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P5 STATE

MERCURY DROPS IN J&K, LADAKH; MINUS 25.2°C IN DRASS

Night temperatures dropped further in Kashmir as Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort, remained the coldest place in Kashmir Valley on Friday, officials said.

P7

'WOMEN EMPOWERMENT' IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Numerous works have been written from different perspectives to deliberate on the issue of 'women empowerment', but the world is still abuzz with the slogans of 'Women Empowerment', 'Gender Justice',

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (ﷺ) AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

A Prophetic Model of Emancipation of Women

P11 SPORTS

IPL AUCTION 2022: TEAMS, PLAYERS, ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

The 15th IPL auction, commencing on Saturday, will be the last of its kind in the cash-rich T20 extravaganza as the Board of Control for Cricket in India is planning to



Quote!

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle

— Socrates

NEWS DIGEST

Stone Pelting Injures 3 Cops In Poonch

JAMMU: Three policemen were injured on Friday in clashes with protesting villagers in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. Police said three policemen were injured, including two constables and one special **More on P10**

4 Gamblers Arrested In Sopore

SRINAGAR: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested four gamblers in a raid in Sopore town of Baramulla district. Mohd Ramzan Bhat of Arampora, Bilal Ahmad Bhat of Chinkipora, **More on P10**

8 Held For Illegal Sand Mining In Reasi

JAMMU: Eight persons have been arrested and 11 vehicles allegedly involved in the illegal mining were seized during raids at several places in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Friday, officials said. Raids were **More on P10**

Ladakh Sees 131 Fresh Covid Cases

LEH: Ladakh reported 131 more corona cases, taking the overall caseload in the Union Territory to 27,279 while the active cases in the union territory has gone down to 670, officials said. As many as 157 patients were cured and discharged from hospitals in Ladakh. Of these, 93 were discharged **More on P10**

LG Gives Nod To Re-Open Schools In J&K

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Asserting that the pandemic situation has improved, the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday gave a nod to the gradual reopening of schools and holding offline classes in the Union Territory while ensuring complete adherence to the standard operating procedures (SoPs)

The LG issued directions to the district administrations to ensure enabling environment for schools for reopening, cleaning & sanitation, transportation, flexible & staggered timings for students with the



help of school education authorities, an official spokesperson said Friday.

These directions were passed by LG during the review meeting with Covid Task Force and DCs, SPs of all 20 districts.

According to the official spokesperson, Sinha observed that the pandemic situation has improved and authorities can gradually move ahead for re-opening of schools and holding offline classes **More on P10**

Cases Drop To 34-Day Low, 540 Test Positive

10th Std Results Likely On Monday

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (BOSE) is likely to announce annual regular results of 10th standard on Monday.

Officials at BOSE said, "The results would be declared mostly likely on Monday and if any case the results are delayed, it would be declared on Tuesday."

The official informed that the deadline for declaring the results was February-15.

JKBOSE on November-20 conducted the first paper of annual regular exams of 10th standard in **More on P10**

Delhi Court Issues Warrants Against 8 Hizb Militants

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court has issued arrest warrants against eight alleged Hizbul-Mujahideen militants on charges of money laundering related to funding militant and secessionist activities in Jammu & Kashmir valley.

Additional Sessions Judge Parveen Singh issued non-bailable warrants (NBWs) against Gulam Nabi Khan, Umer Farooq Shera, Manzoor Ahmad Dar, Zaffar Hussain Bhat, Nazir Ahmad Dar, Abdul Majeed



Sofi, Mubarak Shah and Mohd Yusuf on a plea moved by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The court noted the submission made by ED's Special Public Prosecutor Nitesh Rana

Delimitation Panel To Get Another Extension

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Delimitation Commission, mandated to redraw the assembly constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir, is likely to get a two-month extension to complete its task, sources aware of the development said.

The term of the panel is coming to an end in early March and it would need more time to ready its final report, they said.

Formed in March, 2020, the panel was granted a one year extension last year.

Headed by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, it has Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and the state election commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir as its ex-officio members.

In its draft report shared with its five associated members -- all Lok Sabha members from Jammu and Kashmir -- the delimitation **More on P10**

BANDIPORA ATTACK

Cop Killed, 4 Security Men Injured



KO File Photo

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A policeman was killed while four other security personnel, including an ASI of Border Security Force (BSF) were injured on Friday in a grenade attack by militants in Bandipora town of north Kashmir.

Around 5pm Friday, unidentified militants hurled a grenade towards a checkpoint manned jointly by police and BSF near Nishat Park area in the north Kashmir township of Bandipora, a police spokesperson said. In the

grenade attack, he said, four policemen and a BSF officer received splinter injuries.

All the injured, the police spokesperson said, were evacuated to the hospital for treatment. However, one of the policeman identified as Zubair Ahmad succumbed to his injuries. The condition of other injured security personnel is stable.

The injured have been identified as Head Constable Mohammad Shafi of Sonamarg, and constables Mohammad Yasir and Rayees Ahmad. The injured **More on P10**

Govt Transfers 6 JKAS Officers

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday ordered transfer of six JKAS officers in the interest of administration with immediate effect.

Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, JKAS, BDO Khag (Budgam), has been transferred and posted as

Collector, Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA), Srinagar, against an available vacancy, reads an order by the government.

Irfan Bahadur, JKAS, State Taxes Officer, Baramulla-III (Sopore), has been transferred and posted as Secretary LCMA, Srinagar, against an available vacancy. Ms. Manisha, **More on P10**

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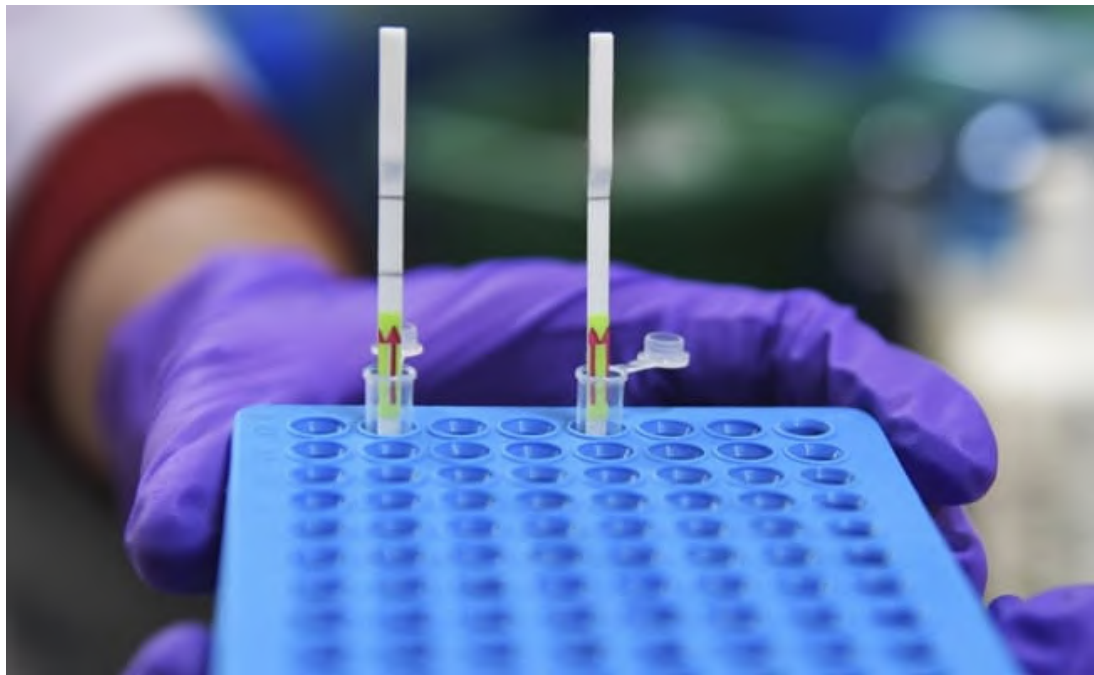
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‘New Inhaled Vaccine Provides Broad Protection Against Covid Variants’

Press Trust Of India

An inhaled form of COVID-19 vaccine developed by scientists at McMaster University in Canada can provide broad, long-lasting protection against the SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern, a preclinical study has found. The research, published recently in the journal Cell, shows the immune mechanisms and significant benefits of vaccines being delivered directly into the respiratory tract, rather than by traditional injection. Because inhaled vaccines target the lungs and upper airways where respiratory viruses first enter the body, they are far more effective at inducing a protective immune response, the researchers said. The study, which was conducted on animal models, has provided the critical proof of concept to enable a Phase 1 clinical trial that is currently under way to evaluate inhaled aerosol vaccines in healthy adults who had already received two doses of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine. The strategy was built upon a robust tuberculosis vaccine research programme established by Zhou Xing, a co-lead author of the study. "What we have discovered from many years' research is that the vaccine delivered into the lung induces all-around protective respiratory mucosal immunity, a property that the injected vaccine is lacking," said Xing, professor at McMaster University. "We wanted, first and foremost, to design a vaccine that would work well against any variant," added the study's co-lead author Matthew Miller, an associate professor at McMaster. Researchers compared two types of adenovirus platforms for the vaccine. The adenoviruses serve as vectors that can deliver vaccine directly to the lungs without causing illness themselves. "We can remain ahead of the virus with our vaccine strategy. Current



What we have discovered from many years' research is that the vaccine delivered into the lung induces all-around protective respiratory mucosal immunity, a property that the injected vaccine is lacking

vaccines are limited because they will need to be updated and will always be chasing the virus," said Miller. Both types of the new vaccine are effective against highly transmissible variants because they are designed to target three parts of the virus, including two that are highly conserved among coronaviruses and do not mutate as quickly as spike, the researchers said. All COVID-19 vaccines currently approved target only the spike protein, which has shown a remarkable ability to mutate, they said. The SARS-CoV-2 virus uses the spike protein to enter and infect the human cells. "This vaccine might also provide

pre-emptive protection against a future pandemic, and that is really important because as we have seen during this pandemic -- and as we saw in 2009 with the swine flu -- even when we are able to rapidly make a vaccine for a pandemic virus, it's already way too late," said Miller. "Millions of people died, even though we were able to make a vaccine in record time," he said. The researchers found that besides neutralising antibodies and T cell immunity, the vaccine delivered into the lungs stimulates a unique form of immunity known as trained innate immunity. This type of immunity is able to provide very broad protection against

many lung pathogens besides SARS-CoV-2, they said. In addition to being needle and pain-free, an inhaled vaccine is so efficient at targeting the lungs and upper airways that it can achieve maximum protection, the researchers said. This protection can be achieved with a small fraction of the dose of current vaccines -- possibly as little as 1 per cent -- meaning a single batch of vaccine could go 100 times further, they said. "This pandemic has shown us that vaccine supply can be a huge challenge," said associate professor Brian Lichty, who co-led the preclinical study.

