



P7 STATE

JAMMU TOPS FIRST EVER DISTRICT GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX

In the composite ranking of first ever District Good Governance Index (DGGI) released on Saturday by Home Minister, Amit Shah here the Jammu district has managed to

P5

"TU JHOOM" WITH NEW COKE STUDIO 14

Pakistan's iconic music series, which is loved and admired across borders, has been released after a gap of one year. It is far from being a disappointment. We've all enjoyed brilliant music from Coke Studio Pakistan



P11 SPORTS

IPL 2022: 1214 PLAYERS LINE UP FOR MEGA AUCTION

India batter Shreyas Iyer and spinner Yuzvendra Chahal along with Australian dasher David Warner are expected to be the top draws as over 1,200 players



Quote!

A goal is a dream with a deadline

— Napoleon Hill

NEWS DIGEST

Militant 'Associate' Held In Awantipora

SRINAGAR: Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested a militant associate of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) from south Kashmir's Awantipora. Umer Farooq Bhat of Renzipora in Awantipora was arrested by a joint team of police, army's 55RR and the **More on P10**

Earthquake Jolts Doda

JAMMU: An earthquake of 4.0 magnitude hit Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district in the early hours of Saturday, an official said. The quake occurred at 2.53 am. There are no immediate reports of any damage, Director Disaster Management Aamir Ali said. He said the epicentre **More on P10**

Pak Flag Seized In Samba

JAMMU: Amid heightened security arrangements ahead of R-Day, a Pakistani flag was seized along the International Border in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, officials here said. The flag tied to a balloon landed inside Raguchak **More on P10**

Bear Caught In Handwara

SRINAGAR: The wildlife department on Saturday captured a black bear in a village in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. The bear, according to reports, was seen roaming in Sirajpora locality of Handwara on Saturday afternoon. A wildlife department team reached the village after receiving **More on P10**

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Assembly Elections In J&K After Delimitation: Amit Shah

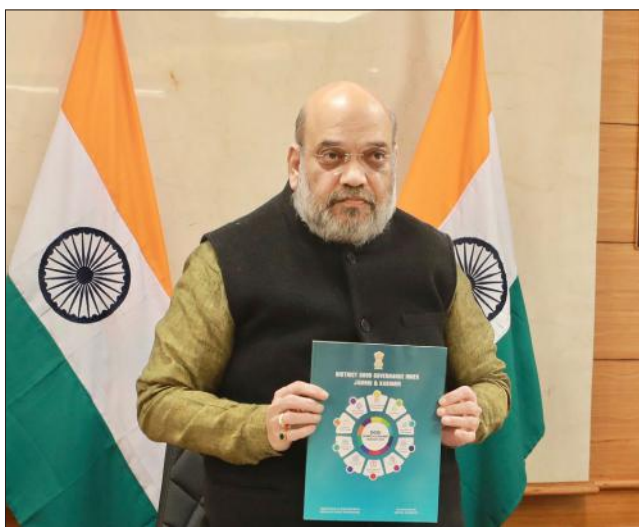
Says Statehood After Return of Normalcy

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: The Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held after the completion of the ongoing delimitation exercise and the statehood will be restored once the situation in the union territory becomes normal.

Shah made these remarks while virtually releasing the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) for Jammu Kashmir.

"As far as the democratic process is concerned, delimitation has begun and elections will be held immediately and after that, as **More on P10**



TODAY, I ONCE AGAIN WANT to tell my young friends, especially the young friends of the Valley that you should walk on the path of development laid by Shri Modi, no one can stop Jammu & Kashmir from becoming the most developed region of the country."

Every Stateless Day An Affront To Federalism: JK Parties

Press Trust Of India

Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir reacted to Union minister Amit Shah's remarks on Saturday that the UT's statehood would be restored once the situation gets normal, saying the Centre's statement was

self-contradictory and that every stateless day was an affront to federalism.

"After quite literally terrorising people of Jammu and Kashmir into silence to create a false normalcy narrative, Gov's admission that the situation still isn't normal is self contradictory. Also proves that silence **More on P10**

THOSE WHO SPREAD LIES DUE TO THEIR POLITICAL INTERESTS and saying that the Valley's land will go, I ask them whose land has been taken away in the Valley. The development of Jammu & Kashmir is being obstructed by misleading statements and lies such as these"

UN Chief Hopes For Peaceful K Solution

Press Trust Of India

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has said that he hopes the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan can be solved peacefully.

"Well, the position of the UN and the resolutions that were taken are the same, remain the same. We have, as you know, a peacekeeping operation there. We are, of course, committed," Guterres said on Friday.

"I'd offered my good offices several times, and we hope that this is something that can be solved peacefully and that the situation in Kashmir is a situation in which human rights are respected and in which people can live in peace and security," he said. **More on P10**

Coronavirus Cases Hit Record High, 6568 Test Positive

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded 6568 fresh cases of novel Coronavirus, the highest ever spike since the outbreak of pandemic, while seven more people succumbed to the deadly infection in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to officials, Kashmir Valley reported the biggest ever surge in Covid-19 cases with 4693 more people confirmed to have contracted the virus during the last 24 hours. Similarly, the Jammu division registered 1875 new cases of the virus, taking the number of people infected in J&K since the onset of the pandemic to 390949.

In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar detected 1604 fresh



cases of Coronavirus, Baramulla 749, Budgam 643, Bandipora 418, Kulgam 333, Kupwara 320, Anantnag 243, Pulwama 230, Ganderbal 99 and Shopian 54.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu reported a maximum of 1236 new cases of virus, Doda 120, Ramban 99, Samba 91, Udhampur 78, Rajouri and

Kathua 59 each, Poonch 50, Kishtwar 49 and Reasi 34.

"Moreover, 2330 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 993 from Jammu Division and 1337 from Kashmir Division," the officials said.

Also, they said **More on P10**

Sarpanch Can Now Grant Building Permission

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a move aimed at strengthening Panchayati Raj, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday designated among others, Halqa Sarpanch to grant permission for the construction of residential buildings in the rural areas of the Union Territory.

In exercise of powers conferred by Section 12 sub section 2 (iv) of Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 read with Rule 155 & 156 of J&K Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996, as amended from time to time, sanction is hereby accorded to the designation of competent authority for grant of permission for construction/reconstruction/alteration of residential/ commercial buildings in rural areas of J&K," reads an order issued by

THE DESIGNATED COMMITTEES CAN co-opt members from any government department as may be required for the purpose of taking decision on these permission cases."

the department of rural development and Panchayati Raj.

The competent authority or committee that has been designated to grant permission for residential buildings within the Panchayat jurisdiction includes Sarpanch of the Halqa Panchayat, VLW (Panchayat Secretary) and Patwari.

Similarly, for commercial buildings including shops, the competent authority/committee has been **More on P10**

'Operation Snow Leopard' Still On in Ladakh: Army

Press Trust Of India

UDHAMPUR: The Operation Snow Leopard' is still on with troops on alert and ready to meet any eventuality as the focus of disengagement in Ladakh continues to be through talks, Army's northern commander Lt Gen Y K Joshi said on Saturday.

Joshi, the General Officer-Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), was speaking at the northern command's investiture ceremony at its headquarters here in Jammu and

Kashmir, where the units involved in the Ladakh operation ran away with major share of the appreciation certificates.

He presented GOC-in-C's appreciation to 40 units and GOC-in-C's Certificates of Appreciation' to 26 units for their outstanding' and distinguished' performance in the command theatre.

The GOC-in-C's Appreciation was given to units for their performance in Operation Meghdoot, Operation Rakshak, Operation Northern Borders, and other operations. **More on P10**

J&K To Receive More Snowfall, Rain For Next 24 Hours

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: The meteorological department predicted more downpour for the next 24 hours across the Kashmir Valley even as Gulmarg and other upper reaches on Saturday received fresh snowfall while rains lashed plains dipping the day temperature sharply. "Currently, weather is overcast at most places of J&K with report of widespread light to moderate rain/snow in both Jammu & Kashmir regions," an official of the meteorological department here said.

"Widespread moderate rain and snow with heavy rain and snow (mainly in South Kashmir, Pirpanjal, Banihal-Ramban-Batote axis, Reasi, Poonch, Rajouri and most places of Jammu region) is most likely during next 24 hours, starting tonight till

One-Way Traffic On Highway Today

Authorities on Saturday said that traffic on Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir valley with the outside world, may remain suspended on Sunday in view of heavy rainfall prediction issued by MeT department. However, a traffic department official here said if the thoroughfare remained open, LMVs (passenger) and private cars shall be allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar "strictly one way". **More on P10**

tomorrow evening," he said.

He said weather may disrupt surface transportation, like Jammu-Srinagar highway, Sinthan Top, Sadhna Top, etc.

The official further said that the weather **More on P10**



An SUV passes through a snow-covered road in Tangmarg following overnight snowfall on Saturday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

'2021 Watershed Year For Army'

A top army officer on Saturday called 2021 a watershed year for the armed forces on Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir and Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh. He said the troops displayed boldness in standing up to the aggressive designs in the two Union Territories. **More on P10**



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Whatsapp To Allow Transfer Of Chats From Android To Iphone

Agencies

Meta-owned WhatsApp is reportedly testing the possibility of allowing users to migrate chats from their Android device to an iPhone. According to WABetaInfo, WhatsApp is working on an "import chat history" feature that will let Android users move their chats to an iPhone device.

The feature was spotted in development in the latest WhatsApp beta for iOS v22.2.74. Currently, it is not available to everyone at the moment. It appears that WhatsApp will rely on an app called Move to iOS in order to make the migration possible.

At present, chat transfer feature has been available from iOS to Samsung devices and Google pixel since last October. Users can also migrate chats from iOS to devices based on Android 12 out-of-the-box.

WhatsApp is also reportedly rolling out a new global voice note player on iOS beta that will let users listen to a voice message even when they switch to a different chat.

The voice note that users are listening to will not be dismissed when they swipe back or open a different chat.

This feature has been released to some iOS beta testers, including WhatsApp Business beta.

--IANS Chinese vaccine Sinovac no match against Omicron variant: Study New Delhi, Jan 22 (IANS) Millions of people in 48 countries have received two shots of Sinovac, a Chinese-manufactured Covid-19



vaccine, but those vaccinations alone are of no help against the Omicron variant, a peer-reviewed study published in Nature Medicine has said.

An analysis of blood serum from 101 individuals from the Dominican Republic showed that Omicron infection produced no neutralising antibodies among those who received the standard two-shot regimen of the Sinovac vaccine.

Antibody levels against Omicron rose among those who had also received a booster shot of the

mRNA vaccine made by Pfizer-BioNTech, showed the new study by researchers at Yale University and the Dominican Republic.

When researchers compared these samples with blood serum samples stored at Yale, they found that even those who had received two Sinovac shots and a booster had antibody levels that were only about the same as those who'd received two shots of the mRNA vaccines but no booster shot.

In other studies, the two-shot mRNA regimen without a booster

has been shown to offer only limited protection against Omicron.

The researchers also found that individuals who had been infected by earlier strains of the SARS-Cov-2 virus saw little immune protection against Omicron.

"An additional booster shot, and possibly two, are clearly needed in areas of the globe where the Sinovac shot has been the chief source of vaccination," said Akiko Iwasaki, the Waldemar Von Zedtwitz Professor of Immunobiology and senior author of the paper.

"Booster shots are clearly needed in this population because we know that even two doses of mRNA vaccines do not offer sufficient protection against infection with Omicron," Iwasaki added. Omicron has proven particularly problematic to combat because it possesses 36 mutations on the spike proteins on its surface, which the virus uses to enter cells. Existing mRNA vaccines are designed to trigger antibody response when spike proteins are recognised.

An analysis of blood serum from 101 individuals from the Dominican Republic showed that Omicron infection produced no neutralising antibodies among those who received the standard two-shot regimen of the Sinovac vaccine.

Study Finds Metal Pins No Better Than Plaster Cast For Broken Wrists

Agencies

A new study has found that using metal K-wires, commonly known as "pins," to hold broken carpal bones in place while they heal, is no better than a traditional cast.

The study was published in the journal BMJ.

Wrist fractures are common, especially in older women. If the bone fragments have dislodged (displaced from their normal position), they often require "manipulation" followed by either surgery to insert metal wires or plates, or a molded bandage as a non-surgical alternative to hold the bones in position while they heal.

Surgery is costly and risky for the patient, while a molded cast is cheaper but may not provide the same functional outcome.

To find out which of these treatments is best, researchers tracked the progress of 500 adults with a displaced wrist fracture at 36 NHS hospitals between January 2017 and March 2019.

Patients were randomly assigned to receive a cast (255) or surgical K-wire fixation (245) after manipulation of their fracture. Their average age was 60 and 417 (81 percent) were women.

The primary (primary) outcome measure was the patient's Wrist Evaluation (PRWE) at 12 months, which included questions about pain, function, and disability and gave an over-

all score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst).

Other (secondary) outcomes were PRWE scores at three and six months, quality of life, and complications, including the need for later surgery.

A total of 395 (79%) patients completed follow-up. While both groups improved over the 12-month period, there was no statistically significant difference in PRWE scores at three, six, or 12 months (mean score 21.2 in the cast group versus 20.7 in the with K-spoke).

Health-related quality of life also showed a similar recovery pattern in both groups over time, and again the difference was not significant.

However, one in eight patients who received a cast required later surgery for loss of fracture position in the first six weeks after injury, compared with one patient in the K-wire group. Other complications were rare, with no evidence of difference between the two groups (28 in the cast group versus 22 in the K-wire group).

The researchers acknowledged some limitations, including the fact that neither the treating physicians nor the participants could be blind to the interventions.

However, they say this was a large study involving adults of all ages, and the results are based on validated patient-reported outcomes, reflecting care provided in the healthcare system.

Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: IIM Ahmedabad Research Assistantship – Centre for Digital Transformation 2022

Description: IIM Ahmedabad Research Assistantship – Centre for Digital Transformation 2022 is a research opportunity offered to Master's or Ph.D. degree holders. Eligibility: The assistantship is open for candidates who hold a Master's or Ph.D. degree in Management/Information Systems/Engineering/Computer Sci-

Currently studying in Class 9 to Undergraduate (including general and professional courses) level.

Annual family income must not be greater than INR 6,00,000 (6 lakh) from all sources.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 1,00,000

Last Date to Apply: 15-02-2022

Application mode: On-line applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/HTFP1



ence/Mathematics or Social and Economic related disciplines. Prizes & Rewards: Variable awards

Last Date to Apply: 06-02-2022

Application mode: On-line applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MCT3

Scholarship Name 2: HDFC Ltd's Badhte Kadam Scholarship 2021-22

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

Eligibility: Indian students who have either lost their parent(s)/earning members or whose family members have lost their employment (or livelihood) during the pandemic.

Scholarship Name 3: Kotak Shiksha Nidhi

Description: Kotak Shiksha Nidhi invites applications from school and college students who have lost a primary earning member of their family due to COVID-19, for continuity of their education from Class 1st to diploma and graduation level courses.

Eligibility: Loss of both parents

Loss of one of the parents Loss of primary earning member of the family (other than parents) Applicants must be school or college going students aged between age 6 to 22 years i.e., class 1 to diploma or graduation course

Prizes & Rewards: Terms and Conditions Apply. Selection and the quantum of assistance under Kotak Shiksha Nidhi will be based on fulfillment of the eligibility criteria and will be at the discretion of Kotak Education Foundation.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION VAILLOO
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER FOR NABARD WORKS
TWO COVER SYSTEM (above Rs. 2.50 crores)
NIT No.195 of 2021-22/ 8082-91 DATED: 20.01.2022

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

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

S. No	Name of Work	Tendered Cost including GST (Rs in lacs.)	Cost of document in shape of Treasury receipt/ Chelen (Rs in lacs.)	Earnest Money (2% of Adv. Cost) (Rs in lacs.)	Time of completion For Construction work	Tender Call	Time and Date of opening of tenders online (Technical Bid)	Class of contractor		
1	Up gradation/ construction of Pushroo Waldran Road by way of earth work cutting, construction of PCC/ Kacha Drain, B Wall, R Wall, supplying and filing of RBM including providing, laying WBM II 50mm BM 25mm semi-dense, wet mix macadam, development of berms, laying of RCC pipes and construction of RCC box type culverts at spots.	256.38	25.63	282.01	5500/-	5,64020/-	365 days	1	10.02.2022 11.00 AM	A class with HMPO

MH : NABARD (RIDF- XXVII)
Position of AAA: Accorded
Position of T.S : Accorded

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	20.01.2022
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 21.01.2022 11.00 A.M to 09.02.2022, 4.00 P.M
3.	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	24.01.2022 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Ang/Kul HQ Khanabal
4.	Bid submission Start Date	25.01.2022 From 10.00 A.M
5.	Bid Submission End Date	09.02.2022 upto 4.00 P.M
6.	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online).	10.02.2022 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Ang/Ku HQ Khanabal.
7.	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online).	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Vailloo (tender inviting authority) and Earnest Money for 2% of Advertised Cost in shape of CDR/ FDR only. Pledged to Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Ang/Kul. (tender receiving authority (Name of work to be mentioned on the Treasury receipt/ challan)) (Refer Govt. order No. A/ 24(2017)-65 DT: 07.06.2018 & Superintending Engineer R&B Circle Ang/Kul's No. 3867-70 dated: 04.08.2018 (The date of Treasury receipt / Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Vailloo (Tendering Inviting Authority).
- 5% Performance Security of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG by the Successful bidder. The order/ directions issued from Financial Commissioner, Finance Department Civil Secretariat Jammu/ Srinagar vide letter No. No. A/Misc(2018)-III -895/J Dated: 22.12.2020 and Endorsed by Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Kashmir Srinagar vide CIRCULAR No. CE/RBK/HD/32857-92 Dated: 01.01.2022).
- The 1st Lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of allotted cost as performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/ BG (Pledged to Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Ang/Kul) within 07 days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of defective liability period of the work.
- All bidders shall upload Verification Certificate from concerned Chief Engineer/ Superintending Engineer of Enlistment Registration card.
- All other terms and conditions shall be strictly as per SBD circulated by this office letter No. CE/RBK/HD/29158-88 dated 10-02-2018

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

No. 8082-91
Dated: 20.01.2022

DIPK-17011/21

THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION SUB OFFICE PULWAMA.

