australia's strict regulations require all players, officials and fans to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

ATP Cup organisers disclosed Djokovic's withdrawal in a roster update that included France replacing Austria in the 16-country event following the withdrawals of Dominic Thiem and Dennis

Novak. Dusan Lajovic will replace Djokovic for Serbia.

Fifth-ranked Andrey Rublev of Russia also pulled out, as did teammates Aslan Karatsev and Evgeny Donskoy. The ATP Cup begins on Saturday in Sydney.

The Australian Open men's entry list announced in early December had the 34-year-old Djokovic at No. 1 in what was seen as a further indication that he'll be playing at Melbourne Park beginning January 17 despite Australia's tight regulations.

The nine-time Australian Open champion is tied with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal for the men's record of 20 Grand Slam singles titles.

COVID Sweeps Through RKFC, I-League Suspended

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: I-League was on Wednesday suspended for at least a week after COVID-19 breached its bio-bubble as eight players and three officials have tested positive for the dreaded virus.

Five players and three team officials from Real Kashmir FC, one player each from Moham-medan Sporting, debutants Sreenidi Deccan FC and Aizawl FC returned positive in the tests conducted on Tuesday.

"The next round of matches (on December 30 and 31) will be rescheduled. We will review the situation on January 4," I-League Chairman Subrata Dutta told PTI after an emergency meeting.

The first round matches were played on Sunday and Monday while the third round games are scheduled for January 4 and 5.

The outbreak happened at the Novotel Hotel, one of the three bio-bubbles, set up by the organisers for the football league that began on Sunday.

Besides RKFC, Sreenidi Deccan and Mohammedan Sporting, the three other teams staying at the Novotel Hotel are



Rajasthan United, Aizawl FC and NEROCA.

Dutta chaired the emergency virtual meeting of the League Committee to take a decision on continuation or suspension of the league.

"The Committee unanimously decided to postpone the Hero I-League 2021-22 matches for the next round which were scheduled on December 30-31, 2021," the league statement said.

"The League will review the situation once all test results come in on January 4, 2022, and reach a consensus thereafter including the next round matches on Jan 4-5."

It said all the players, staff and referees have been tested

on Wednesday. They will be tested again on January 1 and 3.

RKFC owner Sandeep Chatterjee admitted some of his team's players have tested positive, though he did not share how many and who.

"Yes, RKFC has also some positive cases, players from all (six) teams are suspected (of COVID-19)," he said.

"There was one round of tests on December 21 and all my players were negative. This latest tests were done yesterday."

Last season's I-League, which was completed by 11 teams, was also held under bio-secure environment in Kolkata and Kalyani, and six COVID-19 cases were reported then.

Open SnowShoe Trials Held In Gulmarg

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Open SnowShoe selection trials conducted by J&K SnowShoe Association for the National Championship and upcoming 3rd Khelo India National Winter Games were held in Gulmarg on Wednesday.

The open trials were held in senior category in both male and female sections.

In men's section, large number of long distance runners turned up for the trials while as there was a low turnout in the female section.

The selection was held on time trial basis with athletes competing in different groups. The were held in order to select J&K athletes for the upcoming 5th SnowShoe National Championship and 3rd Khelo India National Winter Games 2022.

The trials were inaugurated by J&K SnowShoe Association President Tariq Ahmad Mir in presence of General Secretary Gulzar Khan, Executive Member Shabir Ahmad and international cyclist Akbar Khan. The trials were conducted under overall supervision of NIS qualified athletic coach, Tahir Ahmed.



In men's section Gulbadin Hekmatyar with best timing emerged as the first position holder, while Muzamil Hussain had the second best timing. Adil Fayaz had the third best timing.

In girls section, Muskan Shaban qualified with best timing while as Afshana Zehra had second best timing.

"It was open trials and qualification was based on time trial. While we have selected three for the Nationals and Games in men's section, we have also kept seven in waiting list. In female section only two qualified," Secretary of the Association Gulzar Khan said.

"Our aim is to provide everyone equal opportunity and be part of Nationals and Khelo India Games. While long distance running is tough sport, SnowShoe is extra difficult owing to tough terrain, weight of the snowshoe and the altitude," he said. "To compete in it one needs have highest level of fitness and stamina."

