



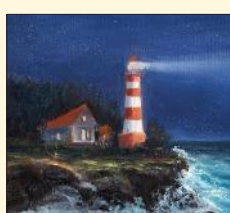
P9 BUSINESS

CS DIRECTS TOURISM DEPTT TO COMPLETE ALL PROJECTS UNDER CAPEX BY MAR 31

The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta Friday directed the Tourism department to focus on tourist comfort, convenience and satisfaction, improved travel guidance

P7 P'LL COME WITH A LIGHTHOUSE: A SAGA OF TWO K

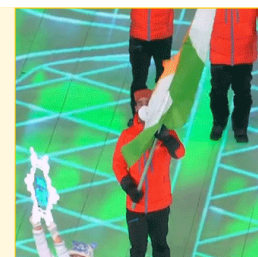
Sayan Aich Bhowmik is currently employed as an Assistant Professor in the department of English, Shirakole College, West Bengal, India. He is also the co-editor of Plato's Caves Online, a semi academic blog on life, culture,



P11 SPORTS

WINTER OLYMPICS OPENING: SKIER ARIF KHAN LEADS INDIAN CONTINGENT

Skier Arif Khan led a small four-strong Indian contingent during the Winter Olympics opening ceremony here on Friday amid a diplomatic boycott of



Covid Curve Flattening In J&K

1429 New Cases In 24 Hours, Lowest In 3 Weeks

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Daily Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir declined further on Friday with 1429 people testing positive for the virus, lowest in the last 24 days, while three more people succumbed to the deadly infection during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, Kashmir Valley reported 822 fresh cases of novel Coronavirus on Friday while the remaining 607 were detected in various districts of Jammu division, taking the number of people infected since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K to 443891.

In the Kashmir Valley, officials said, Srinagar reported the highest 266 new cases of Coronavirus, Baramulla 108, Kulgam 96, Budgam 86, Anantnag 64, Kupwara 55, Bandipora 47, Ganderbal 45, Pulwama 34 and Shopian 21.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu registered a maximum of 228 new cases of virus, Doda 135, Kathua 60, Udhampur 53, Kishtwar 47, Ramban 26, Reasi 23, Poonch 19, Rajouri 12 and Samba 4.

"Moreover, 4057 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 1437 from Jammu Division and **More on P10**

No Room For Complacency: LG

The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday said that though the number of daily positive cases have declined in the Union Territory, but there was no room for complacency. Sinha made these remarks while reviewing the Covid-19 situation in J&K in a series of meetings with members of Covid Task Force, DCs and SsSP **More on P10**

Posts Referred To PSC, SSB Before Oct 2019 Withdrawn

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant move the Jammu & Kashmir government has withdrawn all the posts referred to the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Services Selection Board (SSB) before October 31, 2019, for which selections have not been finalized till date.

In a communique, the General Administration Department has informed the PSC and SSB that the administrative council has decided to withdraw all the posts referred to PSC and SSB before 31.10.19.



2019 for which selections have not been made till date.

"All posts referred to JKPCS/SSB prior to 31.10.2019, for

which selections have not been finalized till date, as also the posts in which there are litigations and the cases are

pending in Hon'ble court shall be deemed to have been withdrawn with immediate effect," reads the decision of administrative council.

In the letter, the GAD has also directed all the concerned to implement the directions of the administrative council in letter and spirit under an intimidation to the GAD.

The administrative council headed by Lt Governor is the highest decision-making body in Jammu & Kashmir.

In the letter, the GAD has also directed all the concerned to implement **More on P10**

Police Arrest Journalist Fahad Shah

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Police on Friday arrested journalist Fahad Shah in connection with a case registered last month in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Fahad is the Editor-in-Chief of news portal Kashmir Walla.

In a statement issued here Friday evening, a police spokesperson said that it was reliably learnt by Pulwama Police that some Facebook users and portals have been up-loading **More on P10**

LG Calls For Pace In Jal Jeevan Mission



'Every Complaint From Citizens Regarding Water Supply Should Be Addressed On Priority'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and

Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday directed the Jal Shakti Department to speed up implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) project in the Union Territory and asked the officials to address every single complaint from the citizens over water **More on P10**

AC Approves Action Plans Of JPDCL And KPDCL

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday approved action plans of JPDCL and KPDCL aimed to reduce transmission and distribution losses through 100% smart prepaid metering in all the 20 districts across the Union Territory. The Administrative Council (AC), which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, **More on P10**

No Evening Flights From Sgr On Fridays, Weekends Till March

Press Trust Of India

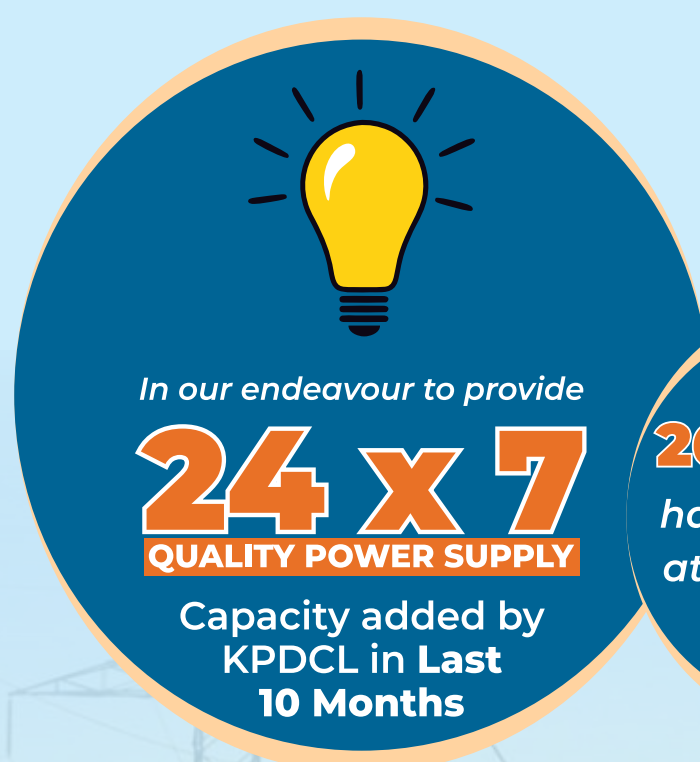
SRINAGAR: Evening flights to and fro Srinagar airport in Jammu and Kashmir will be suspended for three days a week for two months to carry out strengthening works on the runway, officials of Airport Authority of India said here on Friday.

We are commencing the Polymer Modified Emulsion work on the entire runway during the months of February and March. This

necessary to strengthen the runway for the operation of flight and also to control the wear and tear, director, Airport Authority of India (AAI), Srinagar Airport, Kuldeep Singh said here.

He said the work is planned on all Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in the months of February and March.

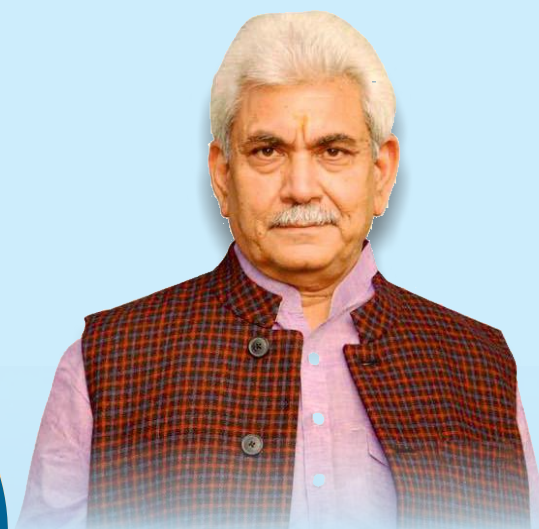
"We will ensure that the flight disruption is reduced to minimum by working only from 5 PM to 6 AM during the night time. **More on P10**



267.5 MVA
has been added
at Transmission
Level

304.9 MVA
at
Sub-Transmission
Level

81.92 MVA
at Distribution
Level



Shri Manoj Sinha
Lieutenant Governor, J&K

CAPACITY ADDITION

OVER NEXT TWO MONTHS

at Transmission Level
774 MVA

at Sub Transmission Level
262.9 MVA

at Distribution Level
39.42 MVA

CONSUMER FEEDBACK ON POWER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



"It is good development by KPDCL, New transformers being installed, Lt-line being improved, power in this winter was better because of infrastructure addition and prompt services by KPDCL.

-Mehraj u din (Umerabad, District - Srinagar)

CONSUMER FEEDBACK ON POWER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



"Thanks to KPDCL for infrastructure addition because of which curtailment hours were minimum in this winter. Developmental works - installation of transformers, cables, new stations will definitely help in providing 24x7 power supply. Highly Applaud KPDCL.

-Ajaz Ahmed (SA Colony District - Srinagar)



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Saturday| 05-02-2022

2

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER LEFT RIVER WORKS DIVISION

CANCELLATION NOTICE

The work Construction of Water Fountain at Major intersection / Circles (4 Spot) tendered vide The tender notice No: 43 of 2021-22 under endorsement No: SMC/EELR-WD/3087-3097 dated 10-12-2021 is hereby cancelled due to receiving of single tender on scheduled date and time.

No:- SMC/EELRWD/3711-3718
Dated:- 02/02/2022

Executive Engineer
Left River Works Division
Srinagar Municipal Corporation

DIPK-NB-6894/21

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CITY ROADS (SMC) DIVISION SRINAGAR.

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDERS.
NIT No:- E-NIT/71/CRD/SMC/SGR/2021-22 DATED: 03-02-2022.

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of J&K, e-tenders (in Single cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for below mentioned work:-

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Restoration of approach road to Pathan Bagh taking off from Main road Syed Rahman Shah to filtration plant at Brane Nishat.	3.74	200/-	12 Days	DEE CLASS	Internal sources

Position of AAA: **Accorded.**
Authorization Issued By: **Accorded vide Commissioner SMC's order no. SMC/Plg/2021-22/1814-18, DATED: 03-01-2022**
Position of TS: **Accorded**

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

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice	03-02-2022.
2. Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM 04-02-2022 10:00 A.M TO 09-02-2022 10:00 A.M
3. Bid Submission Start Date	04-02-2022 FROM 10:00 A.M
4. Bid Submission End Date	09-02-2022 UPTO 4:00 P.M
5. Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	10-02-2022 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar.

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar (tender receiving authority), by simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury Challan Receipt and bid security Declaration as per format attached.
3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar, (Tender receiving authority).
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
5. As per the circular issued by the Govt. of Union Territory of J&K Finance Department vide No.A/Misc(2018)-II-895/J dated 22.12.2020.
- (a) All the bidders have to submit bid security declaration instead of bid security deposit (Earnest money) which shall be duly signed by the bidder with full residential address, Card registration details & active Phone / Cell Nos. Form of bid security declaration attached as Annexure-A.
- (b) The lowest bidder (LI) also called the successful Bidder has to produce a performance security amount equal to 3% (Three percent) of the contract value in the shape of CDR / FDR immediately after the opening of financial bids, but prior to fixation of contract. The same shall be released after successful completion of the Defect Liability Period (DLP).
- (c) In case of abnormally low bids, the tender inviting Authority reserves the right to ask from the bidder for additional performance security with the approval of the next higher Authority which shall be binding upon the bidder in such case.
6. If any bidder / tenderer withdraws/ modified his bid during the period of validity etc, the Department is at liberty to suspend the bidder for one year or as shall be deemed suitable by the tender inviting Authority. Same shall hold good if the bidder fails to produce performance security within the specified time.
7. The successful bidder (LI) shall have to furnish hard copy of the uploaded documents viz Registration card duly renewed, Valid GST Registration, PAN Card, GSTR-3B etc. along with Treasury Challan Receipt & Bid security declaration form (Annexure-A) in original.
8. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- (a) Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- (b) To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
- (c) The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- (d) Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

(e) Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

B (f)	Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.
DOC-1 CLEAR SCAN COPY OF CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION CARD DULY RENEWED. (2021-2022)	DOC-2 CLEAR SCAN COPY OF TREASURY CHALLAN Note: The Date of Treasury Challan should be after the published date of NIT/ Fresh NIT, any Treasury Challan which is before the date of published NIT shall be summarily rejected.
	DOC-3 Scanned Copy of :- 1. PAN Card 2. Copy of GSTIN Registration 3. GSTR-3B Return of previous Quarter to the issued date of NIT i.e, December 2021 or after that
	DOC-4 CLEAR SCAN COPY OF BID SECURITY DECLARATION FORM (ANNEXURE - A) duly signed (Refer para 5(a) (b) above)

(g) The bidder should upload all the necessary documents details given above in One "01" No. PDF file.

(h) All the bids online shall be open in light of Finance Department communication O.M No: A/24 (2017)-651 Dated: 07-06-2018 and No. A/Misc(2018)-II-895/J dated 22.12.2020.

- Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option
9. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
10. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate / (%) percentage rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
11. Price escalation and Taxes:- The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder (item rate basis or %age rate basis whatever the case may be) entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work unless otherwise specified. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
12. In case of CRF and any other specified project, the relevant guidelines/ standard bidding document shall be followed.
13. All bidders shall upload the information and documents with their bids such as Copies of original documents defining constitution / legal status, place of registration and Principal place of Business, GST Registration and PAN Card.
14. The bidder at his own responsibility and risk should visit and examine the site of work and its surroundings before submission of bid.
15. A pre-bid meeting will be held to clarify any issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage by the bidders. However participation in the pre-bid meeting shall not be binding on bidders.
16. All documents relating to the bid shall be in the English language.
17. The bidders shall have to quote the rate percentage in the prescribed rate percentage column in case of percentage based BOQ and in case of item rate based BOQ if the bidder does not quote rate for any item or items of the BOQ, cost of such item / items shall be deemed to be part of overall / total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item / items in the allotment of contract.
- NIT/71/CRD/SMC/SGR/2021-22-e-tendering/
DATED:- 03-02-2022.

Executive Engineer,
City Roads (SMC) Division,
Srinagar.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B SPECIAL SUB-DIVISION URI

(NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER)

eNIT No.104 of 2021-22/5050-56/R&B SSD Uri e-tendering

DATED: 04-02-2022

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

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of Completion (In Days)	Date and Time of Opening of Bid	M.H. of Account	Class of Contract
1.	Repairs/Renovation and minor works of Executive Engineer's Residential quarter at lagama Uri.	4.99	200/=	10000/=	12 days	12.02.2022 at 11:00 A.M	3054 M&R	"DEE"
2	Construction of Crate Wall at Salamabad link Road.	2.50	200/=	5000/=	10 days	12.02.2022 at 11:00A.M	3054 M&R	"DEE"
3	Re-Construction of R-Wall Chowkidar Mode at Nambla A.	2.50	200/=	5000/=	10 days	12.02.2022 at 11:00A.M	3054 M&R	"DEE"

Position of A.A.A - Accorded
Position of funds - Available

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

1. Date of Issue of tender Notice.	04-02-2022
2. Period of Downloading of Bidding Documents.	From 04-02-2022, 10.00 A.M. to 11-02-2022 upto 4.00 P.M.
3. Bid Submission Start Date.	04-02-2022 From 10.00 A.M.
4. Bid Submission End Date.	11-02-2022 upto 4.00 P.M.
5. Date and Time of Opening of Bids (Online).	12-02-2022 at 11.00A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri (Tender Inviting Authority).

3. All bidders have to submit performance security as per circular of Finance Department Vide Chief Engineer PWD (R&B) Kashmir's endorsement No. CE/R&B/HD/32857-92 dated: 01-01-2022.

4. The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG and Treasury Challan within 02 days before fixation of contract and 2% CDR shall be released after receipt of 5% performance security and same shall be released after DLP is over.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on website www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Bids of Responsive Bidders shall be opened online on same website in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri, (Tender Receiving Authority).

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

7. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

- 7.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- 7.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

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

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

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

Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

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

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

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

a.

18. The tender/ bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill the requirements as laid down in N.I.T and SBD

19. All other terms and conditions shall be strictly as per PWD Form 25 (Double Agreement Form) and SBD circulated by Chief Engineer, P.W (R&B) Department, Kashmir's Letter No. CE/RBK/HD/29158-88, Dated: 10-02-2018.

No.-SSDU/2021-22/5050-56

Dated: 04-02-2022

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
R&B Special Sub-Division, Uri.

DIPK-17588/21

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM, KASHMIR

e-mail: ddtregl23@gmail.com Tel/Fax 019402502279/2502281

Sub: Out-sourcing of Departmental assets - Insurance of the properties thereof.

CIRCULAR

During last year due to some fire incidents, few assets of the Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir have got gutted, when these assets stood out-sourced for running catering facilities for the tourists. Thus not only the Government has suffered losses but the out-source agencies too have lost their investment and livelihood earning opportunities. Besides, it has hampered the basic objective of the Directorate to provide standard facilities to the tourists at places where private sector do not venture out to make huge investments.

The out-source contract among other things provide for getting the property insured through nationalized insurance companies. However due to some technical issues, the insurance companies did not entertain third party applications in this regard.

The matter has been examined in light of the communication from The New India Assurance Co. Ltd, Residency Road, Srinagar on the subject and it has been decided that the assets already out-sourced by this Directorate, shall be got insured in the name of the Director Tourism, Kashmir, as per terms and conditions already incorporated in the contracts and/or as per the directions in the circular. This would guarantee that in the event of any mishap, if the assets get damaged, the Department and the out-source agency would immediately restore the asset at once.