Plastic Pollution In Oceans On Track To Rise For Decades

Agencies

Plastic pollution at sea is reaching worrying levels and will continue to grow even if significant action is taken now to stop such waste from reaching the world's oceans, according to a review of hundreds of academic studies. The review by Germany's Alfred Wegener Institute, commissioned by environmental campaign group WWF, examined almost 2,600 research papers on the topic to provide an overview ahead of a United Nations meeting later this month. "We find it in the deepest ocean trenches, at the sea surface and in Arctic sea ice," said biologist Melanie Bergmann who co-authored the study, which was published Tuesday. Some regions -- such as the Mediterranean, the East China and Yellow Seas -- already contain dangerous levels of plastic, while others risk becoming increasingly polluted in the future, it found. The authors concluded that almost every species in the ocean has been affected by plastic pollution and that it's harming important ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves. As plastic breaks down into ever-smaller pieces it also enters the marine food chain, being ingested in everything from whales to turtles to tiny plankton. Getting that plastic out of the water again is nearly impossible, so policy-makers should focus on

preventing any more of it entering the oceans in the first place, said Bergmann. Some of the studies showed that even if this were to happen today, the amount of marine microplastic would keep increasing for decades, she said. Matthew MacLeod, a professor of environmen-

report) that will certainly disrupt current practices for plastic production, use and disposal," he said. MacLeod was involved in a separate study recently that also concluded immediate measures are required because of the possible global impacts. Heike Vesper of WWF said while consumers can help



The part that can (and will) be argued about is whether there is enough evidence to warrant aggressive action (such as what is advocated in this report) that will certainly disrupt current practices for plastic production, use and disposal

tal science at Stockholm University who was not involved in the report, said it appeared to be a sound review of existing studies, focused on the effects of plastic pollution. "The part that can (and will) be argued about is whether there is enough evidence to warrant aggressive action (such as what is advocated in this

reduce plastic pollution by changing their behavior, governments have to step up and share the burden of tackling the problem. "What we need is a good policy framework," she said, looking ahead to the upcoming U.N. environmental meeting in Nairobi. "It's a global problem and it needs global solutions." (AP)

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PHE MECHANICAL RURAL DIVISION, SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.
Corrigendum- III

Kindly read Motor Rating = "Suitable for above parameters" instead of "not less than 30HP/Suitable for above parameters" for the E-NIT No. PHE/MRD/TS/93of02/2022 DT: - 02/02/2022.issued vide this office No: -PHE/ MRD /TS/2762-66DT: - 02/02/2022 and published vide No: 2022_PHE_159068.]

Note: All other terms and conditions as laid down in the tender document shall remain same.

No:PHE/MRD/2893-97
Dated: 11-02-2022

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
PHE Mechanical Rural Division,
Srinagar.

DIPK-17986/21

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR,
NEAR J&K BANK (ZALDAGAR)
Telefax No. 0194-2503195 e.mail Id: xenmidsrinagar@gmail.com

Sub:- **Extension in bidding time for this office Short Term e-NIT No. 39 OF 2021-22, Dated: 25-01-2022 for below mentioned work/s:-**

Part-1:-
Electrical Repairs to OISD Starters (02 No's) & providing / fitting of 10 HP DOL Starter at LIS Astanpora Rawalpura

Part-2:-
Repairs to 40HP OISD Starter, replacement of meters and proper fitment of service line at LIS Sangam

Part-3:-
Electrical repair work to 10HP 3-phase motor of 2cusec pumping unit at LDS Imam Hussain Hospital

Part-4:-
Replacement of rusted bend by fabrication, providing and fitting of 200mm MS Long bend, repairs to Foot valve and TC-15 coupling at LIS Goripora Old.

Part-5:-
Mechanical repair to 05HP Priming pump & fabrication on window / door grill at DWS Chonchi Faquir

Part-6:-
Overhauling / Mechanical repair work to 5cusec VT Pumping unit 2nd & 25HP Vertical motors of VT Pumping units 1st & 2nd LIS Scheme Kreshible.

Ref:- JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No's:-
2022_IFC_158170_1 2022_IFC_158170_2 2022_IFC_158170_3
2022_IFC_158170_4 2022_IFC_158170_5 2022_IFC_158170_6

EXTENSION NOTICE 2

Due to **no/ poor** response to above mentioned sub-parts to this office above referred e-NIT for the subject work/s, the critical dates are again extended as under:-

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Bid submission/ Document download / sale end Date | 14/02/2022 at 1400 hrs |
| Date and time of Bid opening | 15/02/2022 at 1400 hrs |

Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original e-NIT.

DIPK-17920/21

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division,
Srinagar

No. MIDS/TS/ 5201-5206
Dated:- 10-02-2022

E-mail:- techrbpu786@gmail.com Phone:-01933-295302,
Government of Jammu & Kashmir(UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION PULWAMA.

TENDER NOTICE
E-NIT No :-430/EEP/RNB/of 2021-22/14783-93
Dated: 10/02/2022

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on %age Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work:-

| S. No | Name of Work | Adv. Cost in (Rs. Lacs.) | Cost of T/D (Rs.) | Earnest Money (Rs.) in the shape of CDR/ FDR/BG | Time of Completion in working Days | Class of Contract | Major Head of Accounts | Administrative Accord Approval No: |
|-------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Construction of covered/ open Drain from the H/O Mohd Ashraf Dar to H/O Muzaffar Ahmad Bhat, H/o Ali Mohd from Ab Hamid Pandit to H/O Muzfar Ahmad Bhat Abdul Khaliq Bhat to H/o Khurshed Ahmad Ganie to Hilal Ahmad Ganie at Iqbal Colony at W.No 4 MC Awantipora. | 58.00 | 1600/- | 1,16,000/- | 35 working Days | Aay | FC- Grants | MC/AWNT/21 Dated: 28.01.2022 |

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, 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 date given below:-

| Sl. No. | Date of Issue of Tender Notice | Date |
|---------|--|---|
| 1. | Date of Issue of Tender Notice | 10/02/2022 |
| 2. | Period of downloading of bidding documents | From 11/02/2022 10:00 A.M. |
| 3. | Bid submission Start Date | 11/02/2022 from 10.00 A.M |
| 4. | Bid Submission End Date | 17/02/2022 upto 4.00 P.M |
| 5. | Date & time of opening of Bids (Online) | 17/02/2022 at 4:30 P.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama |
| 6. | Submission of Performance Security (PS) | Within 3 days of receipt of LOA. (The First lowest successful bidder has to provide 5% of allotted cost as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/ BG and EMD of 2% shall be released after receipt of 5% Performance security. |

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/Receipt as per Annexure -C (Debited to M.H.0059 PWD) and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/ BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama (The Date of Treasury Challan and EMD should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date.

1. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama

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

All other terms and conditions shall be available in website www.jktenders.gov.in

Head Draftsman Technical Officer

DIPK-17955/21 Executive Engineer, R&B Division Pulwama

Public Notice
I have a Pnb Metlife policy under policy no 21827943. .In the name of MOHD YOUSUF ITOO S/O.SONAULLAH BHAT but my correct name is MOHAMMAD YOUSUF ITOO S/O.GHULAM MOHI UD DIN ITOO now I want to correct it if any body have objection may contact Pnb Metlife office Anantnag within 7 days after that no objection will be entertained.
MOHAMMAD YOUSUF ITOO R/O.TANGPORA SHOPIAN JAMMU AND KASHMIR RNA

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have applied for the issuance of DEE Class Contractor Card from R&B Office. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his /her objection in the office of the Super Intending Engineer R&B Circle Anantnag /Kulgam Khanabal within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
NAME:- Mohd Khalil Kooli S/O :- Mohd Jameel Kooli R/O :- Ahlan Gadoole Kokernag Ang. RNA

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education
BRANCH OFFICE MAGAM
The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original marks certificate of 10th under Below mentioned particulars
Name : Mohammad Wasim Dar
S/O Gh Rasool Dar
R/o Bun Sharan
Details of Marks Certificate lost
Secondary School Examination (class 10th)
Roll No 2146476 Session /Year June 2014

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

Broad Daylight Robbery Shocks Batamaloo

Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR: Two minor siblings were injured after two robbers entered their house and attacked them with a sharp edged weapon at Moominabad, Batamaloo Srinagar on Friday.

A relative told Kashmir Observer that the incident took place around 1 PM when male members of the family were out for prayers.

“We had gone for Friday prayers and as learnt by the locals that two robbers have in the meanwhile entered the house in a bid to carry out robbery”, said Mohammad Yahya Khan, father of the victims told Kashmir Observer.

He said that once they (robbers) failed to meet the motive of receiving resistance from the females’, they (robbers) held them hostage besides injuring two girls with knives.

The duo, he said, has received injuries in nose and arm and was being administered with necessary treatment.

Station House officer (SHO) Batamalo told Kashmir Observer that both the accused have been arrested and a First Information Report (FIR) number



PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION revealed that the accused persons had trespassed into the residential house with the intention to commit theft and attacked two female inmates, resulting in injuries to both of them.”

19/2022. He said the accused have been booked under section 393(Attempt to commit robbery), 452 (House-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint) , 307 (Attempt to murder), 354 (Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) of Indian Penal Code.

He further said that further investigations have been started and both the girls are stable.

“Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused persons had trespassed into the residential house with the intention to commit theft and attacked two female inmates, resulting in injuries to both of them.” a police official said.

The accused have been identified as Umer Yousuf Wani of Firdousabad, Batamaloo and Habil Yaseen son of Mohammad Yaseen of Dal colony, Bemina.

No Compromise On Crime Against Girls: Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR:-- SSP Srinagar, Rakesh Balwal Friday said that there will be no compromise on crime against girls.

“The Batamaloo incident came as a shock and I can’t believe there are people who can do this,” he said.

Earlier, a youth along with his associate in an attempt to loot cash barged into a house at Mominabad Batamaloo. They tied two girls with a rope. One was arrested while another managed to escape from the spot.

Reacting to the incident, SSP Srinagar said that a formal case under strong sections of law including trespassing, assault and outraging the modesty of females has been registered.

“We are investigating the matter and if he has done all this along with his associate, he too will be arrested. I can’t believe that such incidents can take place in my city,” he said.

He hailed the role of people in helping police to nab the culprit saying that cooperation of people is very important to eradicate crime from the society.

“We are working to end crime against girls. We are also working to put brakes on narcotics. We believe that there should be no compromise on crime against girls,” SSP Srinagar said.

He said police want that those youth involved in the earlier attack (acid attack) should get stringent punishment so that it becomes a deterrent for others.

WE ARE WORKING TO END CRIME against girls. We are also working to put brakes on narcotics. We believe that there should be no compromise on crime against girls,”

Two Houses Gutted In Ellahibagh Blaze



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two residential houses were damaged in a fire incident at City Colony Ellahibagh area of Srinagar on Friday evening.

Witnesses said that fire broke out from the residential house belonging to Sajad Ahmad Mir, son of Ghulam Rasool Mir and within no time spread to nearby house belonging to Riyaz Ahmad Najar,

son of Mohammad Sultan in City Colony area of Ellahibagh.

Soon after noticing the flames, locals and police reached to the spot and informed the Fire and Emergency Services department following which the fire tenders reached the spot and doused the flames.

In the incident, two residential houses got damaged completely, the witnesses said.

Labour Electrocuted To Death In Bemina

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: An 18-year-old labourer was electrocuted to death in Bemina area of Srinagar on Friday afternoon.

Reports said that an

18-year-old labourer identified as Sameer Ahmad Bhat, son of Mohi-ud-din Bhat of Ashmuqam area of Anantnag was electrocuted while installing power line in Bemina area of Srinagar.

They said he was rushed to SKIMS Soura for treatment, however, he was declared brought dead on arrival.

Meanwhile, police has registered case in this regard and has started investigations

Fazlul Haseeb Is New ADC Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday ordered transfer and posting of four IAS officers in the with immediate effect with Fazlul Haseeb posted as new additional deputy commissioner Srinagar against an available vacancy.

According to an order, Abhishek Sharma (IAS), Sub-Divisional Magistrate Katra, holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar Katra, has been transferred and posted as Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0.

Akshay Labroo (IAS), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Srinagar (West), has been



transferred and posted as Mission Director, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0).

Fazlul Haseeb (IAS), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Dharmari, holding additional charge of Sub-Registrar,

Dharmari, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Mahore & Sub-Registrar, Mahore, has been transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, against an available vacancy.

“The officer shall also hold the additional charge of the post of Chief Executive Officer, Urban Development Agency, Kashmir, till further orders,” reads the order.

Shyambir (IAS), awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu vice Ghan Shyam Singh (JKAS), who has been asked to report to GAD for further adjustment.

BE CAUTIOUS: YOU CAN BE A VICTIM OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media refers to a computer based technology which expedite and promotes the sharing of ideas, thoughts, information through the medium of virtual networks and communities. It has become the most influential and important virtual space where the platform is used for social networking and connecting people. Social media power is laudable as we can reach larger number of people within seconds. We can also say that it is the meeting point of today’s internet savvy audience. There are more than 4.5 billion social media users around the world. Major portion of younger generation, particularly teenagers, and middle aged persons are major percentage of the total social media user population. The largest social media networks include Facebook, Instagram, twitter, you tube etc. As time is changing and society is modernizing, Social media is changing and developing accordingly. New apps such as Tik tok, clubhouse, many English speaking apps are coming out seemingly every year, joining the ranks of more established social networks.