The candidate whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost his original 12th class pass marks certificate issued by the Board of School Education with following particulars :

Name: Bilal Ahmad Ahanger
S/O : Assad Ullah Ahanger
Class 12th Roll No: 730494 Session April may 1995



Now the candidate has applied for the duplicate certificate of the same. Anybody having any objection in this regard may file the same before undersigned within seven days of period from the date of publication of this notice. After due date no objection will or shall be accepted or entertained.

Assistant Secretary Sub office,
Pulwama

m/pul

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education

BRANCH OFFICE SOPORE

The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original marks certificate of Class 10 th, 12th under Below mentioned particulars

Hussaib Mohammad
Father's Name: Noor Mohammad Bhat
Mother Name : Saleema Begum
Secondary School Examination Class 10th
Roll No: 3168272 Year 2016 Session Annual Regular
Higher Secondary School Examination (Part II) Class 12Th
Roll No: 3150523 Bilingual Annual



Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Marks Card. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the same before undersigned with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original marks card is treated as cancelled.

Sd/ Assistant Secretary
Sub Office Sopore

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Thieves on prowl at Zakura, Police register case

Observer News Service

Srinagar:-- The Jammu and Kashmir Police have registered a case and taken up the investigation after the back-to-back burglary incidents in Zakura locality of Srinagar outskirts.

Locals from Syed Pora Batapora area of Zakura said that burglars have struck 4 times in a week in the area. They said burglars decamped with cash and jewelry from 3 residential houses.

“Yesterday, burglars looted cash from a donation box inside the shrine of Mir Syed Hussain Hasnani.

They demanded stringent punishment for culprits.

When contacted, a police officer said that cognizance has already been taken and formal FIR stands registered.

“Investigation is underway and the culprits will be identified and booked,” he said.

Two drug peddlers arrested in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, police have arrested two drug peddlers in Srinagar and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

According to the official police hand-out, Shaheedgunj police at a checkpoint established at Jahangir chowk intercepted two suspicious persons who on seeing police party tried to escape from the spot but were apprehended tactfully by the alert police party.

The arrested people have been identified as Amjid Dar resident of Tangdhar Karnah and Arif Maqsood Khan resident of Kandi Karnah. During checking, officers were able to recover 17gms of heroin from their possession. They have been arrested and shifted to a police station where they remain in custody.



Normal life was affected across Srinagar city as authorities placed restrictions on the non-essential movement of people in view of upsurge in covid-19 cases, officials said. piC Abid Bhat

‘Mughal Durbar’ Restaurant Sealed For Violating Covid SOP’s

Syed Burhan

SRINAGAR: The authorities on Saturday sealed ‘Mughal Darbar Restaurant’ for allegedly violating Disaster Management guidelines with regard to Covid related SOPs.

Officials told Kashmir Observer the restaurant was found violating the SOP’s in broad daylight.

“A team was deputed to check the adherence of the Covid protocols and it

was found the restaurant was not adhering to Covid-19 Sop’s. Tehsildar South Moeen Kakroo told Kashmir Observer.

He said that a large number of people were eating in the restaurant when the officials visited the restaurant.

“Under the guidelines a restaurant has to operate at fifty percent capacity” he added. Visuals circulating on social media showed a team of officials headed by Naib Tehsildar raiding the premises of Restaurant.

The seizure of the popular hangout comes as Jammu and Kashmir saw the highest spike of 6568 Covid-19 cases on Saturday.4693 cases were reported from Kashmir Division and 1875 cases were reported from Jammu division.7 Covid related deaths were also reported, 5 from Jammu province and 2 from Kashmir Province.

The Authorities say they are enforcing a weekend lockdown to keep a check on the ever increasing number of Covid-19 cases.

5-day Online Research Methodology Workshop Concludes At KU

Srinagar, Jan 22 (KNO): An online workshop on research methodology concluded at the University of Kashmir on Saturday.

The five-day workshop was organised by the varsity’s Shaikh-ul Aalam Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies (SACMS) in collaboration with Ibn Arabi Society Kashmir to help young scholars of Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines to enhance their research skills and broaden their perspectives on research.

According to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), chairman SACMS Prof G N Khaki

inaugurated the workshop and welcomed the speakers, guests and participants, even as he highlighted the aims and objectives of the workshop.

Eminent speakers who delivered online lectures during the workshop included Professor Farida Khan, Formerly Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia; Professor Satish Deshpande, Professor of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics; Professor Uma Chakravarti, Formerly Professor of History, Delhi University and Professor Ayesha Kidwai, Professor School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, JNU.

Labour Commissioner Office J&K Government, Srinagar/Jammu.

Important notice

This is information for all the Migrant Workers/labourers who are presently working in Jammu & Kashmir that in view of current situation due to COVID Pandemic the Labour Department, J&K has established district wise Help Desk/ COVID Control Rooms. Those Migrant Workers/Labours who are in distress and need help can contact on the following concerned helpline numbers. The helpline numbers/persons will be available on all days from 9.00 AM to 5.00 PM:

Name & Location of Districts			Officers/Official Designated for Control Room incharge (Name & Designation)	Phone Numbers
S. No.	Name of District	Location of Control Room/Help Desk		

KASHMIR DIVISION

1	Anantnag	ALC Office Anantnag	Syed Manzoor Ahmad Caretaker	9149950912
2	Baramulla	ALC Office Kanispora Baramulla	Waseem Ahmad DEO	7006087629
3	Bandipora	Mini-Secretariat cum DC Office Bandipora	Mr. Rahul Khar Jr. Assistant	9797560672
4	Budgam	ALC Office Budgam	Tawseeful Islam NYC	7889402918
5	Ganderbal	Mini-Sectratrait cum DC Office Ganderbal	Sh. Amit Kapoor Labour Inspector	7006659415
6	Kupwara	Zangil near Kharbagh Kupwara	Mrs. Nandni Yadav Labour Officer	7006897179
7	Kulgam	DC Office Kulgam	Mr Ajay Koul Labour Officer	9086571168
8	Pulwama	ALC Office Pulwama	Mr. Nowsheed Ahmad Labour Officer	9149995267
9	Shopian	ALC Office Shopian	Mr. Ziya-ul-Haq Labour Inspector	7889320730
10	Srinagar	ALC Office Srinagar near LD Hospital	Mushtaq Ahmad Khambay Labour Officer	7006795140

JAMMU DIVISION

1	Jammu	ALC Office Jammu	Sanjay Bhat	9419424281
2	Samba	ALC Office Samba	Raman Sharma	7006382985
3	Kathua	ALC Office Kathua	Roshan Bandral	9419211429
4	Udhampur	ALC Office Udhampur	A. A. Bhatti	9622068239
5	Reasi	ALC Office Reasi	Deep Kumar	9858803942
6	Rajouri	ALC Office Rajouri	Nasir Khan	9622234624
7	Poonch	ALC Office Poonch	Joginder Singh	6006560525
8	Doda	ALC Office Doda	Sunil Kumar	9697635101
9	Kishtwar	ALC Office Kishtwar	Phulail Singh	8082668516
10	Ramban	ALC Office Ramban	Mohammad Saleem Sofi	9018745412

DIPK-17079/21

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI

CALENDAR

19 Jumada al-Sani

1443

PRAYERS

FAJR 6: 07

ZUHR 12:42

ASR 4:14

Magrib 5:55

ISHA 7: 19

This Day In History

- 971 - War elephant corps of the Southern Han defeated at Shao by crossbow fire from Song Dynasty troops; Southern Han state forced to submit to the Song Dynasty. 1st regular war elephant corps in Chinese army
- 1368 - In a coronation ceremony, Zhu Yuanzhang ascends to the throne of China as the Hongwu Emperor, initiating Ming Dynasty rule over China that would last for three centuries.
- 1556 - Shaanxi Earthquake - deadliest ever recorded kills 830,000 in Shensi Province, China
- 1570 - Earl of Moray, regent of Scotland, assassinated; civil war breaks out
- 1579 - Union of Utrecht signed, forming protestant Dutch Republic
- 1631 - France & Sweden sign anti-German Treaty of Barwald
- 1656 - French philosopher and theologian Blaise Pascal publishes the first of his Lettres provinciales
- 1668 - England, Netherlands & Sweden sign Triple Alliance against French
- 1795 - War of the First Coalition: French cavalry captures 14 Dutch ships and 850 guns near the port of Den Helder - rare instance of cavalry capturing a fleet
- 1859- Mauna Loa volcano in Hawaii begins an eruption that lasts 300 days
- 1899 - Emilio Aguinaldo is sworn in as President of the First Philippine Republic
- 1908 - US & Great Britain demand end of abuses in Congo
- 1932 - El Salvador army kills 4,000 protesting farmers
- 1942 - Battle of Rabaul: Japanese attack Australian air base in Rabaul, New Britain
- 1942 - Tank battle at Adzjedabia, Africa Korps vs British 8th army
- 1943 - British 8th army marches into Tripoli
- 1945 - World War II: Karl Dönitz launches Operation Hannibal.
- 1962 - Libya, Morocco, Algeria & Tunisia plan to form United Arab Maghreb.
- 1970 - US launches 2nd generation weather satellite, ITOS 1
- 1972 - Entire population of Istanbul under 24 hour house arrest
- 1973 - Jordan Air crash at Kano, Nigeria kills 176 Muslim pilgrims
- 1973 - US President Richard Nixon announces an accord has been reached to end Vietnam War
- 1973 - Shah of Iran announces that the 1954 operating agreement between a consortium of oil companies and Iran will not be renewed when it expires in 1979

From KO Archives

US diplomats hold secret talks with APHC

Nusrat Javed

NEW DELHI: US diplomats were holding secret talks with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in this charged and security-ridden Indian capital as the Vajpayee government deliberated whether to extend the "unilateral ceasefire" beyond January 26.

Quoting what it said was a very reliable source, The News report said at least one, or maybe more, diplomats working for the US mission here, was wrong overtime, even on Sunday. The lady diplomat reportedly held a lengthy meeting with two APHC activists, who maintain regular contacts with New Delhi-based diplomats. As this back-door diplomacy continued, the all-important Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met to decide whether the army and other security agencies in Kashmir should continue with the policy of "non-initiation of fire."

Projected as the "unilateral cease-fire," this policy was hailed all over the world, showing to the "international community" as if New Delhi was seriously looking for a lasting solution of the Kashmir problem. It also spread the impression that at tile peak of his political career, which was mostly spent in pursuing the Hindu extremist causes, Vajpayee wanted to get out of the historic prejudices and rigid constructs, developed during 50 years of acrimony between Pakistan and India. The Indian prime minister strengthened the impression through his "musings" on the New Year eve.

But Vajpayee has opponents in his own party and the government, although many in New Delhi seriously believe that Vajpayee and Advani have played "good cop-bad cop" by design. Jaswant Singh has also conveyed it to the prime minister's office that permitting the APHC delegation to Pakistan would eventually lead to "tripartite talks" on Kashmir, a possibility the foreign office mandarins of South Block, vehemently resent.

Many Indian journalists, regularly writing on external affairs, have also begun high-lighting and supporting the South Block's reservations to APHC delegation going to Pakistan. In the latest issue of prestigious "India Today," Tavleen Singh author of a well-received book on the Kashmir entangle, had written a very strong column about it.

She insists that APHC delegation wants to go to Pakistan for it would help "Pakistan's general to establish his belief that the APHC represents the people of Kashmir as distinct from the people of India. This is his way of paving the way for eventual tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and Kashmir. So sitting in distant Islamabad, Pakistan's unelected government has decided who should represent the Kashmiri people."

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 23 January, 2001)

Sd/-
DIPK-17047/21
Accounts Officer,
Member Secretary

In Bid To Present New Avatar, Congress Fields 70% Fresh Faces In UP Polls



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW: Making a conscious effort to shun the old baggage and present her party in a 'new avatar' in Uttar Pradesh, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has hand-picked over 70 per cent new faces among the total 166 candidates for the high-stakes state assembly election.

Besides sticking to her promise of 40 per cent women candidates, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has overwhelmingly given a chance to debutants with an aim to build a new leadership in the Hindi heartland, which had slipped from the party hands in recent years.

Uttar Pradesh is scheduled to have seven-phase polls for the 403 assembly constituencies beginning from February 10. The results will be out on March 10.

Of the total 166 names declared so far by the Congress, 119 candidates will be making their electoral debut, party spokesman Anshu Awasthi told news agency PTI.

With the candidature of Sangeta Tyagi, wife of party leader late Rajiv Tyagi, from Sahibabad seat, Ms Gandhi Vadra has made an earnest effort to break the mould and create new leadership in the century-old party which has faded into political oblivion.

"Priyanka Gandhi has made an attempt to bring all those fighting on people's issues, be it regarding women, youth, farmers, backwards or dalits, to the forefront," Mr Awasthi said.

He said the list of candidates gives a clear vision of the party's effort to give a new direction to the state politics which has been suffering from caste and religion-

based politics for years.

"Party tickets have been given to youth and those who are working strongly in their respective fields," the Congress spokesman said, adding that in the first list of 125 names, 26 candidates are those who are up to 35 years of age.

He said 55-year-old Asha Singh, mother of the Unnao rape victim; anti-CAA activist and party spokesperson Sadaf Jafar; ASHA worker and activist Poonam Pandey who fought for the rights of ASHA workers and was attacked at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's programme at Shahjahanpur; Ram Raj Gond who fought for the rights of Adivasis in Sonbhadra; are all making their debut this election.

Similarly, Bhawana Valmiki, social activist from Hapur; Yasmin Rana from Charthawal; Salma Agha Ansari from Thakurdwara; Kalpana Singh from Bilari; Nafees Saifi from Meerut South; Sukhvinder Kaur from Saharanpur are among those who will be contesting for the first time.

Other women candidates in the Congress list are Ritu Singh from Mohammedi in Lakhimpur Kheri who was manhandled during the recent panchayat elections; Poonam Pandit from Syana who was an international shooter before working as a bouncer to Haryanvi dancer Sapna Chaudhari and later got associated with the farmers agitation.

Archana Gautam, who won Miss bikini 2018 and worked in south Indian films, from Hastinapur; and Avanshi Kajala from Meerut Cantt are also in this list. Kajala is also the district unit president of the party.

The Congress had released the first list of 125 names on January 13 and the second list of 41 names on January 20.

UP Polls: Owaisi Announces Alliance, Proposes 2 CMs



All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday announced his alliance in Uttar Pradesh with Babu Singh Kushwaha and Bharat Mukti Morcha.

"If the alliance comes to power there will be 2 Chief Ministers, one from OBC community and another from Dalit community. There would be 3 Deputy Chief Ministers including from Muslim community," he told a press conference.

Upon being questioned wheth-

er this an alliance formed out of compulsion, Babu Singh Kushwaha said that it is not of compulsion. "We worked for Dalit, backward and minority community for a long time," he said.

Elections to the 403 assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh will be held in seven phases starting February 10.

The polling in Uttar Pradesh will be held on February 10, 14, 20, 23, 27, and March 3 and 7 in seven phases. The counting of votes will take place on March 10...-ANI



Hospitalisation Much Lower During 3rd Wave: Study

Asian News International

NEW DELHI: A comparative study of all admitted COVID-19 patients in Max Healthcare hospitals suggests that during the ongoing third wave, occupancy of ICU beds and oxygen requirement is not higher compared to the prior two waves of the coronavirus infection.

This comparative study from all admitted patients across Max Healthcare hospitals has been conducted to compare the rate of admission, ICU requirement, mortality among COVID-19 patients from the first wave and second wave vs the third wave.

The key finding notes that the percentage occupancy of ICU beds, however, is not higher compared to the first two waves.

"During second wave last year when Delhi was recording 28,000 COVID-19 positive cases per day, hospitals across the city were full and no ICU beds were available. In comparison to that, in the current wave when the national capital recorded its highest around 28,000 positive cases in a single day, the hospital COVID occupancy across our network is less. There is no crisis inside our

■ ALSO, THE deaths reported are largely in the elderly population (above 70 years of age) suffering multiple co-morbidities such as kidney diseases, heart diseases, diabetes, cancers,"

hospitals," as per the statement.

According to the study, oxygen requirement was at a nominal rate of 23.4 per cent during the current wave as compared to the first wave and second wave where it was 63 per cent and 74 per cent respectively.

The study has been conducted under Group Medical Director, Max Healthcare, Dr Sandeep Buddhiraja.

Researchers note that the Omicron variant seems to be causing a much milder disease. Lesser numbers of patients require hospitalisation and the strain on healthcare services in terms of oxygen requirement is also much lesser, according to the study.

"The overall mortality in the first wave was at 7.2 per cent which increased to 10.5 per cent during the second wave. We have recorded 6 per cent mortality in COVID pa-

tients during the ongoing wave. Hence, although the number of patients getting admitted is fast rising over the past 10 days and more and more daily deaths are being reported, the good news is that variant Omicron seems to be causing a much milder disease," the statement further read.

"Lesser numbers of patients require hospitalisation and the strain on healthcare services in terms of oxygen requirement, etc is also much lesser," it added.

The study also claims that low mortality has been reported and a large part of this is because of COVID-19 vaccinations. As per the data, out of 82 deaths so far, 60 per cent was seen in the partially or unvaccinated population.

"Also, the deaths reported are largely in the elderly population (above 70 years of age) suffering multiple co-morbidities such as kidney diseases, heart diseases, diabetes, cancers," the study mentions.

Lastly, amongst the paediatric admissions, the hospital network has admitted 41 children (below 18 years), however, no deaths have been reported in this age group. Among these, a total of seven required PICU while two were on ventilators.

Republic Day: Mahatma Gandhi's Favourite 'Abide With Me' Hymn Dropped From Beating Retreat Ceremony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: One of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Christian hymns "Abide With Me" has been dropped from this year's Beating Retreat ceremony on January 29, according to a brochure released by the Indian Army on Saturday.

"Abide With Me", written by Scottish Anglican poet and hymnologist Henry Francis Lyte in 1847, has been part of the Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950.

This year's ceremony will conclude with 'Sare Jahan Se Acha', the brochure stated.

The Beating Retreat used to end with the "Abide With Me" hymn.

The brochure also listed 26 tunes that will be played at this year's ceremony at Vijay Chowk.