Therefore, the out-source agencies are hereby directed to approach any Nationalized Insurance Companies with an authority letter from this Directorate that the assets in question be insured in the name of the Director Tourism, Kashmir.

All the Resort Officers of the Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir shall ensure that all the assets falling in their jurisdiction are immediately got insured by the respective out-source agencies in the name of Director Tourism, Kashmir. However, the premium on this account shall be borne by the out-source as per terms and conditions of the contracts and shall submit the insurance documents in the Directorate within 15-days from the issuance of this circular.

DIPK-17525/21

Director Tourism
Kashmir

No.PS/Estates/187/DTK/505 dated:03-02-2022

از نیابت مٹن باجلاس ڈاکر احمد کھانہ نیاصحاب نائب تحصیلدار بیت ناگ مٹن
مضمون درخواست منجانب: فیضان احمد جام ولد علی محمد جام ساکد کرنگہ تحصیل مٹن ضلع بیت ناگ
بغرض حصول SC/OBC سرٹیفکیٹ
اشھار برادر آگاہی بر خاص وعام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول SC/OBC سرٹیفکیٹ
دفتر پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں
ہے کہ ساکن کا کنبہ بذیل افراد ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	نام ولد بیت	عمر	پیشہ	آمدنی
01	علی محمد جام ولد عبدالرحمان جام	50 سال	مزدوری	6000/=
02	شونی زید علی محمد جام	48 سال	گھریلو کام	
03	احمد علی ولد علی محمد جام	19 سال	زیر تعلیم	
04	فیضان احمد پیر علی محمد جام	16 سال	زیر تعلیم	
05	سہارا احمد علی محمد جام	13 سال	زیر تعلیم	

اس کے علاوہ اوکوئی افراد کنبہ میں موجود ہیں۔ ورکنڈ کی مابین آمدنی 82000/= ہے اب
سرٹیفکیٹ مندرجہ کی اجرائی میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو ایک ہفتے کے اندر اندر دفتر
ہذا میں پیش کریں۔ معیار گذارنے کے بعد کوئی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
ma تحریر الصدو نائب تحصیلدار۔

از نیابت دیپکام باجلاس نائب تحصیلدار دیپکام

مضمون درخواست منجانب: ملک مہین فاروق، ملک مصباح فاروق اولاد فاروق احمد ملک
ساکد کرنگہ تحصیل ضلع بیت ناگ
بغرض حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ
اشھار برادر آگاہی بر خاص وعام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول (RBA) ایک
وارد اسرٹیفکیٹ دفتر پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی
جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن کا کنبہ بذیل افراد ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	نام ولد بیت	عمر	پیشہ	آمدنی
01	فاروق احمد ولد احسان ملک	50 سال	سرکاری ملازم	LPC
02	داشادہ او زو جب فاروق احمد ملک	48 سال	گھریلو کام	
03	ملک مہین فاروق ولد فاروق احمد ملک	13 سال	زیر تعلیم	
04	ملک سوزید فاروق ولد فاروق احمد ملک	08 سال	زیر تعلیم	
05	ملک مصباح فاروق دفتر فاروق احمد ملک	18 سال	زیر تعلیم	

اس کے علاوہ اوکوئی افراد کنبہ میں موجود ہیں۔ اور ورکنڈ کی مابین آمدنی 737648/= ہے اب
سرٹیفکیٹ مندرجہ کی اجرائی میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو ایک ہفتے کے اندر اندر دفتر
ہذا میں پیش کریں۔ معیار گذارنے کے بعد کوئی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
ma تحریر الصدو نائب تحصیلدار۔

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the RC of my Vehicle Bearing Regd No:- JK03B-4438. 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 ANANTNAG. Within a period of seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name :- Gulam Mohd Dar
S/o :- Mohd Akram Dar
R/O :- Dooru Anantnag

ma

Office of The Regional Transport Officer Kashmir NOTICE



Whereas, a joint application has been received from Shri Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh S/O Gh Qadir Sheikh R/o Budshah Nagar Natipora (Transferor) and Shri Showkat

Ahamd Dar S/O Mohammad Ramzan Dar R/O Dar Mohalla Humhama Sgr (Transferee) for transfer of Maxi Cab carriage route Permit No 5548/MC Covering Vehicle No JK01N-5015

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 Sd/-
Dated: 31/01/2022 Regional Transport Office, fko Kashmir

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(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 05 February, 2001)

America Stands With India Against Chinese Intimidation, Says US



Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON: The US has asserted that it stands with India against Chinese intimidation after Beijing deputed a PLA officer, who was part of the military command that attacked Indian soldiers in the Galwan Valley in 2020, as a torchbearer for the Beijing Winter Olympics.

China on Wednesday fielded a regiment commander of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) involved in the June 2020 clash with the Indian soldiers in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley to carry the Winter Olympics torch in Beijing, prompting India to announce a diplomatic boycott of the opening and closing ceremonies of the mega sporting event starting on Friday.

Responding to a question on China's provocative move, State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters at his daily news conference on Thursday that the US has previously voiced its concern over Beijing's pattern of ongoing attempts to intimidate its neighbours.

"When it comes to the broader issue of India-China border situation, we continue to support direct dialogue and a peaceful resolution of the border disputes," Price said.

"We have previously voiced our concerns on Beijing's pattern of

ongoing attempts to intimidate its neighbours. As we always do, we stand with friends. We stand with partners and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security and values in the Indo-Pacific," he said.

The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's aggressive military manoeuvring in the resource-rich region which is also crucial for global trade and shipping.

China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. China also has territorial disputes with Japan in the East China Sea.

Meanwhile, two top American senators have slammed China for its decision to field the regimental commander of the PLA as the torchbearer for the Games Torch Relay.

"Another outrageous example of the #CCP's flagrant politicization of Beijing2022. Their decision to choose a soldier who participated in a 2020 ambush against Indian troops as torchbearer is appalling and deliberately provocative," Senator Marco Rubio said.

The senator from Florida said he stands with India.



TABLEAU EXHIBITING THE BUDDHIST CIRCUIT of the successful UDAN scheme and the role of women in the aviation sector this Republic Day 2022 have been declared as joint winners.

Owaisi Rejects Z-plus Security, Says 'Make Me A Category Citizen'

The Hindu Bureau

AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi said in Lok Sabha on Friday that he rejected the 'Z' category security accorded to him by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The MHA had sanctioned the security cover to Mr. Owaisi a day after two motorcycle borne men had fired bullets at his vehicle near Chajarsi toll plaza in Uttar Pradesh's Hapur district on Thursday evening.

The Uttar Pradesh police have arrested two accused — Sachin Sharma and Shubham. According to his social media accounts, Sharma is a member of the BJP. In his Facebook profile, Sharma describes himself as "Deshbhakt Sachin Hindu (patriotic Hindu)", with photographs of him with BJP leaders such as Lok Sabha member from Gautam Buddh Nagar, Mahesh Sharma and deputy chief minister of U.P. Dinesh Sharma.

Mr. Mahesh Sharma, however, distanced himself from the accused and told reporters that the BJP is against any kind of violence, adding that Sachin Sharma was



not a member of the party.

"Being a public representative anyone can get photographed with me. Strict action should be taken against him; I don't know him," Mr. Sharma said.

Deepak Bhuker, Superintendent of Police, Hapur said the accused had opened fire on Mr. Owaisi's convoy as they were allegedly 'hurt' by his 'anti-Hindu' statements.

A police officer said Sharma is resident of Badalpur in Dadri, near Delhi and Shubham is a resident of Saharanpur. The duo used an unlicensed pistol to attack Mr. Owaisi while he was returning to Delhi after an election campaign in Meerut.

A case of attempt to murder

has been registered against them and they have been sent to judicial custody on Friday.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader rejected the 'Z' category security cover that was extended to him by the government.

He asked the government to reflect why the youth have been radicalised and referred to recent hate speeches made against him at a Dharam Sansad in Haridwar.

"I appeal to you to stop this hatred. I don't want Z category security. I want to be an A-category citizen, at par with you all. Why was UAPA [Unlawful Activities Prevention Act] not invoked against those who fired at me?" asked Mr. Owaisi, adding, "I want to live, to speak. My life will be safe when the poor are safe. I will not get scared of those who shot at my car."

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said Home Minister Amit Shah will make a statement in the Lok Sabha on Monday on the issue and informed that the State government has arrested the culprits and the weapons and vehicles used in the attack have been seized.

BEING A PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE ANYONE CAN GET photographed with me. Strict action should be taken against him; I don't know him,"

Pegasus Spyware: Only 2 Devices Given For Probe Yet, Says Supreme Court Panel

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Just two persons affected by the Pegasus spyware have so far pledged to give their phones to the SC-appointed technical committee looking into the Pegasus issue, forcing the panel to extend the timeline for affected persons to turn up before it.

The technical committee appointed by the Supreme Court has now given more time, till February 8, for people to come forward and contact the panel if they suspected that their devices were infected by the Pegasus malware.

The development comes amid the fresh allegations in the Pegasus spyware issue.

A recent New York Times re-



port claiming that India bought Pegasus spyware as part of a USD 2 billion defence deal with Israel in 2017, triggered a major controversy last Saturday, with the Opposition alleging that the government indulged in illegal snooping that amounted to "treason".

In a public notice issued on Thursday in leading dailies, the SC appointed panel said that in response to its initial appeal to the public in January, only two persons have produced their mobile instruments for taking digital images.

"Therefore, the technical committee once again requests those who have reasonable causes to believe their mobile instrument is infected with Pegasus spyware to come forward and contact the technical committee with reasons as to why they believe that their mobile instrument may have been infected with Pegasus malware on or before February 8, 2022, by an email..." it said.

The previous notice last month had mentioned a timeline of January 7, 2022.

'Give Compensation To Families Of Covid Victims Within 10 Days: SC



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Friday directed all states governments and Union Territories to appoint dedicated nodal officer to coordinate with the member secretary of the state legal service authority (SLSA) to facilitate payment of compensation to family members of COVID-19 victims.

A bench comprising Justices M R Shah and B V Nagarathna also directed the state governments to give full particulars like name, address and death certificate to the concerned SLSA, as also complete details with respect to orphans, within one week from today (Friday) failing which the matter shall be viewed very seriously.

The top court reiterated that applications seeking compensation should not be rejected on technical grounds and if any technical glitch is found, the states concerned should give them opportunity to cure defects as the ultimate goal of the welfare state is to provide some solace and compensation to victims.

States should make all endeavours to pay the compensation to the victims within a maximum period of 10 days from the receipt of the claim, it said.

"Despite our earlier order directing all the state governments to give full particulars of the deaths due to Covid-19 registered with their portal and the number of persons to whom the ex gratia payment is made, it appears that most of the states have given only statistics and no full particulars are given."

"The object and purpose of our earlier order to give full particulars was to see that at least with respect to those cases which are registered with the state governments if they have not approached the appropriate authorities for compensation," the bench said.

"The legal services authority will reach them and see that they make an application and they act as facilitator as a bridge. Similarly the particulars with respect to orphans are not given. We direct all the state governments to give full particulars including their name, address, death certificate etc. to the concerned state legal service authority including full particulars with respect to orphans within one week from today failing which the matter shall be viewed very seriously," it said.

The Supreme Court said that the endeavour of legal services authority would be to reach to those sufferers/victims who have yet not approached for whatever reasons.

Delhi: Schools To Reopen, Lone Car Drivers Need Not Wear Mask



Press Trust Of India

Schools in Delhi will reopen for all classes from nursery onwards as will gyms with certain restrictions and drivers travelling alone in cars will be exempted from wearing masks, the city government announced on Friday while relaxing Covid restrictions in view of the dip in cases.

Night curfew will continue but from 11 pm instead of 10 pm, it said.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) decided to reopen higher education institutions and coaching centres along with schools for classes 9-12 from February 7, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

At an online briefing, he said the panel has also decided to resume classes from nursery to 8 from February 14.

Sisodia said teachers, who are not vaccinated, will not be allowed to come to schools.

The DDMA also allowed restaurants to remain open till 11 pm.

"A number of key decisions were taken during the DDMA meeting on Friday. The decisions were

taken keeping in mind the decline in coronavirus cases in Delhi. These decisions will help in ensuring that people's lives and businesses can come back on track," Sisodia said.

In another important decision, the panel exempted drivers who are alone in vehicles from wearing masks and also gave its nod to resumption of offices with 100 percent attendance, Sisodia said. "Schools will reopen for classes 9-12 from February 7 and for nursery to 8 from February 14. The classes will continue to be in a hybrid mode," Sisodia said.

The deputy chief minister, who also holds the education portfolio, said institutions of higher education and coaching institutes will also be permitted to open from Monday.

"However, colleges will be discouraged to hold online classes and should start offline teaching," he said.

During the DDMA meeting, chaired by Lt Governor Anil Bajjal, it was decided that gyms, spas and swimming pools will be permitted to open, he said, adding that the panel also gave its nod to organising B2B exhibitions.

SHORT TAKES

Controversial JNU Vice-Chancellor Jagadesh Kumar Appointed UGC Chairman



NEW DELHI: JNU Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar, whose tenure was marred by controversies, has been appointed as Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC). According to the Ministry of Education, Kumar has been appointed Chairman of the higher education regulator for a period of five years.

The post of the UGC Chairman fell vacant on December 7 after Prof D P Singh, who had taken charge in 2018, resigned upon turning 65. The post of the Vice-Chairman of the higher education regulator is also vacant.

"The Central government has appointed M Jagadesh Kumar as UGC Chairman for a period of five years or till he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is the earliest," a senior MoE official said. Sixty-year-old Kumar is currently holding the charge as acting V-C of the varsity after his five-year term expired last year. The ministry is yet to appoint his successor at the JNU.

"It is definitely going to be challenging. My priority will be to ensure the implementation of the National Education Policy. The sooner it is implemented, the better it will be for us. I will be meeting the vice-chancellors of universities across the country regarding the implementation of NEP. The NEP has several aspects like the multidisciplinary courses so we will work on those aspects," Kumar told PTI.

MP To Add 'Happiness' As Subject In School Syllabus



In 2016, Madhya Pradesh became the first state in the country to set up a "happiness department".

"In November (last year), we gave a presentation on the subject to 80-odd teachers or trainers. The following month, we interacted with 80 students from Classes 9 to 12 for five days and discussed the happiness book draft. Their response to the subject was very encouraging," he said.

The state School Education Department, All India Council of Technical Education, and other organisations are helping them on the project, Mr Argal said.

"After giving final touches to the books, we will send them to the State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) for clearance," he said.

The subject will be mandatory for students of all streams from Classes 9 to 12, he said. - PTI

MP To Rename Hoshangabad As Narmadapuram



BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the central government has given its approval to rename Hoshangabad district in the state as Narmadapuram. Similarly, the Centre has also given its nod to rename Babai town in the district as Makhan Nagar, after noted Hindi poet and journalist Makhanlal Chaturvedi.

"The Madhya Pradesh government had sent to the Centre a proposal to change the name of Hoshangabad to Narmadapuram and of Babai to Makhan Nagar, which has been cleared," Mr Chouhan said in a tweet.

"I express my heartfelt gratitude to honourable Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi for bringing to reality people's aspirations," he tweeted. The change in name will come into effect as soon as the state government issues a notification. According to a state government website, Hoshangabad had derived its name from Hoshang Shah Gori, the second king to Malwa of the Gori line who conquered it. Narmadapur was its erstwhile name.

Although there is no proper account of the ancient history of Hoshangabad district, its name appeared in historical records first during the reign of Sultan Hoshangshah Gori in 1405 AD, who built a small fort at Hoshangabad along with two others at Handia and Joga, it added. -PTI

DAK Welcomes Expert Panel Report To Ban Private Practice In Medical Colleges

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday welcomed the expert panel report to ban private practice of doctors in medical colleges.

A committee of medical experts constituted on the directions of Jammu and Kashmir High Court in its report has recommended a blanket ban on private practice of doctors in medical colleges.

The committee comprised of Prof Y.K. Chawla – Former Director PGI, Chandigarh, Prof Showkat Ali Zargar – Former Director SKIMS, Srinagar, Prof Kaisar Ahmad – Former Principal Govt Medical College, Srinagar and Prof Ravi Gupta- ex- Medical Superintendent GMCH, Chandigarh.

Urging JK government to implement the recommendations of the committee, DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan said private practice has eaten away our premier health institutions which not only are crucial life-saving assets, but also full time centers for medical education and research.

Dr Hassan said the academic character of the health institutions has got damaged and profession of healthcare has got affected by private practice.

“There is no provision of private practice of doctors working in teaching hospitals as they have a huge responsibility of patient care, teaching and research,” he said.

The DAK President said government doctor is a government servant all the 24 hours of the day, round the clock and does not cease to be one during the spare hours when he/she is away from duty.

“Permitting private practice at any time in the day is bound to affect the discharge of official duties by government doctors,” he added.

Vice-President DAK Dr Mir Mohd Iqbal said it is ironic that full-time government doctors are allowed to run private hospitals depriving poor and underprivileged of essential healthcare.

“Doctors concentrate their attention and work effort on private practice at the expense of public hospitals,” he said.

Mehbooba Seeks Debate On Issues Over J&K Raised By Rahul Gandhi

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday said the issues related to Jammu and Kashmir raised by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Parliament during the ongoing Budget session demand a serious debate.