Social media platforms are universal in the present times and have connected us with the people around the globe in many ways. We share information and updates in a flash with the networks of connections we have built. While sharing information, in this manner is favourable and privileged for many reasons, but it also brings many risks along with it. Social media is slowly killing real life and replacing with fakeness. People post their best things. We believe that they are happy every time. But the reality is very different. Actually the thing is that these people are being influenced. They are being fed with the concept that they need to show the world that they are rich, beautiful, living a luxurious life and everything is nice with them. We should not make any opinion about a person based on their profiles on social media.

Trusting people online is just like buying stuff for home without checking it or buying medicines without checking expiry date. The trust is established through mutual understanding and dedication, between two or more people, the persons we meet in real life are much more veritable. We can know them better by being with them, by understanding their nature and how they react in particular situation. But this is not the case with online meeting. We are bound to believe what he/she shows us. How they will pretend, we believe that. They can be either fake or they can cheat us easily because we don’t know their backgrounds or how actually they are. So be careful when you trust people online. Remember one thing that no matter how long you have talked to them or how much you have talked but in reality they are still strangers to you. When you are chatting and posting things online, make sure that you keep your personal information private. So that they can’t harm you. Stalking, identity thefts, personal attacks, mis use of information are among the major issues which social media users face. In most of the situations the users themselves are to be blame for this, because they share the private information in the public. Unfortunately, by the time the private content is deleted, it’s usually too late. It can cause problems both in their personal and professional lives. So make sure that the content which you are sharing online with anyone, if it will be public, are you ok with it. If yes, then you should proceed.

One of the biggest threats to online security is overconfidence. Many users believe that they don’t have anything worth hacking or why will anyone hack them, or who will hack them, so they believe that there is no need to worry about security and safety. But they are wrong. With today’s technology we are connected with each other than ever before. When you neglect security, you are putting not only you but others at risk as well. To keep yourself and your information at a safe zone, pay careful attention to your online activity including travel plans, bank account information, your full address, location information, daily schedule. Posting and sharing your travel photos when you are still on vacation is just like sending an open invitation for someone to come and rob your possessions at home. Thieves troll social media all the time looking for opportunity. Lamentably, home burglary isn’t the only reason criminals monitor social media. They know that when you are travelling, or on a vacation. You will not pay attention to your accounts and finances, so it becomes an easy opportunity for financial theft and fraud. Wait till you get home to post your travel pictures. So privacy and safety is in your hands.

When we spend time with our friends or family, we care more about how other people think of us being at that moment. We spend more time taking photos for others, than being in the moment. Instead of experiencing something in real time, we are more interested in watching it through the filter of screen. We should value the persons we are with, by talking with them rather than being on phone. You can use social networks for all they were meant to effectuate, but you need to take extra care and precautions to make sure that your personal information doesn’t go into the wrong hands. Use a stronger password; the longer it is the more secure it will be. If possible use a different password for each of your social media accounts. Be selective with friend requests. If you don’t know the person, don’t accept the friend request. It could be a fake account. And most important thing that be careful about what you share.

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DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1502 - Muslims in Granada forced to convert to Catholicism
- 1502 Vasco da Gama sets sail from Lisbon, Portugal on his second voyage to India
- 1528 - Treaty of Dordrecht between emperor & ecclesiastical power
- 1700 - The Great Northern War begins in Northern Europe between Denmark–Norway, Saxony and Russia and the Swedish Empire.
- 1818 - Chile gains independence from Spain.
- 1832 - Ecuador annexes Galapagos Islands
- 1861 - State troops seize US munitions in Napoleon, Arkansas, during the US Civil War
- 1886 - 2nd British government of Salisbury forms
- 1912 - The last Qing Emperor of China, Puyi abdicates after losing the support of the Chinese people and thus the mandate of heaven
- 1915 - Adolf Hitler receives the relatively common Iron Cross second class for bravery in World War I
- 1921 - Winston Churchill becomes British Minister of Colonies
- 1934 - The four-day February Uprising, sometimes called the Austrian Civil War, begins.
- 1935 - Great airship, USS Macon, crashes into Pacific Ocean
- 1953 - USSR breaks relations with Israel
- 1954 - The UK government establishes an organisation to control atomic energy in the country under The Atomic Energy Authority Bill
- 1955 McGuire Sisters' "Sincerely" single goes #1 & stays #1 for 10 weeks
- 1955 President Eisenhower sends 1st US advisors to South Vietnam
- 1955 - Soviets decides space center built in Baikonur, Kazakhstan
- 1960 - Chinese army kills 12 Indian soldiers
- 1964 - Fighting breaks out between Turks and Greeks over dispute islands in Cyprus and 16 are killed; the UN responds the following month by sending a peacekeeping force
- 1965 - Nuclear test at Pacific Ocean
- 1974 - Heads of state of Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia discuss oil strategy in view of the progress in Arab-Israeli disengagement
- 1979 - Kosmos 1076, 1st Soviet oceanographic satellite, launched
- 1979 - Bakhtiar resigns as prime minister of Iran after losing support of the military
- 1982 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1985 - West Indies beat Australia 2-1 to win cricket's World Series Cup (Australian Tri-Series)
- 1991 - Iceland recognizes Lithuania's independence
- 1994 - XVII Winter Olympic Games opens in Lillehammer, Norway
- 1998 - Intel unveils its 1st graphics chip i740
- 1999 - US President Bill Clinton acquitted by the Senate in his impeachment trial
- 2001 - NEAR Shoemaker spacecraft touchdown in the "saddle" region of 433 Eros becoming the first spacecraft to land on an asteroid.

From KO Archives

India, Pakistan May Conduct Nuclear Tests: US

Agencies

WASHINGTON: US intel-ligence chiefs have warned that they could not rule out new nuclear tests by India and Pakistan and pointed to an "unacceptably high" risk of war between the two countries.

George Tenet, director of the CIA, said in pre-pared testimony to the sen-ate intelligence committee that an escalation of the race for nuclear superior-ity on the subcontinent could not be ruled out "We still believe there is a good prospect of another round of nuclear tests," said Tenet. "I must report that relations between India and Pakistan remain volatile, making the risk of war between the two nuclear-armed adversaries unacceptably high," Tenet said.

MILITARY BALANCE FAVOURS INDIA

The military balance in South Asia favours India against Pakistan in most areas of conventional de-fence preparedness, mak-ing Islamabad rely on nu-clear weapons for deter-rence, Tenet told the Senate Committee.

He said the "military balance in which India enjoys advantages over Pakistan in most areas of conventional defence preparedness re-mains the same. This in-cludes a decisive advantage in fighter aircraft, almost twice as many men under arms, and a much larger economy to support defence expenditures.

Pakistan relies heavily on its nuclear weapons for deterrence. Their deep-seated rivalry, frequent ar-tillery exchanges in Kash-mir, and short flight times for nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and aircraft, all contribute to an unstable nuclear deterrence."

Tenet said that Kash-mir is at the centre of the dispute between India and Pakistan. Nuclear deter-rence and the likelihood that a conventional war would bog down both sides argue against a decision to go to war. "But both sides seem quite willing to take risks over Kashmir in particular, and this along with their deep animosity and distrust - could lead to decisions that escalate tensions."

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 12 February, 2001)

University Of Kashmir

NAAC Accredited Grade 'A+'

Result Notificatin
Doctor Of Philosophy

Shakeel Ahamd Rather S/O Ab Gaffar Rather bearing University Registration No; 19079-IC-2004 who pursued his Ph.D. programme on whole-time basis in the Department of Zoology and submitted his tesis titled "Status of Toxoplasmosis in Kashmir Valley with special reference to Prevalence , Diagnosis and Public Health significance " under the joint supervision of Dr. Hidayatullah Tak (Associate Professor), Department of Zoology, University Of Kashmir, Srinagar and Dr. Dalip K. Kakru, (Ex-Professor) Department of Microbiology, SKIMS, Srinagar is declared qualified for the award of Ph.D. Degree in Zoology on November 02,2021 in the school of Biological Sciences.

Joint Controller of Examination
(Secrecy)
Errors & Omission Excepted.
No: F (Ph.D.- Zoology) / Sec / KU/ 22
Dated February 11, 2022

Controller of Examination



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انہایت دیگام کام اطلاع نائب تحصیلدار دیگام
مضمون درخواست تنخبہ: جمرا اقبال دونی ، ماجد اقبال دونی ، سائل اقبال دونی ، عاقب اقبال
دونی پسران محما اقبال دونی ساکنہ مدرہ تحصیل و ضلع بہت ناگ
بہر ض حصول SC/OBC سر تقیبت

امصار بمراوہ گا ہی ہر خاص و عام۔

مجاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں ساکان نے ایک درخواست بہر ض حصول SC/OBC
سر تقیبت دفتر بذ میں پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کا روائی ہے۔ پنداری ملحقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس
سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکان کا کتبہ بذ میں افراد ہیں۔

| نمبر شمار | نام و ولدیت | عمر | پیشہ | سالانہ آمدنی |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------|------|--------------|
| 01 | محما اقبال دونی | دادادہ عمار زرزی | دونی | 57 سال |
| 02 | فاروق بانو | جمرا اقبال دونی | دونی | 55 سال |
| 03 | وہم راجہ دونی | دلہما اقبال دونی | دونی | 29 سال |
| 04 | عمرا اقبال دونی | دلہما اقبال دونی | دونی | 28 سال |
| 05 | ماجد اقبال دونی | دلہما اقبال دونی | دونی | 25 سال |
| 06 | سائل اقبال دونی | دلہما اقبال دونی | دونی | 20 سال |
| 07 | عاقب اقبال دونی | دلہما اقبال دونی | دونی | 19 سال |

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی افراد کبذ میں موجود نہیں ہے اور کبذ کی سالانہ آمدنی = 456096 ہے
اب سر تقیبت مذکورہ کی اجرائی میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو ایک ہفتے کے اندر
اندرون دفتر بذ میں پیش کریں۔ معیا گذارنے کے بعد کوئی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تحریر الصد نائب تحصیلدار۔

RNA

Withdraw Recovery Notices Against Anti-CAA Protestors Or We Will Quash It: SC To UP Govt



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Uttar Pradesh government on Friday drew flak from the Supreme Court for acting on the recovery notices issued to the alleged anti-CAA protestors in December 2019 and gave one final opportunity to it to withdraw the proceedings and warned that it will quash the proceedings for being in violation of the law.

The top court said that the proceedings initiated in December 2019 were contrary to the law laid down by the Supreme Court and cannot be sustained.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said that the Uttar Pradesh government has acted like a "complainant, adjudicator and prosecutor" by itself in conducting the proceedings to attach the properties of the accused.

"Withdraw the proceedings or we will quash it for being in violation of the law laid down by this court", the bench said.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by one Parwaiz Arif Titu seeking quashing of notices sent to alleged protestors by the district administration for recovering losses caused by damage to public properties during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) agitations in Uttar Pradesh and asked the

state to respond to it.

The plea has alleged that such notices have been sent in an "arbitrary manner" against a person, who had died six years ago at the age of 94 and also to several others including two people who are aged above 90.

Additional Advocate General Garima Prashad, appearing for the UP government, said that 106 FIRs were registered against 833 rioters in the State and 274 recovery notices were issued against them.

"Out of the 274 notices, recovery orders were passed in 236 while 38 cases were closed", she said, adding that under the new law notified in 2020, claim tribunals have been constituted which is being headed by retired district judges, and earlier it was headed by Additional District Magistrates (ADMs).

The bench said, "The Supreme Court has passed two judgements in 2009 and 2018, which said that judicial officers should be appointed in claim tribunals but instead you appointed ADMs".

Prashad said that during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests 451 policemen were injured and parallel criminal proceedings and recovery proceedings were conducted.