The 26 tunes that will be played at this year's ceremony include 'Hey Kanchha', 'Channa Bilauri', 'Jai Janam Bhumi', 'Nritya Sarita',



'Vijay Josh', 'Kesaria Banna', 'Veer Siachen', 'Hathroi', 'Vijay Ghoshi', 'Ladaakoo', 'Swadeshi', 'Amar Chat-tan', 'Golden Arrows' and 'Swarn Jayanti', according to the brochure.

'Veer Sainik', 'Fanfare by Buglers', 'INS India', 'Yashasvee', 'Jai Bharati', 'Kerala', 'Siki A Mole', 'Hind Ki Sena', 'Kadam Kadam Badhaye Ja', 'Drummers Call', 'Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon' are also part of the 26 tunes that will be

played on the evening of January 29, the brochure noted.

Beating Retreat is a centuries-old military tradition dating from the days when troops disengaged from battle at sunset, it mentioned.

As soon as the buglers sounded the Retreat, the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield, it added.

'Isolation Facility' Not Compulsory Now For Covid Positive Foreign Arrivals



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Travellers from any country arriving in India, who test Covid positive, will not mandatorily be managed at an isolation facility from today, but have to quarantine themselves at home according to protocols, authorities said.

In its revised 'Guidelines for International Arrivals' released on Thursday, the government said foreign arrivals, who test positive, will still have to undergo home quarantine for seven days even after they test negative, and undertake RT-PCR test on the eighth day of arrival in India.

The revised guidelines came

into effect from today.

Earlier the norm was that travellers coming from any country, including those considered 'at-risk', would be managed at an isolation facility and treated according to the standard protocols, the government said.

In the revised guidelines, this clause that mandated staying at 'isolation facility' upon arrival, has been removed.

The government said still passengers found to be symptomatic during screening will be immediately isolated and taken to a medical facility.

If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed according to norms, it said.

MP HC Junks Plea Against Renaming Habibganj Station, Imposes Fine



The Madhya Pradesh High Court has dismissed a petition challenging the government's decision to rename Habibganj railway station after Gond queen Rani Kamalapati and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on the petitioner.

A division bench of Justices Sheel Nagu and Sunita Yadav dismissed the petition, terming it as 'frivolous' and 'vexatious' piece of litigation which has consumed precious time of the court.

The court dismissed the plea observing that it does not perceive any public cause involved in the petition, which appears to have been filed to gain cheap publicity.

"This court fails to comprehend as to how the name of a particular Railway Station would lead to furtherance of public cause," it said.

The court further noted that a cause of public is served by quality and quantity of amenities and facilities available at a railway station and in facilitating ease of travelling by train.

This act of facilitation has nothing to do with the name of a particular Railway Station.

"The present petition stands dismissed with cost of Rs 10,000 which shall be paid by the petitioner in the Registry to be utilised for purchasing necessary articles and equipment for dealing with the crisis arising out of the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic," the court said.

The petition was filed by a Seoni-based lawyer, A.S. Qureshi on the ground that in 1973 one Guru Habeeb Miyan had donated his land to the Railways on which the station was constructed. Therefore, the station's old name (Habibganj) should be restored.

The Habibganj railway station which has been renovated and facilitated with world class amenities for the passengers has been renamed after Gond queen Rani Kamalapati during a visit of Prime Narendra Modi's in Bhopal on November 15, 2021...-IANS

■ THE PRESENT PETITION STANDS dismissed with cost of Rs 10,000 which shall be paid by the petitioner in the Registry to be utilised for purchasing necessary articles and equipment for dealing with the crisis arising out of the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic,"

SHORT TAKES

Netaji's statue to be installed at India Gate



Sculptor Adwaita Gadanayak will carve the proposed grand statue of iconic freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to be installed at India Gate in New Delhi.

Gadanayak, who is the director general of the prestigious National Gallery of Modern Art, expressed happiness over the opportunity to carve the statue of the nationalist leader, who was born in Odisha.

The statue when installed will be seen easily from Raisina Hill, he said.

I am delighted. It is a matter of honour for me as a sculptor that Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose to give this responsibility to me, he told a private news channel here. The black jade granite stone for the carving of Netaji's statue will be brought from Telangana. The design of the statue has been prepared by the ministry of culture, he said. The proposed statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be installed at India Gate in the national capital, Gadanayak said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Friday that a grand statue of iconic freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be installed at India Gate as a symbol of India's "indebtedness" to him.

Till the statue is completed, a hologram statue of Netaji would be present at the same place, he said, adding that he will unveil the hologram statue on January 23, the 125th birth anniversary of the Azad Hind Fauj founder...-PTI

Woman Forced To Withdraw Rape Complaint



New Delhi: A Delhi court has sought a report from a senior police officer after a rape survivor alleged that she was being pressured to sign certain documents in his office, with the court saying that investigating agencies cannot conduct themselves out of the bound of due process of law.

The 22-year-old woman had moved the court alleging rape by a head constable, claiming that he used her as a honey trap to arrest a wanted criminal, and sought action against him. The court had earlier called an action taken report from the police on her plea. The rape survivor had on Friday appeared before the court through video conference and alleged that she was called to the office of assistant commissioner of police (ACP) and made to sign certain documents. She further claimed that the accused cop was pressuring her to withdraw the complaint.

On her complaint, Metropolitan Magistrate Vaibhav Chaurasia asked the ACP to answer on what documents the complainant was forced to sign. "Report be called from the ACP as to for what reasons the complainant has been called to the ACP office and further the averments to being pressured to sign on certain documents are true or not. It is directed that the investigating agency cannot conduct themselves out of the bound of due process of law," the judge said. Furthermore, the court directed the deputy commissioner of police to ensure safety and security of the rape survivor...-PTI

Republic Day Parade To Have 25 Tableaux, 16 Marching Contingents



NEW DELHI: This year's Republic Day parade will have 16 marching contingents, 17 military bands and 25 tableaux of various states, departments and armed forces, the Indian Army said in a statement on Saturday.

The Army will be represented by a mounted column of cavalry, 14 mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a flypast by advanced light helicopters of its aviation wing at the Republic Day parade-2022 (RDP-2022), it said. The mechanised columns of the Army will show one PT-76 tank, one Centurion tank, two MBT Arjun MK-I tanks, one APC TOPAS armoured personnel carriers, one BMP-I infantry fighting vehicle and two BMP-II infantry fighting vehicles, it stated. One 75/24 Pack howitzer, two Dhanush howitzers, one PMS bridge-laying system, two Sarvatra bridge-laying systems, one HT-16 electronic warfare system, two Taran Shakti electronic warfare systems, one Tiger Cat missile system and two Akash missile systems will also be part of the mechanised columns.

The six marching contingents of the Indian Army will be of Rajput Regiment, Assam Regiment, Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, Sikh Light Infantry, Army Ordnance Corps Regiment and Parachute Regiment, according to the statement. One marching contingent each of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy will also participate in RDP-2022, the statement said...-PTI

LG Pays Homage To Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Saturday paid tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the eve of Netaji's Jann- Jayanti.

23rd January is observed as "Parakram Divas" to commemorate the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

In a message, the Lt Governor remembered Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation, an official spokesperson said.

"Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is the true icon of patriotism, courage, selfless service, disci-

pline, earthly wisdom, simplicity, and iron will. We are indebted to Netaji for his resilience against the British colonial rule, and for his monumental role in the Indian freedom struggle. Young generation should revisit Netaji's legacy and remember his unparalleled contribution to the nation. We must work together towards realizing his dream of strong and Aatm-Nirbhar Bharat," Sinha said

"The youth of the country must follow the universal and eternal values that he stood for. His life and teachings will continue to be relevant for the generations to come," he added.

NC Bats For Restoration Of Statehood To J&K

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A senior leader of the National Conference on Saturday sought the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, saying the promise held out in parliament about this core issue should be fulfilled forthwith.

Virtually releasing India's first 'District Good Governance Index' for the Union Territory, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held after the completion of the ongoing delimitation process and statehood will be restored once the situation in the Union Territory becomes normal. Reacting to the statement, NC provincial president, Jammu, Rattan Lal Gupta said the people of this part of the country cannot be misled anymore by "rhetoric and routine promises".

"They (people) know the gimmicks of the BJP-led dispensation at the Centre, which is totally insensitive towards the issues of Jammu and Kashmir," the NC

leader said. Referring to the alleged burgeoning unemployment problem and denial of jobs to skilled, unskilled and professional youth in the central projects being carried out in Jammu and Kashmir, he said "this is injustice and discrimination as the locals are the primary stakeholders".

Gupta said the Lt Governor's administration should not test the patience of the youth, who feel terribly let down.

"Unemployment has to be tackled as a priority with guarantee to the permanent residents in government jobs," he said and sought 70 per cent jobs for educated unemployed youth besides 100 per cent recruitment of skilled and unskilled workers of Jammu and Kashmir in the central government establishments operating in Jammu and Kashmir besides IIMs and IITs.

He sought recruitment drives in police be expedited for the larger interest of the border youth, as also others who have been desperately craving for jobs.

21 Held For Stealing Railway Wires Worth Rs 3.5L

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Government Railway Police Kashmir (GRPK) on Saturday claimed to have solved OHE copper wire theft incidents by arresting twenty-one accused persons 'involved in stealing of the special-type electrical wiring' in different places across Kashmir valley in last two years.

In a media handout, the GPRK, "The job installation of OHE copper wire by railway authorities through M/S R.S. Infra private limited company has been under progress from Baramulla to Banihal since September, 2021. While the job of the installation of said wire was being carried out by the said agency it was reported by the said company that during night hours, unknown thieves have committed theft of OHE copper wire/ attempts to theft in Sopore, Pattan, Budgam, Srinagar

and Bijbehara areas, adding On the basis of the written reports received from the M/S R.S. Infra private limited company, nine FIRs (04 in 2021 and 05 in 2022) were registered in GRPS of Baramulla/ Hamaray/Srinagar and Anantnag and investigation set into motion."

It said, to work out the case, SSP GRPK constituted 03 separate teams Sub Division wise led by the concerned SHO's and supervised by the concerned SDPO's. The teams after strenuous / hectic efforts cracked /solved the theft cases by arresting 21 accused persons involved in the commission of crime.

"The stolen property of OHE wire 388 Kgs, worth Rs 3,56,572 was also recovered from them. Weapon of offences including cutter, Hexa blades, Gloves and ropes alongwith four load carriers utilized for the transportation of stolen property were also seized", the concerned department", it further said.

TEEN VACCINATION DRIVE

3 Kashmir Districts Achieve 100% Target For First Job

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir has achieved the target of 100% COVID vaccination in the 15 - 18 years age group for the first dose in the Ganderbal, Shopian, Anantnag and Poonch districts.

This is a major step towards the complete vaccination goal of the eligible people in the Union Territory.

The efforts of District administration, Health officials and front-line workers in this achievement are deeply appreciated. Health department is running a massive immunisation campaign across Jammu and Kashmir.

Driver Injured After Truck Plunges Into Gorge

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: A driver sustained injuries after the truck he was driving skidded off the road and fell into the deep gorge on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Shalgadi Chamel was area on Saturday morning.

Reports said that a truck bearing registration number HR38U 4552, was on its way from Jammu towards Srinagar, when the driver lost control over the vehicle and it

plunged into deep gorge, according to news agency GNS.

They said, soon after getting information about the incident, a team of locals alongside NGO Banihal volunteers & police rescued the driver and subsequently shifted him to SDH Banihal for treatment.

The injured driver has been identified as Ramesh Kumar (36) son of Surum Chand, a resident of Chennai area of Udhampur.

A case has been registered in this regard.



TWO GIRLS CROSS over a bridge in the snow-covered Tangmarg area of Baramulla district on Saturday.

Pic: Abid Bhat/KO

Jammu Tops First Ever District Good Governance Index

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In the composite ranking of first ever District Good Governance Index (DGGI) released on Saturday by Home Minister, Amit Shah here the Jammu district has managed to top the list followed by districts of Doda, Samba, Pulwama and Srinagar in the UT.

The DGGI is a framework document comprising of performance under ten governance sectors having 58 indicators with 116 data points. The criteria has been adopted after following a rigorous and robust process of data collection, screening and validation by each of the Districts.

The governance sectors the performance of which was weighed under this index includes Agriculture and allied sector (11 indicators), Commerce & Industry (05), Human Resource Development (09), Public Health (09), Public Infrastructure & Utilities (06), Social Welfare & Development (06), Financial Inclusion (03),

Judiciary & Public Safety (04), Environment (02) and Citizen Centric Governance (03).

Under individual categories Kishtwar has been rated top in Agriculture sector, Jammu in 2 sectors of C&I and Citizen Centric Governance, Pulwama in HRD, Reasi in Public Health, Srinagar in Public Infrastructure, Ramban in Social Welfare, Ganderbal in Financial Inclusion, Doda in Judicial & Public Safety and Shopian in Environment.

In the overall ranking Ganderbal stands at 6th place, Anantnag at 7th then by Baramulla district at 8th place followed by Kathua (9th), and Kupwara at 10th place.

The last 10 district in the index includes Kishtwar ranked 11th followed by districts of Budgam, Udhampur, Reasi, Bandipora, Ramban, Kulgam, Shopian, Poonch and Rajouri being at the bottom of the index in the composite ranking.

The booklet states DGGI as a tool to assess the status of governance and impact of various interventions taken up by the

districts and UT administration. Further it says that the index would provide a framework to assess the performance of the districts in specific sectors and provide useful information to the districts enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies to improve ease-of-living and service delivery.

The ranking of the districts, has been said, would bring about healthy competition amongst districts from which the citizens would be immensely benefited.

Pertinent to mention here that the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Govt. of India has been guiding and providing financial support for the exercise with technical support extended by CGG, Hyderabad. The J&K Institute of Management for Public Administration and Rural Development (IM-PARD) with active collaboration of Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES) were the pivotal agencies in developing this index for the UT.

DC Baramulla Briefs PM About Achievements In Various Sectors

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Bhupinder Kumar on Saturday briefed Prime Minister, Narendra Modi about the achievements made in various sectors like agriculture and water Resources, health and nutrition, skill development and financial inclusion and basic infrastructure in the north Kashmir district.

According to an official spokesperson, PM Modi on Saturday virtually addressed the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) of Aspirational Districts of the country during which DC Baramulla was also invited as the only DC from Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This interaction with Deputy Commissioner Baramulla was first of its kind and a great honor for being one amongst the five districts of the country. He was specially invited in the event as the Baramulla district has recorded overwhelming and remarkable performance thrice in subsequent NITI Aayog's delta rankings," he said.

On the occasion, the official spokesperson said that Prime Minister enquired from the



Deputy Commissioner about the success of the District Baramulla in achieving the better results within the given resources.

Kumar, he said, apprised Prime Minister about the initiative and the platform provided by NITI Aayog which identified the critical gaps and ensured the multi-stage monitoring besides, raising the stakes of the field functionaries from front line worker to Deputy Commissioner in achieving the targets.

DC Baramulla, he said, highlighted the achievements made in sectors like Agriculture and Water Resources, Health and Nutrition, Skill Development and Financial Inclusion and Basic Infrastructure. "The systematic governance

systems, better coordination, excellent convergence of funds and functionaries created an environment for better result oriented implementation of the schemes yielding desired outcomes which is reflective of the change in the lives of the common masses," Kumar said.

Poor Work By Contractors Delayed Infra Restoration: CAG

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Department has said that the delay in completion for permanent restoration of damaged infrastructure in the department was due to poor execution of work by the contractors, reveals a report of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

CAG in a report has said, "Based on the report of the committee of principals constituted in September 2014, the Planning Development and Monitoring Department approved an allotment of Rs 50 Crore under the PMDP for permanent restoration of damaged infrastructure of the Higher Education Department."

"Under the project, 16 works were prioritized during 2016-17

for execution at a cost of Rs 50 Crore in seven Government Colleges. The works were to be completed within two years," it reads.

"Audit examination of records revealed that 10 works in three selected colleges (out of seven colleges and 16 works) were taken up at an approved cost of Rs 39.08 Crore," reads the CAG report.

CAG said, "Of this, only five works were completed (50 per cent) and balance five works on which an expenditure of Rs 23.68 Crore was incurred were incomplete."

"The delay in completion was attributed to poor execution of work by the contractors with the impact that the benefits of creation of new infrastructure could not be provided to the students," it reads—(KNO)

A Section Of Main Tunnel On Banihal-Katra Railway Link Completed

Press Trust Of India

BANIHAL: A portion of the main tunnel on the 111-km under-construction Banihal-Katra railway link in Jammu and Kashmir was completed on Saturday, an official said.

Tunnel T-49B is 12.6 km long and the longest tunnel of Indian Railways. It is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (US-BRL) project.

The portion that was completed on Saturday is between Kundan Adit and Arpinchala in Khari Tehsil, the company undertaking the project construction said.

Being constructed with New Austrian Tunneling Method in Ramban district, the tunnel on completion would have double tracks, the official said.

He said the tunneling was done with utmost care considering geological challenges.

On December 5 last year, another tunnel in Bankot area near Banihal was connected after a breakthrough, while the work on the pylon of India's first cable stayed railway bridge at Anji Khad in Reasi district was completed on January 4 brightening the chances of train connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country within the next couple of years.

Of the 272-km USBRL project, the work on 161 km was commissioned in phases. The first phase of 118-km Qazigund-Baramulla section was commissioned in October 2009, followed by the 18-km Banihal-Qazigund in June 2013 and the 25-km Udhampur-Katra in July 2014.

The under-construction 111-km Katra-Banihal section has a total of 37 bridges — 26 major ones and 11 minor ones — and 35 tunnels.

انتقال پر ملال

یہ غیر نہایت ہی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ مسماہ شہزادہ نازی زوہہ مرحوم محمد شفیع نازی کی ساکنہ مکان نمبر 733 گورنمنٹ ہاؤسنگ کالونی باغ بہتیار سرینگر مورخہ 22 ماہ جنوری 2022 کو اس دنیا سے فانی سے رحلت کر گئیں۔ مرحومہ نہایت ہی نیک یرت، ملندار اور صوم و صلہ کو پابند تھیں۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحومہ کو کروٹ کروٹ جنت الفردوس عطا فرمائے اور لواحقین کی مدد میں عظیم برداشت کرنے کی ہمت عطا فرمائے (آمین)۔

مرحومہ کی فاتحہ خوانی مورخہ 25 جنوری 2022 11 بجے ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع مقبرہ بد باغ بہتیار نزدیکی ریلوے پل انجام دیا جائیگا۔

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No: SAM/DC/1653 *Dated: 20-01-22*

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Sealed Tenders affixed with revenue stamp worth Rs 5/- are invited from registered Printers, Dealers/ f Firms for the rate contract of below mentioned items for the session 2022-23.

