



P5 STATE

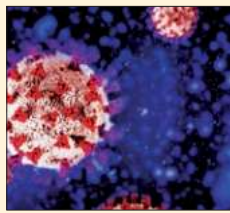
J&K DOCTORS TO GET CRITICAL CARE & ICU TRAINING FROM AIIMS DELHI

Additional Chief Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME), Vivek Bhardwaj and Director, AIIMS, Prof. Randeep Guleria launched the training program of COVID related

P7

BEGINNING OF THE END?

In the short time since the omicron variant was identified in South Africa in November 2021, researchers have quickly learned that it has three unique characteristics: It spreads efficiently and quickly, it generally causes milder disease than previous variants and it



P11 SPORTS

NO MORE THE CAPTAIN, KOHLI TALKS ABOUT CONTRIBUTING MORE AS A BATTER

Citing Mahendra Singh Dhoni as example, Virat Kohli says one doesn't need to be a captain of a team to be a leader and now that he is not the India skipper, he



Quote!

The lust for comfort kills the passions of the soul

— Khalil Gibran

NEWS DIGEST

HAIJ-2022

Last Date For Online Forms Extended

SRINAGAR: The Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday extended the last date to submit online applications forms for Haj-2022 by the desiring pilgrims up to February 15. In a statement issued here on **More on P10**

Cardiac Arrest Kills Policeman

SRINAGAR: A policeman posted at the District Police Lines (DPL) in south Kashmir's Kulgam district died on Monday after suffering a cardiac arrest. The policeman identified as Bilal Ahmed was performing his duty when he collapsed on the **More on P10**

Another Patwari Falls In ACB Net

SRINAGAR: The anti-corruption bureau (ACB) on Monday arrested a revenue official for demanding and accepting a bribe from a person in south Kashmir's Kulgam district for providing revenue extracts. ACB received a complaint from a person alleging that Mohammad Abbas, **More on P10**

Reckless Driver Held After 9 Yr Hunt

JAMMU: Police on Monday said they have arrested a man nine years after he was booked for rash driving and injuring people in Jammu city. Chaman Lal, a resident of Hondana Darwale village in Kishtwar district, was booked for rash driving, endangering lives of pedestrians and causing injuries to **More on P10**

Prez Praises Modi Govt's Actions In Kashmir

'Many Steps Taken To Give Better Opportunities To People Of J&K'



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Narendra Modi government has taken many important steps to provide better opportunities for education, health and employment to the people of "hitherto left neglected" Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Monday.

Addressing a joint sitting of both houses of Parliament at the start of the budget session, Kovind said at the "Amrit

Kaal" of independence, the Centre's resolve of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" (one India, greatest India) is enabling the country to write a new chapter of development on the basis of democratic values and it is now making special efforts for the states and regions "hitherto left neglected".

"The beginning of a new era of development in Jammu and Kashmir and the Ladakh region is a great example of this," he said.

The president **More on P10**

Govt Shifts 13 More JKAS Officers

Second Reshuffle In Administration In Last 4 Days
Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday reshuffled administration, second time in the last four days, by ordering transfer of 13 JKAS officers in the interest of administration with immediate effect.

According to an order issued by the government, Tariq Hussain Ganai, JKAS, Director, Rural Sanitation, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Director, Hospitality and Protocol, J&K, against an available vacancy.

Rakesh Kumar Srangal, JKAS, Director, Panchayati Raj, J&K, has been asked to hold the charge of the post of Director, Rural Sanitation, J&K, in addition to his own duties, till further orders, reads the order.

Manzoor Hussain, JKAS, General Manager, DIC, Rajouri, has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Shopian.

Mohammad Ahsan Mir, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, has been transferred and posted as Director, Command Area Development, Kashmir relieving Qazi Sarwar, JKAS, Additional Commissioner in the office of Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir of the additional charge of the post. **More on P10**

21 Militants, 2 Kashmir Policemen Killed In January

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: At least 21 militants, eight of them foreign nationals, were killed in a dozen encounters with government forces across the Valley in the month of January this year.

Besides militants, two policemen also lost their lives in separate militancy related incidents.

According to the data, Kulgam district witnessed three gunfights, while Srinagar, Budgam, Pulwama and Shopian witnessed two encounters each. A single encounter was reported in the month of January from north



Kashmir's Kupwara district.

The first encounter, as per the data, took place in Keran Sector **More on P10**

Police Summons 2 Journalists

Police on Monday issued summons to two journalists, Fahad Ahmad Shah and Majid Hyderi in connection with a case registered following an encounter in Pulwama in which officials said that four militants were killed. A case FIR (18/2022) under section 307 IPCV, 7/25 IA Act, and sections **More on P10**

Govt Orders Action Against People Opposing Smart Meters

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday directed the district authorities in this capital city to tackle resistance by any person in the process of installation of smart meters amicably and take strict action against those creating hindrances or damaging public property.

These directions were passed by the

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Pandurang K Pole on Monday while chairing a meeting here regarding installation of smart meters in Srinagar City, an official spokesperson said.

The meeting was attended by MD KPDC, SP headquarter, ADC Srinagar, CE KPDC, SE O&M Circle 2nd Srinagar, CEO, IT&C, Executive Directors Division 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th, DGM RECPDC, Executive Director **More on P10**



A special initiative for the Development of Micro Food Processing Enterprises



"Our government is continuously empowering small enterprises associated with food processing through various initiatives like easy loans and technical assistance so that they have the ability to compete with the world market and become strong partners of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan."

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



PMFME (Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises) Scheme

Apply online on our portal www.pmfme.mofpi.gov.in to get bank loan with 35% subsidy and to grow your micro food enterprises under PMFME Scheme

More than 2 Lakh Micro Food Processing Enterprises to benefit under the scheme

PMFME Scheme Benefits

35%	Get 35% subsidy on taking loan from the bank (maximum ₹10 lakhs)	 
	Loan and subsidy are also available from the bank for setting up new industries under ODOP product of the district	
	Training and Technical support	

Apply today on www.pmfme.mofpi.gov.in to get loan and 35% subsidy from bank

www.pmfme.mofpi.gov.in | 01302281089

[@PMFME-Ministry-of-Food-Processing-Industries](#)

[Ministry of Food Processing Industries, India](#)

[@PMFMEScheme](#)



To Know More Scan Now!

NCC Cadets Can Play Major Role In Reversing Drug Menace: LG

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The National Cadet Corps (NCC) can play a major role in reversing the drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday.

Interacting with the contingents of NCC cadets from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh that participated at the Republic Day Parade in New Delhi, Sinha lauded them for their services, particularly especially during the trying times of COVID-19. "NCC cadets are icons of discipline and leadership with unwavering commitment in nation-building," Sinha said.

As the largest uniformed youth organisation in the world, Sinha said, the NCC can



create a culture of fighting substance abuse. "NCC cadets can also play a major role in reversing the drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir through cadet peer-led

intervention," the lieutenant governor said. "Our efforts will not only motivate the youth from the villages to join the armed forces but will **More on P10**

Do You Get Your Copy of
KASHMIR OBSERVER
Regularly?



If Not

Contact Circulation Incharge:
Ishad Ahmad: 7006276927



To place an advertisement

CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

COVID May Cause Microscopic Damage To Lungs Not Detected By Normal Tests

Agencies

Abnormalities have been identified in the lungs of long COVID patients that could offer a potential explanation for why some people experience breathlessness long after their initial infection, The Guardian has reported.

The findings, from a pilot study involving 36 patients, raise the possibility that COVID may cause microscopic damage to the lungs that is not detected using routine tests. Breathlessness is a symptom in the majority of long COVID patients, but it has been unclear whether this is linked to other factors such as changes in breathing patterns, tiredness, or something more fundamental, the report said.

According to Dr Emily Fraser, a consultant at Oxford university hospitals and a co-author of the study, the latest findings are the first evidence that underlying lung health could be impaired, report said.

"It is the first study to demonstrate lung abnormalities in [people with long COVID] who are breathless and where other investigations are unremarkable," said Fraser. "It



does suggest the virus is causing some kind of persistent abnormality within the microstructure of the lungs or in the pulmonary vasculature."

More work would be required to clarify the clinical significance of the findings, she added, including

how the apparent abnormalities relate to breathlessness, the report said.

Claire Steves, a clinical senior lecturer at King's College London who was not involved in the work, said the findings would be of significant interest to anyone living with long-

term breathlessness after COVID.

"They suggest that the efficiency of the lung in doing what it is meant to do – exchange carbon dioxide and oxygen – may be compromised, even though the structure of the lung appears normal," she said.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE KASHMER
(KASHMIRI AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEALTHCARE, MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH)



Free Critical Care Ambulance Service 24*7

In Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag & Kupwara
Acute medical and surgical emergency calls will be taken by experts and triaged. Our expert team will rush to the spot. Appropriate care will be provided and patient will be shifted to the nearby hospital for further management.

**For Emergency call: 9484-100-200
0194-240-4000**

Kindly cooperate and make it a Success!

ایمرجنسی طبی سروس

شہر سرینگر، بaramulla، انت ناگ اور کپوارہ کے لئے ایمرجنسی صورت حال میں

مفت ایمرجنسی کال

انتہائی تازہ اور فوری طبی امداد کے مستحق افراد کو خدمت فراہم کی جائے گی
امداد کے لئے موصول ہونی والوں کو مریض کے ذریعے ہاتھ کے ہونے پر ہنگامی کی جائے گی۔
مارے مریض کی ہم ہائے سوچنے کے لئے مناسب طبی امداد کی سہولت فراہم کرے گی۔
مریض کو جتنی سہولت کے لئے نزدیکی ہسپتال منتقل کیا جائے گا۔
کسی بھی مریض کے لئے رابطہ کریں:-

9484-100-200

0194-240-4000

ہماری کہیں بھی طبی امداد کو سہولت کے لئے ہمارا تعاون کیجیے۔

Please donate to Account Number: 0365040100013064, J&K Bank branch Lal Mandi
KASHMER in Collaboration with HELP Foundation

ASTHMA ATTACK BREATHING TROUBLE

- Inability to Breathe
- Difficulty Talking
- Rapid & Shallow Breathing
- Racing Heart
- Irregular Heartbeats
- Lips Turning Blue

HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Feeling weak, light headed, or faint
- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back
- Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulders
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath

STROKE SYMPTOMS

- Balance loss/Dizziness
- Eyes(Vision change)
- Facial drooping/ numbness
- Arm weakness/ numbness
- Speech slurring (confusion)
- Sudden severe headache
- Time to Call

TRAUMA/HEAD/CHEST OR ABDOMINAL INJURY OR SEVERE MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

CALL CRITICAL CARE AMBULANCE 24/7

9484100200 / 01942404000

دسم اور شخص کی بیماریوں کی علامتیں:

- سانس لینے میں سختی ہونا
- بے ہوشی یا غماض ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا

دل کا دورہ پڑنے کی علامتیں

- سینے میں درد یا بھاری پن
- کھانسی یا سانس لینے میں سختی
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا
- تھکاوٹ یا کمزوری ہونا

سٹرک کی علامتیں

- توازن کا دورہ پڑنا
- آنکھوں سے جھپکے نہ پڑنا
- چہرے میں کچھ حرکت نہ ہونا
- بازو یا کمر کی حرکت نہ ہونا
- بولنے میں رکاوٹ نہ ہونا
- کچھ بھی جھپک نہ پڑنا
- چاکلہ شری سرور ہونا
- کچھ وقت بے ہوش یا بے ہوش ہونا

ٹرا/ا سر کی چوٹ / سینے پر چوٹ غیر معمولی زخم یا کسی بھی حادثے کا شکار

فوری طور مدد کرنے والی ایمرجنسی کو بلائیے 24/7

9484100200 / 01942404000

KASHMER in Collaboration with HELP Foundation

اطہار تعزیت

بہتر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہیں کہ اہلیہ مرحوم غلام نبی نقشبندی ساکنہ آزاد کالون 90 فٹ روڈ متصل ابوبکر مسجد صور مغرب پتھر عمارت کے بعد اس دار فانی سے دارال بقا کی اور انتقال کر گئیں مرحومہ شریف انشس ہونے کے ساتھ ساتھ ایک نیک سیرت خاتون اور صوم و صلات کی پابندی ہم اللہ تعالیٰ سے دست بدعا ہیں مرحومہ کو روت کرٹ جنت نصیب عطا فرمائیں اور مرحومہ کو لائقین کو یہ صدمہ عظیم برداشت کرنے کی توفیق عطا فرمائے۔

مرحومہ کی فاترخوانی یکم فروری 2022 بروز منگل وار بوقت صبح ساڑھے دس بجے ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقعہ شیشہ باغ متصل میرج بال غنی میموریل انسٹیٹیوٹ میں انجام دی جائیں گی۔

صاحب تعزیت انشا نقشبندی

9541850230, 9906958416

Public Notice

I have applied for fertilizer license .If anybody having any objection in this regard He/She May contact office of the Chief Agriculture officer Kulgam within the period of 7 days .After that no objection will be entertained.

Bhat Fertilizers

NAME: Shani Jan
D/o: Nazeer Ahmad Bhat
R/o: Tungdanoo Yaripora Kulgam

Public Notice

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

Bhat Pesticides
Name: Shani Jan
D/O: Nazeer Ahmad Bhat
Tungdanoo Yaripora Kulgam

Public Notice

I have lost my 12th class Marks card bearing Registration No .08NkM303542, Roll No314304. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection n the office of the Principal Higher sacandry school kreeri within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Ishaq Majeed wani
S/o Abdul Majeed wani
R/o waripora bala
Phone 8494020013

ashr k

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کلترہ

درخواست متناجب غلام نبی چوپان ولد غلام رسول سلطان بٹ ساکنہ سرزودھن تحصیل کریری براہ وصول RBA سرٹیفکٹ جتن درخیزیت فاروق تحتی ار 144,294,375آ

اشتہار بمبراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر مذہیں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل سالانہ سرزودھن میں رہائش پذیر ہے۔ کمپنہ کی سالانہ آمدنی 72000 ہے کمپنہ بذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

فاروق احمد بٹ و سرزہ 48 زمینداری 6000 آمدنی

نسیر بیگم زوجہ 25 گھر بلو کام

زینت فاروق دختر 21 زیر تعلیم

ادرفاروق دختر 18 زیر تعلیم

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کمپنہ میں بتلایا گیا ہے سرفٹیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذریا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذریا اعتراض ساتھ ہیوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ یہ عداد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذریا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار ash k

SAD DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of Ghulam Mohammad Wani S/O Late Abdul Ahad Wani R/O New Colony Batmaloo at present Mohalla Ashraf Khan Kathidarwaza Srinagar. The mourning of the deceased will be held at Mohalla Ashraf Khan Kathidarwaza Srinagar. The congregational prayers will be conducted at their ancestral graveyard on (Thursday) 3rd, February 2022 (10.30 am) at Ziyarat Batmaloo.

Bereaved Family
Fida Mohammad wani
Contact : 9641153114

Office of the Principal Govt. Model Hr. Sec School Chittergul Anantnag

No:- HSSC/09/22 Date:- 31/01/2022

AUCTION NOTICE

Pursuant to the permission sought from the worthy Chief Education Officer Anantnag Vide No CEO/A/Plg/C/8847/22 Dated 05-01-2022, the auction of dilapidated single storied building is scheduled on 10-02-2022 (Thursday) at 11:30 am .sharp. In this context, all the interested persons/ Stakeholders/ Agencies are hereby informed to take part in the auction on the scheduled date and time. Moreover anybody/person/dept. having any kind of objection shall file in written with solid evidence in the office of the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection /Claim shall be acceptable after expiry of the date.

Principal

Public Notice

I have lost the Driving Licenses of my Vehicle Bearing Regd No:- 1820110004796. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO KULGAM. Within a period of seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Ishaq Ahmad Khan
S/o:- Ghulam Ahmad Khan
R/O:- Churat Kulgam

MOTOR VEHICLES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE ASSTT. REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER, ANANTNAG. PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, this office has received an application from Parveez Ahmad Lone S/o Ghulam Ahmad Lone R/o Khushroikalan, Bihbhabra, Anantnag (Transferee) together with copy of NOC vide No DL2021-NOC-0319D Dated 11 Jun 2021 for assignment of new registration mark in respect of vehicle (ALTO LXI) bearing registration No DL3CBJ-9806 Model 2012 of registration series of District Anantnag of Jammu and Kashmir, as the vehicle was initially registration with the Registering Authority Saraj Kala Khan , New Delhi in the name Mohammad Humayun Wani S/o Mohammad Sultan Wani R/o HNO.3, Ground Floor, Bogal Lane ,Bhogal ,New Delhi South -110014.

Before proceeding further in the matter, if anybody having any objection regarding assignment of new registration mark of vehicle Alto VXI bearing registration DL3CBJ-9806 Model 2012 may kindly be filed objection within 7days from the date of publication of this notice to the office of undersigned No any objection/ representation shall be entertained after expiry of stipulated time.

Registering Authority
Asstt. Regional Transport Officer,
Anantnag

Date: 29/01/2022
ma

Public Notice

I have applied for the issuance of DEE Class Contractor Card from R&B Office. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his /her objection in the office of the Super Intending Engineer R&B Circle Anantnag /Kulgam Khanabal within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

NAME:- Mushtaq Ahmad Sofi
S/O :- Gh Rasool Sofi
R/O :- T.B Shah Naid Khun Anantnag

Public Notice

My Name has been wrongly written in my Driving License bearing DL No: JK1319990011791 as Rafiq Ahmad Bhat While my correct Name is Mohd Rafiq Bhat which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/he objection in ARTO Office Anantnag within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Rafiq Bhat
S/O Maqsood Ahmad Bhat
R/o Pahloo Nowgam Banimpورا Shangas Anantnag

Office of The Regional Transport Officer Kashmir NOTICE

Whereas, a joint application has been received from Shri Fayaz Aamd Wani S/O Ghulam Mohi-u-din Wani R/O Chanapora Sgr (Transferor) and Shri Nusrat Malik S/O Arshid Ahamd Bhat R/O 64, New Theed Brein Sgr (Transferee) for transfer of Tata Sumo carriage route Permit No 1642/MC Covering Vehicle No JK01AG-9917 Now, therefore, it is notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed transfer of the said route permit / vehicle shall be filled in writing in the office of the Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir. Within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily News Paper Kashmir Observer. Seller and purchaser identified by the authorized representatives of M/S _S-T-W-CO Namely Bagh Hussain

NOJK-RTOK 545
Dated: 31/01/2022
fko

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir

CLOTHING & HOME APPLIANCES

YARDIMCI MULTI-VENTURE

Deals with clothing and home appliances at whole sale rates.

Contact:-0194-3550112
G-mail- yardimciniquie92@gmail.com
I.G: yardimci_multi_venture
F.B: yardimci MultiVenture

ELECTRONICS

10X MOBILE STORE

All types of Mobile and Mobile Accessories

Main Market Sannat Nagar Srinagar
Contact:-7889657769

TECH WORLD

All Mobile and Electronic Accessories Xerox also available.

Sannat Nagar Srinagar
Contact:-9149965005/ 9682370979



Twin COVID Testing Centres San Car Parking, Patients Suffer

Agencies

Srinagar: Absence of car parking at twin Covid-19 testing centres in Srinagar has come under severe criticism with the patients, alleging it to be a reason for immense hardships.

As per the news agency, the government has established a Covid-19 testing centre at TRC where a huge rush of people visit on a regular basis to undergo Covid tests.

However, the patients at the Covid testing centre at TRC and Gousia hospital here have expressed resentment against the authorities for failing to make proper arrangements for the people visiting these places.

“There has been no car parking at both the places. One fails to understand where the people visiting these places are supposed to park their vehicles,” the commuters said, adding that the absence of parking slots and subse-

quent action by the officials is pushing the local people to the wall.

Nazir Ahmad, who visited both the places today to undergo Covid test, said that the commuters have been illegally parking their vehicles outside Gousia hospital and TRC Covid testing centre, which not hampers the traffic movement, but also leads to the fine as well.

“In the both the cases, the people are being forced to face hardships,” the visitors said, appealing to the concerned authorities to ensure that the people visiting the centres are provided parking slots so that they could heave a sigh of relief.