The bench said, "You have to follow the due process under the law. Please examine this, we are giving one opportunity till February 18".



HIJAB ROW

Plea filed In SC challenging Karnataka HC order

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: An appeal has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the direction of the Karnataka High Court that has asked students not to insist on wearing any cloth on campuses of educational institutions which can instigate people, till the matter is resolved. The plea filed by a student has sought a stay on the direction of the high court, which is hearing the hijab issue, as well as the proceedings going on before the three judge bench.

The appeal contended that the high court has sought to curtail the fundamental right of Muslim student women by not allowing them to wear the hijab.

The high court has posted the matter for Monday and

TILL THE DISPOSAL OF the matter, you people should not insist on wearing all these religious things,"

also said educational institutions can resume classes for students. The three-judge full bench of Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Justice J M Khazi and Justice Krishna S Dixit, which was formed on Wednesday, also said it wants the matter to be resolved at the earliest but till that time peace and tranquillity is to be maintained. "Till the disposal of the matter, you people should not insist on wearing all these religious things," Awasthi had said. "We will pass an order. Let the schools-colleges start. But till

the matter is resolved, no student should insist on wearing religious dress", he had said. On Wednesday, Justice Dixit, who was hearing the case, referred the case to Justice Awasthi's consideration with a view that a larger bench may look into the case. The Hijab row started in December end when a few students started coming to a government pre-university college in Udupi wearing Hijab. To protest against it, some Hindu students turned up wearing saffron scarves. The row spread to other educational institutions in different parts of the State, and the protests took a violent turn at some place earlier this week, prompting the government on Tuesday to declare three days holiday for the institutions.

Hijab Row: 6 Girls' Phone Numbers Shared On Social Media, Allege Parents

Press Trust Of India

MANGALURU, KARNATAKA: Parents of six Muslim girl students, who are protesting for their right to wear hijab at the pre-university college in Udupi, Karnataka, have lodged a complaint with the police that the personal details of their children are being shared by some people on social media.

The parents, who submitted a complaint to the Udupi



district Superintendent of Police N Vishnuvardhan, sought action against those sharing

the details of the girls, including their mobile numbers, in the public domain. The parents have expressed fear that the details might be used to threaten the girls.

Mr Vishnuvardhan said the girls' parents have submitted a written complaint to him.

Documentary evidence of the information available online has been sought from them and appropriate action will be taken once it is received, he said.

Pandemic's "Acute Phase" Could End By Mid Year If 70% Gets Vaccinated: WHO

Agence France-Presse

CAPE TOWN: The head of the World Health Organization said Friday the acute phase of the pandemic could end this year, if around 70 percent of the world gets vaccinated.

"Our expectation is that the acute phase of this pandemic will end this year, of course with one condition, the 70 percent vaccination (target is achieved) by mid this year around June, July,"

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, told reporters in South Africa.

"If that is to be done, the acute phase can really end, and that is what we are expecting. It's in our hands. It's not a matter of chance. It's a matter of choice."

He was speaking during a visit to Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines, which has produced the first mRNA Covid vaccine made in Africa using Moderna's sequence.

"We expect this vaccine to be more suited to the contexts in which it will be used, with fewer

storage constraints and at a lower price," said the WHO boss.

The vaccine will be ready for clinical trials in November, with approval expected in 2024.

Afrigen is leading the pilot project, backed by the WHO and the COVAX initiative.

Only 11 percent of Africans are vaccinated, the lowest rate in the world. Last week the WHO's Africa office said the continent must boost its vaccination rate "six times" to reach the 70 percent target.

'It Divides People On Caste, Religion': PM Narendra Modi Attacks Congress



Press Trust Of India

ALMORA/ DEHRADUN: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the Congress of dividing people on caste, region and religion, as he sought another mandate for the BJP, promising it will take development in Uttarakhand to "Himalayan heights".

Addressing a rally in Almora in the poll-bound state's Kumaon region, he also said that Uttarakhand's development is among the top priorities of the BJP's double engine government. Attacking opposition Congress in the state, Modi said it has a "divisive policy" and the people of Uttarakhand know it better than anyone else.

"You know the approach of our rivals. They believe in dividing people along caste, religion, region and linguistic lines. Their only formula is 'Sab mein dalo phoot. Mil kar karo loot' (Divide everyone and loot together)," he said.

Modi also said that development is possible only through a non-discriminatory approach. Polling for in Uttarakhand will be held in a single phase on February 14 for the 70-member state assembly. The development of the state has been among the top priorities of the double engine government and will remain so over the next five years, Modi said.

"We have to take the development of Uttarakhand to Himalayan heights. Like Kedarnath, where development has been given a new impetus, the Manaskhand tourism circuit is to be developed in Kumaon on priority over the next five years," he said.

Referring to his last visit to the Kumaon region, Modi said he had laid the foundation stone of projects worth more than Rs 17,000 crore. The Parvatmala, and the Vibrant Village projects have been introduced in this year's budget with Uttarakhand in mind, he said.

These will give a big boost to tourism and infrastructure development in the border villages of Uttarakhand in a big way, the prime minister said. Under these projects roads, bridges and ropeways will be built in the state, especially in the border areas which will be of great utility not only for people in general but also for security personnel, Modi said.

Uttarakhand shares borders with China and Nepal. The prime minister also said that work on the long-awaited Jamrani dam project will start soon. Reiterating the BJP's motto of 'Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas and sabka prayas', Modi asked people to give the double engine government another mandate for their uninterrupted development.

What Are Asteroids Made Of? A Sample Returned To Earth Reveals The Solar System's Building Blocks

Press Trust Of India

MELBOURNE: (The Conversation) Just over 12 months ago, we were sitting at Woomera, in the Australian outback, waiting for a streak of light in the sky to testify that the Hayabusa2 spacecraft had returned from its voyage to collect a little piece of a near-Earth asteroid called Ryugu.

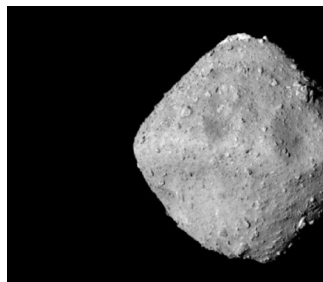
Unfortunately for us, it was cloudy in Woomera that day and we didn't see the spacecraft come in.

But that was the only imperfection we saw in the return. We found and retrieved Hayabusa2, brought it back to Woomera, cleaned and examined it.

The sample capsule was removed from the spacecraft. It was in good shape, it had not exceeded 60 degrees Celsius on reentry, and the capsule rattled when it was turned over, suggesting we did indeed have a solid sample.

Its vacuum had been maintained, allowing whatever gases had been released from the asteroid sample to be collected, and a preliminary analysis of these was carried out in Woomera.

A year down the track, we know a lot more about that sample. In the past month, three papers have now been published concerning the first analysis of the Ryugu samples, including an article in Science this week concerning the relationship between the material seen at the asteroid, and the sample returned to Earth.



These observations open a window into the formation of the Solar System, and helps to clear up a meteorite mystery that has puzzled scientists for decades.

Fragile fragments All up, the sample weighs about 5 grams, split between the two touchdown sites that were sampled.

The first sample came from Ryugu's exposed surface. To get the second sample, the spacecraft fired a small disk at the asteroid to make a little crater, then collected a sample near the crater in the hope this second sample would contain material from below the surface, shielded from space weathering.

The touchdown sampling was recorded by video cameras on board Hayabusa2. Through detailed analysis of the video, we have found the shapes of the particles ejected from Ryugu during the touchdowns are very similar to the particles retrieved from the sample capsule.

SHORT TAKES

Rana Ayyub Breaks Silence After ED Raid



After the Enforcement Directorate (ED) attached over Rs 1.77 crore worth bank deposits of journalist Rana Ayyub in connection with a money laundering probe, she has finally broken her silence on Friday evening. Ayyub said the allegations against her are "preposterous, wholly mala fide and belied by record, and is a deliberate misreading of my bank statements". The journalist added she is confident that the allegations levelled against her "will not withstand any fair and honest scrutiny".

The outbreak of Covid 19 in 2020 exposed the most vulnerable and marginal people to the horrors of disease, hunger and poverty. In April 2020, June 2020 and then in May 2021, I started fundraisers on the Ketto platform to aid in providing respite to the most vulnerable and affected people with food grains, ration, and medical assistance.

To start the COVID 19 fundraiser on their platform Ketto asked me to furnish details of two bank accounts where donations would be transferred. I then explored whether it was possible for Ketto to directly transfer the funds to the grain vendors who were going to provide the supplies for the relief work. However, as the vendors were all required to submit various documents to Ketto, the process could not take off. My personal bank account could not be used at that time as Ketto required the physical copy of my PAN card to be furnished immediately, which at that time was unavailable. In these circumstances, as I thought that aid to Covid 19 ravaged families should not be delayed, I gave Ketto the details and documents relating to my father and sister's bank accounts.

UP Polls: Candidate Has Assets Worth 296 Crore



The Uttar Pradesh Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in a report said they have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of 584 candidates out of 586, who are contesting the second phase elections.

The richest candidate, Nawab Kazim Ali Khan, the Congress candidate from Rampur assembly seat, has declared assets worth 296 crore, the report said. He is followed by Supriya Aron of Samajwadi Party from Bareilly Cantt seat with 157 crore in assets while BJP's Devendra Nagpal from Naugawan seat declared 140 crore in assets, the report noted.

On the other hand, Sanjay Kumar, who will be contesting as an independent candidate from Shahjahanpur seat, has declared assets worth just 6,700, with all of it movable and nil immovable.

Aam Aadmi Party's Vishal Kumar (Nehtaur seat) and Usmaal Malik (Saharanpur Nagar) come next in line with assets worth 13,500 and 15,000, respectively, according to the report. Overall, 260 (or 45 per cent) out of the 584 candidates in fray during the second phase of polls are crorepaties, the report noted.-PTI

Half-Shaved Head: New Punishment for Cow Theft



DAMOH (MP): Villagers shaved half the moustache of a man, half-tonsured him and blackened his face as "punishment" for allegedly stealing a cow in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, police said on Friday.

The bizarre punishment was meted out by the residents of Maruti village in the district on Thursday, an official said.

"The man had allegedly admitted to stealing a cow, following which a group of villagers decided to half-shave his moustache and half-tonsure his head," he said.

The villagers also blackened his face and forced him to walk around the village, the official said.

The cattle owner said the cow had gone missing two days ago, and based on a suspicion, villagers had caught one Sitaram, who admitted that he had stolen the animal along with another man. A video of the incident went viral on social media, after which, R B Pande, in-charge of the Jabalpur Naka police post, reached the village and brought the accused to the post.

A report has been filed in connection with the incident, and further action will be taken based on a probe, the official said.-PTI

CS Calls For Efforts Towards Enhancing Public Service Delivery



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Emphasizing added efficiency and accountability in functioning of government offices, Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Friday exhorted upon the officers to put in regular efforts towards enhancing public service delivery to ensure more responsive and transparent governance to people.

Chief Secretary stated this while chairing a high level meeting held here to assess progress on different sectors in Kashmir valley including district development plan and various other government programs for Srinagar district, an official spokesperson said Friday.

The meeting, he said, was attended by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, PK Pole; IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar; Director SKIMS, Chief Conservator of Forests Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Director General Social Welfare Kashmir, Director General Horticulture Kashmir, Commissioner SMC, Mission Director, NHM, MD KP-DCL, VC LCMA, Principal GMC Srinagar, Directors of School Education Kashmir, Industries and Commerce Kashmir, Rural Development Kashmir, Tourism Kashmir, Fisheries, Urban Local Bodies, Agriculture Kashmir, Sheep Husbandry Kashmir and Animal Husbandry Kashmir besides Chief Engineers of all wings and HoDs of line departments.

According to the official spokesperson, the Chief Secretary asked the officers to initiate proper IEC activities in each department so that maximum people are made aware about various services and beneficiary oriented schemes being launched by the government.

"He also directed them to further improve and enhance the public service delivery system through use of technological interventions and innovations besides optimally utilizing available resources," he said.