The former chief minister while lauding the Congress leader's speech said he had

walked the talk by putting into perspective the constitutional values of India.

“Speaking truth to power in today's India is dangerous. Rahul Gandhi walked the talk by putting into perspective constitutional values that define India. His misgivings about GOIs strategic blunders in J&K that led to external challenges demand a serious debate & corrective measures,” Mehbooba tweeted.

Mercury Dips After Fresh Snowfall In Kashmir

Abid Bhat/KO



Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Many parts of Kashmir received fresh snowfall while others were lashed by rain, resulting in the drop in minimum temperatures across the valley, officials said on Friday.

Several places in the valley, especially in south Kashmir, received fresh overnight snowfall, the officials said.

They said Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir recorded six inches of fresh snowfall, while Kokernag received around four inches of fresh snow and other parts of the Anantnag district received three to six inches of snow.

Other areas in south Kashmir also received snowfall during the night. Some areas in Ganderbal district, in central Kashmir received three to four inches of snow, they said.

The officials said most other parts of the valley received rains. The weather is expected to remain

wet on Friday and is likely to remain dry on Saturday, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature decreased at most places in Kashmir last night.

Srinagar recorded a low of 1.6 degrees Celsius a degree up from the previous night, the officials said. The ski-resort of Gulmarg, in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 12.0 degrees Celsius, six degrees down from the previous night. It was the coldest recorded place in the valley.

Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius down from minus 1.7 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

The officials said Qazigund recorded the minimum of 0.2 degrees Celsius, while the nearby south Kashmir town of Kokernag recorded a low of minus 1.1 degrees Celsius.

The mercury in Kupwara in north Kashmir settled at a low of minus 0.4 degrees Celsius.

Kashmir is currently under the influence of a 20-day-long 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) which began on Monday after the Chillai-Kalan -- the 40-day harshest winter period -- ended.

Chilla-i-Kalan, which had begun 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 including the famous Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and 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.

After the end of 'Chillai-Khurd', a 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha' follows. However, both these periods are considered less harsh.

Restore J&Ks Abridged Constitutional, Democratic Rights: Masoodi In LS

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Member of Parliament from Anantnag Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi sought restoration of abridged constitutional and democratic rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

This he said, while speaking on the discussion on the motion of thanks on the address of the President in Lok Sabha.

Speaking in the parliament, Masoodi said the address has steered clear of issues concerning the people of Jammu and Kashmir, whose constitutional, and democratic rights were snatched on August, 5 2019.

He said the address falls short of expectations and is oblivious of a road map towards the restoration of the abridged constitutional rights and democracy in J&K. Expressing concern over the delay in the restoration of people's government in Jammu and Kashmir, he contended that India was a union of states and that every constituent unit of the country has a distinct character and identity.

He argued that there can be no trade-off between the political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and development. He further said that if officialdom was that fitting an alternative to democracy then the GOI should have handed over the state of affairs in all the five poll bound states to a coterie of few officials and justify it by flaunting developmental figures.

Drawing the attention of the house towards raging unemployment in J&K, Masoodi said, "There should have been a mention of the scathing unemployment rate in J&K, which is much higher than that of the country.

The address has given a miss to the regularization of lakhs of daily wagers, contractual, need based employees, youth corps, Rehbar e Taleem and Seasonal teachers. Even today, people's representatives in Kishtwar are staging protests on the denial of employment opportunities to local youth in central projects. We were expecting that that the address will give a road map to solve these issues but it has failed on that account as well," he added.

Referring to the underway delimitation process, he said that when the opposition benches raise the issue of Pegasus, the treasury benches evade the issue by citing the sub-juice nature of the matter. "Isn't the J & K Reorganization Act sub-judice? Isn't it unconstitutional to go ahead with the delimitation process, which is a consequence of the constitutionally suspect enactments of 5, August 2019. There are ten pleas challenging these enactments in the apex court. All the pleas have been entertained and passed on to a constituent bench. Why is this government then going ahead with this exercise, which is a consequence of such a law which is constitutionally suspect and facing judicial scrutiny," he said.

Masoodi said the ruling government was working on a single minded mission to change the demographics of Jammu and Kashmir. "Every single entity of J&K is under attack. Our land, our jobs, our culture; now it is the economy, which is under attack. Allowing custom free import of fruit into the country is a step towards crushing the market of J&K fruit. All these attacks are being carried out with a single mission to change the demographics of J&K," he said.

LG Takes Note Of PWD's Macdamizatn, Bridge Manual 2022

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Administrative Council (AC), which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, took note of the Public Works Department's J&K Macdamizatn (Execution and Quality Control and DLP Enforcement) Manual and J&K PWD Bridge Manual 2022.

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

The Department has compiled these manuals by incorporating the best practices in the field in accordance with the latest standards and endeavours to bring about uniformity in practices, promote transparency and ensure engineering perfection. To improve the quality of riding surface of J&K's road network, the J&K Macdamizatn Manual categorizes the road length in the Union territory as Inter-District Roads, Major Roads, District Roads, Rural Roads, Local roads, etc.

The Macdamizatn Manual further establishes a Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) protocol to be strictly adhered to during macadamization works. In case of any breach in quality, the contractor will also be made equally responsible for technical divergences due to negligence or execution of poor-quality works.

All Divisions will be mandated to review the performance of every macadamization work post-winter/monsoon season, so as to assess pavement distress and map the same for subsequent prerogatives under the Defect Liability Period (DLP). The Administrative Council also noted the J&K PWD Bridge Manual 2022 which standardizes the engineering practices in bridge construction to bring uniformity, transparency, and accountability in project execution.

Accordingly, the Department will be required to uniformly undertake Project Preparation, Feasibility Study, Preliminary Project Preparation, Detailed Proj-



'Major Push To Infrastructure, Development In J&K'

JAMMU: Central Government's unstinting support in accelerating the pace of development in Jammu and Kashmir has resulted in the transformation of Union Territory on all fronts, an official spokesperson said Friday.

He said that the transformation in every sector has brought economic enabling the UT to march towards a golden future as the government is making every effort to ensure that benefits of development reach all sections of the society.

“With an aim to improve the physical infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the government has accelerated the pace of execution of Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) projects. Official data suggests that the expenditure has reached upto Rs.34,653 crore ending October 2021 resulting in fast moving improvement of physical infrastructure here. As per the data, 21 major projects have been completed/substantially

completed and nine projects are likely to be completed by this financial year,” he said

In another significant achievement, the official spokesperson said that J&K has achieved 100% household electrification under Saubhagya scheme before the target date and 3,57,405 beneficiaries have been covered.

He said that the government has also embarked on path of smart metering and around 20 Lakh consumers shall be covered under Smart Metering Programme. As of now, the Installation of two Lakh meters is already under way and installation of another six lakh is being finalized under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme.

“Further to improve the power infrastructure as well as distribution in Jammu and Kashmir, Government is committed to increase power generation of J&K as the UT is vast potential for Hydroelectricity. Power projects with 3500 MW capacity are going to solve most of the

power woes in Jammu and Kashmir,” he said.

“Moreover, in Jammu & Kashmir, all the rural Anganwari centres, Schools and Health institutions have been provided with functional tap water connections. It is worthwhile to note that two districts, Srinagar and Ganderbal have provided 100% functional tap water connection to all households. UT is targeting provision of 100% functional tap water connection to all households by 15th August 2022,” he added.

As per the official spokesperson, to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected Habitations, all habitations over 1000 population (as per 2011 census) have been provided road connectivity and the habitations with 500 population will be provided roads by ending 2022. In respect of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), J&K has moved in overall ranking in the country from 9th place in 2016-17 to 3rd position in 2020-21.

avoid damage to the road surface, besides sprinkling of salt over frosted surfaces to improve surface friction.

However, if the road damage after a snowfall is attributed to poor macadamization work rather than snow clearance operation, the contract DLP Clause will be enforced, and contracting agencies will be made responsible to rectify reported damages due to their negligence.

The SoP further allows for the empanelment of private players with appropriate machines for snow clearance operations through incentives like a long-term contract for 10-15 years.

World Cancer Day Observed Across Kashmir Hospitals

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The World Cancer Day 2022 was observed across Kashmir hospitals on Friday during which awareness programs were held in the health care institutions.

In his message, Director Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather this year the theme of World Cancer Day is “closing the care gap” and

appealed to people to focus on preventive measures.

“We have to make it sure that people of all regions, sections, sects get equitable and affordable treatment at all the places and the government is working on it,” he said.

The director said that it has been seen certain life style changes and habits including cigarette smoking, use of alcohol, Paan, Gutka, etc. which are prevalent in society have con-

tributed to rise in cancer cases.

Dr Mushtaq said that people should strictly avoid these bad habits and have harmful consequences on human health.

“Whenever people feel symptoms or any abnormality in their body, they should report to the nearby hospital where they will be screened for the ailment,” the director said.

He said that NCDs clinics are working across hospitals in the valley where routine screening

of various types of cancers is being done.

Meanwhile, World Cancer Day 2022 was observed in all hospitals under the aegis of the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir to spread awareness, education about the disease.

Screening and awareness programs were held in various hospitals including at JLNH Hospital Rainawari, Srinagar where the focus was laid on awareness of the diseases.

GOVT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER ICPS KULGAM

Address: Mini Secretariat DC Office Kulgam Room No. 173,176.

Contact No: 01931295345, 9622296000, 7889354824, 9596369007, Email id:dcpuicpskulgam@gmail.com

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir U.T. the District Child Protection Officer Kulgam invites sealed Tenders affixed with Rs.5/- revenue stamp from registered dealers for Supply of below mentioned Items.

S.No.	Item Description	Cost of the item
01.	Rice Basmati	Rate per Plate
02.	Mutton (1 Piece/Plate)	Rate per Piece
03.	Chicken (1 Piece/ Plate)	Rate per Piece
04.	Rajma Dal	Rate per Plate
05.	Mixed Veg.	Rate per Plate
06.	Mattar Mash room	Rate per Plate
07.	Palak Paneer	Rate per Plate
07.	water	Rate per Bottle
08.	Tea with Biscuits	Kate per Cup
09.	Chicken Biryani full	Rate per pack

The tender responds shall reach to the office of District Child Protection Officer by or before 9th of Feb. 2022 upto 2.00 pm and will be opened on the same date or some other date convenient to the undersigned.

The supplier shall quote the rate including Vat and all other taxes. Octroi charges loads and lift carriages to deliver at the venue of training. The successful supplier has to supply the items on the dates of the training which will be communicated separately. The items should be standard and the undersigned reserves the right to reject or accept the tender without assigning any reasons.

The 1st lowest tender respondent has to produce an amount of rupees 5000/= as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR within Two (02)days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

In case of the last date of receipt of the tender respond to be a holiday the same shall be received on the next working day upto 2.00 pm.

No: DCPUK/2021-22/496-503

Date: 04/02/2022

District Child Protection Officer
Kulgam

GOVT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER ICPS KULGAM

Address: Mini Secretariat DC Office Kulgam Room No. 173,176.

Contact No: 01931295345, 9622296000, 7889354824, 9596369007, Email id:dcpuicpskulgam@gmail.com

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Short Tender Notice affixed with revenue stamp of 5 rupees are invited from the reputed transporters of District Kulgam for hiring of vehicle to the specified places and dates. Short Tender Notice should reach the office of undersigned within period of (05) days from the date of issuance of this quotation. The quotations should be free from cuttings and over writings. The tenders will be opened on 09th of Feb. 2022 in presence of the questioners whosoever wish to be present. The lowest bidder will have to lift employees from DC office Kulgam to D H Pora and back to Kulgam on 10th ,14th, 15th,16th and 17th of February 2022. Furthermore the selected bidder will also have to lift employees from D C Office Kulgam to Qaimoh on 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th of February 2022. The selected bidder shall reach the office of District Child protection Unit Kulgam at 9:30 am to lift the employees to the specified places.

No. DCPUK/2021-22/504-10

Dated: 04/02/2022

District Child Protection Officer
Kulgam

DIPK-17606/21

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Twitter Talks

“ If you are looking for the perpetrators of the despicable and horrible acid attack scroll through your twitter and see them. The real monsters are here attaching different angles and excuses to the ugly act to rescue the culprits and blame the victim”

@kabir_writes

“ I have never seen twitter as immediately mad as it is rn about the NYT wordle buyout. the NYT took one nice and simple thing that a lot of people really liked, a dumb bit of fun in our exhaustingly dark times, and implied that they'll stick it behind a paywall. exhausting”

@mcmansionhell

“ One last one on “hijab is patriarchal”. Well, no. All women feel the pressure of patriarchy on our choice of clothing, no matter if it's a hijab/dupatta/miniskirt/lipstick. The answer isn't to ban stuff or shame women & girls for their choice. Each one navigates their own course”

@kavita_krishnan

ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Municipality Or Machination?

Democratic mechanisms in Kashmir have proved to be an instrument for creating and strengthening vested interests rather than a true devolution of powers to the grassroots. Though also the most pronounced feature of the sub-continental variant of democracy, this phenomenon has severe ramifications in the unique political circumstances of Kashmir where it has emerged as a grotesque distortion of what thinkers of yore had actually devised, among other things, as a means to avert power being concentrated, and perpetuated, in a few hands. The government of the day may cry itself hoarse about the success of the panchayat polls, and build up excitement over the forthcoming municipal elections, but it cannot detract from the reality that both these institutions, revived after curbing militancy, have been turned into agencies for promoting and nurturing cabals, cliques, lobbies and syndicates with huge financial stakes in the state's governance, and its alleged development process.

This nexus between elected political representatives of whatsoever level and the execution of developmental works by private hands is at once the prime mover as well as the result of the functioning of the entire democratic system as it has been designed for Kashmir with motives not even remotely connected to the ideals of mass empowerment and accountability. A deliberate replication of this post-1947 paradigm as the state begins to emerge out of two decades of death and destruction is only a case of history repeating itself, first as tragedy and then as farce. Only that the consequences this time would be permanently irreversible in their damage to the fundamental democratic percept of power belonging to the people.

A cynical and resigned mass acceptance of political authority being necessarily a function of factors other than merit, probity, reason and sound argument should not be construed as an endorsement of the present reality, but as one of the many symptoms of a diseased polity which has long given up on ideals that drive and sustain the genuine progress of a people. Kashmir's present rulers may find an excuse in the past twenty years to justify their calculated cultivation of loyalties by dispensing political office and accompanying privileges, but they should not lose sight of what such policies eventually, and inevitably, entail.

The chief minister has announced municipal elections around September and October. The state's political leaders have less than two months to ponder over whether this institution is to be yet another layer for extending patronage and largess at the cost of the public exchequer- a practice the ruling parties specialize in – or a truly democratic way of involving the masses in addressing crucial civic issues. One may be forgiven for nursing grave doubts and suspicions about the intent and purpose of insisting on having corporators and councillors in the state's mushrooming municipalities, if only for the fact that the huge public funds spent on electing and maintaining the worthies, not to speak of the magnitude of attendant loot, could be utilized far better for equipping badly-cash strapped civic bodies with sufficient tools and manpower for ignored basic functions like scientific disposal of urban waste.

The article is an editorial from KO Archives and was originally published by October 11, 2022

Bachcho Ki Awaaz

‘Reopen Schools’

An Open Letter To Lieutenant Governor (J&K)



Sheeba

Based on conversations and inputs from students of Kashmir schools

I am Ainoor, one of the hundreds of J&K students who were in grade 6th when schools abruptly closed in August 2019. There was no online concept then. Today technically we are in 9th grade, but we still need to browse through 6th lessons to cope with 9th. I speak on behalf of almost all the students.

By the time winter vacations are over and hopefully if schools open in March, it will be more than 2.5 years that children in Kashmir have been deprived of our fundamental and constitutional right to seamless education and development.

Close to 1..0..0..0 days! A history in itself by far, for any region in the country, if not the world.

The biggest fear that gives me nightmares is - if this school closure continues for a year more, I will finish my 10th. Will I forever lose my only childhood opportunity of enjoying school days? I don't want to. No one wants to. So comes this sincere appeal to you.

We Respect Your Decision

Yes, we do understand, it may not be your deliberate or first choice to close our schools. Our safety and security are also your prime concern. It is your sole responsibility to avert any possible mishap proactively. There is no scope of concession available to you if anything were to happen to even one single child accidentally. The population and media will not spare any mercy if an untoward incident occurred in school premises. The safest option to protect us is to close schools. Every parent or guardian would do the same in your position.

Yet, I wish to take this liberty to walk you through our world that is confined within 4 walls for more than 2 years. You too were 9 or 14 years old

and so you will understand us.

We are Not Well

I just turned 14. But it doesn't seem to excite anything around me. The day seems just as it has been since a long

A SPACE WHERE WE SIMPLY ENJOY being children. Where we made great friends and had lovely teachers. Where we learnt new things, played and grew up together. Each day added a different experience in our lives. We looked forward to coming back the next morning

time - plain and lifeless. I sit near the window of my living room and try to wander my eyes around. The blanket of snow is equally bleak and cold hearted.

Memories of the only warm days of life fill my eyes as I hear me, my friends, their brothers and sisters prod cheerfully with our backpacks every morning. Laughter and banter fill the lanes on the way to our beloved school. The very sight of its gates opens us to a different world - hamari apni duniya.