Later, the Association felicitated Assistant Director Tourism, Gulmarg, Javid ur Rehman. "Tourism department has been supportive from the beginning and without them we will not be able to take this sport to the level that we want," Khan added.

J&K Exit Cooch Behar Trophy With 1 Point

Lose to Baroda by 7 wickets in final match

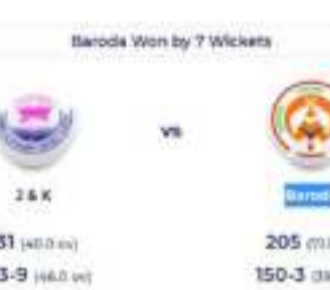
Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K cricket's dismal performance in 2021 continued with a group stage exit in Under-19 Cooch Behar 4-Day Trophy.

Baroda secured a 7-wicket win on Wednesday to send bottom of the group J&K home with just 1 point from 5 matches.

Sent in to bat first, J&K managed only 131 runs in their first innings. Jugap Singh was the highest scorer for J&K with 30 (36) runs. Baroda's Raj

Limbani took 5 wickets, while Karan Umatt took 4.



In reply Baroda was bowled out for 205 in their first innings. Dhruv Singh Parmar took

4 wickets for J&K, while Basit Bashir took 3.

J&K made 223/9 in 46 overs in their second innings, to set a target of 150 for Baroda to chase down. Akshit Gandral was J&K's highest scorer with 80 (69) runs.

Baroda easily chased down the target, losing just 3 wickets in the process.

J&K lost 4 matches during the tournament, and earned just 1 point from a draw against Pondicherry.

ICC T20I 'Player Of Year': Marsh, Rizwan, Hasaranga & Buttler Shortlisted



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh and Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan were on Wednesday named among four players shortlisted for the ICC Men's T20I Player of the Year award.

The other two players are Sri Lankan all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga and England wicket-keeper-batter Jos Buttler.

A part of the T20 World Cup winning Australian team, Marsh scored 627 runs in 27 matches at an average of 36.88 while also taking eight wickets at 18.37 during the year.

Throughout the calendar year, he was Australia's best batter in the shortest format, improving his game by leaps and bounds, especially against spin and when it came to rotating the strike.

"Australia's success at the T20 World Cup can be traced back to the decision to move Mitchell Marsh up the batting order to No.3, instead of designating him the role of being a finisher lower down," the ICC said in a release.

In the T20 World Cup held in the UAE and Oman, he aggregated 185 runs in six matches at an average of 61.66 and a healthy strike-rate of 146.82. He would reserve the best for the last, playing a match-winning knock of 77 not out off 50 deliveries in the final against New Zealand.

Rizwan aggregated a staggering 1326 runs in only 29 matches at an average of 73.66 and a strike-rate of 134.89. He was also solid behind the stumps, playing

a key role in Pakistan's run to the semifinals during the T20 World Cup, where he ended up as the third-highest run-scorer.

He also scored the maiden T20I century of his career against South Africa in Lahore early in the year and ended it continuing his form with a brilliant knock of 87 against West Indies in Karachi.

Hasaranga took 36 wickets in 20 matches at 11.63 and scored 196 runs with one half-century during the year to establish himself as one of the best spinners in the shortest format while also being a player who could contribute with the bat.

A consistent performer throughout the year, Hasaranga's star shone the brightest during the T20 World Cup in UAE and Oman. He claimed a memorable hat-trick against South Africa and ended the tournament as the leading wicket-taker with 16 scalps. He also played some handy knocks with the bat, like his 71 against Ireland.

England wicketkeeper-batter Buttler was also brilliant during the year with 589 runs in 14 matches at 65.44 with one century. He also had 13 dismissals.

Buttler was in sublime touch during the T20 World Cup, always getting his side off to brilliant starts. His two best knocks came in consecutive matches—first against age-old rivals Australia and then against Sri Lanka who faced his full wrath.

He ended the tournament as England's leading run-scorer with 269 runs, including a hundred against Sri Lanka.

Ashwin Holds 2nd Spot In Bowlers' & All-Rounders' Test Rankings

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Wednesday retained his second position in both the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings for bowlers and all-rounders.

Ravindra Jadeja managed to hold to his third position in the Test all-rounders list.