Section A: Binding

1. Binding of Admission/ Library forms.

Section B: Printing

1. College Newsletter
2. College Prospectus
3. College Identity cards
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The tenders should be accompanied with CDR, pledged to Principal, Sheikh ul Alam Memorial Degree College, Budgam worth Rs:

A) Rs 2000/-for section A
B) Rs 3000/- for section B

The tenders shall reach the office of the undersigned within 07 days from the publication of this notice. The specifications can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Principal
Govt. SAM Degree College
Budgam

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KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Twitter Talks

twitter

“Don’t let the ‘feminist hate’ make you forget and deny that some of your sisters live with monsters who look like humans. Could be their husbands or their mother-in-laws. They go through horrendous mental and physical torture”
@minscx

“So we “need” to spend thousands of crores on a new central vista, replacing bajri, earth and grass where thousands of citizens could picnic, with concrete slabs and heavy stone..... but cannot abide the cost of more than one flame?”
@suhasinih

“Every time a woman walks down on the street, the same men who slip into their DMs to cover her head will catcall her and make her feel uncomfortable, like how dare she walk on the streets. How dare she not be scared of my presence. Let me make her feel that!”
@burgerkhan

ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Peace Bus

That the peace bus launched with lot of fanfare in April 2005 across the Line of Control between the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir is losing its sheen could be a matter of concern for the divided families of what is otherwise known as the paradise on earth. For the third consecutive week, the Karvan-e-Aman bus running between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar carried no passengers from the valley while a negligible three guests arrived here from across the LoC. Indeed, the bus carried scores of returnees after they visited their relatives on either side of the line. But that in no way reflects any encouraging sign vis-à-vis the service launched as a long-awaited Confidence Building Measures between the two parts of the region.

The scenario in respect of other four crossing points, including Chakan-da Bagh on the Poonch-RAWalakot route, might be no better. Come as it does at a time when India and Pakistan have just inked a slew of Confidence Building Measures to lend some more meaning and purpose to the cross LoC travel and trade, one is amused at the predicament of the bus service in a matter of a little over half a decade. In a palpably tense atmosphere marked by torching of the historic Tourist Reception Centre in the high security area of Srinagar, the Indian Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, and the UPA chairperson, Sonia Gandhi, had flown in here to flag off the Muzaffarabad-bound service. Through it, the two countries had announced to the world that they had decided to make the man-made barrier irrelevantly porous to facilitate much longed for meetings between the divided families. Enough water has flown down the Jhelum ever since. The frequency of the bus service was increased in 2008 to make it weekly. And, with the introduction of the new CBMs following the recent meeting between the External Affairs minister, S M Krishna, and his Pakistani counterpart, Hina Rabbani Khar, the cross-LoC travel would be extended to religious tourism. The multiple entry system being put in place will enable stay of the intending visitors with their relatives for two months thrice in a year or for six months in one go.

No double, all these “measures” are fairly tempting for any Kashmiri on either side of the LoC to plan an early visit to relatives on the other side. But, unfortunately, that is not to be. Several disincentives too are in place to scare away any prospective traveler. Climatic conditions obtaining in the part of the region intended to be visited has had a bearing on the travel. Officials explain the prevailing trend largely with reference to the climate. It is more convenient for a Kashmiri traveler to visit his or her relatives in Pak-administered Kashmir during winter in view of warmer climate there. Likewise, those from Pak would prefer to visit Kashmir during summer when it is pleasant here. However, there is a man-made factor too which inhibits the cross-LoC travel. There is no denying that trust deficit that has marked the relations between India and Pakistan for more than six decades past continues to guide and over-shadow the otherwise well-meaning CBMs. No Kashmiri on either side can board the peace bus unless a host of intelligence agencies have given their nod. Police clearance happens to be one of the biggest hurdles. Usually, it takes no less than six months for the police to tick an application after which it is sent to the designated authorities across the LoC where it takes several months more for the final clearance. By the time the permission is granted, the purpose of the visit may have been lost altogether.

That, according to official sources, no less than 9,000 applications are pending clearance by the authorities in Pak-administered Kashmir while another 6,000 await green signal from their counterparts in Jammu and Kashmir speaks for itself. There is an urgent need to make it a time-bound process for the authorities, particularly the intelligence agencies, on either side to clear a case for cross-LoC travel. Moreover, restricting the permission for a Kashmiri to visit Muzaffarabad only defies logic as his relatives might well have settled elsewhere in Pakistan. It goes without saying that tens of thousands of Kashmiris who migrated to the neighbouring country around the partition are known to have settled in Rawalpindi and some other cities. Obviously, a Muzaffarabad-specific permission to a Kashmiri would serve no purpose if his relatives live elsewhere. Given the prevailing atmosphere of bonhomie, it is time for the two countries to address these issues to enable the intended beneficiaries avail themselves of the CBMs.

The article is an editorial from KO Archives
and was originally published on 11th October, 2011

A Suit that Fits
Make Tailor Made Education
Strategies In Kashmir



A YOUNG STUDENT IN KASHMIR attempts to learn from home during lockdown. Credits: PA Images

Mir Tajamul Islam and Arif Rashid Malik

Education is contemplated as a behaviour shaping means from the advent of the universe and undoubtedly it invests its positive gears in a man, as well as in society. Education and Kashmir, from the beginning, had stayed in a warm shell — outright, hand in hand. Although education had remained a prospect for a Kashmiri from time to time, a Kashmiri never looked out for the negative flank due to its full swing proficiency and consistent mindset. That is why the contributions, from Kashmir, in the education sector or due to education had prevailed in many shapes and forms. Education (receiving and providing) is a reason to survive for some and a mudbank for many. The education sector in Kashmir read up an excruciating posture from the end of the year 1989; a crucial era that turned on the political uncertainties and suspense in the valley. The coin earned a flip and a different picture of Kashmir was stocked in the market (world). This flip rewrote the outlook of the education sector also. Educationists, pro-believers and spreaders and even the government made an effort to revolutionise the

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE LIVING IN THE age of technology, it is not always inclusive and feasible. A large number of students can hardly afford basic resources like a mobile phone for online education. Online mode of education is exclusively beneficial for those economically privileged students who come from well-off families. The poor have been left behind, yet again.

education sector. Subsequent years saw the education scenario get better. However, even these years saw Kashmiris facing impediments in the way to seek knowledge smoothly. For instance, the political tensions from the year 2016 to August 2019, made education in Kashmir quite different from that which was available to those living outside of these conditions. Therefore, the Kashmiri education scenario has had to undergo many unprecedented roadblocks which are uniquely negative. The last three decades which were interspersed with politics and violence, did not allow easy, healthy and smooth access to education or educational resources. Nonetheless, education kept on being encouraged and pursued despite odds in Kashmir. But who would have thought what was coming! After the unexpected shutdown post Abrogation of Article 370 which was accompanied by internet blockade in Kashmir — the world

welcomed a global pandemic which it is still fighting for two years now. This time, the education sector of the whole world stood knee bent including ours. The education sector of the valley was so far (already) in the stroke, so came to be hot-headed for the educationists, people and government to set it on the zenith once again. Currently, no substantial efforts have been made towards strengthening education in Kashmir in such dire times. This was especially urgent given the losses that the education scenario had already incurred over the years. The government, instead of switching the education to its strength, is aiming to sustain contemporary education on the online strategy nutriment. This strategy was adopted without any area specific or localised planning and research. Even though we are living in the age of technology, it is not always inclusive and feasible. A large num-

ber of students can hardly afford basic resources like a mobile phone for online education. Online mode of education is exclusively beneficial for those economically privileged students who come from well-off families. The poor have been left behind, yet again. Additionally, Internet access is already uncertain and erratic in Kashmir due to it being a conflict zone. This makes it precarious and makes even digital education vulnerable to uncertainties. One may recall here that even at the outset of the covid-19 pandemic, when education switched to online mode, students in Kashmir did not have access to high speed internet. It affected education from primary to university level. Research scholars faced hurdles in their ways towards meaningful and tasteful research. Yet another downside of online education has been that effective communication between students and teachers has also been hampered. Moreover, logistical lacks like internet access, lack of space, noise, issues with being audible or legible due to weak signal have also contributed towards discouraging student attention as well as attendance in online classes. Hence, Online mode of learning has created a lot of disinterest among teachers as well as students in literary pursuit. Locking down educational institutions for an indefinite period by the government in Jammu and Kashmir is no longer productive. The government, in the erstwhile state, tried diverse substitutes from the 1990s till recent times to redress the damages done to education over the years. This spirit needs to continue. Education is a tool to rewrite the destiny of any nation. Without education, the tasteless atmosphere may survive and cascades of oppression will continue. The government and stakeholders must recognise the special needs of Kashmir's education landscape. No copy-paste approach which is generic can be used here. We need solutions that are tailor made for us, specifically.

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

The authors are pursuing a bachelor's degree in legislative law (B.A LL.B) from the school of the law university of Kashmir and Master in political science from the University of Kashmir respectively

Who Is Winning The Trade War?

PINELOPI KOUJIANOU GOLDBERG

NEW HAVEN – The United States-China trade war started in 2018 and has never officially ended. So, which side has been “winning” it? Recent research offers an unambiguous answer: neither. US tariffs on Chinese goods led to higher import prices in the US in the affected product categories, and China's retaliatory tariffs on US goods ended up hurting Chinese importers. Bilateral trade between the two countries has tanked. And because the US and China are the world's two largest economies, many regard this development as a harbinger of the end of globalization. Yet the “deglobalization” argument ignores the many “bystander” countries that were not directly targeted by the US or China. In a new paper investigating the effects of the trade war on these countries, my co-authors and I come to an unexpected conclusion: Many, but not all, of these bystander countries have benefited from the trade war in the form of higher exports. To be sure, one would expect exports from third countries (Mexico, Vietnam, Malaysia, etc.) to take the place of Chinese exports to the US. But what is surprising is that these countries increased their exports not only to the US but also to the rest of the world. In fact, global trade in the products affected by the trade war seems to have increased by 3% relative to global trade in the products not targeted by tariffs. That means the trade war did not just lead to reallocation of third-country exports to the US (or China); it also resulted in net trade creation. Given that trade wars are not generally associated with this outcome, what accounts

for it? One potential explanation is that some bystander countries saw the trade war as an opportunity to increase their presence in world markets. By investing in additional trade capacity or mobilizing existing idle capacity, they could increase their exports without increasing their prices. Another explanation is that as bystander countries started exporting more to the US or China, their unit costs of production

specialization patterns. Countries such as Malaysia and Vietnam, for example, were lucky to be producing a heavily affected product category like machinery. Yet specialization patterns appear to have mattered little, judging by the big export winners of the trade war: South Africa, Turkey, Egypt, Romania, Mexico, Singapore, the Netherlands, Belgium, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

chain of production shifts.” If a company decided to shift production of a product targeted by Chinese tariffs to a third country, this would necessitate a reshuffling of other activities in the third country, affecting multiple other countries in turn. The exact pattern of these responses would have been hard to predict, given the complexity of modern supply chains. But a country's degree of international integration appears to have been a decisive factor in a firm's relocation decisions. Returning to our initial question, then, the big winner of the trade war seems to be “bystander” countries with deep international ties. From the US perspective, the trade war did not lead to the advertised reshoring of economic activity, at least in the short to medium term. Instead, Chinese imports to the US were simply replaced by imports from other countries. From the perspective of “bystander” countries, the trade war, ironically, demonstrated the importance of trade integration, especially deep trade agreements and FDI. Fortunately, the Sino-American trade war does not spell the end of globalization. Rather, it may mark the beginning of a new world trading system that no longer has the US or China at its center.

FORTUNATELY, THE SINO-AMERICAN trade war does not spell the end of globalization. Rather, it may mark the beginning of a new world trading system that no longer has the US or China at its center

declined, because economies of scale allowed them to offer more at lower prices. Consistent with these explanations, our paper finds that the countries with the largest increases in global exports are those in which export prices are declining. While the net effect of the trade war on the world economy was an increase in trade, there was enormous variation across countries. Some countries increased their exports significantly; some increased their exports to the US at the expense of their exports elsewhere (they reallocated trade); and some countries simply lost exports by selling less to the US and to the rest of the world. What accounts for these differences, and what could countries have done to ensure larger gains from the trade war? Again, the answers are somewhat surprising. One might have guessed that the most important factor explaining countries' differing experiences would be pre-trade-war

What mattered instead were two key country characteristics: participation in “deep” trade agreements (defined as regimes covering not only tariffs but also other measures of behind-the-border protection); and accumulated foreign direct investment. Countries that had a high pre-existing degree of international trade integration benefited the most. Trade agreements tend to reduce the fixed costs of expanding in foreign markets, and existing arrangements may have partly offset the uncertainty generated by the trade war. Similarly, higher FDI is a reliable proxy for greater social, political, and economic ties to foreign markets. Supply-chain effects also may have played an important role. In a prescient policy briefing based on private conversations with executives at large multinationals, analysts at the Peterson Institute for International Economics predicted in 2016 that US tariffs would “set off a daisy

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

The author is a former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the American Economic Review, is Professor of Economics at Yale University

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KANA YAARI FEATURES KAIFI, FOLK SINGER
Abdul Wahab Bugti, Eva B who always understands the assignment; anchoring Kaifi's style. This Balochi pop song is rightfully taking its spot as one of the favourites of listeners.

“Tu Jhoom” With New Coke Studio 14



THE SONG THAT BROKE THE INTERNET WITH
its release and made fans say that the season was worth the wait. This brilliant musical gift has been sung by Abida Parveen and Naseebo Lal. The lyrics are out of this world (especially in today's world where problematic words are traded as music).

KO WEB DESK

Pakistan's iconic music series, which is loved and admired across borders, has been released after a gap of one year. It is far from being a disappointment. We've all enjoyed brilliant music from Coke Studio Pakistan which brings to us an amalgamation of indigenous, modern as well spiritual tunes and satiates our hunger for good music.

Here is the line up of songs that you must check out:

Tu Jhoom

The song that broke the internet with its release and made fans say that the season was worth the wait. This brilliant musical gift has been sung by Abida Parveen and Naseebo Lal. The lyrics are out of this world (especially in today's world where problematic words are traded as music). Not only is the song a treat to the ears, the video too is a visual delight. The video has been produced and curated by Xulfi and the cinematography



has been done by Ahsan Raza. The song made it to the internet like a sensation. Kashmiri music aficionados also pitched in to appreciate their craze for classics like Parveen ji.

Kana Yari

At first, one gets the familiar hit of culture and folk as this song gets into our system. However, soon we're thrown off (pleasantly) by the futuristic notes of this masterpiece. Kana Yaari features Kaifi, folk singer Abdul Wahab Bugti, Eva B who always understands the assignment; anchoring Kaifi's style. This Balochi pop song is rightfully taking its spot as one of the favourites of listeners.

Sajan Das Na



Already released on Spotify India, this song has Atif Aslam return with Momina Mustehsan. This song is quirky and modern. The feels are very pop x edm. It's a fun and groovy song. Unlike the usual peppy music, this one has to it the quintessential flavour of the coke studio mark. This is a song you can play on your headphones. Your new drive song or

one to play while you gym!

Shuru Karein



ALREADY RELEASED ON
Spotify India, this song has Atif Aslam return with Momina Mustehsan. This song is quirky and modern. The feels are very pop x edm. It's a fun and groovy song. Unlike the usual peppy music, this one has to it the quintessential flavour of the coke studio mark.

As if variety wasn't enough, this song satiates your hunger for music that blows your mind away! The soulful music by Romail Ali Khan is a breath of fresh air. It is also available on Spotify India.

What Caught The Web: Snow Cricket



KO Web Desk

Marnus Labuschagne, an Australian cricket star, who plays internationally for the Australian national team and domestically for Queensland recently shared a video of a group of boys playing cricket over a snow covered vastness. He captioned the video, "How good is this". His sentiments were shared by one and all on the internet. The video saw youngsters on a large area densely covered with snow, where they had shoved off snow to form a pitch perfect! The pitch has wickets on both ends and everyone was stationed at their respective

position. The batsmen, the bowler as well as the fielders. Not only is the video fun, it is absolutely spectacular! The video is from Gurez Valley from Kashmir, where snow cricket is gaining currency. It seems that the match was a part of what is known as the "The Gayle Storm Cricket League" in Gurez. Users from Gurez who came to know that the video went viral, took the opportunity to request BCCI to utilise the cricket spirit of the aficionados from Gurez. One user tweeted, "Hope @BCCI @BCCIdomestic @IrfanPathan @ICC will support our youngsters to perform on national and international level Gurez valley is full of talent needs little bit support from administration and Govt I assure starts will come from Gurez valley"

KODAK MOMENT



KASHMIRI BOYS WHILE HEADING TOWARDS THEIR HOMES, taking rest on way after coming from tuition classes after heavy snowfall in a hilly area of Budgam district. Credits: Faisal Bashir

Want to get your clicks featured? Send them to editpage.ko@gmail.com

How sweeping EU rules would curb tech companies

Press Trust Of India

Online companies would have to ramp up efforts to keep harmful content off their platforms and take other steps to protect users under rules that European Union lawmakers approved Thursday.

The 27-nation bloc has gained a reputation as a trendsetter in the growing global push to rein in big tech companies facing withering criticism over misinformation, hate speech and other harmful content on their platforms.

Here's a look at the draft EU rules, known as the Digital Services Act, and why they would make an impact:

WHAT IS THE DIGITAL SERVICES ACT?

The legislation is part of a sweeping overhaul of the European Union's digital rules aimed at ensuring online companies, including tech giants like Google and Facebook parent Meta, protect users on their platforms and treat rivals fairly. It's an update of the EU's two-decade-old e-commerce directive.

"The Digital Services Act could now become the new gold standard for digital regulation, not just in Europe but around the world," the lead EU lawmaker on the bill, Christel Schaldemose, said during a debate Wednesday. "Big tech nations like the U.S. or China are watching closely to see what we're now going to agree."