A space where we simply enjoy being children. Where we made great friends and had lovely teachers. Where we learnt new things, played and grew up together. Each day added a different experience in our lives. We looked forward to coming back the next morning. Our Sunday ki chutti at home had a special flavour after a week at school.

Alas, we've lost our Sundays now! The smiling faces of classmates running around the grounds haunt my nights and the joyful noises seem a distant past. As we force ourselves to continue online sessions, very soon monotony drains our energy. No life. Kids do not enjoy virtual classes-when will adults understand this? If online can compensate for learning, why have schools at all? Why not buy every child a smartphone ?

All Is Not Well

Talking of smartphones, well, not everyone has access to it. Schools serve as levellers. With closures we are unknowingly pushing our society back to square one. Friends as Aisha now spend most of their day helping

their mothers in household chores or are babysitters. Soon they will be married off. The boys are forced to help their fathers in menial jobs to support their families. Will all Aishas never come to school again? Will Zul-fi end up in a garage and never get to pursue his dream in aeronautics? We now fear for ourselves too.

My friends share my angst, “We are missing out on so much exposure. Online is limited time, personal interactions with teachers are just not possible the way we could in schools. We have become lazy, our time wasted. The strongest support for us as teens are friends, not family, where we could share our problems and learn to deal with it. With schools closed, that is lost. We fear it's forever lost.”

We fear our schools will never open, for no one around finds it important. We fear our future is lost, because we are not the priority. We fear we will never be heard because our voices are powerless. We fear our needs don't matter to anyone even if tomorrow entirely depends on our wellbeing.

Progressive World Also Agrees

World Bank's Global Education Director Jaime Saavedra asserts, “There is no evidence that reopening schools has caused a surge in

THE BIGGEST fear that gives me nightmares is - if this school closure continues for a year more, I will finish my 10th. Will I forever lose my only childhood opportunity of enjoying school days? I don't want to. No one wants to

Covid-19 cases. There is no justification now for keeping schools closed in view of the pandemic and even if there are new waves, closing schools should be the last resort.”

There are equal reports by education teams at the World Bank to UNESCO, where experts have been warning against school closures now citing huge long-term losses.

Our Questions to You, Sir

With all these inputs, what is making it hard for our state to take this one right decision now?

We hear, couple of the states in India have come forward to reopen schools recently.

Why should not J&K take cue and announce a similar stand?

We fear if we will ever see the day when schools NEVER close except as a final resort. Just as hospitals or any Govt office or in many countries.

Will you help J&K lead India towards this unconditional commitment to children?

Our Earnest Appeal

Our hope now lies with you, Sir.

We are open for a dialogue with you, Bachcho Ki Awaaz! Let this incertitude about schools end for once and all. And please give us our schools back.

Let your promise be your gift to the children of J&K on the occasion of 73rd Republic Day.

To a person of vision whom we have heard to be a firm believer in progressive future and in childhood power.

With all our love, we earnestly pray you create this brave history.

Yours Sincerely,
Children of Jammu & Kashmir.

Sheeba
oasismovement.in
Based on conversations and inputs from students of Kashmir schools

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

Author works for character-building & child-centered school education reforms as also teens-youth-girl empowerment at J&K

BUDGET 2022: Growth Focus In Intent, Fiscal Consolidation In Spirit

Sonal Verma & Aurodeep Nandi

The Budget FY23 assumptions are largely realistic. Our real GDP growth assumption for FY23 is lower (7.8% vs. 8.7% in FY22), as we expect India's cyclical growth recovery to peak around mid-2022 and then enter a downward trend. However, we expect higher nominal GDP growth (13.3% vs the government's 11.1%) due to our expectation of higher inflation. The government has proposed direct tax buoyancy of 1.2 and indirect tax buoyancy of 0.5, which is realistic in our view: we expect direct tax buoyancy of 1.2 and indirect tax buoyancy of 0.6. The disinvestment target for FY23 has also been kept modest compared with more ambitious targets in the recent past, again suggesting a realistic assessment, especially given tightening global financial conditions and greater market volatility.

On the expenditure side, the allocations for fertiliser subsidies and rural employment will be higher than is currently budgeted, due to rising global fertiliser prices and higher demand for work under MGN-REGS, respectively. However, as we have observed in FY22, the government may struggle to spend the allocated amounts on

HOWEVER, WE SEE CHALLENGES AHEAD. First, the ability of the government—both the Centre and the states—to spend 2.9% of GDP on capex will face execution hurdles.

capex due to execution challenges, leading to some potential fiscal savings from underspend as the year progresses. Overall, we expect the government to meet its fiscal deficit target of 6.4% of GDP in FY23.

The budget is unambiguously focused on reviving growth, via higher public capex. Capital expenditure generally results in a higher growth multiplier, so the continued focus on infrastructure spending, including support to states to spend on capex, is important at a time when private capex is sluggish. For FY23, we estimate that the fiscal impulse from the budget will be around 0.77pp, marginally up from 0.68pp in FY22. Adjusting for the business cycle, the structural fiscal deficit (for the Centre) will rise to 6.6% of GDP in FY23 from 6.4% in FY22.

However, we see challenges ahead. First, the ability of the government—both the Centre and the states—to spend 2.9% of GDP on capex will face execution hurdles. Identification of projects, on-the-ground implementation, coordination with different agencies—all typically lead to a smaller amount being spent than allocated.

Second, if revenues disappoint or other expenses rise (higher subsidies or more allocation towards rural employment, for example), then there is a risk of the capex amount being pruned. Third, we see other growth challenges. India is currently in the midst of a business cycle recovery. However, we expect India's growth to decelerate from H2 CY2022 onwards, reflecting weaker consumption demand from low-income households (due to scarring effects and high inflation), weaker export growth and continued sub-par private capex due to low capacity utilisation. Rising oil prices (a negative terms of trade effect) and tighter global financial conditions are also growth headwinds. Hence, if the capex-led push is not fruitful, then the growth slowdown could be material. We currently expect GDP growth of 8.7% y-o-y in FY22 (reduced recently from 9.2% owing to the impact of Omicron) and FY23 of 7.8%, below the government forecasts (8-8.5%).

We continue to expect higher inflation and wider current account deficits, largely due to rising commodity prices, although

an expansionary budget may also play an incremental role. On inflation, while food prices appear in check, core inflationary pressures are rising across clothing, household goods and services and personal care items. Firms are passing higher input prices onto consumer prices. Domestic fuel prices are currently on hold, but will likely be adjusted higher after the state elections. We expect services price inflation to also rise as the economy opens. Overall, we expect CPI inflation to average 5.9% y-o-y in 2022, near the upper end of RBI's target range (2-6%). We expect elevated global commodity prices, high inflation and steady domestic demand to result in higher imports, widening the current account deficit to 2.6% of GDP in 2022, up from a deficit of 1.3% in 2021.

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

Respectively, chief economist, India and Asia e-Japan, and India economist, Nomura. Edited excerpts from Nomura's Global Markets Research: Asia Insights report dated February 2. The article was originally published on Financial Express

I'll Come With A Lighthouse

A Saga Of Two K

Takbeer Salati

Sayan Aich Bhowmik is currently employed as an Assistant Professor in the department of English, Shirakole College, West Bengal, India. He is also the co-editor of Plato's Caves Online, a semi academic blog on life, culture, poetry and politics. His poems have appeared in Kitaab, South Florida Poetry Journal and The Punch Magazine and most recently he was longlisted for the Ralph Angel Poetry Prize organized by Foundlings Press.

Sayan Bhowmik's book I'll Come with a Lighthouse follows its own path of the themes related to horror, pain, grief, sorrow, longing, and spatial living in the places he witnesses his 'existence' the most-Dhaka, Kashmir, Calcutta/ Kolkata to name a few. Uncomfortable with the blurred visions of partition from his memory that is associated with his lived spaces split in the vignettes of events which trace in him a sense of remembering and a feeling to write about his moving 'cities' in his book.

I was intrigued by the relation of the book with Kashmir, its striking reference to heaven "Welcome to heaven on earth" and the fact that in a conversation with Sayan, where he had told me that he had never visited Kashmir directed to the several emotions converted into the feelings of pain which threatens one to self-exile and realities crippling many expectations. The faces of partition, especially the continual presence of his grandmother's memory offers a fresh nostalgia for him and a distant echo of belonging both to the silence and the poems. And the recurring symbol of grandmother also becomes a way to heal and comfort in one of his poems, "Dhaka" he writes:

When I asked her if all this was true?

*That women were raped, killed
and raped again*

That men lost their manhood

Before they lost their lives

She would smile at the Sylhette moon

*Always an hour and a half
here and there*

Compared to the one in Calcutta,

HOME, THE WORD WHICH IS aroused by the depiction of such places of Kolkata and Kashmir reminds me of a familiar cultural belonging and travel stories between individuals and people belonging to groups of its remnants



SHAYAN AND I COME FROM TWO DIFFERENT CULTURAL traditions and backgrounds but given the strangest alliteration of the alphabet 'K'- that of Kolkata and Kashmir helps me to compose our idea of home, connecting us even further. So where do I meet Shayan in this volume? Or what has this volume spoken to me?

And say, "Some yarns were sharper than knives".

This volume begins with the section titled 'Longing and Solitude' evoking for its readers the matrix of people, cities, spaces all of which he knew one on one and through the tales told by his grandmother. The section, like others is a significant memory which maintains the decorum of his city of birth Calcutta and which he manages as the image of the sparkling moon:

'Moths travel between Calcutta and Kolkata, planning a trip to the moon'

On another scale of 'space and time' he first plays with the language of Calcutta and Kolkata bridging a gap between its

old and new factors and then compares both forms to an image of a 'moon'. The city for him is a representation of 'moon' which sparkles on everything and everyone despite the odds they settle themselves in their daily lives. The image of this 'home' the one which is compared to 'moon', is where I found myself too close to Shayan and his poetry. Shayan and I come from two different cultural traditions and backgrounds but given the strangest alliteration of the alphabet 'K'- that of Kolkata and Kashmir helps me to compose our idea of home, connecting us even further. So where do I meet Shayan in this volume? Or what has this volume spoken to me? These stories develop through the lens of

yearning, anecdotes, experiences, that sets out to the limitless idea and definition of home. Home, the word which is aroused by the depiction of such places of Kolkata and Kashmir reminds me of a familiar cultural belonging and travel stories between individuals and people belonging to groups of its remnants.

To say that the end of Shayan's volume dives deep into 'politics of Kolkata' would be a) plagiarizing the title from one of the sections b) going to place myself in the roots of Kolkata which I can't do because of the absence of lived experience. It can be seen in the perfect nostalgia which is brought up front close from the question that realizes a unique travel from memory to reality-my real-

ity. In the line it can be seen such as:

The post-box outside his door had been emptied of brown leaves that had been living there since autumn.

The first time I read the poem, 'The Last Time', I collected one of the former memories from when I had first been away from home for almost seven years. I was reminded of the time, I had said the same phrase for several events such endless 2008 Kashmir curfews, killings, violence and the unnoticed silence on the streets of Kashmir. Also, in his poem, 'Of Simple things', a sudden sense of yearning creeps in when he writes:

*No prospects of negotiations with the
former lovers*

Who spoke to like public address systems?

*When I wanted to do was stand like a
streetlight in the rains.*

He is a poet who longs for his language in the environment of strange but intriguing places reminding him of his own relation with them. In the section 'Political poem'; for a reader outside Dhaka the memory seems to revisit through different paradigm (s). The spatial images found in the poems evoke the image of a missing 'home' paralleled with the broken image of it. I met it midway in the unity of two K's. I'll end with one of my favorite "Choices":

The ones talking of madness in love

Not listed or classified

In western medical journals

*Will slowly tip-toe their way of your
study and pink*

Swahili for itself

Then stand in front of you,

Not for your approval

But for a salute of once institution.

Takbeer Salati was born and raised in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. She is currently pursuing her PhD on works of Saadat Hasan Manto. Her works have been earlier published in Samyukta fiction, Mountain Ink and in an anthology 'Covid Metamorphoses' available on Amazon. Her forthcoming short story is due in Muse edition January 2022. Her works have also been published in Life and Legends, Café Dissensus

Vinyl To Digital

Yes, Audiobooks Count As 'Real Reading'. Here Are 3 Top Titles To Get You Started

Brigid Wagner

Audiobook listening has been called a "silent revolution" in the publishing industry over the last decade. The US audiobook market is estimated to be worth US\$1.1 billion annually and is growing at a rate of more than 10% each year. Industry insiders say this is a fresh market, with 37% of Australian audiobook listeners only taking up the habit in the last year.

Audiobook downloads (up 15% on the previous year) were part of a pandemic boost for publisher revenues. Some are read by the authors themselves or by famous actors including Elizabeth Moss and Tom Hanks.

But are listeners really reading? If we challenge what we think we know about reading, audiobooks can be seen as not just a cheat's shortcut for catching up on classics and bestsellers, but a new way to engage more people with stories.

From vinyl to digital

Audiobooks are not new. The term refers to any authored print book vocalised through a variety of technologies — from records through to cassette players, and CDs. Digitally downloaded or streamed audiobooks have added a new dimension to this heritage technology, traditionally viewed as a compensatory tool for visual impairment or reading difficulties such as dyslexia and the rarer condition of alexia.

The surge in audiobook sales is likely a halo effect of the huge popularity of podcasts. But audiobooks are single-voiced, immersive listening experiences. Audiobooks do not include book-length texts "read" by an automated voice.

Audible (owned by Amazon) dominates the audiobook market and is now getting into the "original audiobook" game, meaning they produce the audio version rather than a book publisher. Other services offer



How we read

"born audio" productions. Storytel Originals bypass print as the starting point in the traditional book publishing cycle.

Librivox — a site dedicated to making "all books in the public domain available, narrated by real people and distributed for free" emerged from a group of friends reading aloud from Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent. It draws its 15,000 titles from Project Gutenberg's 60,000 free ebooks.

Unlike the commercial services, with narration and soundscapes on par with radio drama productions, the quality of Librivox audiobooks is highly variable. There are excellent recordings and "readings that sound as if they come from your worst nightmare of community theatre — either monotone or way over the top", according to one LA Times reviewer.

Reading is a complex process. Rather than a single cognitive act of decoding, we know from imaging technologies that reading engages several discrete actions within the brain's visual region. When the reader encounters an irregular letter-sound relationship, neurologist Stanislas Dehaene tells us the auditory brain region fires up as well.

When reading, we engage a bundle of brain skills that have evolved over centuries if not millennia. A recent study used fMRI scans to show people generate word meaning in the same way whether they see it or hear it. Though reading is still usually thought of

THE SURGE IN AUDIOBOOK SALES IS likely a halo effect of the huge popularity of podcasts. But audiobooks are single-voiced, immersive listening experiences. Audiobooks do not include book-length texts "read" by an automated voice

as a stationary, silent and solo practice, there is a long tradition of reading communally and aloud. This is not only reading by adults to children, but also among adults.

Streamed audiobooks available through smartphones enable reading-as-listening while mobile. The kinetic dimension of reading-as-listening while moving through space, commuting, walking or while driving is yet to be fully understood.

New reading, old storytelling

Audiobooks challenge established practices and assumptions about reading, but also remind us of the oral cultures of storytelling from which print cultures developed.

In Australia, streamed audiobook listening might offer a 21st century way of celebrating the affective, imaginative and kinetic dimensions of the Indigenous songlines that crisscross the continent, either by remediating print books or bypassing the written form altogether.

Listening to audiobooks may help to close the gender gap common with reading literature. The Reading the reader report from Macquarie University found that more than 60% of "frequent readers" are women. Of "non-readers", three quarters are men. Yet, men and women are equally likely to consume digital format books such as ebooks and audiobooks. Audiobooks may inspire more male readers to participate in book-clubs, which traditionally involve more women than men.

Audiobooks could also be used more in higher education. Princeton University Press

recently announced the release of their PUB audio series, signalling new educational formats for scholars and students.

Rather than being one act for one purpose, literacy researcher Sam Duncan argues reading is a bigger umbrella than we may have previously realised, under which sits a diversity of practices, involving different "skills, challenges and pleasures".

Listening-as-reading to vocalisations of books enables a level of imaginative and affective engagement that should not be diminished by our traditional assumptions.

Here are three great books to listen to:

1. **Carpentaria** by Alexis Wright

The audiobook of Alexis Wright's epic Carpentaria, is narrated by Noongar actor and dramaturg Isaac Drandich. Using a range of voices, he offers the reader-as-listener an enhanced experience.

2. **Taboo** by Kim Scott

Reading his own book, Kim Scott's gentle voice animates his sparse prose style beautifully.

The novel dramatises a brutal past event and its present day reckoning.

3. **The Odyssey** by Homer. Translated by Emily Wilson.

Claire Danes's vocalising of Emily Wilson's translation brings this ancient text into the contemporary world through plain speaking and her emphasis on satel-lite characters.

By arrangements with The Conversation

Measuring Climate Change: It’s Not Just Heat, It’s Humidity

Agencies

When it comes to measuring global warming, humidity, not just heat, matters in generating dangerous climate extremes, a new study finds.