Pertinently, following the spurt in daily Covid cases across Jammu and Kashmir, the testing capacity has been increased in Srinagar and elsewhere due to which the Covid testing centres are witnessing huge rush on regular basis—(KNO)

Pace Up Covid Vaccination Process Of Age Group 15-17 Years: Div Com To Officials



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole Monday chaired a Zoom meeting regarding the progress made in vaccination of 15-17 age group in district Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Ajaz Assad, Director School Education Kashmir, Director Health Services Kashmir, Director Colleges, Principals of Polytechnic Colleges of district Srinagar, Principals of all Nursing colleges, Principal ITI Srinagar, CMO & CEO Srinagar, Assistant Director Health and Family Welfare, Principals of all Higher Secondary Schools, Srinagar and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the Div Com enjoined upon all officers to pace up the covid vaccination process of age group 15-17 years and complete the target in a time bound manner.

Taking the serious note of slow progress of vaccination in Srinagar in the said

group which is lagging behind among all districts, the Div Com fixed a deadline to achieve 75 percent target by Friday this week.

Meanwhile, Div Com stressed on dispelling the misinformation which creates hesitation among the parents as well as children to get vaccinated. He directed for dissemination of information to create awareness among the youth regarding the benefits of vaccination in preventing and containing the spread of virus.

Pole further said that vaccination is an important tool to combat the impact of Covid viruses and save the precious human lives. He also emphasized that it is the collective responsibility of everyone to get vaccinated and encourage others to get inoculated.

The chair was informed that all the enrolled students in government Colleges and Polytechnic institutions are being vaccinated while a few private Schools/colleges are lagging behind in the vaccination process.

'Mission to Restore Gilsar Lake'

Govt Presses Watermaster, Motorboats To Remove Encroachment

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 31: The District Administration Srinagar Monday launched a major Encroachment Clearance Operation in Gilsar Lake by pressing a Watermaster and Motorboats into action to clear illegal constructions in and along the historical water body to restore the glory of the historic water body.

The anti-encroachment operation was launched on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad during which a special anti-encroachment squad headed by Tehsildar Eidgah, Ishfaq Ahmad Khan and Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mohammad Shafiqat demolished several residential structures in the Gilsar Lake.

Pertinent to mention that in the last few months, the District Administration Srinagar has conducted a series of such anti encroachment/demolition drives for restoration of the water bodies in the historical water circuit of Srinagar including Gil-



sar lake.

During today's anti encroachment operation, the Watermaster and Motorboats were pressed into action for the first time to speed up the pace of work and rejuvenate and restore the historic water body.

Speaking with regard to the encroachment clearance operation, the Deputy Commissioner stated that such anti encroachment drives will continue with more vigour in the future so that pristine glory of the historical water channel is restored fully in the larger public interest.

The Deputy Commissioner said the transformation has been made possible by collaborative ef-

forts of the local community and the District Administration and we are able to see that the lake has been restored to a large extent.

Meanwhile, during the encroachment clearance operation, the inhabitants of the surrounding areas appreciated the efforts of the District Administration Srinagar undertaken for cleaning the lake, which was covered with weeds, animal waste, plastics and sewage a few months ago while many of its sides had been encroached upon. They said the lake started to show visible improvement as the District Administration has made all out efforts to restore it.

Against demand of 750 MWs, Sgr gets 550 MWs electricity during winters

Agencies

Srinagar: With the improvement in the power infrastructure, the Kashmir Power Distribution Limited (KPDCL) Monday said that it has been able to provide over 70 per cent of the electricity to Srinagar consumers against the total requirement during winters.

Officials told the news agency that during the ongoing winters, the electricity requirement in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir is 750 MegaWatts.

However, they said that with the improvement in power infrastructure, the department has

been able to provide 550 MWs to the people living within the Srinagar district.

The officials said that against the total requirement, the department is supplying 72 per cent electricity to Srinagar residents while for the rest 28 per cent, the KPDCL goes for the curtailment.

They said that many new grid stations have been commissioned, lines have come up in this year, thus the department is able to supply more electricity compared to previous years. “We are expecting further improvement in the infrastructure, which would help in enhancing the supply to the

people,” they said.

There are at least 11 power houses across Kashmir from where the electricity is being supplied to the consumers, officials said, adding that the power houses in the Valley are not able to generate adequate electricity due to the less flow in the water, thus leading to the shortage of electricity for which the power is being procured from outside as well.

Notably, unlike previous years, there have been fewer complaints about the power paucity this year, which otherwise witnessed frequent protests across Kashmir during the winters—(KNO)

Role of Maulana Azad National Urdu University in promoting Urdu Language.

Urdu is considered as the most important language of communication in India and in some other countries as well. It has been called as one of the most beautiful and sophisticated languages spoken around the world. It is because of this that Urdu speakers are such a glee to listen to, just by listening to Urdu poetry or music, it makes you feel that you should also learn Urdu. It was also known as “Kohinoor of India”. One of the basic reasons of why Urdu seems so beautiful is because of the decency that the language presents. It may be the only language in the world in which it is just not possible to abuse someone. According to census of India, the number of Urdu speakers was 2.68 crore in 1971, it increases to over 3.5 crore in 1981 and a decade later it reached 4.4 crore. The 2001 census recorded 5.15 crore urdu speakers. But in 2011, the figure dropped to 5.07 crore. Being the language of masses it is somehow losing its charm. As per poet Rashid:

“Maangi allah se bas itni dua hai rashid
Mai jo vasihat likhon, beta parh le...”

To promote Urdu through the medium of education, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) is playing a tremendous role as it is the first and only central university established with the aim of promoting Urdu language. MANUU is a central university which was established by an act of Parliament in 1988, with the mandate to foster and develop the Urdu language and to impart vocational and technical education through the medium of Urdu. The regular programmes are offered through 8 schools of studies namely, School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Commerce and Business Management, School of Education and Training, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, School of Languages, Linguistics and Indology, School of Sciences, School of Technology, Computer Applications and IT and Engineering and Architecture. It is the kind of university which is diverse in its programmes and courses. It has different colleges of Teacher Education, Polytechnics, ITIs, Urdu model schools all over the India. The vision of the



SARMAD YASEEN BUTT
Ph.D RESEARCH SCHOLAR
Sarmadbutt17542@gmail.com

University is to provide quality higher education and research through Urdu. It has the network of nine regional and five sub regional centres spread across the different states of India.

In spite of being in its dawn stage, the university is growing at a faster rate, surpassing the growth rate of big established universities. MANUU has been placed among the top 25 central universities of India by the Outlook-ICARE 2020 Ranking. As per UGC, there were other language universities as well but it is the only Urdu university which has received this prestige. MANUU is a member of Association of Indian Universities, Association of Common Wealth Universities, Asian Association of Open Universities, Association for the study of Persionate Societies, India International Centre and Indian Academy of Social Sciences.

The students and staff of the university are drawn from different parts of the country. Maulana Azad National Urdu University MANUU is known for its diversity. Students and research scholars from different parts of India like UP, Bihar, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir etc. are part of it. Through culturally diverse classrooms and social interactions students have the opportunity to learn from people with different backgrounds and upbringing leading to increased innovation and collaboration. There are many schools in UP, Bihar, Hyderabad etc. where education is imparted through Urdu medium. After leaving such schools and colleges, MANUU acts as their savour, as it is the only central university

where education is imparted through Urdu medium. It is the central university where Ph. D thesis are submitted bilingual- both in English and Urdu so that Urdu will not act as a hindrance in their progress when these research scholars will apply for jobs in other universities.

There is a great relevance to research in education. Apart from ensuring an in-depth knowledge over a topic, research papers and articles also contribute to the world of knowledge. These research papers and articles become the helping hands for the students in future, guiding and helping them in research. “Adab-o-saqafat” a bi-annual research and referred journal of MANUU is working in this direction. It is dedicated to the promotion of Urdu language, literature and culture by providing opportunities to the faculty and scholars as well to publish their valuable content. The journal is included in UGCs refereed journal list. MANUU has a beautiful tarana (song) which is written by famous poet and Bollywood lyricist Gulzar and sung by Sukhwinder Singh. It clearly indicates that love for urdu was the thread which has bind Bollywood celebrities and MANUU Staff and students together. The tarana is beautifully written and it sought to spread the vinous fragrance of urdu not only in university but outside as well. The lyric, “Urdu ki ude khushboo” justifies it vigorously. Media is considered as the most powerful tool of communication in emerging world. Thomas Carlyle considered it as a fourth pillar of democracy. The university has full-fledged instructional media centre (IMC) which is engaged in production of curriculum based audio and video programmes to meet the needs of students pursuing various academic programmes of MANUU in its regular and distance education stream. It has also launched different e content programmes. The audio visual series titled as “Urdu Nama, shaheene urdu” is promoting and preserving Urdu's rich cultural heritage and will help in bringing its diverse flavours to the masses. I would like to conclude with the beautiful lines:

“Saleeqay se hawaon main jo khushboo ghol sakte hain
Abhi kuch log hain baqi jo urdu bol sakte hain”.

ma_r

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
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



CALENDAR

28 Jumada al-Sani
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	6: 03
ZUHR	12:44
ASR	4:22
Magrib	6:04
ISHA	7: 26

This Day In History

- 1864 - 2nd German-Danish war begins
- 1909 - US forces withdraw from Cuba after liberal Jose Miguel Gomez becomes president; ensuing political instability will bring a threat of US intervention in 1912
- 1923 - Fascists Voluntary Militia forms in Italy under Benito Mussolini
- 1924 - Ramsay MacDonald's incoming Labour government formally recognizes the Soviet Union
- 1944 - Supreme Soviet increases Soviet republics' autonomy
- 1948 - Palestine Post building in Jerusalem bombed
- 1950 - USSR demands condemnation of Emperor Hirohito for war crimes
- 1951 - 1st X-ray moving picture process demonstrated
- 1951 - 1st telecast of an atomic explosion
- 1951 - UN condemns People's Republic of China as aggressor in Korea
- 1951 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1958 - 1st US satellite (Explorer I) launched
- 1958 - Egypt & Syria announce plans to merge into United Arab Republic
- 1961 - 1st full-scale test of US Minuteman ICBM is successful
- 1968 - Former US VP Richard Nixon announces candidacy for president
- 1970 - West-Germany & USSR sign gas contract
- 1974 - Kuala Lumpur is declared a Federal Territory.
- 1979 - Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran after 15 years in exile
- 1981 - French government accord sends 60 Mirage fighter jets to Iraq
- 1981 - One of cricket's biggest controversies; Australian captain Greg Chappell instructs bowler (and younger brother) Trevor to bowl underarm to Brian McKechnie with New Zealand needing 6 from final ball to tie 3rd World Series Cup ODI in Melbourne; Australia wins by 6
- 1982 - Senegal & Gambia form loose confederation (Senegambia)
- 1983 - USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1984 - China & Netherlands regain diplomatic relations
- 1991 - US Air & Skywest Fairchild jet collide at LA Airport killing 32
- 1993 - Soyuz TM-16 lands
- 2003 - Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrates during reentry into the Earth's atmosphere, killing all seven astronauts aboard.
- 2004 - 251 people are trampled to death and 244 injured in a stampede at the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.
- 2005 - Nepalese King Gyanendra exercises Coup d'état to capture the democracy becoming Chairman of the Councils of ministers.
- 2012 - At least 73 people are killed in the Egyptian football riots in Port Said.
- 2013 - John Kerry succeeds Hillary Clinton as US Secretary of State
- 2014 - Syrian civil war death toll reaches 130,000, while 4 million are displaced.

From KO Archives

4 Militants, Soldier Among 7 Killed

Observer News Service

Srinagar - Seven people, including four militants and an army jawan, were killed and three others wounded in militancy-related incidents in Kashmir valley since last night, official sources said today.

Militants today shot dead two persons at village Binner Baramulla district and Wuranhal in Anantnag district. Two militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Machipora Tillage in Kupwara district last night.

The encounter took place in the village yesterday when militants opened fire on an army patrol killing a jawan, they said, adding the operation in the area was still going on for the second day today. A civilian who was seriously injured in shoot-out was shifted to hospital.

In an encounter, two foreign militants, Hafiz Abu Sanan Nayeem and Abu Usman, associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba, were killed and two securitymen injured at Wangipora in Baramulla district yesterday. Some arms and ammunition were recovered from the slain militants, they said.

Militants opened fire on a security camp at Watergam in Baramulla last night The security forces fired back but there was no casualty reported from the either side, they said.

BSF troops detected a powerful explosive device hidden in a 14-inch television set at Dooru in Anantnag district last night, they said.

BSF arrested a militant and recovered an AK-56 rifle, eight magazines, 137 rounds and some ammunition at Noor Bagh area of Sopore in Baramulla Yesterday, they said.

Meanwhile, four army personnel were wounded when militants lobbed a grenade at their vehicle at the busy Jehangir Chowk here today, security sources said.

The army, however, exercised restraint and did not fire in retaliation to avoid civilian casualties; they said adding the explosion caused panic in the area.

In another incident, the sources said Captain N.Roy of Rajput Rifles was seriously injured in a militant ambush at Rangertop in frontier district of Kupwara today.

Security forces conducted a cordon and search operation at Wagub near Sopore and Mangnipora in Bandipore area of Baramulla district today, reports from Sopore said. No arrests were reported.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 01 February, 2001)

Flat for Sale In Delhi !

A Modern 3BHK(1050Sft)
Air Conditioned flat with
24hrs Water supply & all
amenities is for sale in
Neb Sarai, Saket.

The flat is being sold with
All kashmir based fitting
fixtures

Serious interested Parties
Contact:9560786515

To Criminalise Or Not—Delhi HC In A Fix Over 'Marital Rape'



Agencies

The Centre is likely to inform the Delhi High Court on Monday whether it wishes to withdraw its earlier affidavit in which it had submitted that marital rape cannot be made a criminal offence as it could become a phenomenon that may destabilise the institution of marriage and an easy tool for harassing husbands.

A bench of Justices Rajiv Shakdher and C Hari Shankar, on January 28, had asked the Centre's counsel to take instructions on whether it wants to withdraw its 2017 affidavit.

The bench, which has been conducting marathon hearings on a batch of petitions seeking

criminalisation of marital rape, will also hear rejoinder submissions on behalf of petitioners on Monday.

Advocate Karuna Nundy, representing petitioner NGOs RIT Foundation and All India Democratic Women's Association, has sought clarification as to whether she shall address the written submissions and affidavits filed by the central government so far or they are withdrawing it.

This assumes significance as the Centre, in its affidavit filed in August 2017, had said the Supreme Court and various high courts have already observed the rising misuse of Section 498A (harassment caused to a married woman by her husband and in-laws) of the IPC.

Supreme Court To Hear Plea Against Haryana Officials Amid Namaz Row



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court today agreed to list for urgent hearing a former Rajya Sabha lawmaker's plea seeking contempt action against top Haryana government officials over alleged disruptions in the offering of Friday namaz in Gurugram.

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices AS Bopanna and Hima Kohli took note of the submissions of senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for former MP Mohammad Adeb, and said state government officials have not been following the 2018 top court judgment issuing a slew of directions to stop hate crimes. "This is not only based on newspaper reports, we have ourselves filed complaints. We are not asking for any enforcement of FIR. This court has laid down preventive measures," the senior lawyer said.

"I will look into it and post before the appropriate bench immediately," the CJ said.

Mr Adeb has filed a contempt plea seeking action against Haryana's chief secretary and the director general of police for not complying with

the earlier judgment passed on Tehseen Poonawala's plea.

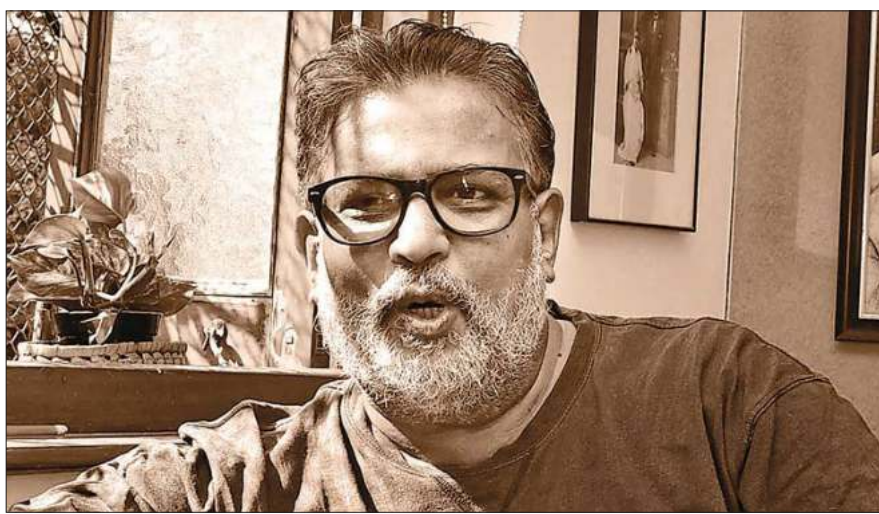
There have been alleged incidents of disruptions in offering namaz in open designated places in Gurugram.

In 2018, the top court issued guidelines to the Centre and states, asking them to take steps such as fast-tracking trials, victim compensation, deterrent punishment and disciplinary action against lax law-enforcing officials.

One guideline said states should designate a senior police officer not below the rank of police superintendent as the nodal officer in each district. These officers will set up a task force to be assisted by one DSP-rank officer for taking measures to prevent mob violence and lynching.

The task force will gather intelligence reports on people likely to commit such crimes or who are involved in spreading hate speeches, provocative statements and fake news, it had said.

The state governments should immediately identify districts, sub-divisions and villages where instances of lynching and mob violence have been reported in the recent past, it had said.



MAHATMA GANDHI'S GREAT GRANDSON Tushar Gandhi, on Sunday, lamented that the number of people who follow the teachings of the Father of the Nation is shrinking in the country, while the ideology of his assassin, Nathuram Godse, is becoming dominant. -PTI

BUDGET SESSION BEGINS

Centre Working On Developing 5G: President

Asian News International

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday appreciated the vision of the government for the success of the country's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform in the context of Digital India and the growing spread of the digital economy.

On the first day of the Budget Session of Parliament, the President addressed the joint sitting and said, "I would also appreciate the vision of the government for the success of the country's UPI platform in the context of Digital India and the growing spread of the digital economy. In December 2021, more than eight lakh crore rupees have been transacted through UPI in the country."

The President of India also said that the government has given training to thousands of women self-help group members to include them as 'Banking Sakhi'.



"Government has given training to thousands of women self help group members to include them as 'Banking Sakhi'. These women are working towards connecting banking services to the rural areas," said President Kovind.

In a move to enhance the internet connectivity in the country, President informed that the government is working on developing 5G that is fifth-generation wireless technology.

"India is one of the nations that has the cheapest internet and mobile phones. We are also working on developing 5G. Our

PLI Scheme on semi-conductor will further boost our startups ecosystem," said President.

The President added, "The government has relaxed various norms in the patents and Trademarks sector and therefore we have already witnessed 6,000 applications for patents and 20,000 applications for Trademarks in the FY 2021-22." Economic Survey 2021-22 and the Statistical Appendix will be laid on the table of the Lok Sabha at around 12.45 pm by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while it will be tabled in Upper House a few minutes after the House assembles at 2.30 pm.

The Budget Session of the parliament commenced on January 31 with President Ram Nath Kovind's address. The first part of the Union budget session of Parliament will be held from January 31 to February 11 and the second part of the budget session will take place from March 14 to April 8.

INDIA IS ONE OF THE NATIONS THAT HAS THE CHEAPEST internet and mobile phones. We are also working on developing 5G. Our PLI Scheme on semi-conductor will further boost our startups ecosystem,"

MP Moves Privilege Motion Notice On Pegasus Row

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Communist Party of India (CPI) MP Binoy Viswam today submitted a notice to move a privilege motion against Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for his statement in Parliament last year on the Pegasus spyware issue.

Mr Viswam said he submitted the notice in light of a recent New York Times report.

The report claimed that India bought the Pegasus spyware as part of a \$2 billion defence deal with Israel in 2017.