Rohit Sharma and skipper Virat Kohli also retained their positions in the Test batters' chart—at fifth and seventh respectively.

While Rohit has 797 rating points in his kitty, Kohli has collected 756 points.

The Test batting chart is being led by Australia's Marcus Labuschagne (915 points), followed by England captain Joe Root (900) while New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson (879) has dislodged Steve Smith (877) from the third position.

Rohit, David Warner, Kohli, Dimuth Karunaratne, Babar Azam and Travis Head complete the top-10.

Among Test bowlers, Ashwin is the only Indian in the top-10, steady at the second spot with 883 rating points.

Australia Test captain Pat Cummins continues to lead the pack, while Pakistan left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi is placed third ahead of Tim South-ee and James Anderson.

Australia Test debutant Scott Boland also made his first ap-



pearance in the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings for bowlers for his outstanding performance in the Boxing Day Test at the MCC.

By virtue of his six for seven run spell in England's second innings on Tuesday, the 32-year-old Victoria fast bowler is ranked 74th with 271 points.

Boland finished with a seven-wicket match haul in a thumping innings and 14 run victory for Australia.

In the Test all-rounders list, Indian duo of Ashwin (360) and Jadeja (346) are below leader Jason Holder (382) of the West Indies.

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan is fourth, while Mitchell Starc nudged ahead of Ben Stokes into fifth place.

The Test Team ranking is being led by India with 124 rating points, while New Zealand and Australia occupy the second and third positions respectively. England are fourth ahead of Pakistan.

2021: When King Kohli Became A Lesser Mortal

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli's watertight grip over Indian cricket loosened significantly in a mixed 2021 bag, when the team's winless run at ICC events continued but the 'Men in Blue' cherished a historic Test series triumph in Australia.

When M S Dhoni left white-ball captaincy in 2017, Kohli became the undisputed king of Indian cricket with his rule unchallenged for the three years that followed.

In the absence of a strong administration at BCCI, Kohli called

the shots and not many seemed to mind it with India performing well across formats though the ICC title eluded them.

However, his reign had to be challenged at some point with Sourav Ganguly and Jay Shah filling the power vacuum in the world's most powerful board towards the end of 2019.

The Alpha males of Indian cricket did not come in each other's way for the following year and cracks in their relationship could only be seen after Kohli decided to step down from T20 captaincy at the end of the 2020 World Cup.

He had no plans to leave the ODI captaincy but India's premature exit from the tournament led to the inevitable and the mighty Kohli did not see that BCCI bombshell coming.

Following his sacking as 50-over skipper, dirty linen was washed in public with Kohli and Ganguly contradicting each other on the sequence of events that led to the former's removal.

Kohli is used to the spotlight with cameras following his every move on the field but now that space will be shared by new white ball skipper Rohit Sharma.



With 70 international hundreds under his belt, the charismatic cricketer has nothing left to prove but after a quiet two years with the bat by his high standards and his feud with the BCCI, Kohli will be more fired up than ever to show that he re-

mains the best in the business.

The early exit at T20 World Cup was a big disappointment but it marked the end of a successful era under Kohli and Ravi Shastri, especially in the longest format.

Not many can question the greatness of the Kohli-led Test team but the defeat in the World Test Championship final against New Zealand was also a big let-down of the year.

India had played remarkably well to reach the final and would have been worthy winners of that trophy but New Zealand once again upstaged them on the big stage.

However, nothing can take sheen off India's second consecutive series win in Australia with an injury-ravaged team struggling to even field a playing eleven in the series decider in Brisbane.

The win at the Gabba will be talked about for years to come, not just because it was Australia's first loss at the venue in 33 years but the way India overcame an injury crisis and the 36 all out debacle at Adelaide to script a comeback for the ages.

Kohli went back home after the first Test for the birth of his child but the way Ajinkya Ra-

ane led the side in his absence also played a major role in India's monumental achievement Down Under.

Later in the year, Kohli and Co. were set for another overseas series win but the fifth and final Test in England had to be cancelled due to a COVID outbreak in the visitors. India lead the series 2-1 with the final Test to be played next year.


If India manage to win that series in 2022 and the ongoing battle against Proteas, Kohli will become the first Asian captain to win Test series in England, South Africa and Australia.





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