Researchers say temperature by itself isn't the best way to measure climate change's weird weather and downplays impacts in the tropics. But factoring in air moisture along with heat shows that climate change since 1980 is nearly twice as bad as previously calculated, according to their study in Monday's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The energy generated in extreme weather, such as storms, floods and rainfall is related to the amount of water in the air. So a team of scientists in the U.S. and China decided to use an obscure weather measurement called equivalent

potential temperature — or theta-e — that reflects “the moisture energy of the atmosphere,” said study co-author V. “Ram” Ramanathan, a climate scientist at the University of California San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Cornell University. It’s expressed in degrees, like temperature.

“There are two drivers of climate change: temperature and humidity,” Ramanathan said. “And so far we measured global warming just in terms of temperature.”

But by adding the energy from humidity, “the extremes — heat waves, rainfall and other measures of extremes — correlate much better,” he said.

That’s because as the world warms, the air holds more moisture, nearly 4% for every degree Fahrenheit (7% for every degree Celsius).

When that moisture condenses, it releases heat or energy, “that’s why when it rains, now it pours,” Ramanathan said.

In addition, water vapor is a potent heat-trapping gas in the atmosphere that increases climate change, he said.

From 1980 to 2019, the world warmed about 1.42 degrees (0.79 degrees Celsius). But taking energy from humidity into account, the world has warmed and moistened 2.66 degrees (1.48 degrees Celsius), the study said. And in the tropics, the warming was as much as 7.2 degrees (4 degrees Celsius).

When judging by temperature alone, it looks like warming is most pronounced in North America, mid-latitudes and especially the poles — and less so in the tropics, Ramanathan said.

But that’s not the case, he said, because the high humidity in the tropics juices up storm activity, from regular storms to tropical cyclones and monsoons.

“This increase in latent energy is released in the air which leads to weather extremes: floods, storms and droughts,” Ramanathan said.

University of Illinois climate scientist Donald Wuebbles, who wasn't part of the study, said it makes sense because water vapor is key in extreme rainfall. “Both heat and humidity are important,” Wuebbles said.

Environmental scientist Katharine Mach of the University of Miami, who wasn't part of the study, said “humidity is key in shaping the impacts of heat on human health and well-being, at present and into the future.” (AP)

Did Humans Live On Mars? First Ever Zircon Crystal Found In Africa Gives New Hope

Agencies

Are we alone in the Universe? Billions of dollars are being spent trying to answer that simple question. The implications of finding evidence for life beyond Earth are staggering. The “before and after” mark would punctuate human history.

Mars is currently the most popular exploration target to search for evidence of life elsewhere. Yet little is known about its early history. Our research on a Martian meteorite provides new clues about early surface conditions on the red planet.

Windows into the past

Today Mars is cold and inhospitable. But it may have been more Earth-like and habitable in a bygone era. Landforms on Mars record the action of liquid surface water, perhaps as early as 3.9 billion years ago.

Like Earth, early Mars was subject to a global bombardment from chunks of rock and ice floating around the Solar System. Giant impacts both destroy and create favourable environments for life. So to untangle when conditions suitable for life may have arisen on Mars, we have to track the history of both water and impacts.

A flotilla of rovers and orbiting spacecraft have been dispatched to Mars, with two NASA rovers specifically exploring impact craters for evidence of past life. Samples collected by rovers will be returned in future missions.

For now, meteorites are the only samples of Mars available to study here on Earth. Martian meteorites are born when an impact on Mars ejects rocky fragments that later intercept Earth's orbit. Most Martian meteorites are igneous rocks, such as basalt. One meteorite, NWA 7034, is different, as it represents a rare sample of the surface of Mars.

Sending shock waves

The NWA 7034 meteorite, weighing about 320g, was found in the desert of northwest Africa and first reported in 2013. Unique oxygen isotope signatures reveal its origin from Mars. Other meteorites blasted off of Mars during the same event have since been found.

NWA 7034 is a complicated rock made of broken rock and mineral shards called “breccia”. Its various fragments record different snippets of Martian history.

Tiny grains of the mineral zircon occur in NWA 7034. Zircon is a “geochronometer”, meaning it records (and reveals to us) how much time has passed since it crystallised from magma. Prior studies of NWA 7034 found it contains the oldest known zircons from Mars – some up to 4.48 billion years old.

Zircon is quite useful for studying meteorite impacts. It preserves microscopic damage caused by the passage of shock waves, and these “shocked grains” provide a solid record of impact. However, no zircons with definitive shock damage had been identified in previous studies of NWA 7034.

NWA 7034 is similar to a type of sedimentary rock on Earth called conglomerate. In such rocks, every mineral can have a different origin. With that in mind, we set out to survey additional zircon grains in NWA 7034 to see if we could find any that recorded evidence of impact.

We looked at more than 60 zircons, but found only one shocked grain. This means the impact occurred before the grain was mixed into the pile of fragments that became a rock.

Reassessing Mars's timelines

The type of shock features we found are called “deformation twins”. High pressure shock waves squeeze zircon like an accordion. This process can reorganise atoms within the crystal, to form a duplicated “twin” of zircon, which we can detect.

We determined the zircon crystallised 4.45 billion years ago, making it one of the oldest zircons known from Mars – even older than the oldest known piece of Earth (also a zircon).

We don't know what kind of rock the shocked zircon originally formed in. The original igneous host rock was ripped apart during impacts on Mars. The zircon is a broken fragment from a larger grain mixed in with the matrix of the meteorite.

We do, however, know where shocked zircons like this are made. On Earth, shocked zircons with deformation twins are only found at impact craters. Moreover, they occur at all of Earth's largest asteroid strikes.

(The Conversation)

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT DISTRICT HOSPITAL GANDERBAL

TENDER NOTICE FOR LAB. TESTS UNDER AYUSHMAN BHARAT IN DISTRICT HOSPITAL GANDERBAL FOR THE YEAR 2021-22

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K UT fresh Sealed tenders are invited from the Registered / authorized blood testing laboratories for testing of different types of blood samples which are not done in District Hospital Ganderbal and same is required for the patients admitted under Ayushman Bharat scheme for the year 2021-22 and tender documents/laboratories producers to be done along with terms and conditions can be obtained from the office of undersigned against nonrefundable cash payment of Rs. 500 W.e.From 4/02/22 to 9/02/2022pm written application on letter head.

The tender must be submitted properly sealed in double water proof envelop duly super scribed as “Tender for Lab tests ” addressed to Medical Superintendent District Hospital Ganderbal “ and Should reach to the same office by or before 10/02/2022 up to 2 pm . The tenders will be opened on next day by the tender opening committee in the office chamber or Medical Superintendent Ganderbal.

The intending tenders shall have to deposit an amount of Rs. 3000 (Rupees Three thousand)/= in the shape of CDR form the Jk bank Ltd. pledged to the undersigned having validity not less than 12 months.

Medical Superintendent

DH Ganderbal

No:MS/DH /GBL/1846-48
Dated: -3/02/22

:DIPK-17556/21

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B SPECIAL SUB-DIVISION URI (NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER)

eNIT No.103 of 2021-22/5036-42/R&B SSD Uri e-tendering DATED: 03-02-2022

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

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of Completion (In Days)	Date and Time of Opening of Bid	M.H: of Account	Class of Contract
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Upgradation of Edge wall at Bilalabad link road.	1.29	200/=	2580/=	07 days	11.02.2022 at 11:00 A.M	3054 M&R	“DEE”
2	Construction of Edge Wall at Gingal Near Masjid Yousuf.	1.50	200/=	3000/=	07 days	11.02.2022 at 11:00A.M	3054 M&R	“DEE”
3	Upgradation of Khan Mohalla Zehanpora link Road.	1.24	200/=	2480/=	07 days	11.02.2022 at 11:00A.M	3054 M&R	“DEE”
4	Upgradation of link road from GPS Perniya upto Masjid Sharief Peer Mohalla.	1.24	200/=	2480/=	07 days	11.02.2022 at 11:00A.M	3054 M&R	“DEE”

Position of A.A.A - Accorded
Position of funds - Available

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

1.	Date of Issue of tender Notice.	03-02-2022
2.	Period of Downloading of Bidding Documents.	From 04-02-2022, 10.00 A.M. to 10-02-2022 upto 4.00 P.M.
3.	Bid Submission Start Date.	04-02-2022 From 10.00 A.M.
4.	Bid Submission End Date.	10-02-2022 upto 4.00 P.M.
5.	Date and Time of Opening of Bids (Online).	11-02-2022 at 11.00A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri (Tender Inviting Authority).
- All bidders have to submit performance security as per circular of Finance Department Vide Chief Engineer PWD (R&B) Kashmir's endorsement No. CE/R&B/HD/32857-92 dated: 01-01-2022.
- The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG and Treasury Challan within 02 days before fixation of contract and 2% CDR shall be released after receipt of 5% performance security and same shall be released after DLP is over.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on website www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Bids of Responsive Bidders shall be opened online on same website in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub-Division Uri.(Tender Receiving Authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the “Downloads” option as well as from “Bidders Manual Kit” on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get ‘Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)’ as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with Digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.
- The tender/ bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill the requirements as laid down in N.I.T and SBD.
- All other terms and conditions shall be strictly as per PWD Form 25 (Double Agreement Form) and SBD circulated by Chief Engineer, PW (R&B) Department, Kashmir's Letter No. CE/RBK/HD/29158-88, Dated: 10-02-2018.

No.:SSDU/2021-22/5036-42
Dated: 03-02-2022

DIPK-17537/21

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
R&B Special Sub-Division, Uri.

OFFICE OF THE Assistant REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER Budgam

NOTICE

Whereas, an application has been received from one Shri : M/S JK Engineering Construction Co Prop Abdul Rashid Bhat R/O Rakh Shalina Budgam owner of vehicle No: JK04E- 7341 for cancellation of Hire Purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank Ltd B/O Rawalpura.

Now it is therefore, notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed cancellation of Hire Purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.



No. ARTO /BUD / 5164
Dated 04-02-2022

FKO

Sd/ Assistant Regional,
Transport Officer Budgam

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B CONSTRUCTION DIVISION NO.II, SGR.

FRESH SNOW STAGE NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No.163/CDII/19921-31 of 2021-22

DATED: 01-02-2022

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S.No.	Name of the stage	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	2	3	4	5
1.	S.C.S-1	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
2.	S.C.S-2	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
3.	S.C.S-3	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
4.	S.C.S-4	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
5.	S.C.S-5	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
6.	S.C.S-6	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
7.	S.C.S-7	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”
8.	S.C.S-9	100/-	3054-SNOW	“DEE”

Position of AAA: Accorded
Position of funds Available

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	03-02-2022 from 10.00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	03-02-2022 from 10.00 AM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	10.02.2022 upto 4.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	11.02.2022 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Srinagar/Budgam.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar (tender inviting authority).
- All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure “A” below)
- The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle Srinagar/Budgam (tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the “Downloads” option as well as from “Bidders Manual Kit” on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get ‘Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)’ as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.
- Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
- All documents relating to the bid shall be in the English Language.
- Bidder must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents including tender documents fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid. No document (s) which has /have not been uploaded shall be entertained in the form of hard copy. However, in case of any clarification the bidders shall have to produce original documents in support of soft copies if need arises

No. 19921-31

Dated: 01-02-2022

Executive Engineer
R&B Construction Division IInd
Srinagar

DIPK-17495/21

LIST OF SNOW CLEARANCE STAGE TENDERS FOR WINTER SEASON 2021-22

STAGE NO.	STAGE NAME	NAME OF THE ROAD	KMS
1.	S-C-S-1	Residence lane from Linz to GPO	0.75
		Poloview lane, Ganda Singh Lane.	0.25
		Lal Sheikh lane	0.10
		Regal lane	0.25
		AbiGuzer lane, Khidmat lane, Lambert Lane.	0.80
		State Bank lane	0.20
		Estate Lane	0.26
		Apna Bazar lane	0.12
		Palladium lane	0.30
		Forest lane	0.28
		Court Lane including Loop	0.43
		Banquet Hall premises	0.20
		Women College M.A.Road complex	0.10
		S.P.College premises	0.50
		Directorate of Education premises complex	0.15
		TOTAL	4.69
2.	S-C-S-2	I.G.road Naaz crossing to Tagore Hall Junction via Children Hospital.	0.20
		Road from Bakshi Stadium to Indoor Stadium connecting Circular Road	0.27
		Abdullah Bridge	1.41
		Church Lane Sonwar	1.50
		Allied links, Khalsa Lane Sharma Tyre Lane, Gurdwara Lane	1.50
		Roads at Jawahir Nagar	2.00
		L.D Hospital Premises	0.75
		Chief Engineer PWD's Office Complex	0.75
		TOTAL	8.38
3.	S-C-S-3	New HMT road from Shalteng crossing via SICOP market via Chinar Chowk old HMT road crossing at Mustafabad.	5.70
		TOTAL	5.70
4.	S-C-S-4	Roads in SK Colony including link behind Police Housing Colony	9.60
		Roads of Qammerwari-Qammarabad	14.00
		Roads in Bemina area	7.00
		TOTAL	30.60
5.	S-C-S-5	Lawaypora Muigund including inner roads of Lawaypora.	6.95
		Muigund inner links	6.50
		Malroo inner links	13.00
		Khojabagh inner roads	5.50
		TOTAL	31.95
6.	S-C-S-6	Shalteng Muigund Bund road with allied links.	19.50
		Khushipora chowk to Abanshah via Dar Mohalla via Estates road including links.	10.50
		TOTAL	30.00
7.	S-C-S-7	Inner road of Rajbawan.	2.50
		C.D Hospital premises and paths	0.40
		Psychiatric Disease Hospital premises	0.30
		TOTAL	3.20
		TOTAL	22.00
9.	S-C-S-9	State Institute of Education premises	0.15
		Bone & Joint Hospital Premises	1.00
		Revenue Training Institute Bemina	0.25
		Women Polytechnic Bemina	0.20
		Board of Secondary Education Bemina	0.25
		TOTAL	1.85

Centre To Settle Almost All Retrospective Tax Cases This Month: Revenue Secy



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The government will settle almost all the retrospective tax cases this month, closing a chapter that plagued India's reputation as an investment-friendly destination, a top official said on Friday.

A 2012 amendment that gave taxmen powers to go back 50 years and slap capital gains levies wherever ownership had changed hands overseas but business assets were in India, was used to raise Rs 1.1 lakh crore demand against multinationals such as telecom group Vodafone, pharmaceuticals company Sanofi and brewer SABMiller, now owned by AB In-Bev, and Cairn Energy Plc. Such demands brought uncertainty in the minds of investors.

To repair India's damaged reputation as an investment

destination, the government in August 2021 enacted a new legislation to drop all such demand and refund about Rs 8,100 crore collected on the condition that any pending lawsuit or legal challenge against the government anywhere in the world would be dropped.

Cairn, from whom Rs 7,900 crore was seized to enforce the retrospective tax demand, as well as Vedanta Group, have dropped lawsuits. Cairn is now eligible for the tax refund.

"In the month of August, we abolished the retrospective taxation and we would be settling almost all the cases this month itself. So, we will close that chapter once and for all," Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said.

The move will help restore investor confidence by providing a predictable and stable tax regime.

Facebook's Giant Crash Explained In 10 Points

Agencies

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook's parent firm Meta on Thursday plunged over \$200 billion in stock value - comparable to the size of New Zealand's economy - after results that raised doubts about the troubled social media giant's future. A few reasons why it happened:

Here's your 10-point cheat-sheet to this big story:

1. Facebook growth that had been on a seemingly perpetual upward trend slipped at the end of last year, with the number of people using the social network daily declining. Meta executives warned of increased competition, particularly from video star TikTok as well as messaging services such as Telegram and Slack.
2. The firm is making a priority of investing in its Reels short-form video feature as well as apps such as WhatsApp and Instagram to stay in tune with users. That means spending big on services that are harder to make money from than the Facebook social network with its digital ad machine.

3. Meta executives told analysts that Facebook's ad-targeting efficiency is being undermined by a change Apple implemented to the software running iPhones. In the update of iOS, Apple required application publishers to ask permission before collecting data, much to the regret of companies like Meta that rely on it for ad targeting.

4. As iPhone users opt out of sharing data for targeting ads in Facebook apps, marketing messages become less precisely targeted and thus less profitable. "We believe the impact of iOS, overall, as a headwind on our business in 2022 is on the order of \$10 billion," Meta chief financial officer David Wehner said on an earnings call. "So, that is a pretty significant headwind for our business."

5. Advertising at Meta also suffered with the broader market, as businesses curtailed budgets in the face of supply troubles, labour turnover, and pandemic woes. Meta is facing a "perfect storm" countering growth, according to Baird Equity Research analyst Colin Sebastian. "Our concerns about the near-term growth outlook for Meta were not only realized, but worse than we thought," Sebastian said in a note to investors.

6. Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg portrays the metaverse as the future of life on the internet. In that spirit, the tech company changed its name to "Meta." Making the immersive online world of the metaverse is expected to take many years and cost many billions.
7. A "Reality Labs" unit at Meta devoted to technology for intermixing actual and virtual worlds reported a loss of \$10 billion last year, according to an earnings release. Major investors in the stock market are notoriously averse to waiting a long time for big returns, tending to trade shares based on potential for quick gains.

8. As Meta looks to make a "transformation" to better compete with the likes of TikTok, a hit with younger users, regulators in the US and elsewhere have vowed to curb its power.
9. A federal judge in January ruled that US regulators' re-worked anti-trust case against Facebook can go ahead, saying the complaint was more robust and detailed than the version denied in 2021.
10. The US Federal Trade Commission has alleged Meta holds an illegal monopoly by acquiring potential competitors that it now owns like Instagram and WhatsApp. The lawsuit, which could take years to go through the courts without a settlement, called for the "divestiture of assets," including WhatsApp and Instagram, to restore competition.