It has triggered a major controversy with the Opposition alleging that the government indulged in illegal snooping that amounted to "treason".

The Budget Session of Parliament, which began today, is expected to see the Opposition cornering the government on issues related to Pegasus snooping allegations, farmers and the border row



THE PRESS reports of 18th July 2021 also appear to be an attempt to malign the Indian democracy and its well-established institutions,"

with China in July last year, during the Monsoon Session.

Mr Vaishnaw, who is the minister for electronics and information technology, had in Parliament said media reports on alleged snoop-

ing published a day before the start of the Monsoon Session "cannot be a coincidence" and stressed there is "no substance" behind the sensationalism.

"The press reports of 18th July 2021 also appear to be an attempt to malign the Indian democracy and its well-established institutions," he had said.

Mr Viswam, a Rajya Sabha member, said despite the government's repeated attempts at hiding the truth, "numerous pieces of evidence have been made public that point towards the government's purchase of Pegasus spyware".

"The New York Times report is the latest on the list," he said.

The matter concerns grave allegations of snooping that violate Constitutional rights and safeguards, but "the minister's deliberate attempt to mislead the members of Parliament constitutes a breach of privilege", the CPI MP said.

413 Death Row Convicts In Indian Jails



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: As many as 413 prisoners, who have been awarded death sentence, were lodged in jails across the country till the end of 2020, according to a new central government data.

Of the total death row prisoners, 94 were sentenced to capital punishment in 2020, stated the National Crime Records Bureau's annual 'Prison Statistics India 2020'.

The death sentence of 29 convicts was commuted to life imprisonment in 2020, according to the NCRB, which functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

"A total of 94 persons were awarded death penalty during 2020 in the country. Out of 94 persons awarded with capital punishment, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan reported 15 persons each, followed by West Bengal

(14), Bihar (8) and Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu (6 each)," the report stated.

Out of 29 convicts whose death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, 24.1 per cent (seven) were reported from Maharashtra followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu (5 and 17.2 per cent each), it added.

"A total of 413 convicts (including 319 persons of previous years and 94 persons sentenced during the year 2020) sentenced with capital punishment were lodged in various jails, accounting for 0.36 per cent of the total convicts," the report stated.

Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest number of such convicts accounting for 12.8 per cent (53 out of 413) of total convicts sentenced with capital punishment in the country followed by Maharashtra (49, 11.9 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (40, 9.7 per cent), it noted.

A TOTAL OF 413 CONVICTS (INCLUDING 319 persons of previous years and 94 persons sentenced during the year 2020) sentenced with capital punishment were lodged in various jails, accounting for 0.36 per cent of the total convicts,"

Bitter Truth Is Many Indians Don't Consider Women To Be Human: Rahul



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The bitter truth is that many Indians don't consider women to be human, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Monday and added that the video of a 20-year-old woman being beaten brutally exposes a very disturbing face of society.

Last week, a young woman was allegedly abducted, gangraped and paraded by her attackers in east Delhi's Kasturba Nagar. Videos from the day have been circulated widely on social media.

"The video of a 20-year-old woman being brutally beaten up exposes a very disturbing

face of our society. The bitter truth is that many Indians don't consider women to be human," Gandhi said on Twitter.

"This shameful fact needs to be acknowledged and called out," he added. Eleven people, including eight women, have been arrested for the sexual assault on the woman and her subsequent public humiliation.

"A boy committed suicide in November last year and his family is now blaming the victim. They have alleged it was because of her that he took the extreme step. To extract revenge from her, they allegedly abducted her. They wanted to teach her a lesson," a police official had said.

SPOTLIGHT

In Mathura, Muslim Dosa Cart-Owner Changes Name - It's A Sign Of The Times

Reuters

MATHURA: In the streets around a religious site in Mathura where a temple and mosque stand side-by-side, the handful of Muslim restaurants that remain are mostly empty or shuttered.

A ban on meat last year by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, who issued the order on religious grounds, has decimated their trade. Now Yogi Adityanath, up for re-election in key state polls next month, has turned his attention to the temple itself, suggesting he will champion the Hindu cause in a long-running dispute with Muslims over who owns the site.

The issue has become a central part of the ruling party's campaign

to extend its grip on power in Uttar Pradesh, home to 200 million people and the bellwether of national politics.

Hindus and Muslims have argued for decades over who should control the site, echoing old disputes in India that have, on occasions, flared into deadly riots between the two communities.

Mention of the Mathura dispute during campaign rallies and on social media has the city's Muslims worried, according to interviews with more than 20 residents.

"An old case which has been settled ... is being revived because we have a new, triumphalist Hinduism," said Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, author of several books on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"There is a greater emphasis on playing the temple card."

Opinion polls suggest that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), to which Yogi Adityanath belongs, will win the vote in Uttar Pradesh, despite broad discontent over the economy and the government's handling of the pandemic.

The Chief Minister, seen by some analysts as a potential successor to PM Modi, has cast the ballot as "80% versus 20%", figures he did not fully explain. The percentages closely match the Hindu and Muslim share of the population across the state.

Yogi Adityanath's office did not respond to a request for comment on the situation in Mathura.

'Nothing to fear'

The BJP swept to power in Uttar Pradesh on a Hindu-first agenda in 2017 and did not field a single Muslim candidate.



That victory reflected the party's dominance nationally since PM Modi came to power in 2014 after appealing to the Hindu majority.

The main opposition Congress party complains that by putting

Hindus first, he and the BJP discriminate against minorities and risk stoking violence. PM Modi has defended his record and says his economic and social policies benefit all Indians.

Jamal Siddiqui, head of the BJP's minority commission, said the party was working to increase the number of minority candidates in Uttar Pradesh and the four other states going to the polls next month.

"I hope the minority community will participate both in elections and in government," he told Reuters. "The Modi government has protected religious sites for all religions. Now, instead of being afraid of saffron, Muslims are coming closer."

Suspicion of the BJP among Muslims in Mathura had been caused by misleading claims from opposition parties, Mr Siddiqui added.

'No compromise'

Among the holiest cities in Hinduism, Mathura is believed to be the birthplace of Krishna.

A temple standing on the reputed site of his birth was razed and replaced by a mosque, known as the Shahi Eidgah, in the 17th century during the Mughal empire. A temple complex built in the 1950s now backs onto the mosque.

An agreement was brokered in 1968 to settle the use of the land, and the two structures stood like "two sisters" until legal action to demolish the mosque began in 2020, said Z Hassan, president of the trust that runs the Eidgah.

"I have been here for 55 years. I have not felt tension between Hindus and Muslims," he said. "Only in the last few years, this idea has come that there are two communities."

The case, brought to a local court by several priests, says the 1968 agreement was fraudulent.

ReT Aspirants Stage Protest, Demand Issuance Of Appointment Orders

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The empanelled Rehbar-e-Taleem aspirants held a protest demonstration in north Kashmir's Bandipora town on Monday demanding immediate issuance of their appointment orders which they have been waiting for many years.

According to reports, the protesters assembled in Nishat Park at Bandipora and raised slogans in support of their demand and against the Government, particularly the Commissioner Secretary and Director Education of Kashmir.

The protesters also alleged the government for halting appointment orders in favour of the aspirants, who were empanelled in 2015-16 as Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers. "Our protest is against the Government's dilly dally tactics in issuing our appointment orders," the protesting aspirants said, adding that they request the government to resolve their issue as soon as possible.

"The High Court has issued a clear cut direction in their favour but the Government was only giving hollow assurances through which our future is getting worse and which we will not tolerate at all now," they said.

"There is no other means to earn our livelihood and most of the candidates have crossed the upper age limit to get any other job," they added, adding that they have been waiting for the formal orders for the last two years.

"If the High Court has ruled in our favor, we do not understand why the government is against us," a female protester said, adding that with this issue, her marriage is no longer taking place and her future is being lost with each passing day.

The protesters demanded implementation of the court by order and also sought the intervention of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for immediate issuance of their appointment orders—(KNO)

Drug Peddler Booked Under PSA In Kathua

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: An alleged interstate drug peddler was arrested and booked under the union territory's stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in Kathua district here on Monday, police said.

Rupesh Kumar alias Bobby is the first accused in a case of drug peddling to be arrested under PSA in Kathua this year and the fifth since last year, a police spokesman said. He said Kumar, a native of Punjab's Gurdaspur and presently living in Kathua's Chak Drab Khan village, was evading arrest for over six months and was arrested by a special police team.

In order to keep a check on his activities, the spokesman said, a dossier was prepared against him and sent to the Jammu divisional commissioner for his detention under PSA some time ago.

Accordingly, the officer issued a detention warrant against him and it was executed on Monday, the spokesman said.

Kumar has been lodged in Central Jail in Kot Bhalwal, Jammu.

Last year, police in Kathua had booked four drug peddlers under PSA as part of their drive against drug menace. PSA is an administrative law that allows detention without charge or trial for up to two years in some cases.

Engineer Faces Probe, One-Day Salary Cut For Absence

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Acting tough on lack of punctuality, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Piyush Singla on Monday ordered one day salary deduction of Executive Engineer FCD Anantnag on account of unauthorized absence from duty on 29th January.

The proceeds shall be deposited in the District Red Cross Fund.

The DC had conducted a surprise check of various offices in Anantnag on Saturday and had found as many as 25 employees unauthorizedly absent from duties.

As per the order issued, ADDC Anantnag has been appointed as enquiry officer and shall seek an explanation from the Executive Engineer as to why disciplinary action shall not be initiated against him and submit the report within 10 days.

Akhood Takes Over As DIO Baramulla

SRINAGAR: Jahangeer Akhood today assumed the charge of District Information Officer Baramulla.

The 2012 batch KAS Officer has already experienced the department as District Information Officer Bandipora and has also worked as BDO, CDPO and on other posts.

After his joining, the District Information Officer convened a meeting and interacted with the officials of District Information office Baramulla. He sought the cooperation from the officials to run the District information office in a better manner.

Moreover, he took stock of the office staff strength and functioning of the district information office.

CEO Kargil N A Wani Repatriated To J&K

SRINAGAR: Government on Monday repatriated Nazir Ahmad Wani, Chief Education Officer Kargil to Jammu and Kashmir in the interest of administration.

"Nazir Ahmad Wani, Chief Education Officer, Kargil, is hereby repatriated to Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir with the directions to report in School Education Department, J&K, for further posting, after proper relieving by a competent authority in the Union territory of Ladakh," reads an order issued by the government.

J&K Doctors To Get Critical Care & ICU Training From AIIMS Delhi

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME), Vivek Bhardwaj and Director, AIIMS, Prof. Randeep Guleria launched the training program of COVID related critical care and ICU for the doctors of UT in a virtual event today.

The training is being conducted by experts from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi under the ECRP-II. A group of 40 doctors from 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir are participating in the training program.

Thanking AIIMS for coming

forward for this training program, Vivek Bhardwaj said, "In the evolving ecosystem this training program will have multiplier effect on our healthcare delivery system in the Union Territory. On one hand the training will enhance the capacity of our healthcare professionals to handle the critical cases especially COVID related cases, additionally they will also be better equipped to further train doctors placed in remote locations."

Commenting on this occasion, Prof. Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS emphasised on the scope of tele-consultation to improve

the delivery of good quality critical care for remote areas.

The programme was moderated by Mission Director, NHM, Yasin M Chaudhary. The 06 day long interactive training program will be facilitated by 06 trainers from AIIMS, New Delhi.

COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package - Phase-II (ECRP II) is a centrally sponsored scheme to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by the ongoing pandemic and strengthen the national health systems for emergency response and preparedness across the country.

Highway Open For Two-Way Traffic Today



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir valley with the outside world, shall remain open for both way traffic on Tuesday, officials said.

"On 01-02-2022, subject to fair weather and better road conditions LMVs(passenger)/private cars shall be allowed from both sides on Jammu-Srinagar highway viz Jammu towards Srinagar and vice-versa. TCU Jammu/Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the traffic," a traffic department official said.

He said Traffic Control Unit

Jammu/Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the traffic, he said.

He said cut off for LMVs/private cars from Nagrota (Jammu) will be at 0700 hours to 1200 hours, from Jakheni (Udhampur) at 0800 hours to 1300 hours and from Navyug Tunnel (Qazigund side) 0900 hours to 1300 hours "(subject to change depending on the road position then)"

He said no vehicle shall be allowed before and after cut off timings.

Regarding HMTVs/Load carriers, he said, "subject to fair weather and better road conditions, they shall be allowed from NAVYUG Tunnel (Qazi-

gund side) towards Jammu after assessing the traffic situation on highway." He said TCU Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the 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)

'Operation Maa' Author In Kashmir, Lt Gen Dhillon Hangs Up His Boots

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: After serving at various strategic postings in the Indian Army during his career spanning 39 years, Lt Gen KJS Dhillon retired on Monday, with his last assignment being that of Director General Defence Intelligence Agency and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Intelligence).

Commissioned in the army in December 1983, the illustrious officer, popularly known as 'Tiny Dhillon', earned widespread appreciation for initiating Operation Maa' during his tenure as the head of Kashmir-based XV Corps where he approached the families especially mothers of misguided youths who had joined militancy and requested them to bring back their children into the national mainstream.

"Do good and serve your mother, then your mother and then your father. This is the importance of the mother in the Holy Quran. This was the message I used to tell

all the misguided youths," Lt Gen Dhillon had said.

Lt Gen Dhillon came in the spotlight immediately after taking over as the Corps commander of the strategically located XV Corps when security forces eliminated Kamran alias 'Ghazi', mastermind of the February 2019 attack on CRPF personnel in Pulwama that left 40 jawans dead.

"Kitne Ghazi aaye aur kitne gaye, hum yahin hain dekh lenge sabko (Many such terrorists have come and gone, we stand where we are rock solid)," were his comments during a press conference to announce the success.

The statement, which went viral on social media with lakhs of hits recorded on YouTube and Twitter, was seen as a reflection of the army's resolve in fighting militancy along the Line of Control as well as the hinterland.

During his stint in Kashmir, which was the third in his career, Lt Gen Dhillon ensured a befitting reply to Pakistan which used unprovoked firing to provide cover

to militants for infiltration.

Lt Gen Dhillon had taken over the command at a crucial time when the Centre executed its plan of abrogation of the special status of the J-K and the state's bifurcation into two union territories — Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

After the successful completion of his tenure in Kashmir, Gen Dhillon took over as DG, DIA, an intelligence unit, created in 2002 on the recommendations of a Group of Ministers that looked into lapses leading to the Kargil intrusion in 1999.

His posting at the DIA, which looks after the intelligence requirement of the armed forces, came at a time when the US-led allied troops were withdrawing from war-ravaged Afghanistan.

He has been awarded several medals during his career which include Param Vishist Seva Medal and Uttam Yudh Seva Medal.

Lt Gen Dhillon handed over the charge of DIA to Lt Gen GAV Reddy.

DISTRICT DAIRY

DC Budgam Warns Against Illegal Conversion Of Agri-Land

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmad Mirza, on Monday directed officials not to allow fragmentation or any illegal conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes in the district.

Mirza, who is also the chairman of District Level Committee, passed these directions on Monday while chairing a meeting on Jammu and Kashmir Agriculture Land conversion for non-Agricultural purposes, regulation-2022, at Conference Hall, here.

On the occasion, the DC instructed the concerned officers not to allow fragmentation of Agricultural land or any illegal conversion of Agricultural land to non-Agricultural purposes, affecting Agricultural production in the district.

At the outset, Tehsildar Headquarter, deliberated on change of

land use application through a powerpoint presentation and briefed members on providing services to the public through online mode.

The DC directed concerned members to ensure timely issuance of NOCs to the applicants after proper verification of documents and rules under land conversion.

He instructed concerned officers to issue IDs and Passwords to all the members for time bound delivery of NOCs to the applicants by the concerned offices.

The DC said that any violation of land shall be reported by Chief Agriculture Officers to concerned ACR, SDM or Tehsildar.

He said through the change of land use application, the applicants shall get permissions or NOCs on fast-track basis and it would ensure prompt public delivery services from the government offices.

Shopian Admin Felicitates NEET Qualifier

SRINAGAR: The District Administration, Shopian on Monday felicitated NEET Qualifier Jabeena Bashir who secured 423 marks in NEET-2021 Examination.

The NEET Qualifier from farflung area of Zampathri, Tehsil Keller, Shopian on Monday called on the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya and interacted with him who enquired about her field of interests, strengths, difficulties and her approach to qualify the prestigious Examination.

The DC congratulated the NEET Qualifier for qualifying the Examination and hoped that she would inspire many other youth from the region to crack other prestigious Examination in or-

der to serve the society in the best possible way so that their energy would be utilized for the development of the Nation.

The DC advised her to stay focused in her resolve towards excellence and continue to be an inspiration for others. He added that the qualifier has brought laurels to the district besides her school and area.

The felicitation ceremony was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Simmani, Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Shopian, Shahbaz Ahmed Bodha, Chief Planning Officer, Shopian, Khursheed Ahmed Khatana, Tehsildar, Keller, Abdul Rashid Malik and young officers posted in the district.

Div Com, ADGP Review Ongoing Works Of Power Projects At Kishtwar



Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer and Additional Director General of Police, Jammu, Mukesh Singh on Monday reviewed the implementation of the Area Development Plan under approved Rehabilitation and Resettlement plan by the Hydro Power Project Construction agencies, here at a meeting.

The Div Com also listened to the grievances of Project Affected People and issued directions to the district administration for time bound redress of the same, an official spokesperson said.

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Ashok Sharma; Additional District Development Commissioner Kishtwar Sham Lal; Additional Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Kishori Lal Sharma; Chief Engineer PWD Manzoor Hussain; Chief Engineer JPDCL, A K Sachdev; SSP Kishtwar besides district officers and project construction authorities attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Div Com reviewed component wise physical and financial status of the developmental works projected under the Rehabilitation and Resettlement plan.

The Div Com inquired about the construction of Hospital Building amounting to Rs 353.25 lakhs at Suid Dachhan for which the funds has been released, construction of 2 passenger sheds, a Community Hall at Kwar Tangi and construction of Dachhan house at Kishtwar, besides construction of Community Halls at Soundar and Panjdihara undertaken by PWD, shifting and realignment of 11KV line and construction of receiving station and up-gradation of infrastructure for PAFs, remodeling of Soundar Kuhl and Nagra Kuhl etc.

Besides, provision of the drinking water supply facilities to PAFs of Kwar Tangi and Additional water lifting irrigation facility at Kishtwar, construction of veterinary Dispensary at Kwar Tangi and Dachhan; construction of Dipping vats at Dachhan and Kwartangi, construction of Common Demonstration centre, construction of the playgrounds at GHSS Soundar and Yaywag Sirchi Dachhan was also reviewed in the meeting.

The concerned executing authorities were asked to submit the DPR of proposed projects and identify suitable land for the same, besides expedite the pace of progress to complete the work in a time bound manner.

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla railway line, one of the most remarkable projects of the Indian Government, once completed, will be revolutionary for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as it will turnaround the economic landscape here.

The railway line will not only give the all-weather connectivity to Kashmir valley but also substantially reduce the transportation costs and will form the backbone of transport of J&K, an official handout said Monday.

It said that the logistics of the track faced many natural challenges as it had to be constructed through major earthquake zone, battling extreme temperatures and hilly terrains. Though the sections from Jammu to Katra and Banihal to Baramulla have been built and are operational, the track from Katra to Banihal is yet to be completed. Moreover, the exten-

sion of the railway line up to Kupwara has also been approved.

"Tracing back into the annals of history, the first railway track in the erstwhile state was laid in 1897 from Sialkot (Pakistan) to Jammu by the then colonial government. In 1947, with the partition of India, the Jammu-Sialkot line was closed since Sialkot went to Pakistan. As a result, the entire state of Jammu-Kashmir was disconnected from the Indian rail network and Pathankot in the Indian state of Punjab remained the nearest railroad," it added

Subsequently, In 1975, the official handout said, a rail link was established between Pathankot and Jammu and a renovated Jammu Tawi railway station was opened. It remained at the northern end of the railway line for the next 30 years until the

Jammu to Udhampur line was opened in 2005.