The proposals are one-half of flagship digital regulations drafted by the bloc. EU lawmakers also are working on the Digital Markets Act, which is aimed at reining in the power of the biggest online "gatekeepers." Both will face further negotiations with EU member countries before taking effect.

Getting the Digital Services Act through the EU Parliament is "a huge step in tackling the social problems caused by online platforms," said Zach Meyers, a senior research fellow at the Centre for European Reform think tank.

Similar efforts are underway in the U.S., but there



are deep divisions between Republicans who criticize platforms for censoring their views and Democrats who slam them for failing to act.

"If EU member-states reach agreement with Parliament in the coming months, the EU will show a way that other democracies can reconcile these different political interests," Meyers said.

WHAT WILL IT COVER?

The Digital Services Act includes a raft of measures aimed at better protecting internet users and their "fundamental rights online." Tech companies would be held more responsible for content on their platforms, with requirements to beef up flagging and removal of illegal

content like hate speech or dodgy goods and services sold online like counterfeit sneakers or unsafe toys.

To address worries that takedown notices would infringe on freedom of speech, lawmakers added safeguards to ensure they're handled in a "non-arbitrary and non-discriminatory manner," the EU Parliament said.

Online platforms would have to be more transparent about their algorithms that recommend the next video to watch, product to buy or news item at the top of people's social media feeds. So-called recommender systems have been criticized for leading people to more increasingly extreme or polarizing content.

The biggest platforms would have to give users at

least one option for recommendations not based on profiling.

There are also measures to ban platforms from using "dark patterns" — deceptive techniques to nudge users into doing things they didn't intend to — as well as requiring porn sites to register the identities of users uploading material.

ARE THERE ANY CONTROVERSIAL POINTS?

One of the legislation's biggest battles was over surveillance-based advertising, also known as targeted or behavioral advertising. Such ads would be banned for children but not prohibited outright. A full ban had faced fierce resistance from the digital ad industry dominated by Google and Meta.

Lawmakers instead added measures banning the use of sensitive personal data to target vulnerable groups and making it equally easy to give or refuse consent for tracking.

Google didn't respond to a request for comment. Meta directed inquiries to tech lobbying groups.

Surveillance ads track online behavior, such as the websites visited or products bought online by a user, to serve them more digital ads based on those interests.

Groups such as Amnesty International say ad tracking undermines rights the legislation is supposed to protect, because it involves a massive invasion of privacy and indiscriminate data harvesting as part of a system that manipulates users and encourages ad fraud.

WHAT HAPPENS TO OFFENDERS?

The EU's single market commissioner, Thierry Breton, took to Twitter on Wednesday to portray the proposed rules as the start of a new era for tough online enforcement.

"It's time to put some order in the digital 'Wild West,'" he said. "A new sheriff is in town — and it goes by the name #DSA," he said, posting a mashup of video clips from a Clint Eastwood spaghetti Western film.

Under the Digital Services Act, violations could be punished with hefty fines of up to 6% of a company's annual revenue.

When Two People ‘Click’ They Respond Faster To Each Other: Study

Agencies

A new study has revealed that when two people are on the same page in a conversation, it often happens that their minds just "click."

The study demonstrated that clicking isn't just a figure of speech but is predicted by "response times" in a conversation or the amount of time between when one person stops talking and the other person starts. The findings were published in the 'Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences'.

"We've all had the experience of clicking with some people but not others. We wanted to see if something in people's conversations reveals when they click," said first author Emma Templeton, Guarini '23, a graduate student in psychological and brain sciences at Dartmouth. "Our results show that the faster people respond to each other, the more connected they feel."

The research consisted of three studies. The first study examined response time and social connection between strangers. Sixty-six participants took part in 10 conversations -- each with a different conversation partner of the same gender. They could discuss any topic of their choosing and their conversation was videotaped. After the conversation was over, participants watched the video playback and rated how connected they felt moment by moment, throughout the dialogue. Conversations with faster response times correlated with feelings of greater social connection.

To determine if this result also applied to close friends, members of the first study and their close friends were invited to have conversations in a second study. Although close friends rated their conversations more favourably overall than strangers, the response time data were similar -- faster response times in friend conversations also predicted moments of greater social connection.

To test whether outside observers also used response times to infer when two people "click", respondents from Amazon's Mechanical Turk listened to audio clips of conversations for which the response times had been manipulated to be faster, slower or the original speed (control condition). Consistent with the results from the earlier two studies, outside observers thought two speakers were more connected when their conversations contained faster rather than slower response times. Because these conversation clips were identical except for response times, this study demonstrated that response times alone are a powerful signal of social connection.

"It's well-established that, on average, there's about a quarter of a second gap between turns during a conversation. Our study is the first to look at how meaningful that gap is, in terms of connection," said senior author Thalia Wheatley, the Lincoln Filene Professor in Human Relations at Dartmouth, and principal investigator of the Dartmouth Social Systems Laboratory. "When people feel like they can almost finish each other's sentences, they close that 250-millisecond gap, and that's when two people are clicking."

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Office of the Chief Executive Officer

SRINAGAR SMART CITY LTD

(A J&K Government Undertaking)

Email: - tenders.sscl@gmail.com Tel. No: 0194-2455370 (CIN: U70200JK2017SGC010107)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

E-N.I.T NO: 02-SSCL of 01/2022, DT:- 20-01-2022

Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Limited on behalf of Lt. Governor Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from bidders who shall be an Agency/ Entity/ Company/ Firm incorporated in India under the (Indian) Companies Act 2013/ Firm registered under the Limited Liability Partnership Act 2008/Class AAY Contractors registered with J&K State PWD, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the work as detailed in table below:

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Organization	Estimated Cost	Cost of Tender Document	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Head of Account	Class Of Contract	Time Allowed for completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Improve-ment and Upgradation of Batamaloo – Mominabad Road in Srinagar City	Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Ltd	Rs. 10.24 Cr.	Rs. 5,000/-	Rs. 20,48,000/-	SSCL	Agency/ Entity/ Company/ Firm/ Class AAY as mentioned in Bid Document	

Critical Dates:

S.No.	Particulars	Schedule
1	Date of issue of IFB	20/01/2022
2	Availability of Bid Document on e-procurement portal	20/01/2022 from 15:00 Hrs.
3	Date of receipt of pre-bid queries	31/01/2022
4	Date of pre-bid meeting	05/02/2022 at 14:00 Hrs.
5	Date of Replies to pre-bid queries	10/02/2022
6	Dead line for Submission of bids	15/02/2022 up to 14:00 Hrs.
7	Last Date for receipt of physical instruments of Cost of Bid Document.	15/02/2022
8	Opening of Technical Bids	16/02/2022 at 14:00 Hrs.
9	Date of opening of Financial Bid	To be informed separately

1. The Cost of Bid Document is non-refundable and is to be paid through via DD/NEFT/RTGS in favour of Srinagar Smart City Limited with Bank Account details as under:
Name of Bank: Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.
Branch: SSI Lal Chowk, Srinagar.
Bank Account Number: 0216010100002252,
IFSC Code: JAKA0SSISGR
MICR Code: 190051059

2. The Bid document consisting of Information to Bidders (ITB), Bid Data Sheet (BDS), Information and Documents to be furnished along with the Bid, General & Special Conditions of Contract, Contract Data, Scope, Specifications and Drawings and set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents will be uploaded on the website: www.jktenders.gov.in from 20/01/2022. The Bidders can take part in the bidding process as per below tabulated schedule:

3. Bids shall be received "on line" on or before 15/02/2022. The bidder must possess Compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and proper used ID.

4. If any date specified herein is a holiday, then the next working day will be considered for the activity and the time will remain the same.

5. The Schedule indicated above is tentative and the Employer may change any or the entire schedule with prior intimation to all bidders.

6. Interested and eligible bidders may submit their complete proposal as prescribed in the Bid Document along with the receipt of requisite Bid Document Cost.

7. The eligible bidders registered as Micro and Small Enterprises shall be provided bid document free of cost subject to furnishing of relevant valid certificate/documents for claiming such exemption.

8. The bidder is required to quote in the prescribed format provided on the e-procurement portal and the selection will be done on least cost basis.

9. Right to revise or amend this notice and / or the Bid Document, fully or partially, prior to the last date notified for submission of offers or on any subsequent date is reserved by the Employer.

10. The Employer will not be responsible for any delay in submission of bid due to any reason.

11. The Employer reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, cancel the bidding process, at any time prior to the award of contract, without assigning any reason therefor and thereby assumes no responsibility of incurring any liability to the affected applicants.

12. Any information regarding the IFB and / or Bid Document can be had from the office of undersigned during office hours.
No: SSCL/CEO/6715-17
Dated: 20/01/2022

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Srinagar Smart City Limited.

DIPK-NB-6710/21

dfofsdbla@gmail.com

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Divisional Forest Officer

Social Forestry Division Baramulla.

e- NIT NO: 14 fresh OF 2021-22 DATED: 20/01/2022

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir /Central Govt. Organizations for the following works: -

S. NO	NAME OF WORK	ADV. COST (Rs. In Lacs)	CLASS OF CONTRACTOR	Cost of Tender Document. (Rs)	TIME OF COMPLETION	Receiving /Opening Committee.
8	Providing and fixing of 4 strands Barbed Wire Fencing with sawn Wooden Fence Posts at strip plantation Hajibal Road side (District Baramulla) Social Forestry Division Baramulla. (Scheme- CA-PEX (Strip) Fencing= 4000Rfts Area =1.00Hac.) Fence posts available at Source.	2.135	"C&D"	Rs. 300	30 Calendar days.	Tender Opening Committee

The e-NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bills of quantities, (B.O.Q) set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Website: -www.jktenders.gov.in.
Position of AA:Accorded
Position of T/S: Accorded
Position of Funds: Demanded

01. Date of publishing/Uploading of Tender Notice	20/01/2022 at 03:00 Pm
02. Start of downloading	20/01/2022 03:00 Pm
03. Bid Submission start date.	20/01/2022 FROM 3.00 PM
04. Bid Submission end date.	26/01/2022 UPTO 4.00 PM
05. Date & time of opening Bids (Online)	27/01/2022 AT (11.30 AM) in the office of Divisional Forest Officer S.F. Division Baramulla
06. Date of opening of Financial Bid	27/01/2022 AT (3.00 PM) in the office of Divisional Forest Officer S.F. Division Baramulla

01. The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website: - https://jktenders.gov.in

02. The date for opening of Technical & Financial bids online shall be opened as per time schedule mentioned above.

03. Bids uploaded must accompany Govt. Treasury Receipt (cost of tender document) in shape of Treasury Challan for the amount shown against the work above to be deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406- Forest and Bid Security Deposit in shape of proforma enclosed at Annexure "A". The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 30 days from the date of opening of bids.

04. As per rule 171 of GFR-2017, Performance Security shall have to be deposited by successful bidder to the order of 3% of the value of contract and if there are compelling circumstances, performance security in excess of three percent may also be demanded. The orders / directions issued from Financial Commissioner, Finance deptt, Civil sec.Jammu/Srinagar vide letter No. A/Misc (2018)-111-895/J dt: 22/12/2020 expired on 31/12/2021 as per circular vide No.CE/RBK/HD32857-92 dt: 01/01/2022. The orders shall be effective from 01/01/2022.

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

06. To participate in bidding process bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act Bidders can get Digital Certificate form approved vendor.

07. The bidders have to submit their Technical & financial bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No Technical or financial bid will be accepted in physical/hard form.

08. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.

09. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents i.e Valid Registration Card issued by PWD/CPWD duly renewed for the current financial year 2021-22, PAN, Valid GST Registration, Govt. Treasury receipt/Challan(cost of Tender Document) and Bid Security Deposit in shape of proforma enclosed at Annexure "A".

10. The successful bidder has to produce Valid Labour Registration Certificate issued by Labour Department after issuance of award of contract.

11. The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission of the bid due to any reason (technical or otherwise).

12. The Department shall not be held responsible for selection criteria/policy matter being adopted by the Directorate of Information regarding publishing the NIT, in any of the newspaper under circulation.

13. The tender accepting Authority however reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

14. All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per PWD form 25 (double leaf) and as per the detailed document.
NO:- 903-6 /A/SF/BLA
Dated:- 20/01/2022

Sd/
Divisional Forest Officer,
Social Forestry Division,
Baramulla

DIPK-17020/21

Jio Completes 5G Coverage Plans For Top 1,000 Cities



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Jio has completed 5G network coverage planning for top 1,000 cities in the country and is augmenting its fibre capacity as well as running pilot across sites, a senior company official said during a presentation.

The company has created teams to focus on dedicated solutions for 5G deployment in India, Reliance Jio Infocomm President Kiran Thomas said on Friday evening.

"5G coverage planning has been completed for 1,000 top cities across the country. Jio has been doing trials on advanced use cases across healthcare and industrial automation on its 5G network," Jio said in a statement.

Thomas during the presentation said that the company is running a 5G pilot in multiple cities and network planning for the roll out of 5G using 3D maps and ray tracing technology is going on.

"We are using the most modern approaches towards network planning, especially 3D maps and ray tracing technology because 5G is pretty unique technology, which requires very advanced network planning techniques, and we are undertaking that for all of India, so that as and when the approvals are received for us to roll out this network, we will be well geared-up to prioritise our rollout, where we can make the maximum contribution," Mr

Thomas said.

Auction for 5G spectrum is expected to be held in the first quarter of the next financial year. Reliance Jio reported to close the third quarter which ended December 31 with net addition of 1.02 crore customers year-on-year (YoY) at 42.1 crore. The subscriber base, however, declined on a quarter-on-quarter basis.

"We closed the quarter at 421 million subscribers. That was a reduction of 8.4 million, but the gross addition continued to be very strong 34.6 million. And the reduction was really on account of SIM consolidation and some of the less active customers, now with tariff increases, etc, looking at consolidating uses in a single SIM," Reliance Jio head of strategy Anshuman Thakur said.

On a reported number basis, Jio's ARPU remained almost flat but the company's average revenue per user (ARPU) increased by 8.4 per cent to ₹151.6 on a year-on-year after making adjustments interconnection usage charges (IUC) which it had to pay to other operators.

The IUC charges have become nil from January 1, 2021.

Jio Platforms posted an 8.8 per cent increase in net profit at ₹3,795 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021.

It had posted a net profit of ₹3,486 crore in the same period a year ago.

Rs 50,000 Cr Investments To Come To J&K: Amit Shah

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Rs 50,000 crore investments will come to Jammu and Kashmir in the next few years and agreements have already been signed for Rs 12,000 crore.

Virtually launching the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) in Jammu Kashmir, he said all investments together will generate employment opportunities for five lakh youths.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the best industrial policy ever for Jammu and Kashmir, under which investments of about Rs 50,000 crore is going to come in Jammu and Kashmir and that will provide employment to five lakh youths," he said.

The home minister said on one hand, investments during last 70 years was Rs 12,000 crore.

However, he said, in a single year, MoUs for investments worth Rs 12,000 crore have been signed and ground breaking ceremonies worth Rs 2,000 crore have also taken place.



"Today, I once again want to tell my young friends, especially the young friends of the valley that you should walk on the path of development laid by Modi. No one can stop Jammu and Kashmir from becoming the most developed region of the country," he said.

The home minister urged youths of the valley to focus on the development initiatives undertaken in the Union Territory and said they should participate in the development process, the political process and in the democratic process and make their future bright.

Referring to the outcomes of

the DGGI, Shah said the achievements of Jammu and Kashmir will reach every state and this will lead to healthy competition of good governance in every district of the country.

"The district is an important unit if good governance is to be taken to the grassroots level in true sense and unless there is good governance at the district level, then it has no meaning," he said.

He said the competition between districts through the Good Governance Index will be of great benefit to the general public of Jammu and Kashmir.

The District Good Governance Index of Jammu and Kashmir covers 10 sectors of governance and 58 indices with 116 data items, which include, agriculture, services, commerce and industry, human resources, environment, justice and public safety, social welfare and development.

"In every sector, Jammu and Kashmir has attempted to provide direct benefits to beneficiaries in two years and it is natural that middlemen will be angry, but we are not afraid of their displeasure," he said.

Travel Agents Body Seeks 'One India One Tourism' Approach In Budget



Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has sought 'One India One Tourism' approach, which is inclusive of 'One Tax Structure,' in the forthcoming Union Budget to revive the pandemic-hit domestic travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

Besides, the Association has sought bringing Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) under the ambit of GST to make air travel "more viable" for all stakeholders as well as extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS). There are several aspects which can be expected in the upcoming Budget to support the entire sector of 'travel tourism and hospitality,' which will help in making this sector revive and survive, TAAI, which is headed by Jyoti Mayal, said in a statement on Saturday.

"For this, it is extremely important for both the central and state governments to work in tandem to facilitate this sector and support it to be included in the concurrent list to get Industry status to make it more structured," the Association

said. TAAI said the government should strive to increase the disposable income of the middle classes to spur that discretionary spending.

According to the travel agents body, concrete steps should be taken to improve cash flows and reduce the working capital burden on startups, existing MSMEs and SMEs along with access to easy credit, reducing income tax rate and GST rate, abolishment of tax collected at source (TCS) and wage support with ease of business. Besides, strengthening MSMEs, creating a fund of funds scheme for technology adoption for use in industry 4.0, reviving the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme (CLCSS) for technology upgradation are the other steps TAAI is expecting in the forthcoming Union Budget, it said.

To revive this struggling sector, "we need 'One India One Tourism' approach inclusive of 'One Tax Structure,'" TAAI said in the statement, adding that, important points to be considered are e-visa fees waiver for all tourist visas for 2022-2023, to support inbound revival export status for tourism export

earnings.

It has also sought double expenditure allocation for the tourism ministry to enable intensive global reach-out to support the inbound revival as well as domestic income tax travel credit for Indian citizens and Indian companies to support domestic retail and domestic MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) pick-up.

The Association is also looking at a global bidding fund in the Union Budget 2022-23 to enable bidding support to Indian MICE companies to bring global MICE events to India, as per TAAI.

Lastly and most vital is a structured mechanism to secure travel agents' payments to ensure security for travel agents and operators' survival, it said.