RBI Likely To Leave Policy Rates Unchanged Till April: Report

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Striking a different note from its peers, US brokerage Bank of America Securities has maintained that the Reserve Bank will leave rates unchanged next week, recognising growth-focused and capex-driven fiscal expansion, which though poses huge price pressure and interest rate risks later.

The RBI's rate setting panel Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will begin its deliberations next Monday and announce the policy moves on Wednesday (February 9) in the backdrop of a massive spike in bond yields post the Budget. Almost all major central banks are in the process of hiking rates to tame inflation.

The key repo rate has been at 4 per cent since May 2020, an all-time low, even though bond yields have been heading north for many months now.

The brokerage has also stuck to its view that the RBI will only adopt a gradual policy normalisation path for now, despite bigger fiscal support and faster rate hikes expected from the US Federal Reserve.

Barring some measures to stabilise the yields, which have already risen above the 2019 levels and sniffing at the 6.9 per cent mark after the Budget announced record borrowing plans next fiscal, the brokerage sees the overall domestic and external environment being unfavourable for the bonds market.

Stating that the Budget prioritises growth over fiscal consolidation, BofA analysts said they see the MPC leaving rates



unchanged on February 9 when the central bank will unveil the last policy review of this fiscal, and undertake gradual tightening measures.

The market has been expecting a 25 bps reverse repo tightening. Its assumption got cemented when the Budget announced a record borrowing plan -- gross borrowing at Rs 14.95 lakh crore and net borrowing of Rs 11.6 lakh crore (much higher than BofA estimates of Rs 13 lakh crore and Rs 9.6 lakh crore).

Although in headline terms, fiscal deficit is expected to fall from 6.9 per cent in FY22 (up 10 bps from the revised estimate) to a budgeted 6.4 per cent in FY23, the brokerage expects the provisional actuals for FY22 fiscal deficit to come in line at 6.8 per cent and at 6 per cent next fiscal, BofA said in a note on Friday.

The key highlight of the FY23 Budget is the massive capex push at the cost of fiscal consolidation. While typically one expects fiscal expansion to be inflationary, the brokerage believes it will not be so because

Mandatory Fitness Test At Automatic Testing Stations From 2023

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The government plans to make fitness testing of vehicles through Automated Testing Stations mandatory in a phased manner starting from April next year.

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry on Friday said a draft notification has been issued for public comments regarding mandatory fitness testing of vehicles through Automated Testing Stations.

An Automated Testing Station (ATS) uses mechanical equipment to automate the various tests required to check the fitness of a vehicle.

The requirement will be put in place in a phased manner. Fitness testing for heavy goods vehicles and heavy passenger motor vehicles through an ATS will be mandatory from April 1, 2023, as per the draft notification.

In the case of medium goods vehicles and medium passenger motor vehicles (transport), the requirement will be made compulsory from June 1, 2024.

According to the draft notification, renewal of certificate



of fitness will be for two years for commercial vehicles (transport) that are up to eight years old and one year for commercial vehicles (transport) that are older than eight years.

Road Transport and Highways Secretary Giridhar Aramane told PTI that eventually fitness testing through ATS will be mandatory for both commercial and personal vehicles.

Aramane said next year onwards, heavy commercial vehicles will be mandated to have this fitness testing done.

"We will give some for time (for personal vehicles). We

of the positive composition of the spending plan.

Revenue expenditure net of interest payments and subsidies is expected to rise by only 1 per cent in FY23, while capital spending is estimated to jump 24 per cent, suggesting more supply side spends than a significant demand boost, and this does not imply any serious pressure on inflation.

Factoring in all this, it continues to see RBI keeping rates unchanged next Wednesday as the pandemic is still not behind us.

The first tightening move is likely narrowing the policy corridor by raising reverse repo rate by 40 bps in March/April, switch to a neutral stance in April and deliver the first repo rate hike in June and take it to 4.75 per cent by December 2022 and 5 per cent by March 2023, BofA said.

For the past several months, the RBI has been a seller of bonds, from a large buyer in the first half, creating a big demand-supply gap and leading to a spike in the yields.

CS Directs Tourism Deptt To Complete All Projects Under Capex By Mar 31

Asks Department To Create Wholesome Experience For Tourists To Position J&K As A Top Global Destination



Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta Friday directed the Tourism Department to focus on tourist comfort, convenience and satisfaction, improved travel guidance and way finding (e.g. signs, maps and websites available in multiple languages), and the potential benefits of integrating art and cultural amenities (e.g. unique artwork/ large billboards/ hoardings at railway station, at Lakhampur border and cultural displays at destinations for enhancing experience of the tourists to position J&K as a top global brand.

He said the highest ever tourist arrivals in J&K during the last 4 months is the result of the image makeover the UT has undergone along with the development of tourism infrastructure during the last two years.

While complimenting the department on increased tourist activity in J&K, he asked the department to target tourist arrival of 10 lakh in the Valley next year and an aggregate tourist influx of 2 crore in J&K.

He made these observations while reviewing the Capex of the department in which Administrative Secretary, Tourism Department and other senior officers of the department were present.

The Chief Secretary said that as much as the inherent beauty of the place, it is the overall experience of the places the visitors have during their stay that makes the tourist destinations the go to places for others.

Dr Mehta directed the department to involve the local people in and around the tourist destinations in the effort to improve the ambience of the tourist places while further adding that all tourist places need to be advertised on the aesthetically

bright and colourful hoardings/ billboards on the national highways and other important roads in the UT, especially on the national Highway, Jammu to Katra, Airports at Srinagar and Jammu, and railway stations.

Highlighting the importance of the Akhnor town as a tourist place, the Chief Secretary directed the department to develop Akhnor as a popular weekend getaway for the residents of Jammu city and surrounding places after the flyover on Jammu-Akhnor road is constructed by year end and the travel time to Akhnor is reduced to 25-30 minutes.

Dr Mehta highlighted the importance of Surinsar as a potentially attractive evening destination for the Jammuites and directed the department to develop the place complete with all recreational activities, improved surroundings and well laid internal roads.

Earlier, Sarmad Hafeez, Administrative Secretary, Tourism department in his presentation informed that during the period from September -December 2021, around 54 lakh tourists have visited J&K, which represents the highest tourist inflow for these months during the last 3 years.

He said that the tourist influx in Kashmir Valley has risen from around 5.65 lakh in 2019 to 6.66 lakh in the year 2021.

Hafeez informed that the tourists have kept visiting J&K in higher numbers despite ongoing Covid pandemic due to extremely good covid containment initiatives taken by the government.

It was further informed that while 224 works under UT Capex have been completed so far, out of 122 works under PMDP, 94 works have been completed and the remaining 28 works will be completed as per the set timelines.

Drive Against Unregistered Insecticides Continue

Sale of 22,940 liters of TSO/HMO Stopped

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Continuing its drive against the distribution and sale of unregistered insecticides, the Enforcement Wing of Agriculture Department Kashmir today inspected various dealers of district Pulwama/Anantnag and stopped the sale of 22,940 liters of unregistered Tree Spray Oil (TSO)/ Horticulture Mineral Oil (HMO) under various sections of Insecticides Act 1968.

In this regard Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal who is also Controller Insecticides impressed upon the Enforcement Officers that all the provisions of Insecticides Act 1968 must be followed in letter and spirit.

Iqbal said that the valley wide campaign against unregistered insecticides will continue in coming days. He marked the Department's commitment to ensure that only the registered quality insecticides reaches the ultimate consumer i.e farmer. He asked the stakeholders including the Enforcement Wing of the Department, Plant Protection Officer Kashmir and Agriculture Chemist Kashmir to work in close coordination with each other so that the farmers' interests are secured.

Meanwhile, it was informed that till date the Department has stopped sale of 189,210 liters of unregistered Tree Spray Oil (TSO)/ Horticulture Mineral Oil (HMO) under various sections of Insecticides Act 1968.

SHORT TAKES

Markets Slip For Second Day As Hawkish Central Banks Weigh

MUMBAI- Equity benchmarks stayed on the backfoot for the second straight session on Friday as policy tightening by central banks and persistent foreign fund outflows weighed on sentiment.

However, a strengthening rupee capped the downside for the bourses, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 143.20 points or 0.24 per cent lower at 58,644.82. Similarly, the NSE Nifty shed 43.90 points or 0.25 per cent to close at 17,516.30. SBI was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 1.83 per cent, followed by M&M, NTPC, Kotak Bank, Wipro, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC and PowerGrid.

On the other hand, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, L&T, HDFC Bank and HCL Tech were among the gainers, spurring up to 1.21 per cent.

Of the Sensex constituents, 19 shares closed lower while 11 were in the green.

The Bank of England on Thursday raised interest rates, while the European Central Bank (ECB) also signalled policy tightening to tame runaway inflation. (PTI)

India To Double Down On Oil, Gas Exploration: Puri

NEW DELHI- India will more than double the area that is under exploration and production of oil and gas to 0.5 million square kilometer by 2025 and to 1 million sq km by 2030 with a view to raising domestic output and cut reliance on imported fuel, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

The world's third-largest energy consumer will continue to rely on hydrocarbons to meet its growing energy needs in the foreseeable future, he said at the World Energy Policy Summit 2022.

India currently relies on imports to meet 85 per cent of its oil needs and 50 per cent of the natural gas requirement. This is because domestic production is inadequate.

"With an objective of increased domestic production of oil and gas, we have declared an ambitious target to increase the area under exploration and production to 0.5 million sq km by 2025 and achieve 1 mn sq km by 2030," he said.

Seven rounds of an auction of acreage under the new Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) in the last five years have doubled the area under exploration for oil and gas to 207,692 (0.2 million) sq km. (PTI)

Gold Higher By Rs 34; Silver Jumps Rs 330

NEW DELHI- Gold price in the national capital on Friday gained Rs 34 to Rs 47,918 per 10 grams in line with a rally in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 47,884 per 10 grams.

Silver also jumped Rs 330 to Rs 61,006 per kg from Rs 60,676 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,810 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 22.55 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded higher with spot gold prices at COMEX trading 0.30 per cent up at USD 1,810 per ounce on Friday," Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (commodities) at HDFC Securities, said. (PTI)

Rupee Logs 1st Gain In Four Days, Surges 19 Paise Against USD

MUMBAI- The rupee snapped its three-day losing streak by recovering 19 paise to close at 74.69 against the US dollar on Friday tracking weaker greenback against key rivals overseas.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened strong at 74.71 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.68 and a low of 74.77. It finally settled at 74.69, a rise of 19 paise over its previous close.

In the previous session, the rupee had settled at 74.88 against the greenback.

During the week, the rupee has appreciated by 37 paise against the American currency.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against the basket of six currencies, fell 0.09 per cent to 95.29.

According to Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, The rupee recovered the lost ground after three days of downtrend on the back of retreat in dollar index as two major central banks -- European Central Bank (ECB) and Bank of England (BoE) -- turned hawkish. (PTI)

4.28 Cr Bogus Ration Cards Cancelled During 2014-21

NEW DELHI- States and Union Territories have cancelled about 4.28 crore bogus ration cards during the 2014-21 period, Parliament was informed on Friday.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs Ashwini Kumar Choubey said the operational responsibilities of the public distribution system under the food law rest with the state governments.

The responsibilities include identification of eligible beneficiaries/ households under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), issuance of ration cards to them as per eligibility and distribution of foodgrains to them from ration shops.

Under the NFSA, the state/UT governments periodically review their lists of ration card holders to weed out potentially ineligible, duplicate or bogus ration cards from their respective systems after proper verification.

"Accordingly, the State/UTs have reported cancellation of about 4.28 crore bogus ration cards during the period 2014 to 2021 so far," Choubey said. (PTI)

Gauhati HC Upholds Govt Decision To Convert Madrassas Into General Schools



Agenceis

Guwahati: The Gauhati High Court on Friday upheld The Assam Repealing Act, 2020, under which all provincialised (government-funded) madrassas are to be converted into general schools in Assam.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice Soumitra Saikia said the changes brought about by the legislative and executive action of the state are for the provincialised madrassas alone, which are government schools, and not for private or community ones.

It also dismissed a writ petition challenging the validity of the Act.

The writ petition was filed by 13 individuals in the HC in 2021 against the state government's decision to transform the state-funded madrassas to general schools.

The Court had concluded the hearing on January 27 and had reserved its judgement, which was passed on Friday.

The madrassas which are wholly maintained by the state cannot impart religious instructions in terms of the mandate of Article 28(1) of the Constitution of India, the Court said in its judgement.

It also pointed that the services of the teachers of the provincialised madrassas have not been dispensed away with and they will be trained for teaching other subjects, if required.

The division bench of the honourable High Court has upheld The Assam Repealing Act of 2020, which had repealed the Madrasa provincialisation acts of 1995, 2011 and 2018, Assam Advocate General Devojit Saikia told PTI.

In the same judgement, the HC also upheld all subsequent notifications issued by the government of Assam to convert madrasa institutions into general educational

institutions.

The court upheld the Act on the basis of Article 28(1) of the Constitution, which mandates that any educational institution cannot impart any religious instruction if such institution is wholly funded from state budget or public funds, Saikia said.

The Assam Repealing Act does not affect the privately or community run madrassas and will only impact 397 madrassas and four Arabic colleges run by the government, he added.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who had pushed the Assam Repeal Bill as the state education minister in 2020, tweeted Division Bench of Honble Gauhati High Court in a landmark judgment delivered today upheld the Act of 2020 to repeal Madrasa Education Provincialisation Acts and also upheld all other notifications to convert 397 provincialised madrassas to general educational institutions.

The Bill was passed by the state Assembly on December 30, 2020, under which all the provincialised, government-funded madrassas were to be transformed into general schools.

It sought to abolish The Assam Madrasa Education (Provincialisation) Act, 1995, and The Assam Madrasa Education (Provincialisation of Services of Employees and Re-Organisation of Madrasa Educational Institutions) Act, 2018. Following the passage of the Bill another act relating to provincialisation of madrassas, which was passed by the state government in 2011 stood repealed.

The state government has assured that there will be no change of status, pay, allowances and service conditions of the teaching and non-teaching staff of the madrassas under the Assam Repealing Act, which was passed during the tenure of the first BJP-led government in the state.

THE DIVISION BENCH OF THE HONOURABLE HIGH COURT has upheld The Assam Repealing Act of 2020, which had repealed the Madrasa provincialisation acts of 1995, 2011 and 2018, Assam Advocate General Devojit Saikia said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Covid Curve

2620 from Kashmir Division," the officials said.

Also, they said that three more people, two from the Valley and one from Jammu, died of Covid-19 related complications on Friday, taking the death toll in the pandemic to 4702 in J&K—2300 in Jammu and 2402 in Kashmir Valley.

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.

They further added that against the availability of 5038 dedicated level 1 & level 2 COVID beds, only 416(8.25%) are occupied.

No Room For

here on Friday, an official spokesperson said. During the meeting, he said, the situation of the Covid-19 was discussed, where ACS Health presented Covid analysis based on various parameters. He said that the chair also took district-wise assessment of vaccination coverage of 15-18 age group, besides the status of distribution of Sehat Golden health cards across the UT.

The LG observed that though the number of new positive cases have declined, there is no room for complacency.

"We must continue awareness campaigns across the UT with the active support of representatives of PRIs", Sinha said, as per the official spokesperson,

The LG, he said, directed the Health & Immunization Department to focus on booster doses to senior citizens,

frontline workers and vaccination among the 15-18 age group, adding that continued adherence to Covid Appropriate Behaviour is paramount.

He said that the LG underlined that J&K is a front runner in SDG's 'Good Health and Well-Being' goal and directed the Health Department to ensure 100% coverage of Sehat Golden Card.

"Our aim is to provide the best treatment to people from village to city. We will continue to strengthen the critical healthcare network", Sinha said.

While interacting with DCs and SsSP, the official spokesperson said that the LG complimented their tireless efforts for effective management of the third wave of Covid-19.

"Emphasizing on the significance of Covid Appropriate Behaviour, the Lt Governor said that we need to continue following CAB until the pre-Covid normalcy is restored. He directed the SsSP for proper enforcement of CAB," he said.

"The Lt Governor also passed specific directions to the DCs to monitor and ensure proper functioning of all online services in their respective districts providing best and hassle-free public services," he added.

Earlier, the official spokesperson said that Vivek Bhardwaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department gave a detailed briefing on the analysis of Covid-19 situation, active positive cases, testing, contact tracing and vaccination across the UT, CAB enforcements, and percentage achieved in weekly and overall BIS Registrations, progress

Div Com Kashmir Visits Border Area In Kupwara

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole on Friday visited border and snow bound areas of Karnah and Machill of district Kupwara.

He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din.

The Div Com took a detailed review of the developmental scenario of these border areas and took stock of essential commodities, power supply and mitigation efforts of Covid-19 pandemic.

At Tangdar, the Div Com convened separate meetings with PRIs, civil administration and army officers.