The Jammu-Udhampur stretch has 20 tunnels, the longest tunnel is 2.5km long while the highest bridge measures 77m. Sensing the need to connect Kashmir Valley with the northern railway grid, the Government of India declared the Jammu-Baramulla railway line a national project in 2002.

Operationally, the Jammu-Baramulla railway line is divided into four sections:

Leg 0: running 53km from Jammu to Udhampur and completed in 2005.

Leg 1: running 25km from Udhampur to Katra, dedicated to the nation on 4th July 2014.



Leg 2: running 111km from Katra to Banihal which is under construction and has 35 tunnels.

Leg 3: running 135km from Banihal to Baramulla, dedicated for public use on 26th June 2013.

One of the significant achievement of Jammu-Baramulla railway line was completion of 11km long Pir-Panjal railway tunnel also known as Banihal-Qazigund

tunnel. This tunnel was extremely challenging and its completion was hailed as an outstanding achievement as it was India's longest rail tunnel. Its average elevation is 1760 m and is 440 m below the Jawahar tunnel. This tunnel gives all weather connectivity to Kashmir valley with the rest of the country.

As of now the construction on Katra-Banihal stretch is going on with full pace.

The stretch is not more than 111 km but around 98 km of this stretch comprises bridges and tunnels. Among these bridges will be the one being built across the deep gorge of the Chenab

JAMMU-BARAMULLA RAILWAY LINE

'A Revolutionary Project For Uplifting The Economy Of J&K'

River near the Salal hydroelectric dam. This bridge of steel arches is 1315 m long and at a height of 359 m from the ground. It is an engineering marvel which is 35 m more than the height of the Eiffel Tower.

The project rewards supernumerary benefits too, because it encompasses 262 km of access roads connecting 147,000 people in 73 villages. It will foster connectivity, besides strengthening the economy of the region whose innate potential still remains untapped.

This colossal project is the most strenuous rail project undertaken on the Indian subcontinent. The young Himalayas are geologically challenging and problematic. Numerous hindrances have been encountered while tunnelling.

The track's alignment presents one of the greatest railway engineering obstacles ever faced. Only Tibet's Qingzang railway, completed in 2006 across permafrost and climbing over 5000 m above sea level, is comparable.

Provisions for future electrification for the track will also be made, although the rail line will use diesel locomotives initially. Passenger trains will be provided with high power diesel multiple units and heated, air-conditioned coaches with wide windows, sliding doors and reclining seats. Three aspect colour-light signalling is being installed on the route for safety, and GSM-R equipment may be installed in the future to improve its quality.

"In brief, it can be undoubtedly said that the Jammu-Baramulla railway line, once completed, will pay huge dividends to the economy, connectivity, security and development of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir," the official handout added.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the
Kashmir Observer LLP
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

K O V I E W

An Integrated South, Central Asia

In a significant outreach to Central Asian countries, India hosted the first India-Central Asia Summit in virtual format on 27 January 2022. The summit was attended by Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Prime Minister Modi and the Central Asian leaders discussed cooperation in areas of trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defence and security and, in particular, on cultural and people to people contacts. The leaders agreed to institutionalize the Summit mechanism by holding it every two years. They also agreed on regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers, and Secretaries of the Security Council. An India-Central Asia Secretariat in New Delhi would be set up to support the new mechanism.

The summit was a welcome development. India and Central Asia have shared deep cultural relations going back centuries. But India's ties with Central Asia have always been hampered by a lack of geographical contiguity. Pakistan and China in between have severed India from the region. This is why a friendly relationship with Pakistan could possibly give India access to Central Asia.

Last year, Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan had in a speech laid out his vision of an integrated, peaceful South Asia. However, this was not the first time the prospect of regional connectivity had been envisioned whereby India and Pakistan are foreseen to not only trade with each other but also with central Asia. In Kashmir, China's Border Roads Initiative project has drawn a lot of attention for its alleged potential to boost regional connectivity which in the long term may also help aid India, Pakistan reconciliation. Many observers have predicted that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor will have very consequential impact on the overall framework of India-Pakistan relations. The project, as it progresses is expected to introduce new geopolitical factors which in the near or long term will help shape the future of South Asia.

Already, the new factors being unleashed by the project are straining existing geo-politics of the region. However, for now, we are only witnessing the beginnings of this shift. And considering India and Pakistan have not been able to mend their relations over the past seven decades, the prognosis for the future of their relations can't be optimistic. But who knows new geopolitical factors and the great possibilities of a normal bilateral relationship might force a decisive rethink after all. Here's hoping that India and Pakistan do go back to dialogue and engagement and, for once, try to seriously sort out their longstanding issues. And for that, the leaders of both countries need to act in a statesmanlike way.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Unlocking Classroom

Though over two lakh Covid-19 cases are being reported every day in India, the third wave seems to be plateauing in large parts of the country – and so, reopening schools must now move to the top of the agenda of all governments. The crisis in learning and education, the regression of children's foundational skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, and the cost in terms of nutrition and equity have been underlined by various surveys. According to a parliamentary standing committee report last year, "around 320 million children in India had not stepped into a classroom for more than a year". Several states had reopened classrooms for a few months last year, but the Omicron-driven wave of infections led to another interruption. Children in the national capital lost more school-days to pollution.

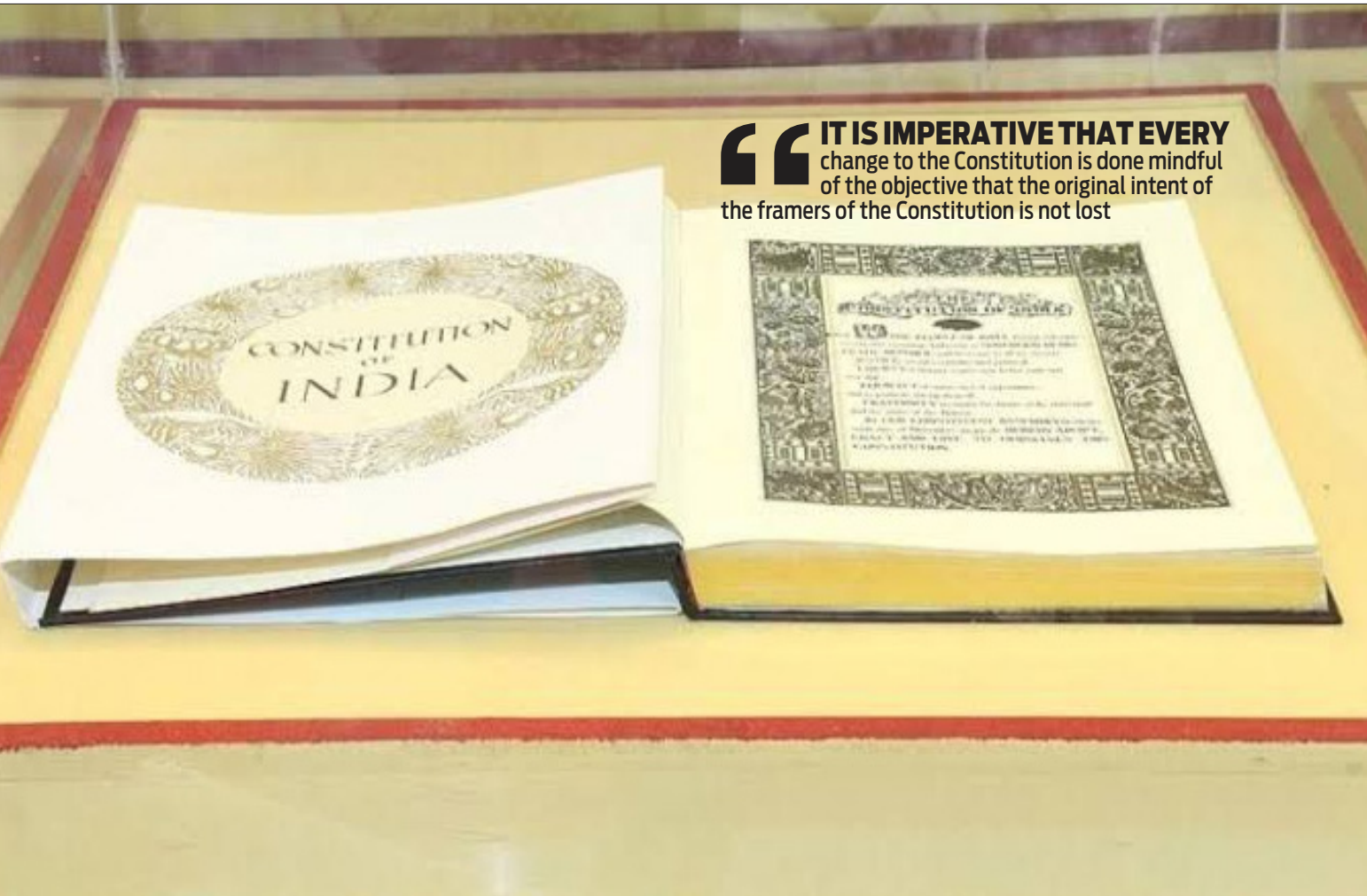
As the third wave peaks in some cities, states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana have announced dates of reopening schools. Since 2020, when schools shut down to contain the imminent first wave of the coronavirus, then an unknown and unpredictably dangerous pathogen, we have come a long way. With 75 per cent adults vaccinated, better treatment protocols and a low rate of hospitalisation in the current wave, governments cannot afford to keep schools, and the lives of children, in a limbo for much longer. But the decision to reopen must be guided by data and science. It must not be a top-down diktat, but involve teachers, district administrations and parents. Two years into the pandemic, all states must have – at the very least – by now, devised an SOP that helps school administrations decide on reopening schools on the basis of the case positivity rate or the number of occupied hospital beds or other criteria devised in agreement with medical experts. Given that, at any moment of time, the burden of disease varies from state to state, district to district, this must be a local decision, taken transparently – and without panic.

The case for reopening schools is a strong one but it is not hard to see why state governments continue to exercise caution. Earlier fears that children will be carriers and infect the elderly at home have been assuaged by the high levels of vaccination among the adult population – 75 per cent of the adults have been fully vaccinated. The vaccination of children in the 15-18 age group has started but is showing signs of slowing down. That needs to pick up pace, schools need to be made part of the vaccination process. Surely, the choice is not a simple binary one and there will be risks. But as the third wave wanes, as the adult population moves to total vaccination, state governments must go to work on a reopening plan that ensures safety of children as well as access to learning. So far, the policy debate in the shadow of Covid has been, as it should, dominated by reviving the economy and ameliorating distress. Similar urgency, thought, planning needs to be brought to unlocking classrooms – the future is a terrible thing to waste.

Indian Express

Robust Republic

During The Last Seven Decades, The Constitution Has Provided Integrity And Stability, But It Is Our People Who Have Kept The Republic Alive



IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERY change to the Constitution is done mindful of the objective that the original intent of the framers of the Constitution is not lost

A picture of the copy of the Constitution of India _

Nirmala Sitharaman

A republic is made robust and kept alive by its people. In its current form, the Indian republic marks 73 years of maintaining a dynamic balance. This is often strained by the pushes and pulls of forces reflecting the plurality and diversity that India is known for. It is to the credit of our people that today we have a pyramidal three-layered elected representative system that governs us. With its warts and all, this system today has over 3 million elected representatives (a million of them women), over 4,000 elected to the state legislatures and over 500 in the Parliament. The Preamble envisaged the republic to be governed by the people through their freely-elected representatives. This scale of directly elected representation, perhaps, can be seen nowhere else in the world. It can be accused of being argumentative, noisy, a bit too much at times, but it continues to be full of life.

Before 1950, January 26 was celebrated as Independence Day, following the resolution for complete independence (Purna Swaraj) adopted at the Lahore Congress in 1929. Once independence from the imperial ruler was obtained and the Constitution was adopted, the day was marked as our Republic Day.

In Pilgrimage to Freedom, K M Munshi writes, "The Constitution is not merely a legal document, nor is it a political document either. True, it was drafted by lawyers with the help of the political leaders who had won the battle of freedom. Theirs was a historical role: That of building a framework within which our national unity and democratic way of life might flourish. Essentially, our Constitution has a moral background – to secure justice for every section of our society; as also a spiritual basis – to preserve and protect all religions in the exercise of their functions... The leaders of my generation have left in the Constitution a legacy of freedom, of the Rule of Law, freedom of speech and religion and above all integrity and stability which the country has never enjoyed for over 500 years."

There is no doubt that during the last seven decades, our Constitution has provided the integrity and stability that are critical for our republic. The challenges continue in securing justice for every section of our society. The Backward Classes, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and the poor across all categories clamour for better opportunities and affordable justice. Denial of constitutional rights over all these decades of our republic to SCs, STs and women in one region of India was corrected when Article 370 was abrogated.

What Munshi calls the spiritual basis of our Constitution in having to preserve and protect all

religions is also seen under stress. Perversion in practising the principle of secularism (introduced subsequently during the Emergency) through minority appeasement for electoral considerations had left women belonging to the minority community being denied their legitimate rights. The resistance to the Act making triple talaq null and void showed how the right given to women in many Islamic countries was being denied to Muslim women in India mainly for electoral considerations. Minority appeasement plays out again when the religious rights of some are upheld by

“THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT during the last seven decades, our Constitution has provided the integrity and stability that are critical for our republic. The challenges continue in securing justice for every section of our society

denying similar rights of others. The issue of religious rights, in its intensity, may vary from state to state, but when the usual suspects paint it as a nationwide uprising, they are not being objective or fair. When the right to practise one's religion is denied or threatened, the silence of the thinking public or the media weakens that constitutionally embedded protection. The strength of the republic is undermined by hypocritical values and the selective silence of the watchdogs.

There is no doubt that communication technologies strengthen modern republics. Technology has brought down costs of information sharing among people and of awareness building. It is a powerful tool, now well democratised. An unforeseen fall-out of this democratisation is the generation and sharing of unverified news or even false news. Through the power of technology and its capacity to broadcast at mass scale, an otherwise useful tool, social media, has become a

challenge and sometimes a threat to one or several of the rights enshrined in our Constitution. Curtailing them to protect the rights of citizens is seen as trampling upon the right to free speech. Without any action, the damage caused to social harmony by such rampant false news can result in people losing faith in the Constitution itself.


Subhash C Kashyap observes, "Our Constitution is a living, dynamic process, always evolving, constantly in the making through amendments, judicial interpretations, and its actual working." Our Constitution is the most amended of all constitutions in the world. Rightly, successive governments have ensured that the Constitution keeps abreast of the times and the aspirations of our people. If there are more than 100 amendments made to the Constitution, there are more than 1,500 laws that have been repealed because they have outlived their times. These deadwood laws, by remaining on paper, occasionally became a weapon in the hands of rent-seekers. Their removal, as a part of administrative reform, has kept the role of the executive transparent and accountable. It is imperative that every change to the Constitution is done mindful of the objective that the original intent of the framers of the Constitution is not lost.

That the Constitution is always evolving is best exemplified by the 101st amendment which rolled out the Goods and Services Tax. This amendment brought in a unified indirect tax regime by subsuming most of the indirect taxes of the Centre and the states. The GST Council was set up. It has the power to decide on issues related to GST and importantly the rates applicable to each item covered under it. Yet to complete five full years, the GST Council has stood the test of challenging times even in its initial years. It augurs well for cooperative federalism.

Our Constitution has served us well in these seven decades. Several republics in the post-imperial era have rejected their earlier constitutions and tested new ones. Babasaheb Ambedkar felt, "The working of a Constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the Constitution. The Constitution can provide only the organs of State such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics." So, it is the people who can keep the republic robust and alive.

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

Nirmala Sitharaman is an Indian economist and politician serving as the current Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of India

OBSERVER MAIL

All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, spaceand accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

MAIL YOUR LETTERS
P.O.Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

Get Vaccinated

If it isn't already obvious, the Covid-19 threat is far from over. Across India, cases are increasing drastically. This will soon reflect in Kashmir as well. Omicron has taken over the globe. It isn't obvious if it will be as devastating as the Delta Variant but vaccination is our only way

to keep us safe. While vaccination doesn't keep one from getting Covid, it does decrease the chances of getting severe symptoms, hospitalisation and even death. Vaccination also reduces the transmissibility of the virus as well. Maharashtra, which has seen quite an increase in the number of cases

has also reassured its population that a majority of the cases are asymptomatic. This may either be because of vaccination or it may be because the omicron strain is mild. However, we must take what we have at hand. We hope that the government considers booster vaccine shots for high risk groups which need

it the most. In addition to getting vaccinated, we must also follow the 101 of covid-19 SOPs. A mask may not always save you from getting covid-19 but it may save others from you at your public workplaces or even your family.

Hooda Syed

Beginning Of The End?

Prakash Nagarkatti

In the short time since the omicron variant was identified in South Africa in November 2021, researchers have quickly learned that it has three unique characteristics: It spreads efficiently and quickly, it generally causes milder disease than previous variants and it may confer strong protection against other variants such as delta.

This has many people wondering whether omicron could act as a vaccine of sorts, inoculating enough people to effectively bring about herd immunity – the threshold at which enough of the population is immune to the virus to stop its spread – and end the COVID-19 pandemic.

As immunology researchers at the University of South Carolina who are working on inflammatory and infectious diseases, including COVID-19, we find the characteristics of omicron in the pandemic setting particularly intriguing. And it is these characteristics that can help answer that question.

Some 4.73 billion people across the globe – about 61.6% of the world's population – have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. In the United States, 63.4% of the population is fully vaccinated with two doses as of late January 2022, while only 39.9% of Americans have received the booster dose. Such low levels of vaccination resulting from vaccine hesitancy and the complexities of the global vaccine supply chain cast doubt on reaching herd immunity through vaccination anytime soon.

How does omicron mimic a vaccine?

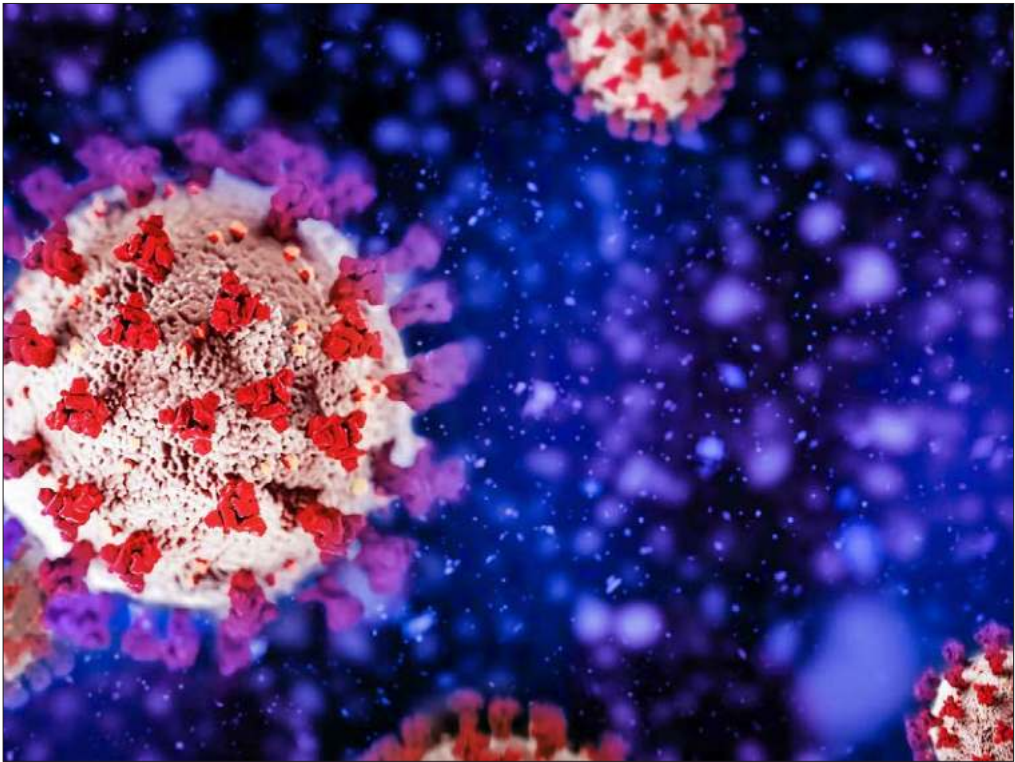
All vaccines work on the principle of training the immune system to fight against an infectious agent. Each vaccine, regardless of how it is made, exposes the human or animal host to the critical molecules used by the infectious agent – in this case, the SARS-CoV-2 virus – to gain entry into the host's cells.