TAAI added that travel agents' payments to principals are unsecured credit and there is need to ensure that some form of mechanisms, whether escrow or guarantee or underwriting based mechanisms, are in place for securing travel agents money.

Public Wifi Hotspots Have Potential To Generate 2-3 Cr Jobs This Year: Telecom Secy

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Setting up of 1 crore public wifi hotspots across the country by this year as envisaged under the present telecom policy has the potential to create 2-3 crore job opportunities, a senior government official said on Saturday.

Telecom Secretary K Rajaraman while speaking at Broadband India Forum (BIF) event called upon wifi equipment makers to lower the cost of their products for the expansion of Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) scheme which aims to set up wifi hotspots across the country.

"Given by conservative estimate of each hotspot enabling 2-3 direct and indirect employment opportunities, the creation of 10 million hotspots as per the NDCP (National Digital Communications Policy) target by 2022 would potentially generate 20-30 million job opportunity in the small and medium scale sectors," Rajaraman said.

Public wifi hotspots have immense potential to act as catalysts for the

rural economy and as a means of rural livelihood besides propelling socio-economic growth by providing employment opportunities for millions of small local and village entrepreneurs. "Sprawling manufacturing

units will be needed to produce millions of access points for PM WANI which is the core of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission and would lead to therefore more job creation," Rajaraman said.

According to the PM-WANI portal, over 56,000 wifi hotspots have been deployed across the country to date. Rajaraman said that he wants more entrepreneurs to join PM-WANI scheme facilitated by C-DoT. "We also want local communities to join PM-WANI scheme wholeheartedly."

"We will be happy to facilitate existing entrepreneurs in local neighborhoods especially local cable operators, internet service providers, tourism operators, etc to come forward and help proliferate WANI access points across the country," he said.

BIF announced the launch of the BIF Connectivity Accelerator programme in partnership with Meta (formerly Facebook) to enable entrepreneurs and startups to build innovative connectivity solutions and support the public wifi ecosystem.

"This (BIF Connectivity Accelerator) virtual programme will give startups the opportunity to partner with BIF to help develop relevant use cases and

help scale their businesses. We appeal to all stakeholders to come together and join hands with us to expeditiously and effectively implement this national mission," BIF president TV Ramachandran said.



Director Agriculture Reviews Progress Under CSSs



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To review the progress on the implementation of different centrally sponsored schemes (CSSs) in district Bandipora, the Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal Saturday paid a brief visit to the district particularly Seed Multiplication Farm Sumbal and recently established Vegetable Farm Bandipora.

The Director took stock of different preparations for the upcoming sowing season. He also held an interaction with the concerned officers, farmers and other stakeholders of the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Iqbal asked the concerned officers to ensure the maximum seedling requirement of different vegetable crops is met from departmental seed multiplication farms and the seedling is available well in time.

He stressed upon the need to further streamline the working of departmental agriculture farms to meet much of the domestic seed/seedling requirement. He directed the officers

to evolve an effective strategy to increase the in-house production of vegetable seedlings.

The Director maintained the department is working on a roadmap to add new dimensions/marketing options to the vegetable sector as this has a great potential of employment generation and socio-economic transformation of the farming community.

Earlier, Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora briefed the Director about the progress and status of implementation of different centrally sponsored schemes in the district.

Later, the Director visited different departmental establishments including District Soil Testing Laboratory (where 7500 samples were analysed), Demonstration Cum Training Centre (Mushroom) (DCTC) Bandipora and had interaction with the concerned technicians.

The Director was accompanied by Chief Agriculture Officer, Bandipora Mujtaba Yahya, Agriculture Information Officer, Incharge Soil Laboratory Bandipora and other officers of the District.

DG Horti Reviews Implementation Of Various Departmental Schemes, MIDH



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To review the implementation of different departmental schemes particularly Modified High Density Plantation Scheme, the Director General (DG) Horticulture Kashmir, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat chaired a meeting at Directorate of Horticulture Rajbagh, Srinagar.

At the outset, DG was apprised by all the district heads about the status of developmental schemes.

The DG took review of all the Departmental schemes particularly Modified High Density Plantation Scheme. He emphasized upon all the Chief Horticulture for timely completion of targets. He urged the officer to make proper and full expenditure

and advocated for strong action against the non-performers.

Regarding the Modified High Density Plantation Scheme, DG directed all the Chief Horticulture Officers to issue work orders for identified/selected farmers and get the work done through empanelled agencies. He further informed that enough planting material is available with the empanelled agencies to meet the demand.

At the end of the meeting, DG also took stock of the preparations being done with regards to the Republic Day celebrations.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Director Horticulture, Chief Horticulture Officers, and other Officers of the Department while strictly adhering to COVID-19 SOPs.

NEWS MAKERS

WB Approves 1,000 Cr Loan To Help People In West Bengal

Kolkata: The World Bank has approved a loan of around ₹1,000 crore to the West Bengal government primarily to support its effort to help the poor and vulnerable groups access its social protection services.

According to a statement released by the state government on Saturday, the loan will help the administration improve services such as medical help through telemedicine, support for the elderly and differently-abled, financial inclusion of citizens with digital payments and disbursement of benefits for public schemes.

"The World Bank on January 19 has sanctioned a \$125 million (about ₹1,000 crore) loan to the government of West Bengal to support the state's effort to help the poor and vulnerable groups access social protection services," the statement read.

The loan under the 'West Bengal Building State Capability for Inclusive Social Protection' operation will strengthen the capability of this state to expand coverage and access to social assistance and targeted service for poor and vulnerable groups, it said.

When contacted, a top official of the West Bengal government said, "This loan will strengthen the state's capability to expand its coverage and reach out to the thousands of poor people with its welfare programmes." (PTI)

Demand For Commercial Vehicles Accelerates Gradually: Tata Motors

NEW DELHI: The Centre's accelerated infra push along with healthy demand from the e-commerce sector has led to a gradual recovery in the commercial vehicle (CV) segment, said automobile major Tata Motors. Notably, the segment went through a major downturn during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a conversation with IANS, Girish Wagh, Executive Director, Tata Motors, cited a gradual recovery in demand post the second wave. Accordingly, the recovery was triggered on the back of an increase in economic activity, which along with a robust rural economy has driven the sales of CVs.

"Increased activity in the last-mile applications like 'FMCG', 'FMCD', agriculture supplies, and other e-commerce products have been major catalysts for the increase in demand in small commercial vehicles (SCVs) and intermediate and light commercial vehicles (ILCVs)," he said.

"M&HCVs (medium and heavy commercial vehicles) have witnessed gradual demand recovery from construction, mining and e-commerce sectors." (Agencies)

Google May Launch Its Smartwatch In May

SAN FRANCISCO: Google is reportedly working on its own in-house smartwatch and now a popular tipster has revealed that the tech giant might release it on May 26 this year.

Popular tipster Jon Prosser took to Twitter to provide details of the Google Pixel Watch.

"Pixel Watch. I have heard that Google is planning on launching it on Thursday, May 26, over a year since we leaked it. This is the first time we have seen a set date on the device behind the scenes. Google is known for pushing back dates, but if they do, we will know," he said.

This timeline syncs with the Google I/O developer conference where Google announces a sleuth of hardware and software upgrades.

Pixel Watch is expected to debut with features that may not be initially available on other Wear OS watches. One such anticipated feature is the next generation of Google Assistant. (Agencies)

E-Mobility Start-Up, VAAN Electric Moto, Launches E-Bikes In India

KOCHI: Indian lifestyle e-mobility startup VAAN Electric Moto Pvt Ltd has launched its electric bicycle-Urbansport in the country.

Union Minister of State for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, launched the Van Electric Moto brand in India in a virtually held event in Kochi on Friday. The e-bike is available in two variants- Urbansport and Urbansport Pro, priced at Rs 59,999 and Rs 69,999 respectively and will initially go on sale in Kochi, before being launched in other high-potential markets like Goa, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi in the future.

According to VAAN, the vehicles offer a maximum assistance (top speed) of 25 km/h, and a pedal assisted range of 60 kilometres.

VAAN claims that a full charge would require just half a unit of electricity, costing around Rs 4-5.

The removable battery pack, with a net weight of 2.5 kg, would offer added convenience and would require 4 hours for a full charge. (PTI)

Global Crypto Market Suffers \$1 Trillion Loss As Bitcoin Crashes

NEW DELHI: Bitcoin, along with other digital cryptocurrencies, crashed to its lowest level on Saturday and the continuing meltdown has wiped out over \$1 trillion from the global crypto market value.

Bitcoin was hovering at \$35,000 per coin and the largest digital asset by market value has lost more than 40 per cent since reaching its peak in November 2021. Bitcoin hit an all-time high of roughly \$69,000 in November.

The crypto crash came as the US Federal Reserve raised the possibility of boosting interest rates as soon as March and withdrawing stimulus from the market. Other digital currencies, Ethereum, Finance Coin, and Cardano also witnessed similar meltdowns. Solana, Dogecoin, and Shiba Inu also saw massive drops.

Bitcoin has crashed below \$36,000 -- a level below which "there is not much support until the \$30,000 level," Edward Moya, senior market analyst at Oanda, said in a note. Bitcoin's decline since that November has wiped out more than \$600 billion in its market value. (Agencies)

SAINIK SCHOOL AFFILIATION

Defence Ministry Says Lukewarm Response From Schools In 13 States, UTs

AGENCEIS

NEW DELHI: Response from schools in 13 states and union territories to the Centre's Sainik School affiliation scheme has been lukewarm and a proactive drive is needed in this matter, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said on Saturday.

These 13 states and union territories are Goa, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal, New Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir, the ministry said

in a statement.

The Union Cabinet had in October last year approved a proposal of setting up 100 affiliated Sainik Schools under the Sainik School Society in partnership with states, NGOs or private entities.

These affiliated schools will function as an exclusive vertical which will be distinct and different from the existing Sainik Schools of the MoD.

Approximately 230 schools from various states have sent their applications to get themselves affiliated with the Sainik School Society, the statement

noted.

"At the same time, it is observed that participation of private-run or NGO-run or government-run schools from Goa, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal, New Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir is lukewarm even when there is a bright opportunity for these state/union territory governments to have Sainik School established in their area," it mentioned.

A proactive drive in this regard will have multiple effects

in providing a window to address the aspirational needs of parents and students of such areas, it added.

Once schools submit their application forms, their evaluation will be carried out by a School Evaluation Committee at the district level and the report will be submitted to the Sainik School Society by last week of January.

Schools approved by the Sainik School Society will start following Sainik Schools' curriculum and activities from the next academic year (April 2022) onwards.

Delhi records highest rainfall for Jan in last 32 years; max temp dips to season's lowest

Agenceis

New Delhi: Delhi has recorded nearly 70 mm of rainfall in January this year, as on Saturday, the highest in the month in the last 32 years, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

A senior IMD official said Delhi registered 69.8 mm of rainfall by 9.30 pm on Saturday. It is the highest since January 1989 when the capital received 79.7 mm rainfall, he said.

According to the IMD, rain on Saturday brought down the maximum temperature to 14.7 degrees Celsius, seven notches below the average and also the lowest for the season so far. The

Safdarjung Observatory, which is considered the official marker for the city, had recorded 5 mm rainfall till 8 am on Saturday.

The minimum temperature settled at 11.5 degrees Celsius, four notches above the season's average, the IMD said.

Widespread rainfall is likely over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh and north Rajasthan from January 21 to January 23 due to a Western Disturbance, the IMD had said. The relative humidity recorded at 5.30 pm was 84 per cent, the weather office said.

The weatherman has predicted generally cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle for Sunday. The maximum and minimum temperature are likely to settle

around 16 and 10 degrees Celsius, respectively. Delhi's air quality was recorded in the "very poor" category on Saturday. The 24-hour air quality index (AQI) read 316 at 4 pm, Central Pollution Control Board data showed.

The AQI of Faridabad (330) and Gurgaon (304) also recorded in the "very poor" category.

While the AQI of neighbouring Ghaziabad (287), Greater Noida (260) and Noida (277) recorded in "poor" category.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Assembly Elections

soon as the situation becomes normal, Jammu & Kashmir will get full Statehood," Shah said, according to an official spokesperson.

Urging the people to focus on development, the Home Minister, he said, called upon the youth of

the Valley to participate in the development process, the new political process, in the democratic process and make their future bright.

Taking a veiled dig at Abdullahs and Muftis for claiming that the law and order situation has deteriorated after Article 370 revocation in J&K, the Home Minister said that some political parties are hurt because Panchayati Raj has taken effect away from the clutches of their families.

"Major changes began in 2019 under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi in Kashmir. Only 87 MLAs, six MPs and three families used to share power in Jammu & Kashmir, today more than 30,000 people's representatives from the village level to the Union Territory levelling are serving the people," he said.

"I want to tell these people that if we undertake a comparative study of the period from April 2017 to 2019 and 2019 to 2021, then there has been a 40 percent decline in terrorist incidents and 57 percent in deaths," he added.

Shah, as per the official spokesperson asserted that peace has nothing to do with new reforms but with administration and when people receive good governance, they automatically become participants in the development process.

"In every sector, Jammu & Kashmir has attempted to provide direct benefits to beneficiaries in two years and it is natural that middlemen will be angry, but we are not afraid of their displeasure," he said.

Lauding the vision of Prime Minister, Shah said that PM Modi has a clear objective that the people of Jammu & Kashmir should have corruption-free governance, and the people don't have to give anything to anyone for scholarships and benefits from their schemes.

"I want to ask those who raise questions, that for so many years three families ruled Jammu & Kashmir, then why did all these developments not take place, if you could not do all this, then what is the point of misleading the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

According to the official spokesperson, the Home Minister said that Jammu and Kashmir has the potential to attract tourists from all over the world, but some leaders in the Union Territory were making statements indicating they do not want tourism to increase in the erstwhile state.

"I want to say clearly that your statements will not make any difference and Jammu & Kashmir has registered a record number of tourists in winter this year and this growth will continue in the days to come," he said.

"Employment and tourism are interlinked in Jammu & Kashmir, but there is a conspiracy by the opposition to keep youth away from employment by issuing such statements, so that tourists do not visit, the people of Jammu and Kashmir should also know this fact," he added.

Taking pot shots at the successive governments who ruled J&K, Shah said that the youth of Union Territory was forced by those previously in power to go to Pakistan and abroad to study medicine.

"I want to tell them that from 1947 to 2014, there were 4 medical colleges and 500 seats in Jammu - Kashmir. Today there are 9 medical colleges, 15 nursing colleges and 1,100 MBBS seats and 600 paramedical service seats," he said.

Lauding PM Modi for making the best industrial policy ever for J&K, under which investment of about Rs 50,000 crore and 5 lakh jobs will come to the UT, Shah said that on one hand, investment during last 70 years was Rs. 12,000 crore and in a single year MoUs for investment worth Rs. 12,000 crore have been signed and ground breaking ceremonies worth Rs. 2,000 crore have also taken place.

"Today, I once again want to tell my young friends, especially the young friends of the Valley that you should walk on the path of development laid by PM Modi. No one can stop Jammu & Kashmir from becoming the most developed region of the country," he said.

He also slammed critics for misleading youth and said that in the last three years, the number of completed development works in Jammu & Kashmir have increased from 9,000 to 21,000, showing that the welfare of the people of Jammu & Kashmir is priority of the PM.

"Those who spread lies due to their political interests and saying that the Valley's land will go, I ask them whose land has been taken away in the Valley. The development of Jammu & Kashmir is being obstructed by misleading statements and lies such as these," he said.

"Those who used to say that violence will increase, ask them whether violence has increased or decreased, they would say investment will not come, today investment worth Rs.12,000 crore has come due to new industrial policy in just one year and arrival of tourists has also increased and Jammu & Kashmir has started its journey on the path of development," he added.

The Home Minister also urged people not to be misled by those with vested political interests, who try to create a different kind of feeling especially in the minds of the people of the Valley.

"Democracy has reached the grass-roots level and these people are disturbed due to this, only democracy can bring prosperity and development in Jammu and only democracy can give employment to youth and for democracy to be good, it is most important that peace should exist in Jammu & Kashmir," he said.

"I want to tell my young friends that the youth of Jammu & Kashmir should not be misled by their provocative statements," he added.

Urging people to keep faith in Prime Minister and J&K Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the Home Minister said that the administration was making major efforts to compensate for the gap of 70 years in five years and that gap will be filled.

Every Stateless Day

shouldn't be misconstrued as normalcy," PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti wrote on Twitter.

Reacting to Shah's remarks, Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone asked who will define normalcy.

"Who will define normalcy? And in a federal structure, can we really use normalcy as an excuse to assume power. Irrespective of the definition of normalcy, possibly coined by the union government, every single stateless day is an affront to federalism and to the people of J&K," Lone said on Twitter.

He said "non-popular" governments mean a "humiliating existence" for the inhabitants of that particular place.

"And to the people of India who are mute bystanders, Inshallah you too will one day taste statelessness and helplessness. We don't wish it for even on our worst enemies (sic)," Lone said.

The People's Conference chairman said the central rule in any place is a "kick in the teeth for federalism".

"And self-styled pat on the back, oh, doing so well, this is all so nauseating," he added.

CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami said the people of the Union territory were being denied the right of participation and representation which was one of the fundamental principles of good governance.

"One of the principle fundamentals of good governance is participation and representation, a right which continues to be denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Releasing such indexes is intended to help the government in optics-wise," he said.

Tarigami said the "ground reality" of dilapidated roads, erratic power supply, inaccessibility of portable

water combined with huge unemployment, social unrest is reflecting the "contrasting picture".

Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir will be held after completion of the ongoing delimitation process and statehood will be restored once the situation in the union territory becomes normal, Shah said on Saturday.

Virtually releasing India's first "District Good Governance Index", he said Jammu and Kashmir is a priority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and multipronged efforts are being made for the all round development of the union territory. (PTI)

Launches District

then it has no meaning "Competition between districts through this Good Governance Index will be of great benefit to the general public of Jammu & Kashmir," Shah said

After the launch of the Good Governance Index by PM, the Home Minister said that there is healthy competition among the States and with the Jammu & Kashmir District Good Governance Index, now there will be healthy competition among districts across the country to provide good governance.

Shah also praised Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for governing the Union Territory under the guidance of the Prime Minister and said a big change has been seen in Jammu and Kashmir, in line with the vision of a New India.