Mehta, he said, exhorted upon the concerned departments to take up major procedure simplifications under different schemes by doing away with unnecessary compliance burden and use of technological interventions to further streamline the service delivery.

While reviewing progress of health sector across Kashmir valley, Chief Secretary asked the Principal GMC, Director Health Services and Director SKIMS to properly maintain cleanliness and hygiene in hospitals which is imperative for patient care.

He also directed them to prepare digital record of patient prescriptions and other medi-

cal tests through proper mobile applications or website so that a patient can access it while on the go.

Chief Secretary asked the Director to provide free medicines to locals at District Hospitals and initiate an awareness campaign for the same so that maximum people are made aware about this facility.

While reviewing tourism sector of Kashmir valley, Mehta asked the Director tourism to enhance facilities at tourist locations so that locals as well as the visitors from outside don't face any inconvenience. 'Apart from traditional tourist places like Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonmarg and others the unexplored locations should also be made available for public with proper facilities established there', he asked the officers.

Mehta asked the department to explore more ways of developing rural tourism in synergy with Mission Youth, J&K, so that the rural youth get self employment through 'Home Stay' programme recently initiated by the J&K government.

He further directed them to start 'One Activity a day' in every tourist destination from March this year to give more recreational options for the tourists as well as locals visiting these places.

While assessing progress of Agriculture sector, Chief Secretary asked the officers to launch 'Two Seasons-Two Crops' campaign across the valley so that no area remains under single crop cultivation and maximum production of different varieties is obtained.

He also asked them for 100% distribution of Soil Health cards so that people get aware about the productivity of their land and proper sowing of crops as per soil health.

Chief Secretary, while reviewing progress of Rural Development Department, R&B, PMGSY, FCS&CA and other essential departments, asked the officers for effective implementation of all programmes and policies for transformation in development profile.

Mehta, while highlighting present administration's motto of 'Road to Every Village', asked the officers of PMGSY to ensure coverage of all habitations under their schemes.

While assessing progress on district development plan and various other government schemes for district Srinagar, Chief Secretary impressed upon the officers to ensure completion of all ongoing works within prescribed timelines. He cautioned that no lackadaisical approach shall be entertained while executing these works.

Census Of Migratory, Other Endemic Birds To Be Held Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Department of Wildlife Protection (DoWP), J&K Govt. Wetlands Division (WD), Kashmir, is conducting the census of Migratory Birds and other endemic birds nesting in the valley wetlands on Saturday.

The participants from Kashmir University, SKUAST-K, Wildlife Conservation Fund, National Development Foundation, Govt. Degree College Pampore, Biodiversity Management Committees, Kashmir Bird Watchers Club, Wildlife SOS, Wildlife Researchers, Society for Environment Education and Development, Wildlife Conservation Foundation, Volunteers and freelancers are taking part in the said census.

The aim of the programme is to identify the current status of valley Wetlands viz. Hokersar, Mirgund, Narkara, Hygam, Badi Nambal, Shallabugh, Anchar, Dal-Lake, Wullar Lake, Chatlum, Kranchoo, Manibugh, Freshk-hoori Wetlands which harbour

sizeable number of migratory birds and to check the population fluctuation of migratory species in the Valley Wetlands during Winter migration.

Meanwhile, an orientation programme was conducted today at Camping Ground, Hokersar Srinagar to inculcate the census techniques amongst the participants and to add valuable suggestions received from the participants.

The Wildlife Warden, Wetlands Division Kashmir stated that coordinated efforts by the Department of Wildlife Protection to conduct the Annual Water bird Census (AWC) this year shall go a long way in establishing the numbers of various water bird species particularly the migratory waterfowl that visit the wetlands of the Valley during winter months.

This annual practice conducted by the Wildlife Protection Department will help in creating a sound data base of the wintering waterfowl population in the Valley Wetlands.

Govt Developing 37 Offbeat Destinations In Jammu: LG

'Jammu Is A Treasure Trove Of Culture, Spirituality, Tradition And Literature'



Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Friday that his administration is developing 37 offbeat destinations in Jammu division that will boost the economy and provide a large number of jobs to the people.

Sinha made these remarks after inaugurating the Musical Water Fountain with Laser, Light & Sound Show at Bagh-e-Bahu here on Friday, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, stated that the Musical Water Fountain with Laser, Light & Sound Show is the first of its kind in the Jammu region.

"This innovative project will showcase cultural heritage & take the tourism in Jammu to new heights," Sinha said.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG observed that the unique amalgamation of heritage and modernity developed while keeping in mind the importance of historic Bahu fort will add to the aesthetics of Jammu city.

"Jammu offers spiritual and scenic richness that is divine. It has vast tourism potential and we are developing 37 offbeat destinations in Jammu Division that will boost the economy and provide large number of jobs to the people," the LG said.

Sinha, according to the official spokesperson said that the government is working on mission mode to transform the tourism sector of Jammu division and developing tourist places which were neglected for years.

"Jammu is a treasure trove of culture, spirituality, tradition and literature. The beauty of Jammu division is truly mesmerizing and tourists have plenty of scenic locations to explore," the LG said.

"For many decades, the tourism potential of the Jammu di-

vision remained untapped. In the last two and a half years, our endeavours such as Rope-way project; Retreat Ceremony at Suchetgarh, Winter carnival & Lit-Fest at Patnitop and strengthening of infrastructure in various other districts are paying the dividend. We are committed to develop the Jammu region as a preferred tourist destination and create huge employment opportunities for youth," he added.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG said that as we are celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Jammu & Kashmir, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is heading towards an unprecedented development in every sector.

"Our efforts will continue to bring the culture & history of the UT on the world stage," Sinha said.

Terming connectivity as the fundamental requirement of developing any tourist destination, the LG, as per the official spokesperson said under the guidance of the Prime Minister, an amount of rupees one lakh crore is being spent on highways, tunnels, and related infrastructure to bring J&K closer to the rest of the world.

"Infrastructure and road construction projects have picked up pace in Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri, Kishtwar, Ramban, Doda, Samba, Kathua and Jammu. The construction of the much-awaited Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway will give further boost to tourism in the region," the LG said.

Sinha, according to the official spokesperson said that more tourism spots and facilities are being developed to provide a much wider choice to the tourists.

"J&K government, along with world's leading travel tech platform, OYO Group, has recently

launched rural home stay to encourage micro-entrepreneurs in rural areas. A special financial assistance of Rs 50,000 will be extended to the youth willing to establish a home stay unit," the LG said.

The LG said that the steadfast efforts of the UT Government have started showing results with record 26 lakh tourists and devotees coming to Jammu in September-October last year.

"Tourism brings infrastructural development, better management of services, eliminates socio-economic imbalance, increases employment opportunities and develops the business sector," Sinha said.

He further said that under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the Hon'ble Prime Minister had given 37 projects worth Rs 197 crore only for Jammu division, out of which 35 projects have been completed. He said that two other projects, which include Rs 80 crores worth Maantalai's Wellness Center and Bhagwati Nagar's Amusement Park, will be completed by March this year.

"Similarly, many projects for Jammu division have been submitted to the central government under the PRASAD scheme. Two projects have got the approval of the Union Ministry of Tourism- the Pilgrimage Facility at Katra at a cost of Rs 51.5 cr and Shiv Shakti Dham and Choti Ganga Tourism Project costing Rs 38 crore. We have also approved the plan to complete 400 projects under CAPEX this year," the LG said.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG stressed on the need to extend the outreach efforts under Central Government's Dekho Apna Desh and Tourism for All, besides UT Government's tourism promotion programs to create maximum awareness of the tourist potential areas of Jammu division.

Lawyers Are Officers Of Court Inside, Its Ambassadors Outside: J&K HC Chief Justice

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court Pankaj Mithal on Friday said lawyers are officers of the court inside it and its ambassadors outside.

He was addressing a refresher training programme for young advocates of the Jammu and Kashmir Judicial Academy.

Mithal emphasized on the important role of lawyers and judges in applying law and dispensing justice, saying these are only possible by maintaining the highest standards of ethics and judicial behaviour.

Lawyers are peace-makers who work for justice and help to build the world, he said, adding they are officers of the court

inside and its ambassadors outside.

Justice Mittal underscored that a judge should be austere and restrained, impartial in temperament, steadfast, neutral and disciplined, free from anger, leading a righteous life and must demonstrate virtuous conduct.

Advocate General D C Raina said the legal profession has been placed at the highest pedestal due to its nobility carrying attributes of fairness, honesty, etiquettes, mannerism supplemented by correct aptitude within its ambit.

He said lawyers have certain duties towards their clients, fellow colleagues, courts and towards the society which he must discharge with sincerity.

'AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV'

Cultural Unit Srinagar Of DIPR Organizes Musical Programme



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In continuation to the programmes organised under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' initiative of GoI, the Cultural Unit Srinagar of Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) on Friday organised a colourful musical event and skit at Auditorium Hall of DIPR, here.

Ghulam Mohammad Bhat

Music Composer and Ghulam Mohideen Khanday of Cultural Unit Srinagar assisted by other artists enthralled the audience with popular Kashmiri songs.

Another young folk singer, Feroz Ahmed Shah presented some sufi songs besides a Skit was performed by Shabir Hakak and Hilal Ahmad Khan.

The performance of all Artists were appreciated by the audience.

Ex- NC Provincial V-P, Six Panchayat Members Join BJP In Jammu

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Former senior provincial vice-president of the National Conference Anil Dhar and six panchayat members were among 13 leaders to join the BJP here on Friday.

Welcoming them into the party fold, Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina said it was the party's good governance and its "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" policy that was attracting people in large numbers.

Dhar and the other leaders, along with dozens of their supporters, joined the saffron camp in the presence of Raina, BJP general secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul, vice-president Surjit Singh Slathia and former MLA Devender Singh Rana.

The Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief said he believed that the new entrants would further strengthen the party.

Koul said while other parties serve single families, BJP workers serve the nation and the society.

"The BJP gives equal opportunities to every ground-level worker to rise to the top-most position in the party with dedication and devotion," he said.

Rana said the Narendra Modi government was taking every decision for the growth and welfare of the nation.

The new entrants praised Prime Minister Modi and said the BJP is a truly secular party that takes care of the aspirations of every community without indulging in appeasement politics.

They expressed their gratitude to the BJP leadership.

Two Absconders Held After 11 Years Hunt

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Two persons evading arrest for the past 11 years in cases of trespassing and causing injuries to persons, were nabbed in a raid here, officials said.

Manjeet Singh and Santosh, who were booked in 2011 in several cases of house trespass, wrong restraint, assaulting and

causing injuries in police stations in Jammu, were arrested, they said.

Police was looking for the accused for last over a decade and finally on local intelligence they were nabbed, the officials said.

The warrants were issued against accused Singh and Santosh by various courts under relevant sections of law, police said.

IAF Airlifts 104 Stranded Passengers Between J&K, Ladakh



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Friday airlifted 104 stranded passengers between the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, officials said.

An AN-32 aircraft of the IAF also airlifted two passengers from Kargil to Chandigarh, they said.

As many as 76 passengers were airlifted from Jammu to

Kargil and 28 from Kargil to Jammu. The next flight is scheduled on February 14 between Kargil and Srinagar.

The IAF operates C-17, C-130 and AN-32 aircraft regularly to airlift stranded passengers between Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in view of the closure of the 434-km Srinagar-Leh national highway owing to heavy snowfall in January.

Mercury Drops In J&K, Ladakh; Minus 25.2°C In Drass

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Night temperatures dropped further in Kashmir as Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort, remained the coldest place in Kashmir Valley on Friday, officials said.

A meteorological department official here said that Srinagar, the summer capital of the J&K, recorded a low of minus 2.2°C against last night's minus 0.1°C, he said.

Qazigund witnessed a low of minus 3.3°C against minus 2.0°C on the previous night, he said. Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, had a low of minus 3.6°C against minus 2.7°C on the previous night, the official said.

Pahalgam, the famous resort in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 9.4°C against minus 8.5°C last night, he said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 10.2°C against minus 10.4°C on the previous night, he said.