Some vaccines expose the host only to select portions of the virus. For example, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines use a molecule called messenger RNA, or mRNA, to encode and produce a fragment of the "spike protein" – the knobby protrusion that is expressed on the outside of SARS-CoV-2 viruses – inside a person's body. These spike proteins are the key way that the coronavirus invades cells, so the mRNA vaccines are designed to mimic that protein and trigger an immune response against it.

In contrast, some vaccines against other infections, such as chickenpox and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), expose the host to a "live attenuated" form of the virus. These vaccines use small amounts of a weakened form of the live virus. They mimic a natural infection, trigger a strong immune response and afford lasting resistance to infection.

In some respects, omicron mimics these live attenuated vaccines because it causes milder infection and trains the body to trigger a strong immune response against the delta variant, as shown in a recent study that is not yet peer-reviewed from South Africa.

Deliberate infection with omicron is not the answer



SO THE COVID-19 VACCINES COMBINED WITH the omicron variant could feasibly move the world to a new stage in the pandemic – one where the virus doesn't dominate our lives and where hospitalization and death are far less common

While omicron may share certain characteristics with a vaccine, it should not be considered a viable alternative to the existing vaccines. For one, COVID-19 infection can result in severe illness, hospitalization or death, especially in vulnerable individuals with underlying conditions. It can also cause long-term health effects in some people, called long COVID. In contrast, vaccines currently available against COVID-19 have been tested for safety and efficacy.

The high transmission of omicron combined with ongoing vaccination efforts could help attain herd immunity soon and end the most acute phase of the pandemic. However, there is little chance of it eradicating COVID-19, since all signs point to the likelihood that the virus will become endemic – meaning SARS-CoV-2 will be in circulation but will likely not be as disruptive to society.

Thus far, smallpox is the only infectious disease that has been eradicated globally, which shows how difficult it is to fully eliminate a disease. However, it is easier to control an infection effectively. One example is polio, which has been reduced or eliminated in most countries through vaccination.

What happens when the body meets a virus or vaccine

Both viral infections or the mimicking of a virus through vaccination activate a critical component

of the immune system, called B cells, in the body. These cells produce antibodies that bind to the virus, preventing it from infecting cells. These antibodies act much like anti-ballistic missiles that shoot down an incoming virus missile. However, once a virus manages to get inside the body's cells, antibodies are less effective.

That's where another key player in the immune system, called killer T cells, come in. These cells can recognize and destroy a cell as soon as it is infected, thereby preventing the virus from multiplying and spreading further. Think of this as an anti-ballistic missile that detects and destroys the factory where missiles are manufactured.

Immunologists believe that antibodies against COVID-19 prevent an individual from catching the infection, while the killer T cells are crucial in preventing severe disease. Despite its numerous mutations, omicron can trigger a strong killer T cell response. This may explain why the COVID-19 vaccines – by triggering the T cells – have provided strong enough immunity against omicron to, in most cases, prevent hospitalization and death.

But, critically, the first wave of antibodies and killer T cells produced during infection or vaccination last for only a few months. This is why recurrent infections of COVID-19 have occurred even in the vaccinated population, and it's also why booster shots are needed. In contrast, some vaccines – like the one against smallpox – have been shown to trigger immunity that lasts for several years.

“All of these considerations leave room for hope that when new variants of SARS-CoV-2 inevitably arise, omicron will have left the population better equipped to fight them.”

Memory immune response

So what exactly triggers strong and lasting immunity? The lifelong immunity seen in certain infections such as smallpox can be explained by a phenomenon called “immunological memory.”

After the B cells and killer T cells first encounter the virus, some of them get converted into what are called memory cells, which are known to live for several decades. As their name suggests, when memory cells “see” a virus again after initial exposure, they recognize it, divide rapidly and mount a robust antibody and killer T cell response, thereby preventing reinfection.

For this reason, memory cells are critical for establishing strong, long-lasting immunity. This is evidenced from studies with smallpox in which people that were infected or vaccinated were found to have the antibody response even after 88 years! Why some infections or vaccines trigger long-lasting memory and others do not is under active investigation. Because COVID-19 is only two years old, we researchers don't know yet how long the memory B and T cells last. Based on recurrent infections, it looks like longer-term immunity does not last very long, but that could also in part be due to the evolution of new variants.

All of these considerations leave room for hope that when new variants of SARS-CoV-2 inevitably arise, omicron will have left the population better equipped to fight them. So the COVID-19 vaccines combined with the omicron variant could feasibly move the world to a new stage in the pandemic – one where the virus doesn't dominate our lives and where hospitalization and death are far less common.

The authors are Professor of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, University of South Carolina and Professor of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, University of South Carolina respectively. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation

Certainty, I Certainly Miss You

Shilpa Bhasin Mehra

One thing I surely miss these days is certainty. How plans were made for meetings, travel, conferences or time out with friends to the smallest detail, and everyone just followed them. From the pickup time to the lunch to the coffee break. If someone didn't show up, it was very strange and at times worrisome (must be an emergency).

Fast forward to these days, the certainty has changed to let's see, fingers crossed, or hope so. And it's no one's fault. Someone has met a person or works with a person who has tested positive for Covid. So, everyone in contact is grounded. All the meticulous planning goes down the drain. I wonder whether one should plan anything these days. But we are so programmed to function with a timetable and a plan, that we feel out of focus without that. So, what is the solution? I have been thinking about this a lot these days, because a lot of my plans have gone haywire because of the uncertain times we are living in.

Every experience (however tough) teaches us a lesson. The lesson here I feel is of adapting and quickly moving on. There is little point in cribbing about what hasn't materialised because it is no one's fault. From a free bird, our status seems to have changed to caged with many restrictions and safety measures that must be followed. That's when having a plan B or C can be very useful. Also keeping an open mind that things may go this way or that, so we aren't too disappointed.

In every kind of fitness regime, one notices the importance of flexibil-



ity. To avoid injury, we must stretch our muscles and make them flexible. What we need to do these days, in addition to stretching our body, is to stretch our mind muscles and make them flexible, so that the rigidity of the muscles doesn't make sensible thinking difficult. Suppleness of the mind muscles is so needed to adapt to the ever-changing times. The answer is yes and it's no after a few minutes or a could be after another few min-

utes. So, what does one do to cope up with situations that are behaving like an ECG? Adapt, adapt, and adapt with a lot of deep breathing to calm the physical and mental muscles.

I have noticed how understanding people has become in the ever-changing situations. No one is feeling bad if you can't attend a function – a simple “not feeling well” WhatsApp message is enough, no details are required. Earlier, we took a Pan-

“UNCERTAINTY IS ALL AROUND US, never more so than today. Whether it concerns a global pandemic, the economy, or your finances, health, and relationships, much of what lies ahead in life remains uncertain. Yet, as human beings, we crave security. While we may not wish to acknowledge it, uncertainty is a natural and unavoidable part of life

adol and attended programmes that we had committed so that the host would not feel bad. One positive (if I may use the word) is that we are no longer faced with that pressure. Imagine a wedding being cancelled because the bride tested positive. Where is the scope of anyone feeling bad? These times have taught us that we can make plans, but be ready to make them again and again, until they materialise.

I remember the days when bosses spoke with full authority and certainty about work and its execution. Now fluidity is the key word. But what is admirable is how work is still going on and going well. The transition from physical to virtual happened because there was simply no choice. Some struggled and some were quicker to learn the virtual methods of working, but eventually all were on board. I am reminded of the old saying that nothing in this world is certain, except death and taxes. But we humans tend to be egoistic and feel we can control everything. Covid has truly humbled us this way. We know realise that nothing is certain and if we wake up tomorrow morning, we should say Thank you God for another day.

Uncertainty is all around us, never

more so than today. Whether it concerns a global pandemic, the economy, or your finances, health, and relationships, much of what lies ahead in life remains uncertain. Yet, as human beings, we crave security. While we may not wish to acknowledge it, uncertainty is a natural and unavoidable part of life. Very little about our lives is certain, and while we have control over many things, we can't control everything that happens to us. As the coronavirus pandemic demonstrated, life can change very quickly and very unpredictably. One day things may be just fine, the next you've suddenly become sick, lost your job, or find yourself struggling to put food on the table or provide for your family.

While many things remain outside our control, our mindset is key to coping with difficult circumstances and confidently facing the unknown. To end this topic on a humorous note, “If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans.”

The author is a legal consultant based in Dubai and the founder of SBM Consultancy, formerly Legal Connect. The article was originally published by Khaleej Times



“Self-coaching is the skill of asking questions to improve self-awareness and prompt positive action. Everyone can learn to coach themselves, regardless of experience or expertise. It takes practice and might feel uncomfortable at times, but the hard work will be worth it. When we develop our own ideas and actions in response to the challenges we experience in our careers, we increase our resilience and reduce our dependency on other people.”

How to Become Your Own Career Coach



Helen Tupper and Sarah Ellis

There’s no such thing as a straight line to success in careers today, and the past few years have created an environment where we’ve all had to become accustomed to constant change and increased complexity. Coaching is a valuable way to create clarity and deal with the uncertainty of an increasingly squiggly world of work.

Coaching helps us understand ourselves, uncover new options, and get unstuck, but the opportunity to spend time with a qualified coach is only available to a fortunate few individuals and organizations who can afford it. We know coaching can make work better, but we need a better way to make it work for everyone.

To make coaching accessible, we need to widen its definition from a person to an approach. An important part of taking a coaching approach is learning the skillset to be able to coach yourself in your career. This doesn’t replace the value of career conversations with other people — if anything, it does the opposite by putting you in a position to have more meaningful coaching conversations with a wide variety of people, like managers, peers, and mentors. Self-coaching skills accelerate your self-awareness and your self-sufficiency, helping you navigate your career with more confidence and control.

Self-coaching is the skill of asking questions to improve self-awareness and prompt positive action. Everyone can learn to coach themselves, regardless of experience or expertise. It takes practice and might feel uncomfortable at times, but the hard work will be worth it. When we develop our own ideas and actions in response to the challenges we experience in our careers, we increase our resilience and reduce our dependency on other people.

To get started coaching yourself, work on developing these three skills.

Self-Awareness

To achieve high levels of self-awareness, we need to see ourselves clearly and understand how other people us. Self-awareness doesn’t arise by accident — we make it happen. Here are two ways to improve your self-awareness that you can integrate into your workday.

Create a five-minute mind-map

Focused time to think about ourselves rarely makes it to the top of our to-do lists. However, when we increase awareness of how our values and beliefs drive our actions, we can be more conscious about the choices we make in the future.

Creating a five-minute mind-map can help you quickly gain insight into your reactions to a career challenge. To do this, write down your challenge in the center of a page, then note down any reflections you have about the what, who, when, and why of the challenge, and see what you notice. For example, if you have a difficult relationship with someone at work, you might reflect on your need to be liked by people (a “why” insight), or you might come to the conclusion that the people you find difficult just happen to work differently from you (a “who” insight). The more regularly you do this, the more you’ll notice patterns in your thinking that could be working for or against you at work. This self-awareness will help you get unstuck as you learn to coach yourself.

Understand intent vs. impact

To spot the self-awareness gaps we need to work on, we need to understand whether what we want to be known for is consistent with how we show up at work. To explore this for yourself, think about three important situations in your week where you have a clear view of how you want to show up. For each scenario, summarize your intention using just one word. For example, you might want to be “credible” in a presentation or “collaborative” in a team meeting. After each situation, ask at least one person who was involved to describe your impact from their perspective in one word. This question might sound like, “What word would you use to summarize my approach in today’s meeting?” or “What one word would you use to describe my impact when presenting?” Comparing your intent with the feedback you receive

on your impact will help you see whether you have self-awareness alignment or a potential gap and opportunity for growth.

Coach-Yourself Questions (CYQs)

Asking yourself insightful coaching questions will unlock your thinking and support you to identify actions that will help you make positive progress. You can assess the quality of your questions using the three O’s below:

Open

CYQs start with who, what, why, where, when, or how, not a closed question with a yes-or-no answer. If you find yourself asking a closed question, such as, “Do I enjoy my job?” ask it again in an open way: “What do I enjoy about my job?” You’ll find you get more insights as a result.

Ownership

CYQs focus on ownership and always include “I.” Instead of, “How has that person progressed more quickly than me?” the question becomes, “How could I accelerate my progression?” If you find yourself blaming other people or external factors when coaching yourself, it’s a signal that you need to refocus on what you can control. By identifying your own actions, you’ll be more committed to making change happen.

One-at-a-time

Avoid question “stacking,” where you ask multiple questions at the same time. Instead of asking, “Why am I missing deadlines and feeling so out of control of my time?” you ask and answer each question in turn: “Why am I missing deadlines?” and “Why do I feel out of control of my time?” One-at-a-time questioning helps you generate more options and actions as part of your coaching approach.

Here are five CYQs to get you started:
What gives me the most energy at work?
When do I let my self-belief hold me back?
How can I increase the frequency of the feedback that I get?
Who could offer me a different perspective on my career challenge?
What do I want to be true in 12 months’ time that isn’t true today?

Listening to Yourself

In order to coach ourselves, we need to become skilled at listening to the thoughts and beliefs that inform our actions. However, distraction and discomfort can make our minds wander or gravitate toward things that are easier to work on. When our attention is diverted, we don’t achieve the depth of reflection that will help us think or act differently. There are a couple of techniques you can practice as you learn to listen to yourself.

Find your friction

We all get distracted. Understanding when and where this happens is an important part of making sure you don’t get in your own way when you’re learning to coach yourself. Finding ways to increase the friction between you and your distraction downfall can prevent it from affecting your self-coaching efforts. For example, if technology is your weakness, you can find friction by leaving your devices in another room. If other people create a problem for your focus, try coaching yourself in a café or at the start of a day before the demands of your job distract you.

Become your best friend

Part of coaching yourself is learning whom to listen to inside your head. We all have an inner coach and an inner critic, and there will be times when your inner critic will creep in and start to take control. This might sound like “I’m not smart enough to figure this out” or “I can’t do this so I should give up now.”

To quiet your inner critic, try talking to yourself in the same way your best friend would talk to you. Imagine yourself having a conversation with that person and write down three supportive sentences they would say. Perhaps they would remind you of previous successes or how you’ve overcome adversity before. Or maybe they would talk about how much they admire your determination or bravery. Keep this person in mind when your inner critic creeps in.

Our careers can frequently feel uncertain, but self-coaching is a capability we all have control over. Committing to the development of your self-coaching skills can help you overcome obstacles and open up more opportunities for your growth. If there’s one skill you spend time learning, practicing, and improving in 2022, coaching yourself is a good place to start.

...
Harvard Business Review



Indian Economy Contracts By 6.6% In 2020-21



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Indian economy contracted by 6.6 per cent in 2020-21 as against the earlier estimate of 7.3 per cent decline, showing that the COVID-19 pandemic hit economy did not perform as badly as was initially worked out.

As per the provisional estimates released in May 2021, the GDP had contracted by 7.3 per cent during 2020-21 on account of the outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent nationwide lockdown to contain the pandemic.

The National Statistical Office has also revised downward the real GDP growth number for 2019-20 to 3.7 per cent as against the earlier estimate of 4 per cent.

"Real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2020-21 and 2019-20 stands at Rs 135.58 lakh crore and Rs 145.16 lakh crore, respectively, showing a contraction of 6.6 per cent during 2020-21 as compared to growth of 3.7 per cent during 2019-20," National Statistical Office said in the revised national account data released on Monday.

Under the first revision released in January 2021, real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2019-20 was pegged at Rs

145.69 lakh crore, showing growth of 4 per cent during 2019-20.

"In terms of real GVA (gross value added), i.e., GVA at constant (2011-12) basic prices, there has been a contraction of 4.8 per cent in 2020-21, as against growth of 3.8 per cent in 2019-20," NSO stated.

During 2020-21, the growth rates of the primary sector (comprising agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining & quarrying), secondary sector (comprising manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply & other utility services, and construction) and tertiary sector (services) have been estimated as 1.6 per cent, (-)2.8 per cent and (-) 7.8 per cent as against a growth of 1.9 per cent, (-) 6.8 per cent and (-) 8.4 per cent, respectively, in the previous year.

Nominal Net National Income (NNI) or NNI at current prices for the year 2020-21 stands at Rs 171.94 lakh crore as against Rs 177.17 lakh crore in 2019-20, showing a contraction of 2.9 per cent during 2020-21 as against growth of 6 per cent in the previous year, it stated.

Per Capita Income i.e. Per Capita Net National Income at current prices is estimated at Rs 1,32,115 and Rs 1,26,855 respectively for the years 2019-20 and 2020-21, it stated.

FM To Boost Budget Spending To Support Eco Growth

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to strike a fine balance between being fiscally prudent and growth supportive when she presents her fourth straight budget on Tuesday, which is expected to have plans to boost spending to revive investment and create jobs.

The Budget for the fiscal year starting April 1, 2022 is likely to raise spending on infrastructure to set the economy on a firmer footing.

The stage for the Budget presentation was set by the Economic Survey stating that the government has the fiscal space to do more to support the economy that is forecast to grow at a healthy 8-8.5 per cent growth in the 2022-23 fiscal.

The budget comes days before the first phase of voting in Uttar Pradesh, which along with four other states is going to the polls to elect a new state government. And naturally, it is expected to contain measures for higher rural and agriculture spending.

Asia's third-largest economy is estimated to expand 9.2 per cent in the fiscal year that ends in March, following a contraction of 7.3 per cent in the previous fiscal.

Analysts said the finance minister will have to strike a fine balance while keeping up the momentum of the country's promising but fledgling economic recovery and tax collections, but at the same time look at bringing in measures to spur demand, create jobs and tackle inflation as the country deals with the ongoing third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While being 'fiscally prudent' as well as 'growth supportive', she is widely expected to continue growth agenda via higher capex allocation, which will accelerate the investment cycle and employment while at the same time taking a fiscal conservatism approach.

With a goal to reach a USD 5-trillion economy by FY25, capital expenditure allocation is expected to continue to remain higher while healthy tax revenues and mega disinvestment pipeline may help contain the fiscal deficit to 5 per cent in FY23.

The buoyancy in tax revenues, relatively contained spending and higher nominal GDP growth is expected to have contained the fiscal deficit in the current fiscal to 6.3 per cent, below the projection of 6.8 per cent.

Within infrastructure segment, higher allocation towards roads, railways and water are expected.

Economic Survey Predicts 8-8.5% GDP Growth In 2022-23

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India's economy is expected to grow by 8-8.5 per cent in the fiscal beginning April 1 and is well placed to meet the future challenges on the back of widespread vaccine coverage, supply-side reforms and easing of regulations, said the pre-Budget Economic Survey on Monday.

The Economic Survey 2021-22, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, expects the economy to grow by 9.2 per cent during the current financial year, indicating a recovery to the pre-pandemic level.

The economy had contracted by 7.3 per cent in 2020-21 on account of impact of COVID pandemic and subsequent nationwide lockdowns to check the spread of coronavirus.

"Overall, macro-economic stability indicators suggest that the Indian economy is well placed to take on the challenges of 2022-23. One of the reasons that the Indian economy is in a good position is its unique response strategy," the survey said.

The Indian economy, as seen in quarterly estimates of GDP, has been staging a sustained recovery since the second half of 2020-21. Although the second wave of the pandemic in April-June 2021 was more severe from a health perspective, the economic impact was muted compared to the national lockdown of the previous year.

"Advance estimates suggest that GDP will record an expansion of 9.2 per cent in 2021-22. This implies that the level of real economic output will surpass the pre-COVID level of 2019-20," the survey said.

The survey expects private sector investment to pick as financial system is in good position to provide support necessary for speedy revival of the economy.

The document authored by a team lead by Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal further said the fiscal support given to the economy as well as the health response caused the fiscal deficit and government debt to rise in 2020-21. However, there has been a strong rebound in government revenues in 2021-22 so far.

As per the survey, the government has the fiscal capacity to maintain the support, and ramp up capital expenditure when required.