2 Militants Killed

spokesperson said. He further said that Police have registered a case under relevant sections of law and investigation has been initiated.

UN Chief Hopes

Guterres was responding to a question by a Pakistani journalist on the Kashmir issue during a press conference here.

New Delhi has been categorically rejecting any scope for third party mediation between India and Pakistan on Kashmir, saying that India's stand has been clear for decades and the two countries can discuss the issue bilaterally.

Guterres, in an August 2019 statement, had recalled the 1972 Agreement on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan — the Simla Agreement.

The Simla Agreement was signed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972 and is a bilateral agreement between the countries and rejects any third-party mediation on the Kashmir issue.

The 1972 Simla agreement provides that the resolution of differences between the parties should be resolved by peaceful means and by bilateral negotiations.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after India abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the state into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. The move evoked strong reaction from Pakistan.

India has categorically told the international community that the scrapping of Article 370 was an internal matter and also advised Pakistan to accept the reality.

India has repeatedly told Pakistan that Jammu and Kashmir "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.

New Delhi has also told Islamabad that it desires normal neighbourly relations with it in an environment free of "terror, hostility and violence"..

Corona Virus Cases

that seven more people, five from Jammu division and two from Kashmir, succumbed to the deadly infection during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll in the pandemic in J&K to 4598—2246 in Jammu division and 2352 in the Valley.

The officials also said that no new cases of Mucormycosis were reported Saturday, thus the total number of confirmed cases remains 51 across J&K.

Sarpanch Can

designated as Sub-Divisional Magistrate concerned (Chairman) Tehsildar, Town Planning Officer, BDO, and Halqa Sarpanch.

For other buildings, including government buildings, the competent authority/committee has been designated as Sub Divisional Magistrate concerned (Chairman), Tehsildar, Town Planning Officer, BDO and Sarpanch of Halqa Panchayat.

"The designated Committees can co-opt members from any government department as may be required for the purpose of taking decision on these permission cases", the order reads further adding "Procedure as prescribed in the Rule 155 shall be followed by the above said committees for the purpose of grant of permission."

"Fees for the said permissions shall be decided by the said committees and shall be remitted to the Panchayat fund of that Halqa Panchayat within the jurisdiction of which these buildings/constructions fall and these committees shall also be competent authorities for the purpose of levy of penalty under rule 156 of the aforesaid rules", the order further reads.

'Operation Snow

The GOC-in-C Certificates of Appreciation were given to units involved in Operation Snow Leopard, which was launched after China refused to move back and restore status quo ante in eastern Ladakh.

The importance of both the union territories of J&K and Ladakh is well known and we have played our role as far as the security of this region is concerned with full dedication and devotion and are maintaining our complete dominance, whether it is Line of Control, Line of Actual Control (LAC), Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) and International Border (IB), the army commander said in his address.

He said the brave soldiers of the northern command foiled the aggressive designs of the enemy.

Referring to the developments in Ladakh in the wake of Chinese aggression, he said disengagement with People's Liberation Army (PLA) was completed from various areas in a peaceful manner and efforts are on through dialogue for disengagement from other areas.

However, the troops are maintaining alertness on the snow-bound peaks, he said.

On the counter-insurgency campaign undertaken under Operation Rakshak, he said the people of Kashmir have rejected militancy, separatism, and gun culture, and after many years, the number of militants has gone below 200 in the valley which is a big achievement.

The ceasefire along the LoC has provided relief to the border residents. But infiltration attempts of militants are going on, which are being foiled by our alert security personnel, he said.

He said 2021 was a watershed year for the armed forces when they displayed boldness in standing up to the aggression on the LoC and LAC

There has been a reduction in militancy related incidents, stone pelting activities and protests as a result of tireless efforts of the security forces and the people of J&K, Joshi said.

He congratulated local police, the CRPF, and other agencies for their role in counter-insurgency operations.

Joshi said technology is being used to assist the troops in keeping vigil and maintaining security.

We are fully inducting the state-of-the-art technology in our army, he said.

Referring to the current wave of COVID-19, he said like the previous two pandemic waves, the northern command is always there to help the government and the people.

We are fully with you and ready to serve you, he said, saluting the healthcare workers of the command who reached out to the people without caring for their safety.

The Army Commander lauded all ranks of northern command for their dedication and devotion to duty in the highest traditions of the Indian Army.

'2021 Watershed

General Officer-Commanding-in-Chief, northern command, Lt Gen Y K Joshi said there has been a reduction in militant-related incidents and stone pelting activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

There has been a reduction in militancy related incidents, stone pelting activities and protests as a result of tireless efforts of the security forces and the people of J&K, Joshi said, addressing the northern command investiture ceremony at its headquarters here in J&K.

Earlier in the ceremony, he presented GOC-in-C's appreciation to 40 units and GOC-in-C's Certificates of Appreciation to 26 units for their overall 'outstanding' and 'distinguished' performance in the command theatre.

The GOC-in-C's Appreciation were given for performance of units in Operation Meghdoot, Operation Rakshak, Operation Northern Borders, and other operations in the command.

The GOC-in-C Certificates of Appreciation were given for performance of units in Operation Snow Leopard, which was launched after China refused to move back and restore the status quo ante in eastern Ladakh.

The ceremony was a solemn occasion to appreciate and recognise the professionalism in operational roles performed by the units during their tenure in northern Command, a defence spokesman said.

The army commander praised all ranks of the northern command for their dedication and devotion to duty in the highest traditions of the Indian Army.

He also conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to the brave men who laid down their lives in internal security challenges.

J&K To Receive

will witness significant improvement from January 24 onwards till January 28.

Meanwhile, Gulmarg skiing resort received about five inches of fresh snowfall, while Pahalgam tourist resort, in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, recorded about two inches, the officials said.

Qazigund also recorded about two inches, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag received an inch of fresh snowfall, they said.

There are reports of snowfall in other areas in the upper reaches of the valley as well, they said.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature at most places in the valley last night settled above the freezing point. The mercury was several degrees above the normal for this time of the season at most places, the officials said.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of 2.3 degrees Celsius - down from 2.8 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 6.5 degrees Celsius - a degree up from the previous night.

Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 2.4 degrees Celsius - same as the previous night, they said.

The officials said Qazigund recorded the minimum of 0.2 degrees Celsius, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag recorded a low of minus 1.9 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of 1.4 degrees Celsius.

The MET Office has forecast widespread light to moderate rain/snow in J-K till Sunday.

There are chances of rain/snow at isolated places over the next two days too, it said.

Afterwards, the weather is likely to stay mainly dry till the end of the month and there is no forecast of any major rain/snow till the end of January, it said.

Kashmir valley is currently under the grip of the 40-day harshest winter period known as 'Chilla-i-Kalan' which began on December 21 last year.

'Chilla-i-Kalan' is a period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies

including the famous 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 highest during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, witness heavy to very heavy snowfall.

One-Way Traffic

"In view of heavy rainfall prediction issued by MeT department, tomorrow (on Sunday) traffic on Jammu-Srinagar highway (NH-44) may remain suspended," the official said, adding, "However, if highway remained open inspite of predicted rainfall then LMVs (Passenger)/ private cars shall be allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar (strictly one way) on Jammu-Srinagar highway." TCU Jammu shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the traffic, he said.

The cut off timings for LMVs/private cars from Nagrota (Jammu) will be 1000 hours to 1300 hours and from Jakheni (Udhampur) 1100 hours to 1400 hours (subject to change depending on the road position then)". "No Vehicle shall be allowed before and after cut off timings."

Regarding heavy vehicles/load carriers, he said, subject to better road conditions, HMVs shall be allowed from Jakheni (Udhampur) towards Srinagar after assessing the traffic situation. TCU Udhampur shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the HMVs, the official said.

"Security Forces are advised/requested not to ply against the advisory/ traffic plan in view of traffic congestion on Jammu-Srinagar highway. They may ply from Jammu towards Srinagar after confirming the status of highway."

Meanwhile, Mughal Road, connecting Shopian with Poonch and Rajouri districts, remained closed for vehicular movement in view of snow accumulation at Peer Ki Gali.

Also, Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri road remained shut for vehicular movement in view of snow accumulation on Zoji la axis and has been closed till further orders. Kishtwar-Sinthan road also remained closed in view of snow accumulation, the traffic department official said. (GNS)

Militant 'Associate'

personnel of CRPF 185 battalion and incriminating materials, including a hand grenade was recovered from his possession, a police spokesperson said Saturday.

He said that preliminary investigation has revealed that the accused was involved in providing shelter, logistic support, transportation of arms/ammunition and assisting the militants to shift their locations.

Bhat, he claimed, was also passing sensitive information regarding movement of police and central forces to the militants of Jaish.

"A case under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Awantipora and investigation has been initiated," he added.

Earthquake Jolts

of the tremor was 10 kilometres below the surface of the earth in the Doda region.

Pak Flag Seized

village of Ghagwal sector, the officials said.

They said the flag had apparently flown to this side from across the border and was found stuck in barbed wire after the balloon punctured. A police party rushed to the scene and recovered the flag, the officials said, adding some Pakistani mobile phone numbers were found written on a paper attached with the flag.

An investigation is on into the incident, officials said.

Security has been beefed up across the Union Territory to ensure peaceful celebrations of January 26 celebrations. (PTI)

Bear Caught

information from the village. Reports said that after hours of hectic efforts, the beast was tranquillised and trapped.

SA Vs IND, 3rd ODI

India Hope To Avoid Clean Sweep Against South Africa



Press Trust of India

CAPE TOWN: Indian team's strategy is expected to undergo paradigm shift with some players getting a subtle yet stern message to lift their games as they face an embarrassing possibility of a clean sweep against South Africa in the third ODI in Cape Town on Sunday.

India's strategy looked completely out of sync with modern day white ball game as the batters failed to keep the momentum in the middle overs and more importantly the bowlers, save Jasprit Bumrah, looked club class and without ideas of getting breakthroughs.

In two matches, India have been only able to pick up seven wickets -- four in the first game when Proteas batted first and only three in the second.

Ravichandran Ashwin and especially Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the two senior-most bowlers looked far from threatening and the young Proteas batters like Rassie van der Dussen, Janneman Malan along with seniors like Quinton de Kock have feasted on the pedestrian stuff dished out by them.

With the two having flopped completely, it needs to be seen whether Rahul Dravid, the man who is currently calling all the shots as far as tactics is concerned, takes a dim view and at least try out Jayant Yadav and Deepak Chahar in the next game which would lend some freshness to the attack.

Worse, the first two games were played on a Boland Park strip that didn't have a lot of pace and bounce and even skipper KL Rahul admitted that conditions were more familiar with what they get back home, compared to what they are used to getting in South Africa.

However at Newlands, there will be more pace and bounce on the track and the Indian team that has been perennially struggling would want to avoid the ignominy of a 0-3 loss.

For skipper Rahul, the whole tour, save his match-winning hundred in the first Test, has been a nightmare. Although he is being seen as a long-term future leader, there hasn't been any spark whatsoever in his leadership that would make anyone sit up and feel that he is the one cut out for the job.

There hasn't been any tactical improvisations in the two games so far which would inspire confidence in his leadership abilities.

Add to that, his own style of batting at the top of the order is outdated in modern ODIs and his inability to rotate the strike for the better part is also creating pressure on the later batters, who aren't as adept at manoeuvring the strike.

It is a foregone conclusion that once Rohit Sharma is back in action, Rahul will lose his spot at the top of the order with Shikhar Dhawan scoring runs and at a better clip compared to his younger partner.

Match starts 2 PM IST.

Rahul, Stoinis Bring More Than One Facet: Goenka



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The other new side in IPL -- the Lucknow team has signed India limited overs vice-captain KL Rahul, big hitting Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis and leg spinner Ravi Bishnoi as its draft picks and team owner Sanjiv Goenka said the reason for picking the trio is that they are multi-dimensional players.

"There were multiple things. We were looking at not only building a team for one or two seasons, as we did in the case of Pune, but actually, building the foundation for a team, which will compete successfully for many years," said Goenka on said on Star Sports' 'IPL: Selection Day.'

"We were also looking for players with more than one

facet, so not singular-dimension players. So, KL is not only an outstanding batsman, he's a great wicketkeeper.

"Marcus is a great finisher, a good bowler, and a phenomenal fielder. Ravi brings a unique dimension to the spin department and is an exceptional fielder," he added. Goenka said the two main focus while selecting players was longevity and multi-dimensionalism.

"So, we looked for players, who could do more than just one thing; players who would be with the franchise for several years - three, four, five, six, seven, eight years.

"And KL is in the batting department, Marcus is an all-rounder and Ravi is a bowler, so we have tried to cover all the three departments."

Maradona To Come To Life In A Play In Tehran

Agencies

An Iranian play on the life of late football star Diego Maradona will be shown at Tehran's Neauphle-le-Château Theater starting Friday.

The play is the culmination of a project Iranian director Mehran Ranjbar has been planning since Maradona's death in 2020. The legendary football player was one of the director's heroes since childhood, he told Iranian Mehr news agency, and his death made him want to pay homage to him in his work.

"Now, with great contributions and help from my crew, we are ready to bring the play on stage," Ranjbar said. The director has also previously directed

biographical plays on innovator Steve Jobs and film icon Marlon Brando.

"Since childhood, I was an ardent fan of Maradona and the Argentina national football team and by this play, I want to pay tribute to the late legendary soccer who took great pains to enter the world of football and become a champion for many people of the world and football aficionados," he added.

Ranjbar had also planned to stage a play on the life of Che Guevara in 2020. However, the emergence of the pandemic kept him from realizing it.

Ranjbar's previous play, Marlon Brando, won the award for best costume design in 2020's 38th Fajr International Theater Festival in Tehran.

IPL 2022: 1214 Players Line Up For Mega Auction

Agencies

NEW DELHI: India batter Shreyas Iyer and spinner Yuzvendra Chahal along with Australian dasher David Warner are expected to be the top draws as over 1,200 players registered themselves for the Indian Premier League mega auction scheduled for next month.

Apart from Shreyas and Chahal, the 10 teams are likely to be involved in bidding war for Indian players like senior opener Shikhar Dhawan, batter Ishan Kishan, the pace duo of Shardul Thakur and Deepak Chahar, the top two wicket takers of the last edition Harshal Patel and Avesh Khan, spinner Rahul Chahar and all-rounder Washington Sundar.

The above bunch of Indian players is expected to attract anywhere between Rs 7 to 15 crores (between USD 1 to 2 million).

Among foreign players, Warner, South African Kagiso Rabada are likely to fetch big bucks along with England's Mark Wood, Australia's Mitchell Marsh, New Zealand's Trent Boult and Pat Cummins. Veterans Faf du Plessis and Dwayne Bravo could still keep their franchise Chennai Super Kings interested.

"Total of 1,214 players (896 Indian and 318 overseas players) have signed up to be part of the IPL 2022 Player Auction," the IPL said in a statement on Saturday.



The two-day mega auction is slated to be held in Bengaluru on the February 12 and 13.

This is the initial list of players. All 10 teams will be sent the following which will the franchises will revert with the names of the players they are interested in.

The list will then be pruned for the auction.

A total of 33 players have been retained/picked ahead of the Player Auction. The existing eight IPL Franchises have

retained a total of 27 players, including MS Dhoni by Chennai Super Kings, Rohit Sharma by Mumbai Indians and Virat Kohli by Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The two new IPL teams have picked six players with Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul being named captain of the Ahmedabad and Lucknow franchise respectively.

Some of other other big names retained include Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja, Kane Williamson, Jos Buttler and Glenn Maxwell to name a few.

The big names to miss out are Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer, Mitchell Strac, Sam Curran and Chris Gayle.

IPL: Mumbai-Pune, UAE, SA Preferred Back-Up Options

Mar 27, Apr 2 two tentative start dates

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BCCI is mulling two start dates for the 2022 Indian Premier League with some preferring a March 27 kickoff and few other influential people wanting the mega event to begin on April 2, which conforms to the Lodha Committee ruling.

"Some of the owners prefer March 27 start but India play their last international game against Sri Lanka, a T20I at Lucknow on March 18, and then you need a 14-day gap as per Lodha rule which is why April 2 could be the start date," a senior BCCI official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

It is understood that the India players will also be exhausted after three back-to-back bubbles in South Africa (away) and at home against West Indies and Sri Lanka.

"The BCCI must take bubble fatigue of players into account if they start IPL in less than 10

days of completion of Sri Lanka tour," a BCCI source said.

It is also learnt that all the 10 IPL owners, including the two new teams from Lucknow and Ahmedabad, want India as the host country for the 2022 IPL, with Mumbai and Pune being the two preferred cities.

Their second choice is the United Arab Emirates where the IPL has been organised thrice while the final option is South Africa where the mega event was held back in 2009.

However, the UAE and South Africa will only come into the picture if the COVID-19 situation in India worsens.

As reported in some quarters, Sri Lanka as a host was not even discussed in the meeting.

As far as the dates of the mega auction is concerned, they remain February 12 and 13 in Bengaluru as per the original schedule.

"Today's meeting was primarily about owners trying to put forth their suggestions on

the issue of their preferred venues. Most of the owners want the IPL to be held in India if all goes well and we are past the peak of third COVID-19 wave," a senior BCCI source said.

"Mumbai has three grounds and we have the Pune ground which is more on the highway rather than Pune city. Doing it at Wankhede, Brabourne and DY Patil Stadium (Navi Mumbai) and Gahunje Stadium. So there won't be any air travel and there could be bubble in one city without bubble to bubble transfer," added the official.

The second option is the UAE where they have had strict bio-bubbles and both editions were successfully held.

"South Africa is the last option but as of now, we aren't even thinking of it as an option. It's the last resort. As far as entry of crowd is concerned, a call can't be readily taken. It will be taken closer to the tournament," the source added.

Hardik Motivated To Show Leadership Skills: Ahmedabad Mentor Kirsten

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former India coach and Ahmedabad franchise team mentor Gary Kirsten feels Hardik Pandya is keen to show his leadership skills on the big stage and having a young and new captain will fare well for the side.

The flamboyant India all-rounder was roped in for Rs 15 crore and is set to lead the CVC-owned Ahmedabad team in the IPL.

"I am looking forward to working with Hardik as a young and new captain. I think he will be really motivated to come in and make a plan and show what he is capable of at this level of the game as a leader," Kirsten said on Star Sports' 'IPL: Selection Day'.