The DDC Member, Najma Hamid, BDC Chairpersons and PRIs put forth their local demands before the Div Com with regard to construction of Sadhna Tunnel, posting of Gynecologist and staff at Kadhama Jabdi, establishment of bank branch at Gabra, Fire tenders, release of pending NREGA payment, construction of protection bunds of Nallah Batmoji, besides, augmentation of power supply, road widening, potable drinking water, healthcare facilities and other local demands.

The Div Com heard them patiently and discussed the issues

raised in the meeting, with the Deputy Commissioner and the local administration.

The Div Com gave on spot directions to the officers for time-bound resolution of the demands, so that the people living in these areas get benefited.

He said that the objective of his visit to these border areas was to personally assess the requirements of the border people and to guide the administration for further improvement of the facilities especially during these winter months.

Addressing the officers, the Div Com stressed the need for remaining available for the public in their respective offices so that the people do not face any difficulty.

Referring to the demand for construction of Sadhna tunnel, the Div Com said that the tunnel will be constructed as per the central government proposal but before that the widening of the road from Kupwara to Tangdhar is the first priority of the government, which has been approved and the land acquisition is in progress. He said augmentation of road connectivity for all the border areas of the district including Karnah, Keran and Machill is the priority of the UT Government.

Reviewing the stock and

supply position, the Div Com was informed that sufficient stock of rice and other essential commodities has already been dumped which is sufficient and will cater the requirement of border people till June this year.

The Deputy Commissioner Kupwara and the SDM Karnah briefed the Div Com about the developmental profile of the Karnah sub division. It was informed that the Oxygen generating plant established by District Administration has been made operational in the Sub District Hospital (SDH) Tangdar to meet any eventuality amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The plant has a capacity of generating 500 litre Oxygen per minute.

The Div Com also had a separate meeting with senior Army officers which was also attended by Deputy Commissioner and SDM and got the feedback regarding the overall situation and developmental scenario.

It was informed that the power supply needs to be augmented in the area.

Later the Div Com accompanied by DC Kupwara visited snow bound and border area Machill. He reviewed the developmental scenario of the border area with PRIs and local administration.

Core Issue Whether Any State Can Restrict Employment On Domicile Basis: Punjab And Haryana HC

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab and Haryana High Court, which has granted stay on a Haryana law providing 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for the state's residents, has made it clear that the core issue for adjudication before it is whether any state can restrict employment, even in the private sector, on the basis of domicile.

"We have considered these arguments, but the core issue is whether any state can restrict employment (even in the private sector) on the basis of domicile," a bench comprising justices Ajay Tewari and Pankaj Jain said in the detailed order that stayed the implementation of the law.

The court had, on Thursday, passed the order on pleas filed by an industry body from Faridabad and some other associations, and the detailed order was released on Friday.

"In these circumstances, we are constrained to stay the implementation of the Act," the bench said.

It added that the counsel for the petitioners had prayed for interim relief. On the question of stay, the solicitor general candidly conceded that the writ petitions

involve substantial questions, but vehemently opposed the prayer for interim relief, the court said.

The solicitor general pointed out three facts, which according to him would have a material bearing on the matter, it pointed out.

"The first argument of the Solicitor General of India is that there is always a presumption of constitutionality of a statutory provision and though the writ court has ample jurisdiction to ultimately hold that a statutory provision is unconstitutional, yet interim orders should not be granted.

"His second argument is that there is an insinuation that this law would affect even existing employees, which is incorrect. The law is prospective and it saves all the existing staff," the bench said.

It noted that the solicitor general's third argument is that about 38,000 registered domicile workers and around 900 establishments have registered under the Act and this itself shows that only a handful of people are opposed to the implementation of the law.

The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to hear on February 7 the Haryana government's appeal challenging the high court order.

Tushar Sharma, the counsel for one of the petitioners, had on Thursday said they had challenged the vires of the Act in the high court.

"I was representing one of the petitioners -- IMT Manesar Association and Manesar Industrial Welfare Association. We were challenging the vires of the Act. We were saying this Act is unconstitutional, discriminatory and violative of the fundamental rights of our members and were seeking quashing of the Act. The high court admitted the petition," he had said.

The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020 provides for 75 per cent reservation in the private sector to job seekers having state domicile. It came into force on January 15 after being notified in November last year. It applies to jobs offering a maximum gross monthly salary or wages of Rs 30,000.

The Act is applicable to the employers of private sector companies, societies, trusts, limited liability partnership firms, partnership firms and anyone who employs 10 or more people on salary, wages or other remuneration for the purpose of manufacturing, carrying on business or rendering any service in Haryana.

CBI Searches Premises Of Amrapali Smart City Developers In Bank Fraud Case



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The CBI has carried out searches at the premises of the directors of Amrapali Smart City Developers, including Anil Kumar Sharma, booked in a case of alleged bank fraud of over Rs 472 crore, officials said on Friday.

The central probe agency conducted the searches at eight locations in the Delhi-NCR, including the premises of three accused directors, on Thursday, they said.

The CBI has filed an FIR against the company and its directors Anil Kumar Sharma, Shiva Priya and Ajay Kumar for allegedly causing a loss of Rs 472.24 crore to a consortium of banks comprising the erstwhile Corporation Bank (now the Union Bank of India), the Oriental Bank of Commerce (now the Punjab National Bank) and the Union Bank of India.

The action comes on a complaint from the Corporation Bank, which alleged that the company had a dishonest intention from the very beginning, it started defaulting in making payments of the dues under the agreement and failed to fulfil its obligations.

"Since the disbursement of the loan amount, the company deliberately and intentionally defaulted in making payments of the entire loan amount. The loan account started to show signals of stress and was finally classified as a Non-Performing Asset..." the FIR alleged.

The agency has also booked the company's statutory auditor, Amit Mittal.

Sharma, Shiv Priya and Kumar are in jail.

The bank said the Supreme Court had ordered a forensic audit of the company and the report was directly submitted to the court.

In its complaint, the bank said it does not have the report but in its order dated July

23, 2019, the Supreme Court pointed out that Amrapali group directors diverted the money by creating dummy companies, realising professional fees, creating bogus bills, selling flats at an undervalued price, payment of an excessive brokerage etc.

"They obtained investment from JP Morgan in violation of FEMA and FDI norms. The shares were overvalued for making payment to JP Morgan. It was adopted as a device for siphoning off the money of the home buyers to foreign countries," it said.

Citing the order, the bank said the amount so obtained was not used in the projects.

"The statutory auditor, (Amit) Mittal, failed in his duty and was part of fraudulent activities as found in the forensic report. The money obtained from the banks was diverted to unapproved uses such as for the creation of personal assets of directors, creation of assets in closely held companies by the directors along with their partners and relatives, for personal expenses of directors, to give advances without carrying interest for several years," it said.

It said the firm has cheated the banks by diverting the funds, creating dummy companies, bogus bills, selling flats at an undervalued price, violating FEMA and FDI norms and money laundering.

"It is thus observed from the above stated facts that the loan was sanctioned for a specific purpose and the same was misutilised by the company. The company indulged in malpractices and misappropriated the loan amount and diverted the money to certain non-existing entities, which is detrimental to the interest of the complainant, and thereby, the borrower company and its directors have committed fraud and criminal breach of trust," the bank said.

THEY OBTAINED INVESTMENT FROM JP MORGAN in violation of FEMA and FDI norms. The shares were overvalued for making payment to JP Morgan. It was adopted as a device for siphoning off the money of the home buyers to foreign countries."

under AB PM-JAY & AB PM-JAY SEHAT. **Posts Referred**

the directions of the Administrative Council in letter and spirit under an intimidation to it.

On October 31, 2019, Jammu & Kashmir State was formally reorganised into two Union Territories- J&K UT and Ladakh UT.

The legal framework governing government jobs in Jammu & Kashmir also changed due to legal and constitutional changes effected by the Parliament and Central government on August 5, 2019.

Police Arrest

anti-national content including photographs, videos and posts with criminal intention to create fear among public and the content so uploaded can provoke the public to disturb law & order.

"It was also learnt that these Facebook users are uploading such posts which tantamount to glorifying terrorist activities and causing dent to the image of law enforcing agencies besides causing ill-will & disaffection against the country," he said.

The police spokesperson further said that such activities by some of the Facebook users' amounts to commission of cognizable offences by them, accordingly Pulwama Police while taking cognizance of the matter registered a case vide FIR No. 19/2022 under relevant sections of the law and initiated the investigation.

"During the course of investigation, one accused person identified as Fahad Shah was arrested. The accused is on police remand," he said.

He further said that the investigation into the matter is in progress.

LG Calls For Pace

supply on priority.

Sinha made these remarks while reviewing various aspects related to Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) project at the Civil Secretariat here on Friday, an official spokesperson said.

During the meeting, he said, the LG sought a detailed report on the progress made under Jal Jeevan Mission across the UT, including functional household tap connections; tap water connections to rural-public institutions; present status of water supply system and water treatment under JJM.

The LG, he said, also directed the concerned officials to speed up implementation of the project to achieve the desired results on ground.

"We are determined to provide tap water connection to every household and capacity building of Water Quality Management-testing, monitoring & surveillance," Sinha said.

"Improved SDG ranking of J&K in NITI Aayog's report is testimony of our commitment to ensure safe water supply and sanitation," he said.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG directed the officials to ensure sustainability of the source water supply system, along with maintaining inter-departmental coordination for the effective implementation of the project.

"Every single complaint from the citizens regarding water supply should be addressed on priority," Sinha said.

As per the official spokesperson, M Raju, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti Department gave a detailed presentation on the status of Jal Jeevan Mission in the UT including functional household tap Connections; district wise schemes proposed under JJM; support activities (ISA, IEC & HRD activities); filtration plant capacity & augmentation; existing & the proposed infrastructure for water treatment under JJM and hydrogeomorphology maps (HGM Maps) for ground water exploration.

"The chair was also briefed about the Village Action Plans & Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of Jal Jeevan Mission submitted to J&KWRRRA for technical evaluation," he said.

AC Approves Action

Manoj Sinha, approved the action plans of Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL) and Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) for 2021-22 to 2024-25, an official spokesperson said Friday.

"The approved action plans aim at achieving 100% prepaid consumer metering and 100% system metering (DTR), and include distribution infrastructure work for loss reduction and modernization, and training/ capacity building of the workforce," he said.

The PDD, he said, is working towards improving the quality, reliability and affordability of power supply to consumers; reducing AT&C losses; and improving operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of DISCOMs.

According to the official spokesperson, the action plans of DISCOMs focus on reduction of ACS-ARR gap and AT&C losses through 100% smart prepaid metering including System metering with communication features, AB Cabling/ HVDS in high loss areas among other components as per scheme guidelines. This will provide quality and reliable power to consumers and assist in the progress towards a 24x7 power supply in all districts.

"The action plans also include policy and structural reforms, increasing recruitment of manpower, creating a separate cadre of IT employees, developing a training Policy of employees with targeted annual training on modern lines," he said.

He further said that the DISCOMs were directed to reduce the AT&C losses to Pan India levels of 15% and ACS-ARR gap to zero by 2024-25, while the state-wise targets for each year will depend on their current levels of AT&C losses and ACS-ARR gap.

No Evening Flights

The runway will be available and the flights will be operated from 6 AM to 5 PM, he said.

Singh said the affected flights scheduled to operate after 5 pm on the last three days of the week have been pre-poned to operate before 5 pm every day.

The information has already been given to all affected passengers by the respective airlines. Passengers of the affected flights are requested to confirm the revised departure times if they have booked their flights during this period, the director said.

India On Course To Extend Its Dominance At U-19 World Cup



Press Trust of India

NORTH SOUND (Antigua): Eight finals and four trophies in 14 editions make India the most successful team in the Under-19 World Cup history.

And come Saturday, they look on course for a record-extending fifth title given the depth of talent and form but standing in the way is a driven English team, chasing its own piece of history in what promises to be an enthralling summit clash.

Yash Dull and Co. will aim to add to India's rich legacy when they take on England at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium here.

India have had a rather smooth run into the final despite a massive off the field setback when skipper Dhull and his deputy Shaik Rasheed missed two of the three league games due to COVID-19.

Dhull, who had the worst symptoms among the infected players, has lived up to his highly rated talent in the three innings he has played so far including the sublime hundred in the semifinal.

Rasheed has also shown his brilliance with the bat and is certainly the one to watch out for in the future.

Opener Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Harnoor Singh were extra cautious in their approach in the semifinal against Australia and the duo will need to change their approach for the summit clash.

What makes India's bunch of teenagers look the part is their unexpected maturity. The way Dhull and Rasheed battled after a poor start against Australia was a lesson in pacing the innings.

Only a few out of the current lot are likely to graduate to the highest level in the years to follow but in the short term, a special performance on Saturday afternoon can land them a life

changing IPL deal at the upcoming mega auction.

While the batters have put up individual performances, the bowling department has fired in unison.

The extra pace of Rajvardhan Hangargekar and swing of left-arm Ravi Kumar has rattled the top order batters while the Vicky Ostwal-led spin attack has stifled the opposition in the middle overs. He is India's leading wicket-taker with 12 scalps at 10.75.

Summing up team's confidence ahead of the final, Rasheed said: "We are a very good team. We are looking to win the finals." The U-19 stars are also getting to learn from the best.

Virat Kohli, who went on to become a world beater after captaining India U-19 to the title in 2008, gave a pep talk to the class of 2022 on how to approach the high pressure final.

They face England, a team which last reached the title clash way back in 1998 when it won its sole trophy till date.

After a tense finish in the semifinal against Afghanistan, England will be more than keen to end their title drought of the last 24 years.

Like India, England too remain unbeaten in the tournament. Captain Tom Prest has led from the front with 292 runs at an average of 73 while left-arm pacer Joshua Boyden has taken 13 wickets at a stellar average of 9.53.

India batters will also need to be wary of wrist spinner Rehan Ahmed who is tasked with providing breakthroughs in the middle overs.

Irrespective of the result on final, the Indian boys have had their moment in the sun in the Caribbean but given the high expectations they set for themselves, they will settle for nothing less than a trophy.

Match starts 6.30 PM.

Team India Has First Full Training Session Ahead Of West Indies Series



Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: The Indian team on Friday carried out its first extensive training session ahead of the three-match ODI series against the visiting West Indies.

On Thursday, the team had a light session where the players had been accompanied by trainers.

On Friday, however, barring the trio of Shikhar Dhawan, Rituraj Gaikwad and Shreyas Iyer, all the players and support staff were present for training after testing negative for COVID-19. The players practised under lights and it was a full-fledged session.

It is understood that head coach Rahul Dravid introduced young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi to the players.

The likes of Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and others batted at the nets while the spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav, who is making a comeback to the ODI team, and Yuzvendra Chahal rolled their arms overs.

Pacer Mohammad Siraj and all-rounder Shardul Thakur also bowled in the nets.

Opener Mayank Agarwal is in isolation for three days and will be an option for the opening

game if KL Rahul isn't available. Wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan, who can also open the innings, was also added to the ODI squad.

A COVID-19 outbreak had hit the Indian cricket team on Wednesday as three players—senior opener Dhawan, reserve opener Gaikwad and middle-order batter Shreyas—had tested positive for the virus during their mandatory isolation period before the start of the series.

Four more cricketers, including net bowler Navdeep Saini, had also tested positive for COVID-19. Saini is on the stand-by list.

The remaining three who tested positive for the virus are non-playing members—fielding coach T Dilip, security liaison officer B Lokesh and masseur Rajeev Kumar.

The Indian team assembled in Ahmedabad on January 31 for the three ODIs against the West Indies.

The series starts in Ahmedabad on Sunday with India's 1000th ODI match but it is now a foregone conclusion that Dhawan, Rituraj and Shreyas will be missing the rubber as they will have to undergo a week-long isolation and then return with two negative RT-PCR tests.

With Rings Breaking From Block Of Ice, Winter Olympics Ceremony Begins



Reuters

BEIJING: The opening ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics kicked off on Friday night.

The culmination of preparations beset by the COVID-19 pandemic and criticism over human rights in China that led several countries to mount a diplomatic boycott.

Held on the first day of Spring by the Chinese calendar, it began with a performance by dancers waving glowing green stalks to convey the vitality of the season, followed by an explosion of white and green fireworks that spelled the word "Spring."

On a three-dimensional cube resembling a block of ice, lasers carved imagery from each of the previous 23 Winter Games. The block was then "broken" by ice hockey players, enabling the Olympic rings to emerge, all in white.

That was followed by the traditional "parade of nations," with each of the 91 delegations preceded by a woman carrying a placard in the shape of a snowflake resembling a Chinese knot.

In keeping with Olympic tradition, the parade was led into the stadium by Greece with the rest ordered by stroke number in the first character of their Chinese name, which meant Turkey was second, followed by Malta, with host China set to go last.

The entrances for "Hong Kong, China," as well as for Russia, generated applause in the partially filled stadium.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, the highest profile foreign leader present for the Games, could be seen in the stadium.

However, the athletes from his country were unable to carry its flag due to doping violations, marching instead under the standard of the Russian Olympic Committee.

RETURN TO BIRD'S NEST

Friday's ceremony began shortly after President Xi Jinping and International Olympic Committee Chairman Thomas Bach entered the iconic Bird's Nest stadium.

Soon after the start, the Chinese flag was passed among 56 people representing China's different ethnic groups before it was raised and the national anthem performed.

Directed by Zhang Yimou, reprising his role from Beijing's 2008 Summer Games triumph, the event was to feature 3,000 performers on a stage comprised of 11,600 square meters of high-definition LED screen resembling an ice surface.