The strong revival in revenues also provides government with fiscal space to provide additional support as well, if necessary, it added.

Also, the banking system is well capitalised and the overhang of Non Performing Assets (NPAs) seems to have structurally declined even allowing for some lagged impact of the pandemic.

Referring to the price situation in the country, the survey said "although the high WPI inflation is partly due to base effects that will even out, India does need to be wary of import-



HIGHLIGHTS OF ECONOMIC SURVEY 2021-22

Following are the highlights of the Finance Ministry's Economic Survey 2021-22.

- **Pegs economic growth for 2022-23 at 8-8.5 pc; for 2021-22 GDP expansion at 9.2 pc**
- **Economic activity has recovered to pre-pandemic level, economy well placed to take on challenges in 2022-23**
- **Growth in FY23 to be supported by vaccine coverage, gains from supply-side reforms and easing of regulations**
- **Growth projections based on oil price projection of USD 70-75 per barrel next fiscal, against current price of USD 90**
- **India's economic response to devastation caused by pandemic has been supply-side reforms, rather than demand management**
- **India's agile policy response differed from the waterfall strategy of introducing front-loaded stimulus packages, adopted by most other countries in 2020.**
- **Robust export growth and availability of fiscal space to ramp up capital spending to support growth next fiscal**
- **Private sector investment to pick with financial system in good position to provide support to revival of economy**
- **Air India privatisation key in boosting government's privatisation drive; calls for private participation in all sector**
- **Government finances to witness consolidation in 2021-22, after uptick in deficit and debt indicators in the previous year**
- **India transformed from being among 'Fragile Five' nations to 4th largest forex reserve, giving policy room for manoeuvring**
- **High WPI inflation is partly due to base effects that will even out, need to be wary of imported inflation, especially from elevated global energy prices**
- **Disruptions in the global container market not yet over; will continue to impact the global sea trade**
- **Crop diversification towards oilseeds, pulses and horticulture needs to be given priority**
- **Climate finance will remain critical to successful climate action for India to achieve its net-zero carbon emission target by 2070.**

ed inflation, especially from elevated global energy prices".

"Overall, macro-economic stability indicators suggest that the Indian economy is well placed to take on the challenges of 2022-23.

The growth in 2022-23, it said will be supported by widespread vaccine coverage, gains from supply-side reforms and easing of regulations, robust export growth, and availability of fiscal space to ramp up capital spending.

"The year ahead is also well poised for a pick-up in private sector investment with the financial system in a good position to provide support to the revival of the economy. Thus, India's GDP is projected to grow in real terms by 8.0-8.5 per cent in 2022-23," it said.

The projection, according to the survey, is based on the as-

sumption that there will be no further debilitating pandemic related economic disruption, monsoon will be normal, withdrawal of global liquidity by major central banks will be broadly orderly, oil prices will be in the range of USD 70-75 per barrel, and global supply chain disruptions will steadily ease over the course of the year.

The survey also said India's external sector is resilient to face any unwinding of the global liquidity arising out of the likelihood of faster normalisation of monetary policy by systemically important central banks, including the Fed, in response to elevated inflationary pressures.

The latest survey has shifted from the two-volume format of recent years to a single volume plus a separate volume for statistical tables.

KCCI, FCIK Welcome Transfer Of CDI To I&C Dept



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Inc) and Federation Chamber of Industries (FCIK) Monday welcomed the transfer of administrative control of the Craft Development Institute (CDI) to the Industries and Commerce Department for promoting GI tagging of J&K arts and crafts.

Ahmad Monday welcomed the decision of the Administrative Council which met under the Chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the transfer of administrative control of the Craft Development Institute (CDI) to the Industries and Commerce Department for promoting GI tagging of J&K arts and crafts.

"The decision is welcomed and aimed at promoting and developing the traditional, contemporary, modern and diversified crafts in Jammu and Kashmir through targeted and strategic planning," KCC&I president Sheikh Ashiq said in a statement.

He said that the Craft Development Institute plays a pivotal role in identifying and promoting varied crafts and obtaining the coveted Geographical Indicator (GI) tag to further boost awareness and sales of authen-

tic products.

"The Craft Development Institute has so far assisted Pashmina, Sozni, Kani, Khatamband, Paper Machie, Walnut Carving, and Carpet art in achieving the GI tag."

President also urged the J&K government to provide a financial budgetary support to the Craft Development Institute for their various projects and provide best Craft faculty for students and their upcoming projects.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry as previously and will always play vital role and support Craft Development Institute for their future projects, he said.

Meanwhile, FCIK also welcomed the decision.

FCIK President in a statement said as previously the Craft Development Institute has protected the artisans through authentic trade of genuine pashmina based handicrafts and handloom products in the market. The Institute has so far assisted Pashmina, Sozni, Kani, Khatamband, Papermachie, Walnut carving, and Carpet art in achieving the GI tag. Today's step of transfer of CDI to I&C Dept will make the Jammu and Kashmir's art and craft more efficient and smooth-running.

AHD Department To Encourage, Promote Large Scale Milk Processing In J&K



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Principal Secretary, Animal/ Sheep Husbandry & Fisheries Department, Navin Kumar Choudhary chaired the 33rd State Implementing Agency (SIA) meeting at his office here today. He is Chairman of the J&K State Implementing Agency.

Additional Secretary (C&DD), Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India also attended the meeting through video conference.

The Chairman sought details of livestock vaccinations done under the National Animal Disease Control Programme (NAD-CP) and called for crosschecking and tallying with panchayat-wise figures. He directed that the benefits of the scheme be permeated up to the remotest regions of the UT and therefore vaccinations be done on priority.

With regards to the Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme, Phase III, the Chairman called for concerted efforts and directed that 75 percent of the targeted figures be achieved by the mid February this year.

Speaking to the Directors of Livestock Development Boards, from Jammu as well as Kashmir, the Chairman took stock of the working of liquid nitrogen plants in J&K. While seeking a detailed report of their conditions, he directed that the plants be augmented and run at their maximum capacity. He directed the respective officers for efficient expenditure of allocated budgets and payments of pending dues.

In view of surplus milk production by some district of J&K, it was decided that the department would encourage and promote large scale milk processing and value addition.

While discussing the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) with the Directors of Animal Husbandry, the Chairman called for a thorough review of the scheme.

Delhi Airport Implements One-Hand Bag Rule With Some Exceptions

NEW DELHI: With some exceptions, Delhi airport implemented the rule which allowed a domestic passenger to carry only one piece of luggage or hand-bag as cabin luggage.

A Delhi airport official informed that the following advisory from Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), only one piece of hand baggage is permitted per passenger as 'Cabin Luggage'.

There are some exclusions like Ladies handbag, an overcoat or a wrap, a rug or blanket, a camera or pair of binoculars, a reasonable amount of reading material, an umbrella or a walking stick, an infant's feed for consumption during the flight and infant's carrying basket provided an infant is carried, Collapsible wheelchair and/or pair of crutches or braces for passenger's use if dependent on these, a gift item purchased from duty-free shops and a laptop bag.

The official added that they have mentioned the advisory at the entry of the airport to avoid any inconvenience to the passenger during the security check. (Agencies)

Vistara Cancels Several Flights For February: Report

NEW DELHI: Vistara airline had cancelled several flights for the month of February while many more were rescheduled due to low demand, sources in aviation disclosed on Sunday. The cancellation and rescheduling of flights have led to several complaints from affected passengers. Taking to Twitter, a passenger also raised concern over the unavailability of Vistara's customer care.

"Dear Vistara airlines You have cancelled a ticket from New Delhi to Bhubaneswar on February 5. Your customer care number is a cheap gimmick I think. No one responds and It's been busy since 48 hours. Please refund the full amount ASAP!" Shibashis Prusti, a scientist of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) tweeted.

Furnishing a reply on the same, Vistara Spokesperson on Monday informed that they are offering a waiver of change fee for one-time rescheduling on all direct bookings with travel until March 31.

"After a sharp decline in demand for air travel, due to the surge in COVID-19 numbers and restrictions imposed by various state governments, we are observing a marginal increase in traffic in February compared to the previous month," Vistara Spokesperson said. (Agencies)

Air India Sale To Boost Privatisation: Survey

NEW DELHI: Air India sale will give a boost to India's privatisation drive, the Economic Survey said on Monday, as it suggested redefining the public sector role in business enterprises to encourage private participation in all sectors.

The government earlier this month handed over ownership rights in national carrier Air India to Tata Group for Rs 18,000 crore. The amount includes the takeover of the debt burden of Rs 15,300 crore and another Rs 2,700 crore in cash.

"This progress on privatisation of Air India is particularly important, not only in terms of garnering disinvestment proceeds but also for boosting the privatisation drive," the Survey said.

This is the first privatisation in 20 years and will pave the way for the sale of more CPSEs, which are lined up for sale -- BPCL, Shipping Corporation,

Pawan Hans, IDBI Bank, Concor, BEM and RINL.

Since 2016, the government has given in-principle approval for strategic disinvestment of 35 CPSEs and/or subsidiaries/units/ joint ventures of CPSEs and IDBI Bank.

"In order to realise the mission of New, Self-reliant India, there was a need to redefine public sector participation in business enterprises and to encourage private sector participation in all sectors, the Survey said.

The government had last year approved a policy of strategic disinvestment of public sector enterprises that will provide a clear roadmap for disinvestment in all non-strategic and strategic sectors.

The guideline for implementation of new public sector enterprise policy for CPSEs have been notified on December 13, 2021. (PTI)

I&B Ministry Bans MediaOne News Channel Yet Again

KOCHI: The Union Government on Monday barred the telecast of Malayalam news channel MediaOne citing "security reasons", an action which invited the ire of many with the Opposition Congress party terming the move as "undemocratic".

Pramod Raman, the Editor of MediaOne, said the channel was taking legal steps for the restoration of the channel.

"The telecast of MediaOne channel has once again been disallowed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, citing security reasons. The Government has not been forthcoming with the details," Raman said in a statement.

When contacted, Information and Broadcasting ministry officials confirmed that the channel has been banned but didn't share any further details.

Leader of Opposition in Kerala Assembly V D Satheesan said the I&B ministry banned the telecast without citing reasons. (PTI)

Govt To Take Balanced View On Cryptocurrency: PEA

NEW DELHI: The government will take a balanced view on the issue of regulation of cryptocurrencies as they have implications on the country's financial stability, Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal said on Monday. Currently, there are no particular regulations or any ban on use of cryptocurrency in the country.

The issue of cryptocurrency has not been covered in the Economic Survey 2021-22, Sanyal said in an interaction with media on the Survey tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier in the day.

"As you know, this is a matter of some debate, both inside the government, in the Ministry of Finance, and even in Parliament. So, this is something that is currently in discussion," he said.

The Reserve Bank has also highlighted various issues, including financial stability impact of such virtual currencies.

"There are some financial stability issues. But there are also other arguments that are made in terms of innovation and so on....obviously a balanced view on this will be taken," he said. (PTI)

SHORT TAKES

Bengal Schools, Colleges To Reopen On Feb 3, Daily Flights From Delhi, Mumbai Allowed

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Schools for classes 8 to 12, colleges and varsities will reopen in West Bengal on February 3, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced on Monday.

Addressing a press conference, Banerjee said flights from Delhi and Mumbai will be allowed to operate daily, instead of thrice a week.

The ban on flights from the UK to Kolkata was also lifted but passengers need to undergo RT-PCR tests, she said.

The government also allowed 75 per cent workforce to attend office, both government and private, instead of the earlier 50 per cent.

The night restriction on movement of people was reduced by an hour and will now be in force from 11 pm to 5 am, Banerjee said.

Cinema Halls and auditoriums were allowed to host shows with 75 per cent capacity, she said.

Metro and local train services were also permitted to operate with 75 per cent of the seating capacity, she said.

"COVID-19 situation in Bengal has improved. Schools will reopen on February 3 for classes 8 to 12. Colleges, universities, polytechnics and ITIs will also restart offline classes on the same day. We are not reopening primary schools right now," Banerjee said.

"We will decide on reopening primary schools later," she said, adding that students of standards 5 to 7 will be taught



through 'Paray Sikshalay' (neighbourhood classes) programme from February 1.

All sports activities, cultural, administrative and social programmes, weddings and other social functions will be allowed with 75 per cent of the venue capacity, she said.

Parks, zoos, museums and tourist places were also allowed to reopen with 75 per cent capacity, Banerjee said.

Salons and beauty parlours, gyms, spa and wellness centres were also allowed to operate with 75 per cent capacity.

The new rules will come into effect on Tuesday and remain in place till February 15, she said.

Banerjee said on February 16, the government will hold a meeting with the industry bodies.

Following the announcement, a notification was issued by the Higher Education Department, asking heads of universities and colleges to make their campuses ready by February 2 so that classes can resume the next day. Hostels can also be opened, it said.

In another notification, the School Education Department directed the district magistrates

to ensure that by February 2 the schools are sanitised.

Students' organisations that were demanding reopening of schools and colleges welcomed the government's announcement but said that the decision was taken under pressure.

SFI state secretary Srijan Bhattacharya said the government has finally responded to the just demand after "playing with the future of lakhs of students".

"For airing the demands of ordinary students, our activists were beaten up and arrested by the police over the last few days," he alleged.

Bhattacharya said the government should now ensure that classes are held with all COVID safety guidelines.

The ABVP said the state government unnecessarily delayed making a simple decision, which would benefit students.

"Even today, at least 18 ABVP activists were taken into custody when they were going to meet Education Minister Bratya Basu in Bikash Bhavan to raise our demands. They just wanted the government to know how the students were suffering as schools and colleges were closed," ABVP national secretary Saptarshi Sarkar told PTI.

The Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (TMCP) said the chief minister took a timely and appropriate decision.

"The 'Paray Sikshalay' programme and normal classes in schools will now be held simultaneously," said TMCP state president Trinankur Bhattacharya.

India abstains from UNSC procedural vote to discuss Ukraine; says 'quite and constructive' diplomacy 'need of the hour'

Agenceis

UNITED NATIONS: India on Monday abstained from a procedural vote taken in the UN Security Council ahead of a meeting to discuss the situation on the Ukraine border and underlined that quiet and constructive diplomacy is the need of the hour and any steps that increase tension may best be avoided by all sides in the larger interest of securing international peace and security.

The 15-nation Council held a meeting to discuss the Ukraine crisis amid the build-up of tens of thousands of Russian troops on Ukraine's borders. The action by Moscow has stoked fears of an invasion. Russia denies it is planning an attack.

Ahead of the meeting, Russia called for a procedural vote to determine if the open meeting can go through. The Council needed 9 votes in favour to go ahead with the meeting held at the request of the US.

India, Gabon and Kenya abstained from the vote, while Russia and China voted against. All other Council members, including the US, the UK and France, voted in favour of the meeting.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador TS Tirumurti said in the Council that New Delhi has been closely following the evolving developments relating to Ukraine, including through ongoing high-level security talks between Russia and the United States, as well as under the Normandy format in Paris.

India's interest is in finding a solution that can provide for immediate de-escalation of tensions taking into account



the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed towards securing long term peace and stability in the region and beyond, Tirumurti said.

Quiet and constructive diplomacy is the need of the hour. Any steps that increase tension may best be avoided by all sides in the larger interest of securing international peace and security, he underlined.

Tirumurti also told the Council that more than 20,000 Indian students and nationals live and study in different parts of Ukraine, including in its border areas. The well-being of Indian nationals is of priority to us, he said.

India said it has also been in touch with all concerned parties.

It is our considered view that the issue can only be resolved through diplomatic dialogue, Tirumurti said, adding that in

this context, New Delhi welcomes the efforts underway including under the Minsk Agreement and the Normandy format.

The Normandy format talks involve Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France whose representatives first met informally in Normandy (France) in 2014 in an effort to resolve the war in Donbass, a small region in eastern Ukraine adjoining the Russian border.

The Minsk protocol is a 2014 agreement reached in the Belarusian capital that sought to end the war in Ukraine. It was mediated by France and Germany under the Normandy format. But it failed to stop the fighting, and a new package of measures - known as Minsk II - was signed in February 2015, after a fraught 16 hours of negotiations. This also did not end the fighting.

Tirumurti said, "Flowing from the recently concluded meeting in Paris under the Normandy format, we also welcome the unconditional observance of the July 2020 ceasefire (in Donbass) and reaffirmation of Minsk Agreements as the basis of work under the ongoing Normandy format, in particular, commitment of all sides to reduce disagreements on the way forward. We also welcome their agreement to meet in Berlin in two weeks."

New Delhi urged all parties to continue to engage through all diplomatic channels and to keep working towards the full implementation of the 'Minsk Package'.

India reiterated its call for the peaceful resolution of the situation by sincere and sustained diplomatic efforts to ensure that concerns of all sides are resolved through constructive dialogue.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Prez Praises

said the government has started a new central sector scheme for the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir at a cost of about Rs 28,000 crore.

Last year, the Qazigund-Banihal tunnel was opened to traffic and international flights between Srinagar and Sharjah have also started, he pointed out.

"Many important steps have also been taken to provide better opportunities for education, health and employment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Kovind said.

He said currently, work is in progress on seven medical colleges and two All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) -- one in Jammu and another in Kashmir. The construction of IIT, Jammu and IIM, Jammu is also going on in full swing.

Kovind said the Sindhu Infrastructure Development Corporation has been set up to accelerate infrastructure and economic development in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Another chapter in this development journey of Ladakh is being added in the form of Sindhu Central University, he said.

Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was scrapped on August 5, 2019 and it was bifurcated into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Both the Union territories are currently under central rule.

Govt Shifts 13

Pran Singh, JKAS, Special Secretary to the Government, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Doda, as against an available vacancy.

Khurshid Ahmad Shah, JKAS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Samba.

Ghulam Jeelani Zargar, JKAS, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Recovery, Kashmir headquartered at Srinagar, has been transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Gulmarg.

Ritu Mahajan, JKAS, Programme Officer, ICDS Project, Kathua, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes, Enforcement (Central), Jammu.

Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina, JKAS, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Gulmarg,

has been transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla.

Ashwani Kumar, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Samba, has been transferred and posted as General Manager, DIC, Rajouri.

Mridhu Salathia, JKAS, Deputy Director, Information (Hq) in the Directorate of Information, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Additional Mission Director, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission, Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Tahir Mustafa Malik, IKAS, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Rajouri, has been transferred and posted as Director, Land Management, Srinagar Development Authority, against an available vacancy.

Sanjay Kumar Bhat, JKAS, Personnel Officer in the Directorate of School Education, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

Today's reshuffle in the administration comes four days after the government ordered the transfer of 33 officers, 32 of them JKAS, in the Union Territory on Thursday last.

2550 Test Positive

Shopian 27 and Ganderbal 18. In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu detected a maximum of 500 new cases of Coronavirus, Udhampur 120, Kishtwar 107, Doda 90, Rajouri 53, Ramban 32, Reasi 26, Poonch 21, Samba 14 and Kathua 11.

"Moreover, 6433 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 1853 from Jammu Division and 4580 from Kashmir Division," the officials said.

Also, they said that 15 more people, 10 in Jammu and five in Kashmir, died of Covid-19 related complications during the last 24 hours, raising the death toll in the pandemic to 4674 in J&K -- 2285 in Jammu and 2389 in Kashmir.

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

ARTO Baramulla

licenses and other documents."

Pertinently, Last year, Sirajuddin Ahmed, a member of RTI movement, in his complaint had alleged that Mubashir Jan along with other officials was involved in "illegal and corrupt" activities by issuing illegal driving licenses and other documents to people who were not eligible for driving license as they had either failed to undergo a DL test or had failed the test.

In his complaint, Sirajuddin had also alleged that the ARTO officials were issuing DL or other documents to ineligible candidates through handpicked agents, charging a hefty amount of money from people.

The officer further said that after receiving a complaint against the

officials, the ACB had launched a joint surprise check as per Vigilance act.

"After the joint surprise check was launched against the ARTO officials, the enquiry officer had followed the case for next few months and submitted his report requesting a case against the ARTO and other officials on the strong evidence available against the officials," he said.

"The early evidence available with ACB has revealed that all the booked officers were working together in issuing illegal driving licenses and other documents to the ineligible persons," he added.