The temperature was 4.0°C below normal for this time of the year in the famous resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a low of minus 3.9°C against minus 1.9°C on the previous night, the official said.

While the 'Chillai Kalan', the 40-day long harshest period of winter ended on January 30,

2-Way Traffic On Highway Today

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

"On 12-02-2022, subject to fair weather and better road conditions LMVs(passenger)/ private cars shall be allowed from both sides on Jammu-Srinagar highway viz Jammu towards Srinagar and vice-versa," a traffic department official here said, adding, "TCU Jammu/Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the traffic."

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

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

Regarding HMVs/Load carriers, he said, "subject to fair weather and better road conditions, they shall be allowed from NAVYUG Tunnel (Qazigund side) towards Jammu after assessing the traffic situation on highway." He said TCU Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the highway.

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

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Kashmir is under the grip of the 20-day long 'Chillai Khurd' which would be followed by 10-day-long 'Chilla Bachha'.

Jammu recorded a low of 5.3°C against previous night's 7.1°C, the official said. The temperature was 4.8°C below normal for the J&K's winter capital during this time of the year, he said.

Banihal recorded a low of 2.8°C, Batote had a minimum of 1.6°C while Baderwah re-

corded a low of minus 1.2°C, the official said.

Ladakh's Leh recorded a low of minus 15.8°C against last night minus 15.0°C while mercury at automatic station in Kargil settled at minus 18.0°C. Drass, the second coldest place in the world after Siberia, recorded a low of minus 25.2°C against last night's minus 22.9°C, official said. The weatherman has forecast dry weather for next few days. (GNS)

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Twitter Talks

“Making memes on a girl because she does not do Hijab and mocking her is no way of doing Dawa’. This is why do- ing Dawa’ requires knowing the ethics of Dawa’. Yes, Hijab is obligatory. But bringing a girl down like this runs anti- thetical to the ethos of Dawa’. Shame on you”
@Eszedday

“Do you ever feel creepy about having such strongly opin- ions about what women wear?”
@VidyaKrishnan

“These expensive winter school projects are more of a homework for parents than kids . What a futile and sense- less exercise this is , waste of time energy and money . Give something creative to students rather than telling them to arrange materials they have no idea about”
@rjnaskashmir

ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Holistic View Needed

For the second time in a matter of about 15 months, the government has agreed to hike the passenger fare for different transport modes ranging between 14 and 16 per cent of the existing rates. Orders to the effect are expected to be issued in a few days after the step is approved by the cabinet. The decision on substantial increase in fares, described officially as “a breakthrough,” was taken after several rounds of talks between the state government and the representatives of various transport companies, who had taken their services off the roads in Jammu. The earlier 13 per cent hike in the fares was ordered in June 2010. It is for the umpteenth time now the government hiked passenger fare and in the process imposed a heavy burden on people, in general, and passengers, in particular, without showing any concern for genuine public interests.

By obliging the powerful and influential transport lobby thus, the government virtually yielded to blackmailing tactics the transporters adopted to bend it to knees. They had asked for around 30 per cent hike in the fares. The fresh hike should shock the vast majority of commuters and passengers who obviously are the eventual victims of government's apathy and unconcern. Indeed, for a government which is perpetually out of sync with the people it claims to represent, there seems to be no need whatsoever to ascertain the public opinion on such unilateral decisions before these are taken.

Ever since the state came to be governed by coalitions, in which every partner claims to possess a birth right over its pound of flesh in a virtual loot of public funds and resources, the teaming millions would seem to have been made almost entirely irrelevant. In the transport sector alone, the government has revised the fares and freight charges every now and then without sparing a thought for the ultimate sufferers. On most occasions, the government is more than eager to oblige the transport mafia on one pretext or other. There are allegations the transport lobbies do compensate their political benefactors during elections. Several politicians and government officials allegedly own fleets of vehicles due to which they would be favorably disposed towards the demands of private transport sector.

Interestingly, the State Road Transport Corporation, which could have played a decisive role in neutralizing the blackmailing tactics of private transport companies, has virtually been liquidated except that some of its buses ply in some rural areas or ferry students of some private schools in the city while its trucks carry the FCI supplies to various CAPD facilities. The passenger services in the two capital cities and most towns have been left entirely to private operators for no good reason. The government is least bothered about the legitimate interests of passengers. It has never been accused of showing concern for the vast multitude who are routinely subjected to sub-human and primitive treatment by callous private transport operators. It must not be unaware of how passengers, including the aged, the women and children, are stuffed in vehicles like dumb driven cattle, of the discomfort passengers are put to with impunity; or of the over-loading that has virtually been legalized to deny the service to vulnerable sections like women, children, aged and the infirm. Most minibuses plying on cities and other routes fall below the specification prescribed about height, seat dimension and leg space, while the officials clearing these for operation, allegedly against consideration, prefer to look the other way. All this goes to suggest the government has been compromising the genuine interests of the people in general and of passengers and commuters in particular while conceding the demands of private transporters.

One is reminded of the suggestion that the government constitute a committee comprising officials and representatives of transport companies, passengers, civil society actors, media and experts from different fields to go into the nitty-gritty of revision of fare and freight structures of transport services from time to time. The panel would provide for a credible mechanism for the purpose, of course, taking into account the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. Obviously, before placing the recent move to affect 15 per cent raise in passenger fare is the cabinet, the government, particularly the chief minister, should take a holistic view of the entire issue. A government which does not have the interests of the aam aadmi paramount has no business to be in office. It is time people's interests got precedence over those of a particular lobby.

The article is an editorial from KO Archives and was originally published on October 7, 2011

Heaven’s Got No Parking Space

Cartoon Source: The Bengal Archives

Amir Suhail Wani

Traffic Police have been quite active recently. Sporting batons and laser receipt printers, they warn you with their cameras and order you out of your parking spots. This sight has been common in Srinagar's Lalchowk and is now entering the city's downtown areas as well. The move to decongest the roads is a welcome one but if it isn't too much to ask, where must commuters park their wheels?

While Lalchowk has come up with multi-level parking spots which shopkeeper's can't afford, Downtown seems to be perplexed as no road leads to a parking lot. There's none. This is quite a metaphor for the smart city of Naya Kashmir. There's the facade of order which shrouds a rumble of discrepancies.

Smart city has lately been a buzzword lately. The facades of Srinagar have been dressed in the best looks. The city walls have been painted with large murals which stare at us as we are stuck in traffic jams. There are serpentine diversions which make no sense. Even though roadside parking has been fined, new expensive parking spaces are hardly the answer.

Inherent to the problem of jamming and traffic disorder is the absence of proper parking spaces, both in city heartland and in peripheries. Vehicles are often fined for parking their vehicles at wrong spots, genuinely so, but it must also be thought out simultaneously if there are appropriate parking spaces available around. The parking spaces must be conceived and constructed keeping in view the traffic density in a particular area and the parking charges must also be fixed in such a way that makes it convenient and attractive to the vehicle holders.

While one talks about parking tariffs it is pertinent to note that Srinagar's much hyped multi-level car parking has failed to decongest the traffic mess in the city because of the high tariff it levies on commuters for parking their vehicles. While there are parking spaces, poorly functional or otherwise around city heart, no such facilities are available in Downtown which remains equally buzzed with traffic. Similarly, the

nagar's much hyped multi-level car parking has failed to decongest the traffic mess in the city because of the high tariff it levies on commuters for parking their vehicles. While there are parking spaces, poorly functional or otherwise around city heart, no such facilities are available in Downtown which remains equally buzzed with traffic. Similarly, the

crossing around Regal and other places only adds to the frustration and inconvenience of commuters. It literally makes little sense to think of smart vehicles and smart parking spaces while our roads are festering with the traffic jam they can't contain. The intensity and frequency of traffic jams is such that long hours are lost maneu-

FOR ANY ACTIVITY WHICH aspires or claims to make the city smart, what is of fundamental importance are the services, facilities and amenities available within the premises of the city. It should not be a spectacle of inconvenience for those who live and breathe in the city

recent move by the administration to shut down the parking space around polo-view which caters to the parking needs of shopkeepers and customers sparked demonstrations and backlash from the market. The shopkeepers complained that it will only add to their miseries and make their businesses suffer.

Cosmetic and superficial measures to add to the looks of the city look farcical when they are limited in their capacity to add anything meaningful in how the city operates.

Crooked and narrow roads are yet another cause of concern and road widening is the need of the hour in many parts of the city. The congested and narrow roads, streets and lanes often result in traffic jams of the worst order which devour our time. This problem of frequent traffic jamming has lately been an issue of grave concern and different measures instead of solving the problem have aggravated the same.

Diversions in the middle of roads and blocking of crossings at various points like Karan Nagar crossing, Bemina highway crossing,

vering long queues and navigating through the grid locks which now seems to be a defining feature of our roads and traffic system.

Traffic management, despite the installation of smart signals and availability of men in uniform to smoothen the flow, seems far from solution and with increasing number of vehicles on roads, the problem becomes more nuanced.

While we are discussing the issues pertaining to traffic, it is pertinent to note that there are many routes in Srinagar on which no transport services are available. It doesn't only escalate the miseries of those living around these routes but also fosters the menace of differential progress and differential treatment to various areas which results in inequitable progress and local inequalities. As a welfare state, it is very much the responsibility of administration to direct JKSRTC to mobilise its men and vehicles on all routes and in all parts of the city to rescue people of their commuting problems. The absence of passenger sheds at proper places is another problem that commuters are facing.

COSMETIC AND superficial measures to add to the looks of the city look farcical when they are limited in their capacity to add anything meaningful in how the city operates

It makes little sense to prematurely announce the launching of services like electric vehicles while a large portion of the population (both rural and urban) lack basic access to primary public transport facilities. It equally makes no sense to think of electric vehicles, the infrastructure for charging when a proper EV policy is not in place. What the administration shall be primarily concerned with is the high density of traffic on roads, the frequent traffic jams and the lack of ample number of passenger sheds, earmarking of bus stops and also the restoration of women special bus service which was called off a few months ago. So, before one can even contemplate the contours of a smart city and the tech-ease it has to offer, it seems more appropriate to first address the facilities that are lacking on date and which make the life of its inhabitants a scene of discomfort and hardship.

Similarly, the faulty drainage system as it exists across the length and the breadth of the city is nothing unheard of. A day-long rainfall is enough to expose the lacunae and technical snags underlying our drainage network. No sooner does it start to rain that our lanes and streets become a spectacle of flash flood like situation – all because of faulty drainage. Despite the recurrent problems that this situation imposes upon the residents, both in downtown and upper town areas, little attention is paid to it and as a result, the problem remains unattended.

The problem has only escalated and risen exponentially with the mushrooming of new colonies which keep cropping up on the peripheries of the city now and then. The ill planning and the lack of proper structural, architectural and spatial management which characterizes these colonies only adds to the existing drainage mess and makes it more convoluted. These new colonies in themselves represent a mess and mismanagement which lies at the bottom of their physical structure adds to the list of existing managerial and administrative problems.

For any activity which aspires or claims to make the city smart, what is of fundamental importance are the services, facilities and amenities available within the premises of the city. It should not be a spectacle of inconvenience for those who live and breathe in the city. The city is its people.

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

The author is a Srinagar based writer and columnist

Legal Or Not? India’s Budget Raises Questions, Hopes For Crypto

Aprajita Sharma

NEW DELHI: While the status of cryptocurrencies in India is far from clear after the country's annual budget, investors see hopeful signs that New Delhi is tentatively moving towards greater acceptance of the digital assets.

Narendra Modi's government said during the budget announcement on Tuesday that it will launch an official digital currency and begin taxing profits earned on cryptocurrencies from the financial year 2022-2023.

After sending crypto investors in a tailspin in November by proposing a ban on virtual currencies, New Delhi has shifted gears from prohibiting the technology to jumping on the bandwagon.

Even as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman insisted cryptos could not be considered "currencies", she unveiled a virtual currency that will be introduced by India's central bank next year.