"He's a great player. What I have heard is that he is really keen to get into the mix and get involved. I think he understands the importance of this tournament. He is raring to go and get into the mix from a leadership perspective.

"So, I think that's really exciting for us to have a player with such a level of skill, motivated to do well in this competition," added Kirsten, who will also serve as the team's batting coach.

The franchise has also signed



star Afghan spinner Rashid Khan and young Indian batter Shubman Gill and Kirsten was delighted with the duo's signing.

"I am really excited by both of them. They are both high performers."

The South African was on lavish in his praise for Gill, who he feels has "great flair and instinct."

"Gill is a fantastic player, who, in my view, should be playing for India. He is on the verge of that and has played already. With great flair and instinct for the game, he could be a match-winner on his own.

The 22-year-old Gill has already played 10 Tests and three ODIs but is yet to feature in a T20I for India.

"From a batting perspective, I am looking forward to working with him and helping him give the best out of an IPL season."

Rashid, on the other hand, has proved his mettle in several seasons of the IPL and various leagues across the world.

"Rashid Khan has gone around the world, proven his value anywhere, so that's an incredible signing for us. I am very excited to work with him -- I haven't yet -- but I have seen him a lot, have met him few times.

"I am looking forward to that. Certainly, watching him on the field, he's a very competitive, young man that wants to do well for the franchise that he's been involved in," Kirsten said.

U19 World Cup: Sri Lanka, South Africa Secure QF Spots



Press Trust of India

BASSETTERRE (St Kitts): Sri Lanka sealed their qualification for the last eight stage with a dramatic three-wicket victory over West Indies while South Africa defeated Ireland by 153-runs to also book their place in the quarterfinals of the ICC U-19 World Cup.

Dunith Wellalage took three wickets as Sri Lanka restricted the hosts to 250 before Sadisha Rajapaksa (76) Anjala Bandara (40) and Ranuda Somarathna's unbeaten 28 guided the Group D winners to a three-wicket success on Friday.

WI openers Shaqkere Parris and Matthew Nandu ensured they made a steady start, reaching the end of the fifth over for 20 without loss before Treveen Mathew removed the latter for seven.

Wickham reached his half-century before falling for 56.

In response, Sri Lanka lost opener Chamindu Wickramasinghe in the first over.

Sadisha Rajapaksa and Shevon Daniel got their side back on track before Daniel was removed for 34.

Anjala Bandara contributed 40 before his wicket fell with Rajapaksa (76) also falling the same bowler in the 40th over.

With 51 needed off 60 balls for victory, Shiva Sankar removed Wellalage (15) to set up a tense finale.

McKenney Clarke bowled Raven De Silva (13) but a nerveless 28 from 27 balls from Ranuda Somarathna saw Sri Lanka home.

In the day's other game, a blockbuster century from captain George Van Heerden propelled his side towards the Super League quarterfinals as South Africa defeated Ireland by 153 runs in Tarouba.

Van Heerden made 111 from 93 balls while Dewald Brevis better known as 'Baby AB' contributed 96 to take South Africa's total of 315 for seven from their rain-reduced 47 overs before bowling out Ireland for 158.

Legends League Cricket: Asia Lions Roar Back To Stun World Giants



Press Trust of India

MUSCAT: It was raining sixes and fours on a severely windy and cold evening as Asia Lions scripted a stunning six-wicket win over World Giants to return to winning ways in the Legends League Cricket at the Al Amerat Cricket Ground.

Smarting from their defeat to Indian Maharajas the previous day, Asia Lions rode on a 88-run partnership from 54 balls by the Sri Lankan duo of Upul Tharanga (63) and Tillakaratne Dilshan (52) to chase down a stiff 206 with five balls to spare on Friday.

Lions opener Dilshan smashed three sixes and two fours en route his 32-ball knock, while Tharanga top-scored for them with his 43-ball 63, which included seven boundaries and two maximums, as they took charge of the proceedings after Kamran Akmal (14) was dismissed in the fourth over.

Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez chipped in with his quickfire cameo of 27 from 13 balls when 56 runs were needed off 24 balls after Tharanga was brilliantly run out by Imran Tahir.

In the penultimate over, Asghar Afghan (14 from 7 balls) and Lions skipper Misbah-Ul-

Haq (19 from 11 balls) took Ryan Sidebottom to the cleaners with two sixes and as many boundaries in an over that yielded 22 runs to virtually seal the issue.

Earlier, Kevin O'Brien set the tone for World Giants with a splendid 95 from 46 balls (7x6, 7x4) to prop up the total to 205/7 after Lions opted to bowl.

The former Irish cricketer held their innings together after English star batter Kevin Pietersen (14) got out cheaply in the third over.

O'Brien raced to 95 with back-to-back six and four to Muttiah Muralitharan (1/46) but the Sri Lankan spin wizard had the last laugh getting him out in the same over five runs short of a century.

Sri Lankan seamer Nuwan Kulasekara was brilliant in the death overs to return with a tidy 4-1-17-2, while Hafeez also claimed two wickets to cap an all-round show.

Brief Scores:
World Giants: 205/7 in 20 overs (Kevin O'Brien 95; Nuwan Kulasekara 2/17, Mohammed Hafeez 2/32) lost to Asia Lions 209/4 in 19.2 overs (Upul Tharanga 63, Tillakaratne Dilshan 52; Morne Morkel 2/38) by six wickets.

Madrid Great Gento Dies At 88

Agencies

MADRID: Francisco "Paco" Gento, a former Real Madrid great who is the only soccer player to win six European Cup titles, has died. He was 88.

Madrid announced Gento's death on Tuesday but did not give a cause.

Gento played with Madrid for 18 seasons, from 1953-71, and his 23 titles with the club in official competitions is a record he shares with Brazilian defender Marcelo, who tied him on Sunday by winning the Spanish Super Cup.

In addition to the six European Cups, Gento also helped Madrid win 12 Spanish league titles. He played 600 games with the club, scoring 182 goals. He was later

named honorary president of the club.

Gento, a strong and speedy left



winger, also made 43 appearances with the Spanish national team. He played in the 1962 and 1966 World Cups.

Gento arrived at the Spanish powerhouse from Racing Santander in 1953, the same season Di Stéfano joined the club. Together, they led Madrid to a golden era both in Spain and internationally.

Tonga Volcanic Eruption Felt Like An "Atomic Bomb", Say Aid Workers

Agenceis

SYDNEY: Tonga's volcanic eruption felt like an "atomic bomb" that shook "the whole island", an aid worker told AFP on Friday, as the Pacific nation raced to address a drinking water shortage.

Almost a week after the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano exploded, unleashing a tsunami and cutting Tonga off from the rest of the world, witnesses are recounting the disaster.

On Tongatapu, Tonga's main island, "we felt a big... it was like an atomic bomb," said Sione Taumoeofolau, the secretary general for the Tonga Red Cross.

"The whole island shake because of the noise of the eruption."

The situation remains difficult, with only limited supplies of aid getting in and residents facing a massive clean up effort.

"The worst part, for us, is the ash. Everywhere we are being covered by the ashes from the volcano," Taumoeofolau said.

UN crisis coordinator Jonathan Veitch told AFP from Fiji the key concern now for Tongans is drinking water, with water supplies for tens of thousands feared contaminated by ash or saltwater.

"Prior to the eruption, the majority of Tongans relied on rainwater," Veitch said. "If it's all basically made toxic by the by the ash, then they have a problem, unless they have access to groundwater sources."

Determining the location of and access to groundwater sources is now vital, he said.

Water testing has begun, but after last Saturday's eruption "the entire country is covered in ash", Veitch said.

'A triple whammy'

The relief effort got under way in earnest on Thursday after Tonga's main runway was cleared of

ash, allowing the arrival of military aid flights from Australia and New Zealand.

But the sheer distance, crippled communications, and the bid to keep Covid out of the kingdom of 170 islands are hampering the recovery.

Tonga has been virtually cut off from the outside world since the volcanic blast broke an undersea communications cable, which may remain severed for weeks.

"It's not an easy one. It's far from anywhere, as you know. So there are access constraints. And then the Covid issue, obviously. And then comms collapsed," Veitch said.

"So I mean, it's like, almost a triple whammy."

As foreign aid deliveries ramp up, the UN is "massively concerned" about the Covid risk posed to the island nation, Veitch said.

He pointed to current outbreaks of the virus across the Pacific, including in the Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

"Omicron is getting out there very fast," he said.

The Tongan government is currently investigating whether there is any safe way to bring aid workers into the country.

"If there are Covid safe protocols that could be adjusted to allow safe travel into Tonga sooner rather than later we will encourage the government to do that," Veitch said.

'Plenty of destruction'

The Tongan government has now completed its full assessment of the situation after the disaster, including the impact on the outer islands that were particularly hard-hit by the tsunami.

Three people have been confirmed killed, while the extent of the damage has yet to be calculated.

"They didn't have evidence that there were more casualties, but there's plenty of destruction," Veitch said.

Lebanon Returns Smuggled Artifacts To Syria



Agenceis

The Lebanese Ministry of Culture announced that it had returned 5 antiquities smuggled from the Nabu Museum to Syria, during an event held at the Beirut Museum to deliver the artifacts.

The Lebanese Minister of Culture, Muhammad Murtada, revealed the existence of other Syrian artifacts that were seized by the Lebanese security, and that they will be delivered to Damascus soon.

The minister said, "These Palmyrian antiquities were bought by the Nabu Lebanese Museum from outside Lebanon before 2010, that is, before the Syrian crisis," noting that when the Nabu Museum learned that these antiquities belonged to Syria, he decided to hand them over to the Syrian state under the auspices of

the Lebanese government.

He added: "With the efforts of the General Directorate of Antiquities and the Ministry of Culture's organs, the Lebanese state was able to seize stolen Syrian antiquities that are being smuggled, and they are in the possession of the Lebanese state, and we are in the process of returning them to the brothers in Syria."

For his part, the Syrian ambassador to Lebanon, Ali Abdel Karim Ali, considered the return of smuggled antiquities "evidence that Syria has begun to recover," adding that Damascus is waiting for the return of other smuggled antiquities currently in the "Beirut National Museum."

This step comes as "a gesture and an initiative to embody co-operation between the two countries in the cultural field," according to the organizers.

Yemen: UN Urges Investigation Into Saudi-Led Coalition Air Raids

Agenceis

The UN chief has condemned air raids by the Saudi-led coalition on Saada city and called for an investigation into the attacks that killed more than 70 people in Yemen.

"The Secretary-General calls for prompt, effective and transparent investigations into these incidents to ensure accountability," Antonio Guterres' spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said.

A detention centre holding migrants in Saada city was bombed on Friday. Basheer Omar, a Red Cross spokesperson in Yemen, said rescuers continued to search for survivors. He said more than 100 people had been killed and wounded, according to the Red Cross count.

Yemen's Houthi rebels and an aid group on Saturday claimed that the death toll had climbed to at least 82.

Al Jazeera, however, could not independently verify the casualty figures.

Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières, or MSF) put the number of wounded alone at "about 200". Ahmed Mahat, MSF's head of mission in Yemen, said they had reports of "many bodies still at the scene of the air strike, many missing people".

Another Saudi air raid on Friday in the port city of Hodeidah – later confirmed by satellite photos analysed by the AP news agency – hit a telecommunications centre that is key to Yemen's connection to the internet. Early on Saturday, the internet remained down.

Yemen's Houthi Health Minister Taha al-Motawakil has appealed to the international community for medical aid. He accused the Saudi coalition of deliberately targeting civilians.

"We consider this a war crime against humanity. The world



should take responsibility at this critical moment in human history," he said.

The Houthi Al Masirah TV satellite news channel said the strike on the telecommunications building killed and wounded an unspecified number of people. It released chaotic footage of people digging through rubble for a body as aid workers assisted bloodied survivors.

Save the Children said at least three children were killed in the Hodeidah attack.

Air raids also hit near the capital, Sanaa, held by the Houthis since late 2014. On Tuesday, at least 14 people were killed in strike, many missing people".

Intense campaign The intense campaign comes after the Iran-backed Houthis claimed a drone and missile attack that struck inside the United Arab Emirates capital earlier this week – a major escalation in the conflict in Yemen where the Saudi-led coalition, with the UAE as a member, has been carrying out air raids since 2015.

Al Jazeera's Mohammed Al Attab, reporting from Sanaa, said that the attacks have drawn nationwide condemnation by the Houthis and different human rights groups in Yemen.

"The Houthi-run ministry of human rights has called for an investigation into the attacks," he said.

Eight aid agencies operating in Yemen said in a joint statement that they were "horrified" the killing in Saada, which included women and children.

"Migrants seeking better lives for themselves and their families, Yemeni civilians injured by the dozens, is a picture we never hoped to wake up to in Yemen," said Gillian Moyes, Save the Children's director in Yemen.

Jamal Benomar, a former UN special envoy for Yemen, said the air raids are the latest in a series of war crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition.

"There has been no accountability whatsoever since the start of this war. It's a failure not only from the United States but the permanent members of the Security Council.

"The reality is that all the five members instead of cooperating to try to find a way on how to compel the Saudis to end the war in Yemen and compel the Yemeni sides to enter in good faith in a political process, to end this strife, they have in fact been competing for lucrative contracts with Saudi Arabia and the UAE," he said.

Yemeni Forces Tell Foreign Firms To Leave UAE As Conflict Spreads

Agencies

SANAA: Houthi militia dominated military Saturday called on foreign companies to pull out of the UAE following a series of Saudi airstrikes on Thursday and early Friday which have killed at least 90 people in Yemen.

Yemen's al-Masirah TV said five people were pulled out from the rubble on Saturday, raising the death toll from the Saudi-led coalition bombing of a temporary detention center in Sa'ada to 87 people.

Another 266 people were injured, most of them in critical condition, it cited Yemen's Minister of Public Health and Population Taha al-Mutawakil as saying.

Late Thursday, Saudi-led coalition warplanes also struck a communications center in Hudaydah, killing six children playing soccer nearby and plunging Yemen offline as the war-torn nation lost its connection to the internet.

A Saudi military spokesman denied deliberately targeting the detention center, raising questions as to whether the UAE had carried out the deadly bombing.

"In the aftermath of the crimes



committed by the Saudi-led coalition of aggression against Yemeni people, we advise foreign companies in the Emirates to leave because they have invested in an unsafe country," Yemen's Armed Forces spokesman Yahya Saree tweeted on Friday.

"The UAE would grow more insecure as long as its rulers continue their military aggression against Yemen."

His fresh warning came after Yemeni forces carried out retaliatory drone and missile strikes against strategic facilities deep inside the UAE on Monday.

On Friday, thousands of Yemenis staged demonstrations in the capital

Sana'a and other cities to condemn the bombings of Sa'ada and Hudaydah.

Earlier, the Information Minister of the Ansarallah government Dhaifullah al-Shami warned of "volcanoes of rage" in response to the new atrocities.

"The enemy was seeking to perpetrate today's crimes [against Sa'ada and Hudaydah] in silence and far from public opinion. Nationwide internet blackout in Yemen is a scheme by the Saudi-led coalition to conceal its crimes. Whatever took place in Syria several years ago is now happening in our country," he told Lebanon's al-Mayadeen TV.

After Loss, Trump Ordered US Defense Staff To Seize Voting Machines: Report

Agenceis

A draft executive order written by Donald Trump's White House in the weeks after his defeat in the 2020 election directed the nation's top military leader to seize voting machines, a report said Friday.

The explosive document, released by the National Archives and obtained by Politico, highlights the extreme measures Trump may have been willing to take to cling to power against the will of voters who picked Joe Biden to be their next president.

Dated December 16 2020, the order sought to appoint a special counsel to bring charges on any fraud allegations that arose from the seizures. But it was never signed.

It is among 750-plus records turned over to the House of Representatives select committee investigating the 2021 Capitol assault after the Supreme Court rejected Trump's appeal to block their release.

"Effective immediately, the Secretary of Defense shall seize, collect, retain and analyze all machines, equipment, electronically stored information, and material records required for retention," says the three-page draft.

The document reprises many of the debunked conspiracy theories about hacked voting machines that were pushed by figures in Trump's orbit now being targeted by congressional investigators, including right-wing attorney Sidney Powell.

She falsely told reporters the

election had been targeted by "communist money through Venezuela, Cuba, and likely China."

Powell and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani led unsuccessful efforts to have courts throw out election results in key swing states in the weeks after Trump's defeat.

The ex-president and his allies spent months pressing false claims of widespread fraud, despite experts in his own government affirming that it was the most secure vote in US history.

The claims were also rejected by Trump-appointed attorney general Bill Barr, and Trump was eventually impeached for inciting the attack on the Capitol by a mob of his supporters.

The draft order bears similarities with a plot outlined in a Powerpoint presentation to keep Trump in office that former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows turned over to the select committee last year.

That document envisaged US Marshals seizing ballots for a 50-state hand recount.

The draft executive order that emerged Friday focuses specifically on touchscreen ballot-marking devices made by Dominion that were used in Georgia, where a hand recount and machine recount affirmed Biden's win.

It repeats false allegations about Dominion being "owned or heavily controlled and influenced by foreign agents, countries, and interests" and alleging that its machines are deliberately designed to create "systemic fraud."

COVID-19 Vaccines Don't Cause Infertility: US Study



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Covid-19 vaccines do not cause infertility, though males who have been infected by the virus may experience short-term reduced fertility, according to the latest research published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

The study found that couples trying to conceive found no association between Covid-19 vaccination and fecundability – the probability of conception per menstrual cycle – in either women or male partners.

However, the research conducted by Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) indicated that Covid-19 infection among males may temporarily reduce fertility. But this can be overcome if a vaccine is taken.

"Many reproductive-aged in-

dividuals have cited concerns about fertility as a reason for remaining unvaccinated," says the study's lead author, Dr Amelia Wesselink, research assistant professor of epidemiology at BUSPH.

"Our study shows for the first time that Covid-19 vaccination in either partner is unrelated to fertility among couples trying to conceive through intercourse. Time-to-pregnancy was very similar regardless of vaccination status of the individuals."

The study analysed couples who had taken Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

According to senior study author Dr Lauren Wise, who is a professor of epidemiology at BUSPH, "These data provide reassuring evidence that Covid vaccination in either partner does



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