As per the ACB official, a thorough investigation has been started into the case and a detailed report will be submitted to the higher authority with all the available evidence against the ARTO officials.

"None of the booked officials have been arrested yet but as soon as we're done with the investigation and if the accused are found guilty, then they will be dealt with strictly under the given provisions of law."

Notably, the case is being investigated under supervision of SSP ACB, Baramulla, Ayaz Sheikh.

Mercury Improves

40-day harshest winter period which began on December 21 last year -- is a period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies here.

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

However, the 'Chilla-i-Kalan' this year was not harsh like the last year and there was less snowfall during the period.

Even after the end of 'Chilla-i-Kalan', the cold wave continues in Kashmir with a 20-day-long 'Chillai-Khurd' and a 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha'. However, both these periods are considered less harsh.

Srinagar recorded a low of minus 1.6 degrees Celsius up from minus 2.3 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

The ski-resort of Gulmarg, in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 6.6 degrees Celsius up from minus 7.4 degrees Celsius the previous night.

Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 4.8 degrees Celsius up from minus 7 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

The officials said Qazigund recorded a minimum of minus 2.8 degree Celsius, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius.

The minimum in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of minus 0.6 degrees Celsius.

The MeT Office has said there is a possibility of rain or snow at scattered places over the next 24 hours.

After that, there are chances of a wet spell from February 2 to 4 as well,

it said.

21 Militants

of Kupwara on January 1 and led to the killing of Muhammad Shabir Malik, a Pakistani national.

Two days later on January 3, police claimed to have killed LeT commander Saleem Parray of Hajin Bandipora in an encounter in the Shalimar area of the city. Parray, as per police, was active since 2016.

Officials had said that with Parry's killing, Hajin hamlet of Bandipora is now militancy free as no local militant from the area is active now.

Just an hour after Parry's killing; another encounter broke out in the Gusu area of Shalimar in which one non-local militant was killed.

A day later on January 4, two TRF militants namely Amir Ahmad Wani from Alamgunj Shopian and Sameer Ahmad Khan from Tiken Pulwama were killed in Okay area of Kulgam.

On January 5, three Jaish militants, including two non-locals and one local namely Owais Ahmad of Ashmander Pulwama were killed in an encounter in Chandgam Pulwama.

On January 7, three Jaish militants including two foreigners and one local namely Waseem Ahmad from Nowgam Srinagar were killed in Chadoora area of Budgam district.

On January 11, two Al-Badr militants identified as Imad Muzaffar Wani resident of Arigam Pulwama and Abdul Rashid Thoker resident of Hassanpora, were killed in an encounter in Hassanpora Kulgam.

On January 13, one non-local militant identified as Babar Bhai and one SOG personnel Sgt Rohit Chib were killed in an encounter in Pariwan area of Kulgam.

Three army soldiers and two civilians were also injured during the encounter.

On January 22, two LeT (TRF) militants identified as Sameer Ahmad Shah son of Nazir Ahmad Shah resident of Dhangam Shopian and Rayees Ahmad Mir son of Muhammad Ashraf Mir of Takiya, Wahgam Pulwama were killed in an encounter in Kilbal Shopian.

On January 27, Militants managed to give slip to forces; however, three soldiers were injured in an exchange of fire in Check Nowgam area of Shopian district.

On January 29, Ali Mohammad Ganie, a policeman was shot dead by militants outside his home in Hassanpora area of Anantnag district.

On January 30, a militant of LeT identified as Bilal Ahmad Khan resident of Chill Brass Khanshabab was killed in an encounter in Tilsar Charare-Shareef area of Budgam district.

On January 30, four Jaish-e-Mohammad militants identified as Zahid Ahmad Wani @Uzair (a top commander) resident of Karimabad Pulwama, foreign militant Kafeel Bhari @Chotu resident of Pakistan, Waheed Ahmad Reshi resident of Khadermoh Kakapora and Inayat Ahmad Mir resident of Naira Pulwama

who according to police was a hybrid militant were killed in an encounter in Naira Pulwama. (With inputs from KNO)

Police Summons

16, 18, 20, 38 ULA(P) A has been registered in police station Pulwama, a top police officer said, as per news agency GNS.

The police officer said that the journalists have made "incorrect reporting" regarding the incident.

The similar-worded summons issued by the SHO concerned under section 160 CrPC, calls upon the duo to appear before him at 11 a.m. today.

"It appears that you are acquainted with the circumstances of FIR and your presence is necessary to give such information as you may possess relating to FIR for the finalization of the investigation and arrest of the accused person," reads the summons.

Govt Orders

M/S Techno electronic and other officers.

At the outset, the official spokesperson said that the Chief Engineer Power Distribution gave a detailed presentation on status of Smart Metering Projects in Srinagar under Phase-I & Phase-II, smart metering project under PMDP, AMI Implementation Status, feeders identified for smart metering in Srinagar, feeder wise meter installation progress, field activity progress, funding and road map for AMI projects, major right of way issues, Row issues.

On the occasion, he said, the Div Com directed district administration and police to tackle resistance by any person in the process of installation of smart meters amicably.

"He also said that if any person creates hindrances and damages public property then strict action shall be taken against him," he added.

Pole, as per the official spokesperson also directed concerned officers to create awareness among the people regarding utility and advantages of smart metering in ensuring constant supply of electricity.

"Div Com directed to involve opinion leaders, religious leaders and social activists to motivate people regarding installation of Smart meters," he said.

"He said the message should be loud and clear regarding the execution of work besides utilizing social media and other channels to familiarize and sensitize general people about advantages of smart meters," he added.

According to the official spokesperson, the meeting was informed that under smart metering project Srinagar Phase-I, out of 57750 meters, 11348 have been installed till now. It was further informed that 15000 meters are committed to be delivered in the month of Feb-2022.

NCC Cadets

also inculcate the values of fraternity, discipline, national unity and

selfless services among them," he said. Sinha said the NCC cadets in Jammu and Kashmir led by example in activities such as conducting awareness campaigns on COVID-19 and effectively executing the assigned missions during the vaccination programme.

Last Date

Monday, an official spokesperson said that the intending Haj pilgrims are being informed that the last date for submission of online application forms for Haj-2022 has been extended up to 15th February, 2022.

"It has been informed that only those applicants who possess machine readable valid Indian International Passports issued on or before 15th February, 2022 and valid up to 31st December, 2022 will be eligible to apply for Haj-2022," he said.

Besides, the official spokesperson said that those intending pilgrims who have already submitted their Haj Application Forms online but have not received their Cover Numbers through SMS till date, are requested to approach/contact J&K Haj Committee, Haj House Bemina, Srinagar during office hours either personally or through telephone numbers viz. 0194-2495365, 0194-2495367 so that their Cover Numbers are generated well before the last date i.e., 15th February, 2022.

Cardiac Arrest

ground and died on the spot, a local news agency KNT reported.

The report further said that Ahmed died of cardiac arrest.

The deceased was a resident of Chandian Pajan village of Devsar Kulgam.

Another Patwari

Patwari Halqa Kewa, Qazigund was demanding a bribe of Rs 3500 for issuing revenue extracts viz Intikhaab for obtaining KCC loan, a Bureau spokesperson said Monday.

"Upon receiving the instant complaint prima facie offence U/S 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 was found made out. Consequently, case FIR No. 02/2022 was registered at Police Station ACB Anantnag," he said.

The ACB spokesperson further said that the accused Patwari was arrested while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 3500/- from the complainant.

"Further investigations of the case is going on," he added.

Reckless Driver

some in Domana area in 2013. Since then, he had remained underground, the police said.

Teams were constituted and local intelligence was gathered. Based on a tip-off, and with technical and manual surveillance, he was nabbed, they said.

A chargesheet was filed in the case and a general warrant under Section 512 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) was issued against him by a local court, they said.

India Squad Arrives In Ahmedabad For ODIs Against West Indies



Press Trust Of India

AHMEDABAD: Members of the Indian cricket team have arrived here for the three-match ODI series against the West Indies beginning on February 6.

All players entered the bio bubble between Sunday and Monday.

"They will undergo a three day quarantine," a BCCI official told PTL. The series will be the first for Rohit Sharma as white-ball captain of the side. He could not travel to South Africa due to a hamstring injury.

Leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal had posted photo of his departure for Ahmedabad on Sunday. He was sitting in the aircraft alongside Shikhar Dhawan.

Spinner Kuldeep Yadav has made a comeback into the team while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi has received a maiden call up.

Due to COVID-19 threat, the BCCI reduced the venues of three ODIs and as many T20s to two. The three T20s will be played in Kolkata.

Fresh from their home T20 series win against England, West Indies squad will land here later in the week.

West Indies Name Squad For T20I Series In India



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: West Indies named a 16-member squad to be led by Kieron Pollard for the upcoming three-match T20I series in India starting February 16, the same team that faced England in the home contest.

The three T20Is will be played in Kolkata on February 16, 18 and 20, following the three-match ODI Series which will be played in Ahmedabad on February 6, 9 and 11. West Indies have already named the ODI squad under Pollard.

Shimron Hetmyer was left out of the squad on fitness grounds once again. Earlier this month, West Indies head coach Phil Simmons had expressed unhappiness at Hetmyer's attitude towards physical fitness.

All-rounder Odean Smith was also named in the squad after a recent bizarre incident in which claims were made of him being "victimised" after he was left out for the third T20I against Eng-

land to make way for Rovman Powell.

The claims were made in a voice note sent to the media, the sender is not known yet. Simmons and Cricket West Indies president Ricky Skerritt have rubbished the claims, terming the allegations "a malicious attack on the credibility of the West Indies captain, designed to sow division within our team".

West Indies have put up an impressive showing against England, winning the five-match T20Is series 3-2.

The West Indies T20I squad for the India series was named over the weekend.

West Indies T20I Squad: Kieron Pollard (captain), Nicholas Pooran (vice-captain), Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Roston Chase, Sheldon Cottrell, Dominic Drakes, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Brandon King, Rovman Powell, Romario Shephard, Odean Smith, Kyle Mayers, Hayden Walsh Jr.

PSL: Fakhar Propels Lahore Over Karachi, Islamabad Thump Peshawar



Press Trust Of India

KARACHI: Fakhar Zaman's first century in cricket's Pakistan Super League propelled Lahore Qalandars to a six-wicket win over Karachi Kings, and Islamabad United started its campaign by inflicting a crushing nine-wicket defeat on Peshawar Zalmi.

Left-handed opener Fakhar made 106 off 60 balls and anchored Lahore to 174-4 with four balls to spare as Karachi had its third straight loss.

The toss didn't go in favor of Karachi skipper Babar Zaman for the third successive game and his team, despite Sharjeel Khan's 60, was restricted to 170-7 in its 20 overs.

Fakhar controlled Lahore's chase by hitting 12 boundaries and four sixes as Karachi's bowling looked ordinary in the absence of injured Mohammad Amir, who is yet to feature in the tournament due to side strain.

Fast bowler Umaid Asif picked up 2-30 but the other two pacers — Mohammad Ilyas (0-43) and Lewis Gregory (0-32) — failed to pose any threat to Fakhar.

Asif dismissed Fakhar with Lahore needing only seven off the last seven balls when he attempted an upper-cut against a slow bouncer and was caught at third man. Samit Patel finished off the game by hitting Gregory for two successive boundaries as Lahore recorded its first win after losing to defending champion Multan Sultans.

Earlier, Sharjeel and Babar (41) provided an ideal platform of 84 runs in the first 10 overs but Karachi's middle-order couldn't capitalize in the second half of the innings.

Sharjeel was undone by Mohammad Hafeez who clean bowled the batter with a delivery which turned sharply. Babar was bowled by Rashid Khan's sharp googly and Haris Rauf picked up 3-33 to restrict Karachi's total.

No More The Captain, Kohli Talks About Contributing More As A Batter

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Citing Mahendra Singh Dhoni as example, Virat Kohli says one doesn't need to be a captain of a team to be a leader and now that he is not the India skipper, he might contribute more as the side's batting mainstay.

Kohli shocked the cricketing world earlier this month when he stepped down from Test captaincy following the 1-2 series defeat in South Africa. He ended up as India's most successful Test captain.

His unexpected decision came after he stepped down from the T20 side before being removed as ODI skipper.

During Digit's 'Fireside Chat with VK', Kohli spoke how one can contribute to the team even when he is not its leader.

"Everything has a tenure and time period. You obviously have to be aware of that. People might say 'what this guy has done' but you know when you think of moving forward and achieving more, you feel like you have done your job.

"Now as a batsman may be you have more things to contribute to the team. You can make the team win more. So take pride in that. You don't need to be a captain to be a leader. As simple as that," he said.



Kohli had taken over captaincy from MS Dhoni, first in Tests and then limited overs cricket.

"When MS Dhoni was in the team it was not like that he was not a leader. He was still the guy we were going to constantly to get inputs.

"... but for him to understand that yes it is natural progression and a natural time for me to take over and take Indian cricket forward to a level that I wanted to and as long as I feel that I have done that job without having materialistic goals, that has a longer lasting effect."

Kohli also talked about the timing of moving on. Rohit Sharma has taken over from him as the white ball captain while the board is yet to announce his successor in the five-day format.

"Taking the decision to move on is also part of leadership to understand the right time to do it. To understand that may be the environment needs a different direction. Obviously same culture but a different set of ideas to boost people in a different way and contribute in a different manner.

"One has to embrace all kinds of roles and responsibilities. I have played under MS as a player and I have been the captain of the team for a long time, my mind set has been same.

"I always thought like a captain even when I was a player. I want to make the team win. I have to be my own leader," he added.

After Dramatic U-19 WC Entry, Afghanistan Seek History Against England

Press Trust Of India

NORTH SOUND (Antigua): Their late arrival in the Caribbean had forced the ICC to re-work the fixtures of their group matches but Afghanistan, with their magnificent run to the semifinals of U-19 World Cup, ensured the tweaking by the apex body was worth it, even if it meant rescheduling as many as four matches.

Accustomed to dealing with issues far removed from and bigger than cricket, the battle-hardened Afghanistan team will chase history on Tuesday, in a sport that has often been a soothing balm for the country's many battered souls.

Having punched above their weight, they now face England in the Super League semifinals of the U-19 showpiece at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, an appropriate setting for those seeking inspiration for doing things in cricket which only the man after whom the venue is named could do in his heydays.

Afghanistan will create history if they are able to beat fancied England, for they have never been to the final of the U-19 World Cup.

If their entry into the tournament was not bereft of drama, thanks to visa-related issues, no less dramatic was their march



to the last-four stage.

The odds were heavily stacked against them when they posted just 134 on board after Sri Lanka asked them to take first strike in their quarterfinal match but Afghanistan produced a superb performance with the ball to bundle out the island nation for 130 in 46 overs at Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

Before that, having obtained the necessary permission to travel to the West Indies, Afghanistan won all three matches in the group stage.

It is only the second time, the first being the 2018 edition in New Zealand, that Afghanistan have made it to the Super League semifinals of the U-19 World Cup.

However, England will undoubtedly be their biggest challenge. England are widely known

for their batting depth in white-ball cricket and Jacob Bethell is one name that might be creating problems for the Afghanistan bowlers.

The batting all-rounder from Warwickshire displayed his prowess in England's quarterfinal win against South Africa at the same venue. He smashed 88 off 42 balls at a strike-rate of 209.52, the highest for any Englishman in an innings of at least 50 runs in the U-19 World Cup.

Bethell, who was born in Barbados and idolises Sir Garfield Sobers, has scored 201 runs at an average of 50.25 and a strike-rate of 112.92 and hit two 50s in four innings so far.

England will be hoping he continues that form against Afghanistan, though they also have others capable of contributing to the team's cause.

Salah Shines As Egypt Advances To African Cup Semifinals



Agencies

YAOUNDE (Cameroon): Mohamed Salah scored the equalizer and created the winner to inspire Egypt's comeback to beat Morocco 2-1 after extra time and reach the African Cup semifinals.

Egypt fell behind to an early penalty won by Achraf Hakimi and converted by Sofiane Boufal in the seventh minute on Sunday.

Egypt captain Salah reacted quickly to knock in a rebound to make it 1-1 in the 53rd and sent in a perfect low cross for Trézéguet to tap in near the end of the first half of extra time.

Egypt was left to rely on third-choice goalkeeper Mohamed Sobhy for most of extra time after an injury to Mohamed Abou Gabal, who was already in the team in place of first choice Mohamed el-Shenawy.

About Gabal was injured in normal time but tried to play through it. He couldn't and had to come off in the sixth minute of extra time, leaving the 22-year-old Sobhy to make his debut for his country at the end of a high-pressure game.

In the end he wasn't tested and Salah and Trézéguet combined for the winner four minutes after Sobhy came on. Salah was faced with three defenders covering him on the right wing but he went for the outside and sent a right-foot cross into the path of Trézéguet at the back post.

Salah almost had a second in the final, chaotic moments when Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou joined an attack in the desperate search for an equalizer and left the Moroccan goal unguarded.

Egypt broke and Salah chased down a through ball but couldn't force it into the empty net from a tight angle.

It didn't matter. Full time came about a minute later and Egypt went through to a semifinal against host Cameroon, which is a repeat of the 2017 African Cup final that was won by Cameroon.

Egypt hasn't won the African Cup since its record-extending seventh title in 2010. Salah made his debut for the national team the year after that triumph and is still searching for a first major title with his country.

Eriksen Set For Playing Return After Signing For Brentford

Agencies

LONDON: With a thumbs up to the camera, Christian Eriksen revealed his new team and planned return to playing — almost eight months after having a cardiac arrest on the field at the European Championship.

"I'm happy to announce that I've signed for Brentford Football Club," Eriksen said in Monday's social media video. "I can't wait to get started."

It will be a remarkable playing comeback to the Premier League for the Denmark playmaker, who has said he was essentially dead for five minutes after collapsing in the opening Euro 2020 game against Finland.

The uplifting signing was an early announcement on the final day of the January transfer window in the Premier League. Signing with Brentford until the end of the season, Eriksen is returning to England where he played with Tottenham until joining Inter Milan two years ago and winning the Serie A title.

The west London club will feel like home. The 29-year-old Eriksen is being reunited with Thomas Frank, the Brentford manager who coached him when playing for Denmark's under-17s team. He will also be the ninth Dane in



the club's squad.

Eriksen's contract with Inter Milan was terminated by mutual agreement in December since Italian regulations prevented him playing with the implantable cardioverter-defibrillator that was fitted. He was recently training to regain fitness at Ajax, the Dutch club where he began his career.

Brentford said it would "respect Christian's medical confidentiality" by not divulging further information beyond saying he only recently received coronavirus vaccines that allow him to comply with entry rules to Britain.

Eriksen is set to fly into London this week but not immediately train with Brentford.

Canada Stun US To Close In On Qatar World Cup Berth



Agencies

HAMILTON: Canada took a giant step towards their first World Cup qualification in 36 years on Sunday after scoring an upset 2-0 victory over arch-rivals the United States in CONCACAF qualifiers.

A Cyle Larin goal after just seven minutes and an injury-time effort from Sam Adekunbe secured all three points for the Canadians at a frigid Tim Hortons Field in Hamilton to extend the home side's lead at the top of the CONCACAF standings.

The unbeaten Canadians now have 22 points from four games with four fixtures remaining, pulling four points clear of the

USA who are second with 18 points.

Canada has emerged as the surprise package from Central America, North America, and the Caribbean qualifying region, and are now firmly on course for only their second trip to the World Cup after reaching the Mexico finals in 1986.

"We're turning into a football country," Canada's jubilant English coach John Herdman said afterward.

"(The USA) are a great team, a very good team, they had great quality today. But we matched their spirit.

"And that's what I said to our lads — we've got our own quality, and it came through."

Federer, Djokovic Praise 'Great Champion' Nadal

Tennis stars hail Spanish rival for becoming the first man to win 21 Grand Slam titles

Agencies

PARIS: Rafael Nadal's record 21st Grand Slam title, secured in an epic Australian Open final on Sunday was hailed by both Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic who had been tied with him on 20.

Nadal, 35, battled back from two sets down to defeat Russia's Daniil Medvedev 2-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 in a gruelling 5hr 24min in Melbourne.