The central bank digital currency (CBDC), or digital rupee, will create a more "efficient and cheaper currency management system" in a country that still largely depends on cash, Sitharaman said.

Meanwhile, "virtual digital assets" will attract a flat 30-percent tax, she said.

For some industry watchers, the moves are seen as the first step towards legiti-

THE WORDING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S proposal is ambiguous about whether taxes will be levied on annual net gains or each profitable sale, raising questions about tax liability when an investor makes money on a cryptocurrency then loses it shortly after, or loses money on another virtual currency

missing cryptocurrencies, which are largely unregulated in India.

Gursimran Jit Oberoi, a crypto investor and author in Gurgaon, described the move to tax digital currencies as a net positive.

"I was already paying 30 percent tax on crypto profits each year under the head [category] 'income from other sources,'" Oberoi told Al Jazeera. "So, nothing changes for me."

Notably, the Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill – which could simultaneously ban private crypto operators and grant the Reserve Bank of India the authority to issue digital currencies – is not among the tentative list of 15 bills to be tabled in Parliament during the budget session.

As yet, cryptocurrencies continue to exist in legal limbo. Tax chief J B Mohapatra, in post-budget comments to the media, stressed that taxing cryptos did not give them legal status.

"The department does not sit in judgement over the legality of any transaction," Mohapatra said. "The income tax depart-

ment and the income tax act only looks at whether the transactions that you have entered into are resulting in income. We are not into legality of any income but we are into the taxing of that income."

The 30 percent flat tax rate on cryptos is in line with how speculative income, like winning the lottery, is taxed in India. As with such winnings, crypto investors will not be able to claim deductions to reduce the tax liability.

The wording of the government's proposal is ambiguous about whether taxes will be levied on annual net gains or each profitable sale, raising questions about tax liability when an investor makes money on a cryptocurrency then loses it shortly after, or loses money on another virtual currency.

Losses from cryptocurrencies cannot be offset against income from other sources such as real estate or salary, nor can losses be carried forward to future years. But it is unclear if profits from one type of digital asset can be offset against losses from another.

"It should be on annual net gains from all digital assets," Harry Parikh, an associate partner at M&A Tax and Regulatory Services in Mumbai, told Al Jazeera.

The government has also introduced a provision for levying a 1 percent tax rate at source when an investor sells digital currency – with 29 percent to be paid later – to keep track of buyers and sellers.

'Prototype of the crypto tax regime'

Parikh said the current proposal reads like a "prototype of the crypto tax regime" and that it would become clearer in the coming months.

"The implementation is difficult as buyers cannot be identified readily. A lot of people will become non-compliant if the rules are not clarified," he added.

The 30 percent tax rate is likely to be a tough pill to swallow for investors on lower incomes and could see them move to asset classes that are more tax-friendly and less risky, like mutual funds and stocks.

But Oberoi said the government's "sort-of" validation of cryptos would encourage big investors, who are currently on the sidelines, to join the fray.

"I expect big net-worth individuals, corporates and family offices to take meaningful exposure in cryptos from the financial year 2023 onwards," Oberoi said.

The article was originally published by Al Jazeera

‘Women Empowerment’ In Islamic Perspective

On Reading Zaira Ashraf Khan’s Prophet Muhammad And Empowerment Of Women

Dr Tauseef Ahmad Parray

TITLE: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Empowerment of Women—A Prophetic Model of Emancipation of Women
AUTHOR: Zaira Ashraf Khan
PUBLICATION DETAILS: New Delhi: Viva Books, 2021
Pages: 124; ISBN: 9789393329141; Paperback; Price: Rs. 595/-

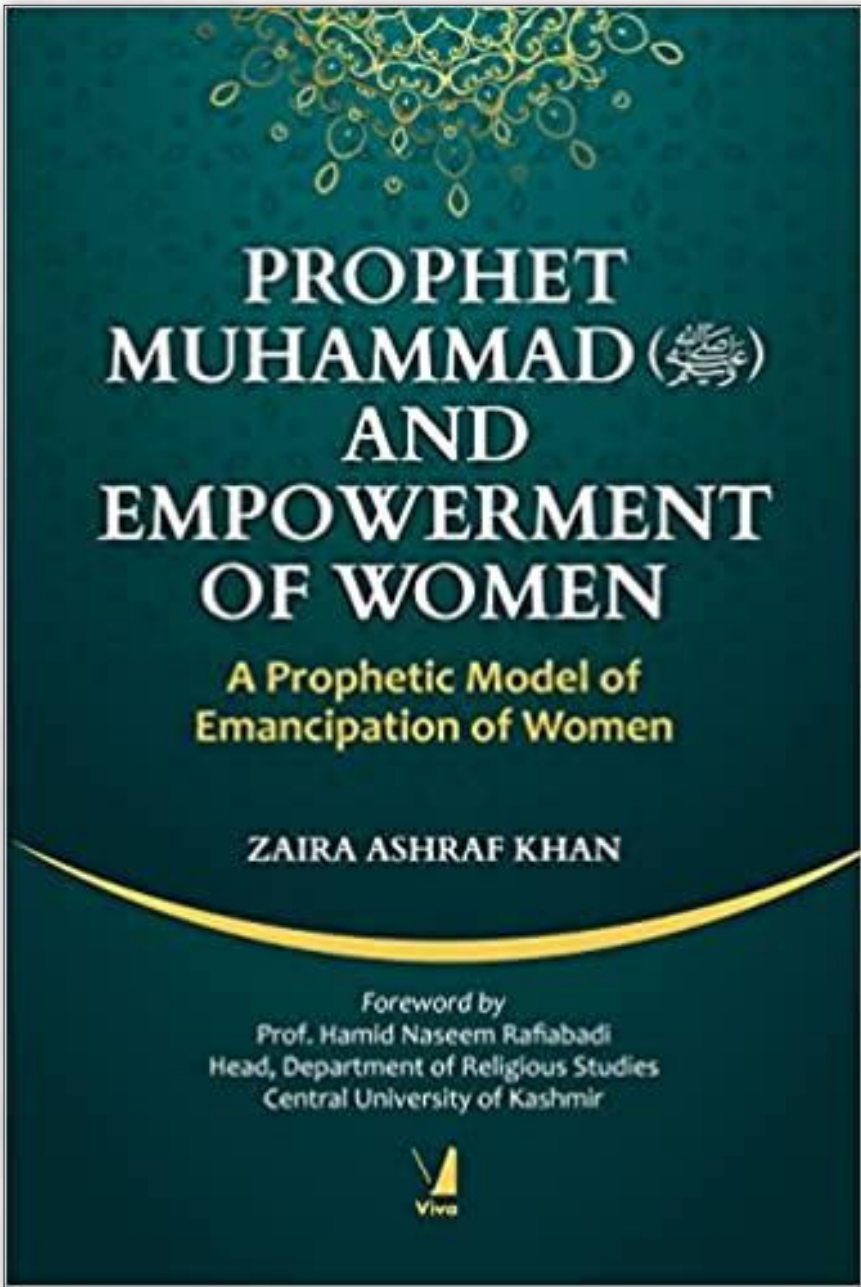
Numerous works have been written from different perspectives to deliberate on the issue of ‘women empowerment’, but the world is still abuzz with the slogans of ‘Women Empowerment’, ‘Gender Justice’, ‘Gender Equality’, ‘Liberation of Women’, etc. ‘Women Empowerment in Islam’ is one of the crucial and controversial debated topics/ issues in the 21st century and many Muslim scholars, young and peers, have contributed in their own ways to this discourse. A new addition to this discourse is Prophet Muhammad and Empowerment of Women—A Prophetic Model of Emancipation of Women by (daughter of this soil) Dr Zaira Ashraf Khan (a young researcher/ academic from Srinagar who is working, sine 2016, as an Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies in J&K’s Higher Educations Department).

Published by Viva Books, New Delhi, this book is a modest effort to evaluate: (i) critically “the theories of Feminist movement and their assumptions on religion being one of the central reasons for the deplorable condition of women, particularly in Islam”, and (ii) how the Prophet (pbuh) championed the cause of women empowerment and “transformed the entire [Arabian] society in a span of 23 years” and what strategies he followed and the role he played in uplifting women (p. xvii). In other words, the book presents a comparative study of two women empowerment movements (of East and West launched in 6th Century CE and 16th CE, respectively) which were ‘aimed at the common goal of emancipating women and granting them the rights towards leading a dignified life’ by highlighting ‘the practical approach of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in curbing the gender disparity and narrowing the gender gap in the Arabian Society’ and by analysing and evaluating critically the ‘various theories of feminist movement’ and of ‘feminist theorists on the religion of Islam’.

An outcome of the author’s PhD dissertation (pursued at Shah-i-Hamdan Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir) the book consists of six (6) chapters, excluding Acknowledgements, Introduction, Conclusion and Bibliography. It spans over 120 pages and has a Foreword (pp. ix-xi) by Prof. Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi (Head, Department of Religious Studies, Central University of Kashmir) and an ‘Endorsement’ by Prof. Abdur Raheem Kidwai (Director, K.A. Nizami Centre for Quranic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University)—both of them have contributed significantly to the subject under study in their own ways.

In his Foreword, Prof. Rafiabadi (author’s PhD Supervisor) contextualises the discourse of “women empowerment” vis-à-vis Islam and its primary sources and substantiates it with examples from Islamic history, and argues that “Islam conferred on women with plentiful of blessings whether it be in the form of rights in the ancestral property, education, business, marriage” or other arenas of life—the real ‘empowerment’ (pp. ix, x). He appreciates the efforts of the author and calls her book “a commendable work” and a “well researched book” (pp. x, xi). Similarly Prof. Kidwai in his endorsement has highly praised this work “for its insightful coverage of all the relevant aspects of Gender justice in Islam” and for “presenting the Islamic stance on gender equality and women empowerment in a reader-friendly and authentic way.”

In her ‘Introduction’, Dr Khan contextualises the process of, and the movements associated with, the ‘Women Empowerment’, and how “Muslim women have been depicted as subjugated section of society” and how Islam and its Text and its Prophet (the Qur’an and Prophetic Traditions, Ahadith), have been “questioned, criticised and debated” by the feminists (p. xvi). She also refers to the Sirah literature (works on the life of the last Prophet) and the



lack of significant works on Prophet’s life and women empowerment and thus finds ways to highlight the uniqueness of her work: “Numerous works have been authored on the role of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) ranging from spiritual and social roles to the political ones. But the role he played in the empowerment of women centuries back provides a scope for further deliberations, because the subject of women empowerment is more novel in today’s time, and to look for an exemplary prototype for the women liberation ... is even more required today” (p. xvi). The main reason which prompted the author to carry research on this delicate topic is also mentioned by the author when she writes: “Various challenges and unanswered questions of defining empowerment for women, evaluation of the Western feminist movement, analysis of the role of Prophet Muhammad in getting women out of the state of despondency, granting them their rights and evolving them into accomplished scholars of their times, and dispelling the misconceptions about the position of women in Islamic tradition; [all these concerns] prompted the research of the subject under study” (p. xvii).