All of the performers are ordinary people from Beijing and nearby Hebei province, with "the Story of a Snowflake" its central thread.

With temperatures of about -4C (25F) at the start, the show was set to be about half as long as the four-hour marathon that opened the 2008 Games, also at the Bird's Nest.

The crowd itself was pared down, with organizers deciding last month not to sell tickets to Olympic events to curtail the spread of COVID-19. A "closed loop" separates competitors and other personnel from the Chinese public throughout the Olympics.

Zhang, the director, said the ceremony takes into account the changed global backdrop, including the pandemic and what he said were hostile forces "suppressing and blackening" China.

Winter Olympics Opening: Skier Arif Khan Leads Indian Contingent

Press Trust of India

BEIJING: Skier Arif Khan led a small four-strong Indian contingent during the Winter Olympics opening ceremony here on Friday amid a diplomatic boycott of the event by the country.

The 31-year-old Arif will be the lone Indian competitor at the Games, having qualified in Slalom and Giant Slalom events. India sent a six-member contingent to the Games including a coach, a technician and a team manager.

Arif is the first Indian to secure qualification in two events of the same edition of the Games and his competitions are slated for February 13 and 16.

Born in Kashmir's Baramulla district, Arif took up skiing quite early in life, winning his first national slalom champion-



ship at the age of just 12.

He later went on to win two gold medals in the Slalom and Giant Slalom events of the South Asian Winter Games in 2011.

He has also participated in both the editions of the Khelo India Winter Games held in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir.

Arif's inspiration was his father Yasin Khan, who owns a ski equipment shop in Gulmarg,

a popular tourist destination in Jammu and Kashmir.

Previously, India's Winter Olympics campaigns have been identified with one man — veteran luge athlete Shiva Keshavan, who represented the country in six editions of the mega-event.

The 40-year-old from Manali, Himachal Pradesh has now taken up the role of promoting winter sports in India.

J&K Administrative Council Approves Sports Policy 2022

- Policy incorporates provisions for cash awards for winners
- Employment to outstanding sportspersons
- Special focus on differently-abled athletes

Observer News Service

JAMMU: To promote sporting culture and harness the energy of youth in Jammu and Kashmir, the Administrative Council (AC), which met here under the chairmanship of LG, Manoj Sinha, approved the rollout of the J&K Sports Policy 2022.

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

The new Sports Policy is aimed at promoting sports in the Union territory by developing sports infrastructure and incentivizing sportspersons to excel in their respective games/sport. The Policy strives to achieve excellence by involving all the stakeholders and establishing inter-departmental synergies for composite development of sports.

The basic cannons of the Sports Policy are to "Scout" identify talent and catch them young; 'Engage'

ensure grassroot inclusive engagement in sports & games (Sports for All & Fitness for All); 'Facilitate' provide sports infrastructure, facilities, know-how, and training; and 'Recognize' - acknowledge the achievements and contributions through awards and further employment.

The Policy incorporates various annual awards like Award for Excellence in Sports for 10 sportspersons, J&K Khel Protsahana Award for Sports Association, and two veterans/ experienced sportspersons/organizers or referees, Parshuram Award for 5 Best Coaches in different disciplines.

To further motivate the UT's sporting talent, the Sports Policy announces special cash awards to the winners in Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Championship (Seniors/Juniors), World Cup/ Championships, Youth Olympic Games, South Asian Games, and World University Games/ Championships; in the range of Rs. 1.00 lakh to Rs. 1.00 crore.

Further, the winners in all recognized National competitions and National School Games in various sports disciplines will be granted specified scholarships from the Directorate of Youth Service & Sports.

Moreover, special emphasis has been laid to meet the sporting needs of the specially-abled sportspersons through sufficient infrastructure and training facilities to ensure their full participation in various events. The Department will also organize several paragon games at District and UT levels.

Furthermore, the Policy provides for the annual recruitment of outstanding sportspersons achieving podium finish/ participation in recognized international and national competitions. The expertise of outstanding players will also be utilized to impart specialized training/ coaching to budding players and athletes across the UT. Through inter-departmental convergences, new vistas of employment will be opened for youth in the fields of Tourism, Education, and Adventure/Winter Sports.

Cricket Australia Approves First Tour Of Pakistan In 24 years



Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Cricket Australia on Friday approved its first tour of Pakistan in 24 years with a revised itinerary being announced by both the boards amid lingering security concerns.

Coming off a 4-0 Ashes victory against England at home, Australia will play three Tests -- in Rawalpindi, Karachi and Lahore.

They will also play three one day internationals and a T20I during the full tour.

The opening Test match will be played from March 4-8 in Rawalpindi and the four white-ball matches are scheduled to be played from March 29 to April 5.

The tour will now start and end in Rawalpindi with the opening Test to be played from 4-8 March and the four white-ball matches to be played from 29 March to 5 April.

The second Test will be played in Karachi from March 12-16 and the third in Lahore from March 12-16.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief executive Faisal Hसनन said: "We are pleased that the Cricket Australia Board has formally approved their side's five-week tour itinerary and confirmed that their best available players will visit Pakistan for the first time in 24 years.

"We are really excited to host Pat Cummins and his players, and look forward to a competitive series that will comprise three Tests, three ODIs and a T20I."

The tour comes as a huge boost for Pakistan, which was hit hard when New Zealand and England abruptly pulled out from their scheduled tour of the country last year over security concerns.

Top-flight international cricket did not take place in Pakistan for nearly a decade since the

REVISED SCHEDULE:

27 Feb Arrival in Islamabad
4-8 Mar 1st Test, Rawalpindi
12-16 Mar 2nd Test, Karachi
21-25 Mar 3rd Test, Lahore
29 Mar 1st ODI, Rawalpindi
31 Mar 2nd ODI, Rawalpindi
2 April 3rd ODI, Rawalpindi
5 Apr one-off T20I, Rawalpindi
6 Apr – Departure.

2009 terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore.

"While Australia will arrive at the back of strong performances in their home series against England, our team has been playing excellent cricket resulting in our players sweeping the ICC Awards," Hसनन.

The schedule has been revised to ease logistical and operational challenges as well as to avoid Pakistan Day rehearsals, which usually commence in Islamabad in the second week of March.

The two cricket boards have also agreed that the Australia Test side will complete its isolation in Australia, before arriving in Islamabad on February 27 on a chartered flight. After a one-day hotel isolation, they will hold training sessions at the Pindi Cricket Stadium.

Australia's white-ball players are expected to arrive in Lahore on March 24 following isolation in Australia. After a one-day isolation upon arrival, they will integrate with other members of the side and travel to Islamabad for the first ODI in Rawalpindi.

The Tests will be part of the ICC World Test Championship, while the ODIs are linked to the World Cup Super League from which the top eight sides, including hosts India, will qualify directly for the 2023 50-over World Cup.

Pakistan Ban Gold-Medallist Hockey Player For Criticising PM Imran



Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's sports authorities have banned for 10 years hockey player Rashid-ul-Hasan, a member of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics gold medal winning team, for allegedly using offensive language against Prime Minister Imran Khan, a media report said on Friday.

Rashid, 62, while categorically denying the allegations of using offensive language, is considering the option to challenge the ban in the court of law, the Dawn newspaper reported.

He was banned by the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Thursday for 10 years after he criticised Prime Minister Khan—who is also PHF patron-in-chief—on a social media platform over the decline of the sport in the country, it said.

Expressing his surprise over the ban, Rashid said that currently he was not even holding any position in the federation.

The move is expected to raise voices in support of freedom of expression. A PHF inquiry committee was constituted to see if Rashid had used abusive language against Khan. The instructions were given by the PHF president Brig. (Retd.) Khalid Sajjad Khokhar and secretary Asif Bajwa, according to a statement.

After Rashid did not respond to two notices, the committee on PHF president's instructions imposed the 10-year ban. The copy of the notification has also been sent to the National Assembly's Standing

Committee on Sports.

Speaking on the matter, Rashid dispelled the impression of abusive language he was alleged to have used against the prime minister on any social media forum.

"On social media or any other public media, I have always given (due) respect to the prime minister," Rashid told the Dawn newspaper.

"On a WhatsApp group I only said that on the container though Imran Khan was claiming that he would put the game of hockey on the right track, nothing came on the surface during the last three years. And I also said Imran will not do any good work for hockey," the Olympian remarked while giving his clarification.

As a citizen of the country, Rashid said, he had the right to speak, but "I didn't use any abusive language".

According to Rashid, he received the first notice from the PHF some five months ago, adding "it didn't carry any solid material, that's why I did not consider it serious".

"The second explanation notice I received some 45 days ago. I wrote a short reply to the PHF refusing to accept the allegations as I did not use any abusive language against the prime minister," he said.

Meanwhile, the PHF requested the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) to issue letters to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority and other relevant institutions to take further steps for implementing the ban on Rashid, the report added.

Mark Zuckerberg Lost \$29 Billion - In Just One Day

Agenceis

Mark Zuckerberg lost \$29 billion in net worth on Thursday as Meta Platforms Inc's stock marked a record one-day plunge, while fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos was set to add \$20 billion to his personal valuation after Amazon's blockbuster earnings.

Meta's stock fell 26%, erasing more than \$200 billion in the biggest ever single-day market value wipe-out for a U.S. company. That pulled down founder and Chief Executive Officer Zuckerberg's net worth to \$85 billion, according to Forbes.

Zuckerberg owns about 12.8% of the tech behemoth formerly known as Facebook.

Bezos, the founder and chairman of e-commerce retailer Amazon, owns about 9.9% of the company, according to Refinitiv data. He is also the world's third richest man, according to Forbes.

Amazon's holiday-quarter profit surged, thanks to its investments in electric vehicle company Rivian; and the company said it would hike annual prices of Prime subscriptions in the United States, sending its shares up 15% in extended trading and readying it for its biggest percentage gain since October 2009 on Friday.

Bezos' net worth rose 57%

to \$177 billion in 2021 from a year earlier, according to Forbes, largely from Amazon's boom during the pandemic when people were highly dependent on online shopping.

Zuckerberg's one-day wealth decline is among the biggest ever and comes after Tesla Inc top boss Elon Musk's \$35 billion single-day paper loss in November. Musk, the world's richest person, had then polled Twitter users if he should sell 10% of his stake in the electric carmaker. Tesla shares have yet to recover from the resulting selloff.

Following the \$29 billion wipeout, Zuckerberg is in the twelfth spot on Forbes' list of real-time billionaires, below Indian business moguls Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani.

To be sure, trading in technology stocks remains volatile as investors struggle to price in the impact of high inflation and an expected rise in interest rates. Meta shares could very well recover sooner rather than later, with the hit to Zuckerberg's wealth staying on paper.

Zuckerberg sold \$4.47 billion worth of Meta shares last year, before 2021's tech rout. The stock sales were carried out as part of a pre-set 10b5-1 trading plan, which executives use to allay concerns about insider trading.

Pakistani Forces Battle Gunmen After Balochistan Checkpost Raids

Agenceis

ISLAMABAD: Gunmen have killed at least four soldiers and a civilian in attacks on two security posts in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan within hours of each other, officials say, with a clearance operation at one of the posts ongoing.

The attacks took place late on Wednesday, targeting a paramilitary post in the town of Panjgur, about 450km (280 miles) south of the provincial capital, Quetta, and another one in Noshki, about 330km (205 miles) north of the first attack spot.

On Thursday, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said "four or five" attackers were still active in Panjgur, and that Pakistani forces were continuing an operation against them.

Six attackers were killed, Ahmed said, while security officials in Panjgur confirmed to Al Jazeera that a curfew had been imposed in the area and that security operations were ongoing.

At least four soldiers were killed in the Noshki attack, Ahmed said,

along with nine attackers. Local police official Khalid Badini told Al Jazeera that a civilian had also been killed in the exchange of fire.

In a statement emailed to the media, the ethnic Baloch separatist group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Jeayand Baloch, the BLA's spokesman, said the raids were carried out by attackers who were prepared to "self-sacrifice".

Balochistan is Pakistan's largest but least populated province and has been the site of an armed rebellion by ethnic Baloch separatists for more than 10 years. Baloch separatist groups have targeted security forces and civilians in regular raids across the province, demanding greater rights and independence for ethnic Baloch areas of the province.

Wednesday's attack comes a day after a raid on a Pakistani security forces checkpost in the town of Kech, about 145km (91 miles) south of Panjgur, where at least 10 soldiers were killed, according to a Pakistani military statement.

Russia And China Hail "No Limits" Partnership To Stand Up To U.S.



AGENCEIS

MOSCOW: China and Russia proclaimed a deep strategic partnership on Friday to balance what they portrayed as the malign global influence of the United States as China's President Xi Jinping hosted Russia's Vladimir Putin on the opening day of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

In a joint statement, the two countries affirmed that their new relationship was superior to any political or military alliance of the Cold War era.

"Friendship between the two States has no limits, there are no 'forbidden' areas of cooperation," they declared, announcing plans to collaborate in a host of areas including space, climate change, artificial intelligence and control of the Internet.

The agreement marked the most detailed and assertive statement of Russian and Chinese resolve to work together - and

against the United States - to build a new international order based on their own interpretations of human rights and democracy.

Steeped in ideological discourse, it was not clear whether it would immediately translate into an increase in tangible and practical cooperation despite Putin trumpeting a new gas deal with China on Friday, or was intended as more of a statement of general policy intent.

"The two leaders are announcing their determination to stand together and to stand against the U.S. and the West - ready to withstand sanctions and contest American global leadership," said Daniel Russel of the Asia Society think tank, who served as the U.S. State Department's top diplomat for East Asia under the Obama administration.

While not formally allied, the two "are making common cause as a tactical matter to better defend their respective interests

and their authoritarian systems from Western pressure", he said.

Jonathan Eyal of the London-based Royal United Services Institute said the declaration marked a "frontal rebuttal" of the U.S. and Western view of the world and a possible building block towards a military alliance.

"It's the most explicit articulation of the 'making the world safe for dictatorship' strategy," he said. "It is a historic point because they both feel cornered and they feel their moment has arrived to state their vision of the world and promote it aggressively."

The two countries have moved closer together as both have come under pressure from the West on a host of issues including their human rights records and Russia's military build-up near Ukraine. The timing of their announcement was highly symbolic, at a China-hosted Olympics that the United States has subjected to a diplomatic boycott.

Britain Launches Jets Against Unidentified Aircraft For Second Day

AGENCEIS

LONDON: Britain on Thursday launched fighter jets against aircraft approaching its area of interest, a day after the Royal Air Force intercepted and escorted away four Russian bomber aircraft in a similar operation.

"Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon fighters from RAF Lossiemouth, supported by a Voyager Tanker from RAF Brize



Norton, have been launched against aircraft approaching the UK area of interest," an RAF spokesman said.

"We will not be offering any additional detail on this ongoing operation until complete."

Morocco Rescuers Race To Save Boy Trapped In Well For Days

Agenceis

Rescuers in Morocco raced against the clock on Friday to save a young boy trapped in a deep well for almost three days, in an operation that has gripped the kingdom with hundreds of thousands anxiously glued to live broadcasts.

Relief operations intensified for five-year-old Rayan, who fell down a 32-metre (100-foot) deep well on Tuesday, as darkness fell with diggers clawing out dirt under floodlights to create a hole next to the narrow shaft.

Government spokesman Mustapha Baitas promised on Thursday that the child will be rescued soon.

"Our hearts are with the family, and we are praying that he will be back with them as soon as possible."

The drama has sparked an outpouring of sympathy online, with the Arabic hashtag #SaveRayan going viral across North Africa, in-

nearby hospital.

Rayan's father told Le360 news website he had been repairing the well when the boy fell into it.

"I couldn't sleep a wink all night," he said.

His grandmother Laaziza told AFP Rayan "is very loved here in the village, not just at home" by his family.

Lead rescuer Abdelhabib Temrani told Al Oula television that the diameter of the well was less than 45 centimetres (18 inches).

Baitas said the nature of the soil meant it was too dangerous to try to widen the hole, meaning major excavations around it were the only solution.

The broadcasts of several Moroccan media outlets are being followed minute-by-minute by hundreds of thousands of internet users hanging on for news about the child's fate.

Moroccan footballer and PSG star Achraf Hakimi mentioned



cluding in neighbouring Algeria.

The drilling in the village near Bab Berred in Morocco's rural northern province of Chefchaouen has hit 27 metres (88 feet), with "the hope of reaching 32 metres (105 feet) in the next few hours", Morocco's MAP news agency reported.

The rescuers will then dig three metres horizontally "between the hole and the well to recover the child", it said.

A medical team was dispatched to the scene to carry out initial checks and potential resuscitation once the boy is rescued.

Rescuers were able to send the child oxygen and water via pipes, and a police helicopter is on standby to evacuate him to a

the rescue efforts on social media, alongside emojis of a broken heart and hands together in prayer.

The boy's fate has attracted crowds of people to the site of the operation, putting pressure on rescuers operating in "difficult conditions", Baitas said.

"We call on citizens to let the rescuers do their job and save this child," he said.

The accident echoes a tragedy that occurred in Spain in early 2019 when a 2-year-old child died after falling into an abandoned well 25 centimetres (10 inches) wide and more than 70 metres (230 feet) deep.

Julen Rosello's body was recovered after a search and rescue operation that lasted 13 days.



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