It crowned an extraordinary effort from Nadal at the year's opening major, having to modify his game to compensate for a degenerative bone disease in his left foot that ended his 2021 season last August.

Federer, who came close to becoming the first to 21

when he lost in five sets by Djokovic in the 2019 Wimbledon final, missed the Australian Open recovering from knee surgery.

"To my friend and great rival @rafaelnadal, heartfelt congratulations on becoming the first man to win 21 Grand Slam titles," 40-year-old Federer posted on Instagram.

"A few months ago we were joking about both being on crutches, amazing. Never underestimate a great champion.

"Your incredible work ethic, dedication and fighting spirit are an inspiration to me and countless others around the world."

Djokovic's hopes of being the first to 21 were dashed when he was deported from Australia prior to the Grand Slam over vaccination issues.

However, the 34-year-old Serbian tweeted his congratulations — after he had first saluted Ashleigh Barty on her title win on Saturday.

"Amazing achievement. Always impressive fighting spirit that prevailed another time.

"Enhorabuena (Congratulations — followed by applause, trophy and thumbs up icons)."

gled titles," 40-year-old Federer posted on Instagram.

"A few months ago we were joking about both being on crutches, amazing. Never underestimate a great champion.

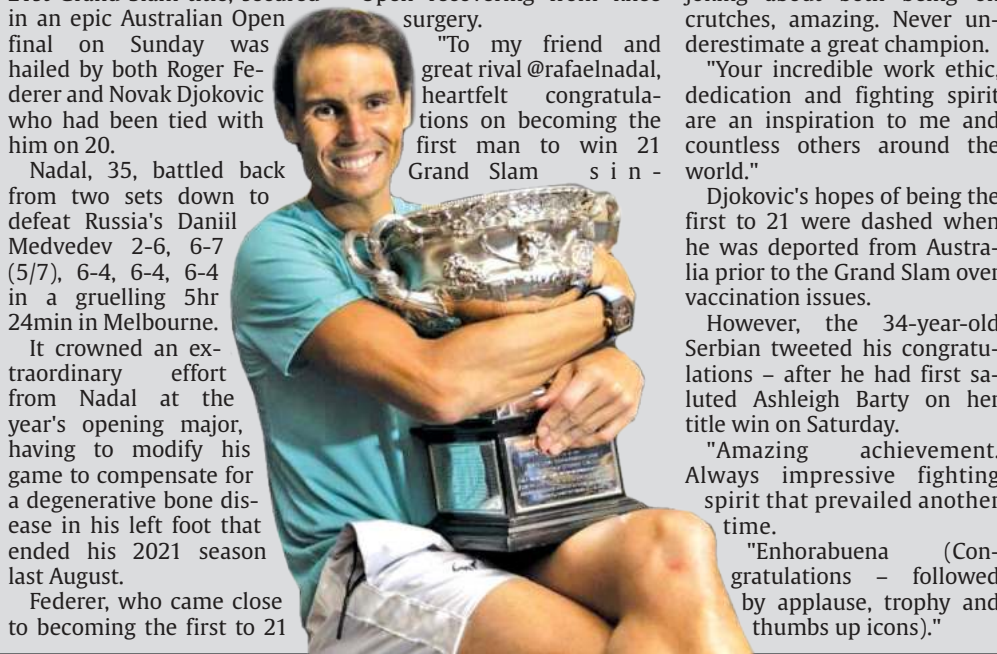
"Your incredible work ethic, dedication and fighting spirit are an inspiration to me and countless others around the world."

Djokovic's hopes of being the first to 21 were dashed when he was deported from Australia prior to the Grand Slam over vaccination issues.

However, the 34-year-old Serbian tweeted his congratulations — after he had first saluted Ashleigh Barty on her title win on Saturday.

"Amazing achievement. Always impressive fighting spirit that prevailed another time.

"Enhorabuena (Congratulations — followed by applause, trophy and thumbs up icons)."



More Than 100 Ex-Afghan Forces, Officials Slain Since Taliban Takeover: UN chief

Agenceis

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations has received "credible allegations" that more than 100 former members of the Afghan government, its security forces and those who worked with international troops have been killed since the Taliban took over the country Aug. 15, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says.

In a report obtained Sunday by The Associated Press, Guterres said that "more than two-thirds" of the victims were alleged to result from extrajudicial killings by the Taliban or its affiliates, despite the Taliban's announcement of "general amnesties" for those affiliated with the former government and US-led coalition forces.

The UN political mission in Afghanistan also received "credible allegations of extrajudicial killings of at least 50 individuals suspected of affiliation with ISIL-KP," the Daesh or Islamic State extremist group operating in Afghanistan, Guterres said in the report to UN Security Council.

He added that despite Taliban assurances, the UN political mission has also received credible allegations "of enforced disappearances and other violations impacting the right to life and physical integrity" of former government and coalition members.

Guterres said human rights defenders and media workers also continue "to come under attack, intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment and killings."

Eight civil society activists were killed, including three by the Taliban and three by Islamic State extremists, and 10 were subjected to temporary arrests, beatings and threats by the Taliban, he said. Two journalists were killed — one by IS — and two were injured by unknown armed men.

The secretary-general said the UN missions documented 44 cases of temporary arrests, beatings and threats of intimidation, 42 of them by the Taliban.

The Taliban overran most of Afghanistan as US and NATO forces were in the final stages of their chaotic withdrawal from the country after 20 years. They entered Kabul on Aug. 15 without any resistance from the Afghan army or the country's president, Ashraf Ghani, who fled.

The Taliban initially promised a general amnesty for those linked to the former government and international forces, and tolerance and inclusiveness toward women and ethnic minorities. However, the Taliban have renewed restric-

tions on women and appointed an all-male government, which have met with dismay by the international community.

Afghanistan's aid-dependent economy was already stumbling when the Taliban seized power, and the international community froze Afghanistan's assets abroad and halted economic support, recalling the Taliban's reputation for brutality during its 1996-2001 rule and refusal to educate girls and allow women to work.

Guterres said: "The situation in Afghanistan remains precarious and uncertain six months after the Taliban takeover as the multiple political, socio-economic and humanitarian shocks reverberate across the country."

He said Afghanistan today faces multiple crises: a growing humanitarian emergency, a massive economic contraction, the crippling of its banking and financial systems, the worst drought in 27 years, and the Taliban's failure to form an inclusive government and restore the rights of girls to education and women to work.

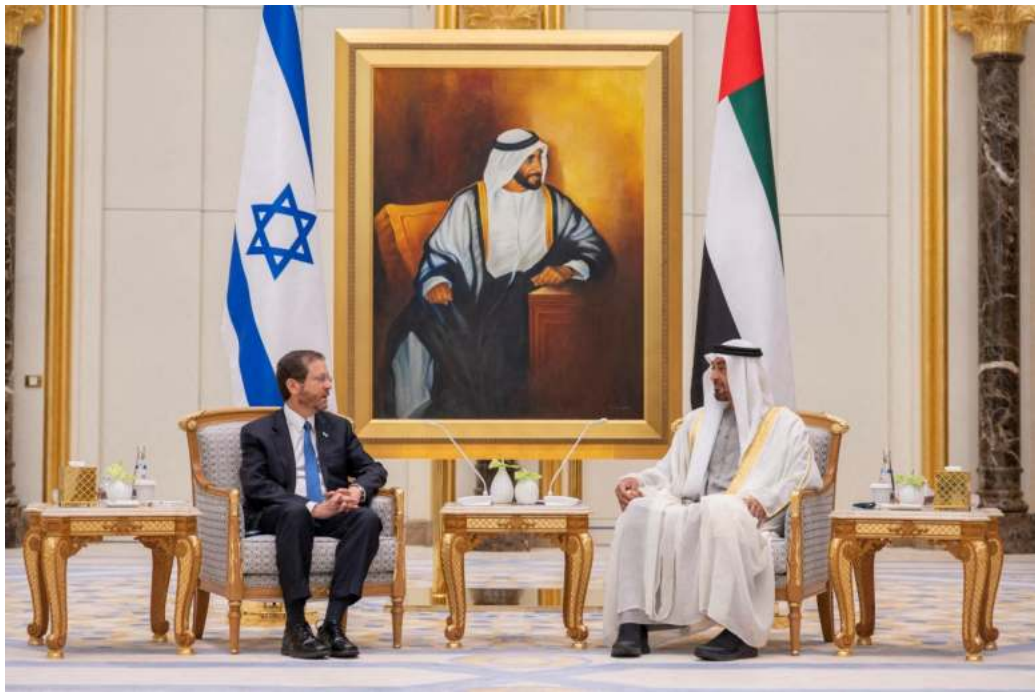
"An estimated 22.8 million people are projected to be in 'crisis' and 'emergency' levels of food insecurity until March 2022," the UN chief said. "Almost 9 million of these will be at 'emergency' levels of food insecurity — the highest number in the world. Half of all children under five are facing acute malnutrition."

On a positive note, Guterres reported "a significant decline" in the overall number of conflict-related security incidents as well as civilian casualties since the Taliban takeover. The UN recorded 985 security-related incidents between Aug. 19 and Dec. 31, a 91 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2020, he said.

The eastern, central, southern and western regions accounted for 75 percent of all recorded incidents, he said, with Nangarhar, Kabul, Kunar and Kandahar ranking as the most conflict-affected provinces.

Despite the reduction in violence, Guterres said the Taliban face several challenges, including rising attacks against their members.

"Some are attributed to the National Resistance Front comprising some Afghan opposition figures, and those associated with the former government," he said. "These groups have been primarily operating in Panjshir Province and Baghlan's Andarab District but have not made significant territorial inroads" though "armed clashes are regularly documented, along with forced displacement and communication outages."



Israeli President Isaac Herzog meets with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi. Reuters

UAE Intercepts Houthi Missile As Israeli President Visits

Agenceis

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) says it has intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile fired from Yemen as the Gulf state hosted Isaac Herzog on the first-ever visit to the country by an Israeli president.

The UAE's defence ministry said on Monday the debris of the missile fell on an uninhabited area. It did not say whether the missile was targeting the UAE's capital Abu Dhabi or Dubai.

The country's civil aviation authority said air traffic was continuing as usual, and all flight operations were operating normally despite the attack, the state news agency (WAM) reported.

The Emirati ministry of defense said in a post on Twitter that it had destroyed a launch site for one of the missiles that landed on the UAE. It did not give further information about the exact location of the site.

Within hours, Yemen's Houthi group confirmed it had fired a number of ballistic missiles at Abu Dhabi, and had also fired several drones at Dubai, the regional business hub.

The headquarters of international companies in the UAE will be targets of attacks in the coming period, a military spokesman of the Iran-aligned group, Yahya Saria, said in a television address, reiterating previous warnings.

"We hit specific and important targets in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi with a number of ballistic missiles, as well as sensitive targets in the Emirate of Dubai with a number of Samad-3 drones."

"The Yemeni armed forces confirm that the UAE enemy state will remain unsafe as long as the tools of the Israeli enemy remain in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, launching aggression against our dear country," said Saria.

The UAE is part of a Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen, in a seven-year-old conflict that has left tens of thousands of people dead, displaced millions and spawned what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

A Houthi military spokesman said late on Sunday on Twitter the group would disclose within hours details of a new military operation deep inside the UAE. He gave no further details.

The Houthis launched an attack on Abu Dhabi on January 17 in which three people died, and a second missile assault a week later, after UAE-backed Yemeni armed groups intervened on front lines where the Houthis had made inroads last year.

The UAE's defence ministry said fighter jets of the Saudi coalition had destroyed missile launchers that were located in Yemen.

Last week, the Gulf state's public prosecutor said it had summoned several people for sharing videos showing defence systems intercepting a previous missile attack by the Houthis. There were no social media posts on this interception.

Monday's attack came as Herzog discussed security and bilateral relations with the UAE's de facto ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in Abu Dhabi.

Herzog reportedly spent the night in Abu Dhabi. He will continue his UAE visit despite the Houthi attack, his office said.

The United States, which warned of the risk of continued missile or drone attacks in a travel advisory last week, condemned the attack.

"While Israel's president is visiting the UAE to build bridges and promote stability across the region, the Houthis continue to launch attacks that threaten civilians," State Department Spokesman Ned Price said in a tweet.

The UAE, along with Bahrain, signed US-brokered normalisation agreements with Israel, dubbed the "Abraham Accords", in 2020.

The UAE has reduced significantly its military presence in Yemen since 2019, but it still holds sway via large local forces that it has built and armed.

Commenting on the escalation, James Farwell, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, said Yemen's conflict has reached a stalemate because neither has been able to prevail militarily.

"The situation is becoming more dangerous because the nature of weapons being used in the attacks is becoming more deadly," said Farwell.

"The Houthis are trying to bring pressure to the Saudi-UAE coalition to bring things to a favorable close. The only way this [conflict] is going to be resolved is if the Saudi, the Emiratis and Houthis sit directly to together and work things out."

"There isn't any alternative because neither side has been able to gain an advantage over the other," he added.

Saudi Arabia's First Yoga Festival Offers Mindfulness And Meditation

Agenceis

JEDDAH: More than 1,000 people from across Saudi Arabia flocked to Juman Park in King Abdullah Economic City on Saturday to take part in the country's first yoga festival.

The event was organized by the Saudi Yoga Committee, with the participation of people aged between 10 and 60 delving into a variety of activities, yoga styles, and the art of mindfulness.

It began with yoga classes on the lawn. Murali Krishnan led the adults, while Sara Alamoudi led the children.

Festival participants had the chance to practice yoga, watch different performances, and enjoy demonstrations by yoga studios and learn about the services they provided.

There were more than eight hours of classes on offer during the one-day event from Saudi and international yoga masters, and lectures.

The day was filled with positive energy and acceptance, with many people choosing to sit and relax in the shade where mats, pillows, and rugs were available.

The president of the Saudi Yoga Committee, Nouf bint Muhammad Al-Maroufi, said she was overwhelmed by the number of visitors and the energetic, positive response.

She said yoga had become an

increasingly widespread therapy deployed to maintain wellness and alleviate a range of health problems and ailments.

In her address to visitors, she said that Saudi Arabia was witnessing a remarkable development in all sectors and also in the quality of life due to great support from the government.

"The festival was a great success and I am happy that not only Saudis welcomed but also embraced our thoughts on yoga, which was the sole purpose of the event," she told Arab News. "We want to promote yoga to families and encourage it in the country. We want Saudis to start their day with yoga, which does not take more than 20 minutes a day, which anyone can easily spare."

People's reactions to the event were also positive.

"What a great festival!" 38-year-old Sara Al-Madani commented. "So well laid out and organized, with excellent instructors! (I) praise everyone, including all who attended this great day. I look forward to next year!"

Pediatrician Uday Qurashi, who began his yoga journey purely for fitness purposes during lockdown, expressed his delight with the festival. "I am so happy to see this happening here in Saudi Arabia. It is so nice to hear that yoga has been established in the Kingdom."

Call For PUBG Ban After Pak Teenager Shoots Dead 4 Of Family

Agenceis

LAHORE: Pakistani police called Monday for the wildly popular PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) game to be banned after a teenager confessed to killing four members of his family in a rage after bingeing for days playing online.

Police said Ali Zain shot dead his mother, two sisters and a brother on January 18, and claimed under questioning at the weekend that the game had driven him to violence.

"This is not the first incident of its nature," police investigator Imran Kishwar told reporters in the eastern city of Lahore, adding "so we have decided to recommend a ban".

PUBG is an online multiplayer "battle royale" game in which the winner is the last survivor.

Kishwar said Ali, 18, lived in complete isolation in his room and was addicted to the game. Dawn newspaper quoted a La-



hore police officer as saying Ali "fired at his family thinking that they will also come back to life, as happened in the game".

Often likened to the blockbuster book and film series "The Hunger Games", PUBG has become one of the world's most popular mobile games.

Telecoms authorities in Pakistan have previously temporarily blocked access to the game after complaints about its violent content.

PromotedListen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com

The game has been banned -- briefly or permanently -- in several other countries, including India and China.

Cyberattacks increasingly hobble pandemic-weary US schools

AGENCEIS

ALBUQUERQUE: For teachers at a middle school in New Mexico's largest city, the first inkling of a widespread tech problem came during an early morning staff call.

On the video, there were shout-outs for a new custodian for his hard work, and the typical announcements from administrators and the union rep. But in the chat, there were hints of a looming crisis. Nobody could open attendance records, and everyone was locked out of class rosters and grades.

Albuquerque administrators later confirmed the outage that blocked access to the district's student database — which also includes emergency contacts and lists of which adults are authorized to pick up which children — was due to a ransomware attack.

"I didn't realize how important it was until I couldn't use it," said Sarah Hager, a Cleveland Middle School art teacher.

Cyberattacks like the one that canceled classes for two days in Albuquerque's biggest school district have become a growing threat to US schools, with several high-profile incidents reported since last year. And the coronavirus pandemic has compounded their effects: More money has been demanded, and more schools have had to shut down as they scramble to recover data or even manually wipe all laptops.

"Pretty much any way that you cut it, incidents have both been growing more frequent and more significant," said Doug Levin, director of the K12 Security Information Exchange, a Virginia-based nonprofit that



helps schools defend against cybersecurity risk.

Precise data is hard to come by since most schools are not required to publicly report cyberattacks. But experts say public school systems — which often have limited budgets for cybersecurity expertise — have become an inviting target for ransomware gangs.

The pandemic also has forced schools to turn increasingly toward virtual learning, making them more dependent on technology and more vulnerable to cyber-extortion. School systems that have had instruction disrupted include those in Baltimore County and Miami-Dade County, along with districts in New Jersey, Wisconsin and elsewhere.

Levin's group has tracked well over 1,200 cybersecurity incidents since 2016 at public school districts across the country. They included 209 ransomware attacks, when hackers lock data up and charge to unlock it; 53 "denial of service" attacks, where attackers sabotage or slow a network by faking server requests; 156 "Zoombombing" incidents, where an unauthorized person intrudes on a video

call; and more than 110 phishing attacks, where a deceptive message tricks a user to let a hacker into their network.

Recent attacks also come as schools grapple with multiple other challenges related to the pandemic. Teachers get sick, and there aren't substitutes to cover them. Where there are strict virus testing protocols, there aren't always tests or people to give them.

In New York City, an attack this month on third-party software vendor Illuminate Education didn't result in canceled classes, but teachers across the city couldn't access grades. Local media reported the outage added to stress for educators already juggling instruction with enforcing COVID-19 protocols and covering for colleagues who were sick or in quarantine.

Albuquerque Superintendent Scott Elder said getting all students and staff online during the pandemic created additional avenues for hackers to access the district's system. He cited that as a factor in the Jan. 12 ransomware attack that canceled classes for some 75,000 students.

The cancellations — which Elder called "cyber snow days"

— gave technicians a five-day window to reset the databases over a holiday weekend.

Elder said there's no evidence student information was obtained by hackers. He declined to say whether the district paid a ransom but noted there would be a "public process" if it did.

Hager, the art teacher, said the cyberattack increased stress on campus in ways that parents didn't see.

Fire drills were canceled because fire alarms didn't work. Intercoms stopped working.

Nurses couldn't find which kids were where as positive test results came in, Hager said. "So potentially there were students on campus that probably were sick." It also appears the hack permanently wiped out a few days worth of attendance records and grades.

Edupoint, the vendor for Albuquerque's student information database, called Synergy, declined to comment.

Many schools choose to keep attacks under wraps or release minimal information to prevent revealing additional weaknesses in their security systems.

"It's very difficult for the school districts to learn from each other, because they're really not supposed to talk to each other about it because you might share vulnerabilities," Elder said.

Last year, the FBI issued a warning about a group called PYSIA, or "Protect Your System, Amigo," saying it was seeing an increase in attacks by the group on schools, colleges and seminaries. Other ransomware gangs include Conti, which last year demanded \$40 million from Broward County Public Schools, one of the nation's largest.

☎ 7006779576

✉ adnanirshad935@gmail.com

adnan electronics

Deals in Sale & Service of All electronic Items

TVs

Refrigerators

Washing Machines

Air Conditioners

Microwave Ovens

Furniture Market Baba Demb Road, Near Hotel Golden View