Chapter 1, “Women Empowerment—A General Perspective” (pp. 1-10) looks into the concept of empowerment from the feminist perspective, locates the historical inception of the idea of women empowerment, and contextualises the ‘Feminist Movement’ by probing into its various phases. It concludes with the argument that “the definition of empowerment was subservient to the changing perspective of its advocates that led to various liberation theories” (p. 9). This becomes the basis for the discussions of Chapter 2, “Women’s Liberation Theories and Some Prominent Feminist Theorists” (pp. 11-20), in which the author deals with various liberation theories that developed over a period of three centuries in the West “in the cause of Women Empowerment”—a movement which had “many narratives” and “each narrative took shape of a distinct theory” (p. 11); and among these, the prominent ones, discussed by author in detail, are: Liberal Feminism (pp. 11-15), Existentialist Feminism (pp. 15-16), Radical Feminism (pp. 16-17), Socialist Feminism (pp. 17-18), Cultural Feminism (p. 18). The chapter ends with these insights: “there are various feminist theories”, some being very rational in their claim and others very radical in their approach, “trying to come up with the solution to the male induced indifference

in the past 3 centuries.” (p. 19)

Chapter 3, “Qur’anic Archetype of Women: A Study of Prophetic Times” (pp. 22-40), deals with the subject of women and gender relations as highlighted in the Qur’anic injunctions and discusses

“THE AUTHOR also refers to the major factors due to which women folk are considered as “one of the most marginalized sections of the society” in the current Muslim societies and thus putting the Islamic texts and the Prophet (pbuh) “to criticism”; these are: Misinterpretations of Islamic texts; Misrepresentation of Islamic ideals in Muslim societies; and false presumptions of status of Muslim women

“the spiritual, social, educational, economical, legal and moral rights of women (in Islamic tradition)” (p. 21). Laced with Qur’anic verses and the wisdom hidden in them, this chapter highlights the real picture of women—her status, her rights, and her place—in Islam. This theoretical outlook of women empowerment is further discussed in Chapter 4, “Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Empowerment of Women” (pp. 41-70), which aims to explore “the course of empowerment of women as brought forth by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) over a span of 23 years” in the 7th century Arabian society—“a typical male dominated society” (p. 41). The author describes it as a “movement that questioned and challenged the system of domination, deceit and abomination towards women; the movement that was based on justice [:] neither biased nor coercive” (p. 41). The chapter depicts the “Status of Women in Islam” through the Prophetic Narrations (Ahadith) “in praise of women, narrations upholding the honor of women and their identity, reprimanding men about them, narrations encouraging women towards a productive life” and other such aspects (p. 43).

For example, in the explanation of the tradition that “women are similar to men”, the author writes that it was a “breakthrough for women empowerment in Arabia and an end to predominant stereotyping” (p. 43); and in the explanation of the tradition that “a woman is created from a rib”, she writes: “This hadith is

KEEPING ASIDE THESE OMISSIONS, DR ZAIRA indeed deserves applause for her deep research acumen, meticulous analysis and insights, and well researched book which presents the Islamic stance on gender equality and women empowerment simply but meticulously. In sum, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Empowerment of Women is a must-read for everyone interested in knowing the intricacies of this subject

often misquoted to authenticate crookedness in the creation of woman and her very existence. ... The crookedness of the rib doesn’t seem complimenting with woman’s nature; rather it is a clear indication of denouncing any sort of coercion in moulding one’s inherent character according to one’s norms, preferences or desires instead of valuing it” (pp. 46-47). Similarly, to show contemporary relevance of the Prophetic wisdom, in the description of a report narrated by Aisha (R.A.) that “Never has Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) hit any woman or servant”, Khan writes: “It is astounding to blame Islam for the perpetuation of domestic violence or any sort of violence when it calls for justice and patience” (p.65). The chapter also highlights the Prophet’s “compassionate behavior towards women of his household” by providing a portrayal of the wives of the Prophet (pbuh), the Mothers of the Believers (pp. 49-57) by focusing on these aspects: “Honouring his Wives”, their “Participating in the Religious Endeavours”, “Education”, “Compassion”, “Playful Moments”, Assisting [in] Household Chores”, “Seeking [their] Counsel”, “Dealing Strife with Patience and Compassion”, “Against Domestic Violence”, and “Love for Children” (pp. 57-65). Through these examples, the author depicts how the Prophet’s life and conduct “liberated them from the bondage and slavery [.] the social norms [of the day] and directed them to the creator” and “how he was instrumental in dismantling the age old traditions of patriarchy and despotism” (pp. 49, 57).

As clearly evident from the title, “A Continued Legacy of Women Empowerment in Islamic Tradition”, Chapter 5 (pp. 71-84) evaluates the overall reformation that society of Arabia was undergoing by providing an account of “vibrancy and participation of women in the Muslim societies from 6th-12th century, seeds of which were implanted by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and ardently followed by the Muslims” (p. 83). The chapter documents the names and contribution of various female scholars in different eras and in different fields and substantiates these arguments: “The engagement of Muslim women in rational and intellectual discourses demonstrates the freedom they enjoyed in their society” (p. 80); “Women right from the Prophetic times were active and had strong presence in all intellectual and religious debates” (p. 82); and the “women in Muslim societies were living a life of purpose. Their contribution in any arena was as obvious as that of men” (p. 83).

Chapter 6, “Gender Relations in Islam: A Textual (Nasus) Study” (pp. 85-90) provides a description of gender relations vis-à-vis Islamic texts; i.e., it throws light on the “gender relations as endorsed by divine injunctions of the religion of Islam from the Qur’anic perspective” (p. 85). To achieve this objective, the chapter discusses (i) “Qur’anic Dictum on Gender relations” in the light of Q. 49:13. This recalls the “our origin and our position in the sight of our Creator” (p. 86); (ii) “Qur’anic View on Gender Equality and Gender Identity” by referring to Q. 4: 124; 33; 35; 3: 36; 67:2; 4: 33; and 3: 195; this highlights that “equality should not be taken same as Identity”, for there is difference between “being identical and being equal. Islam recognizes that men and women have different abilities and strengths that complement each other” (p. 86); and (iii) “Islam: Promotion of Coexistence, not Confrontation”, which is sub-divided into four “main gender relation scenarios [as] depicted in [the] Quran”: (a) “In Islam, the role of a man and woman is complimentary, it is not conflicting. It is that of a partnership, it is not antagonistic” (as is evident from Q. 9: 71); (b) Q.30: 21 makes it evident that men and women are “a source of affection and solace for each other”; (c) Q. 2: 187 declares that spouses are like a garment, i.e., they “beatify and complete one another”; and (d) Q. 4: 34, one of the “misunderstood” and misconstrued verses, declares that men are supposed “to develop a strong sense of responsibility in terms of maintaining and protecting women” (pp. 87, 88). From these Qur’anic injunctions, the author confers that the crimes like “domestic violence and fe-

male infanticide which] are prevalent in the Muslim societies” and the “cases of violence and oppression” executed on women, “contradicts the teachings of Islam and misrepresents divine commandments based on justice and equality which must be rectified by revisiting the pristine essence of Islamic injunctions” (p. 89).

Thus, having discussed “two significant movements dedicated to the empowerment of women” (p. 91), one from the East (beginning in 6th century Arabia) and another from West (beginning in 16th century), the book ends with the ‘Conclusion’ (pp. 91-95) wherein the author highlights the similarities and dissimilarities between these two women liberation movements, contending that both were similar in the sense that they fought for a common cause, i.e., “a fight for equal rights of women vis-à-vis men in all social, economic, marital, educational, political, existential domains” (pp. 93-94); however, Islamic prototype of women empowerment had certain distinctive features, viz., it brought forth a “balanced society that does not lead to any sort of gender clash or confrontation”; it didn’t restricted the “domain of empowerment ... but rather stands for the sanctity of women”; it neither denigrated women contribution in private sphere nor undermined her contribution in public arena; and , most importantly, it “never competed for identity with men” (p. 94). The author also refers to the major factors due to which women folk are considered as “one of the most marginalized sections of the society” in the current Muslim societies and thus putting the Islamic texts and the Prophet (pbuh) “to criticism”; these are: Misinterpretations of Islamic texts; Misrepresentation of Islamic ideals in Muslim societies; and false presumptions of status of Muslim women (p. 94).

Thus, through her meticulous analysis, keen efforts, and well documentation, Dr Zaira presents a critical evaluation and assessment of western women liberation movement (theories and theorists) as well as presents an authentic and comprehensive Islamic stance on gender equality and women empowerment.

The book is, however, blemished by grammatical/ typographical and technical errors: e.g., the word Quran is mentioned inconsistently as “Qur’an” and “Quran” (see, pp. 23, 24, 28, 32, 35, 62) and in the Foreword as “The Noble Quran” (p. ix); most of the times Qur’anic verses and Ahadith are provided with the Arabic text, however the same is missing on some occasions (see, pp. 24, 26, 28, 35-36, 44, 54, 58, 59, 60, 86, 88); the appellation “R.A.” and “r.a.” are used interchangeably without any classification (pp. 37-38); dates are mentioned in variedly both in CE and AH (see, pp. 50-51); few sentences are either complicated or grammatically incorrect; examples are: “this verse signifies that the [relation] both between male and female” (p. 23), “a woman was inherited” (p. 35), and “that liberated them from the bondage and slavery [.] the social norms [of the day]” (p. 49); number of Ahadith reported on authority of Umm Salamah (R.A.) is mentioned variedly as 387 and 378 on page 53: “She ... preserved three hundred and eighty-seven [387] ahadith”, and “As many as 378 traditions are reported to have been narrated by her”. Moreover, one observes inconsistency in the references style as well. Furthermore, though the author has cited Prof. M. Y. M. Siddiqui’s Rasool-e-Akram (SAW) aur Khawateen in a chapter, but the same is not mentioned in the literature review section in the Introduction (p. xvii).

Keeping aside these omissions, Dr Zaira indeed deserves applause for her deep research acumen, meticulous analysis and insights, and well researched book which presents the Islamic stance on gender equality and women empowerment simply but meticulously. In sum, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Empowerment of Women is a must-read for everyone interested in knowing the intricacies of this subject.

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Calorie Restriction Trial Reveals Key Factors In Extending Human Health: Study

“ Here we're asking: What is calorie restriction doing to the immune and metabolic systems and if it is indeed beneficial, how can we harness the endogenous pathways that mimic its effects in humans

Agencies

A new study led by Yale researchers confirms the health benefits of moderate calorie restrictions in humans and identifies a key protein that could be harnessed to extend health in humans.

The findings were published in the journal Science.

Decades of research has shown that limits on calorie intake by flies, worms, and mice can enhance life span in laboratory conditions. But whether such calorie restriction can do the same for humans remains unclear.

The research was based on results from the Comprehensive Assessment of Long-term Effects of Reducing Intake of Energy (CALERIE) clinical trial, the first controlled study of calorie restriction in healthy humans. For the trial, researchers first established baseline calorie intake among more than 200 study participants.

The researchers then asked a share of those participants to reduce their calorie intake by 14 per cent while the rest continued to eat as usual, and analyzed the long-term health effects of calorie restriction over the next two years.

The overall aim of the clinical trial was to see if calorie restriction is as beneficial for humans as it is for lab animals, said Vishwa Deep Dixit, the Waldemar Von Zedtwitz Professor of Pathology, Immunobiology, and Comparative Medicine, and senior author of the study.

And if it is, he said, researchers wanted to better understand what calorie restriction does to the body specifically that leads to improved health.

Since previous research has shown that calorie restriction in mice can increase infections, Dixit also wanted to determine how calorie restriction might be linked to inflammation and the immune response.

"Because we know that chronic low-grade inflammation in humans is a major trigger of many chronic diseases and, therefore, has a negative effect on life span," said Dixit, who is also director of the Yale Center for Research on Aging.

Dixit added, "Here we're asking: What is calorie restriction doing to the immune and metabolic systems and if it is indeed beneficial, how can we harness the endogenous pathways that mimic its effects in humans?"

Dixit and his team started by analyzing the thymus, a gland that sits above the heart

and produces T cells, a type of white blood cell and an essential part of the immune system. The thymus ages at a faster rate than other organs. By the time healthy adults reach the age of 40, said Dixit, 70 per cent of the thymus is already fatty and nonfunctional.

And as it ages, the thymus produces fewer T cells. "As we get older, we begin to feel the absence of new T cells because the ones we have left aren't great at fighting new pathogens," said Dixit. "That's one of the reasons why elderly people are at greater risk for illness."

For the study, the research team used magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to determine if there were functional differences between the thymus glands of those who were restricting calories and those who were not.



They found that the thymus glands in participants with limited calorie intake had less fat and greater functional volume after two years of calorie restriction, meaning they were producing more T cells than they were at the start of the study. But participants who weren't restricting their calories had no change in functional volume.

"The fact that this organ can be rejuvenated is, in my view, stunning because there is very little evidence of that happening in humans," said Dixit. "That this is even possible is very exciting."

With such a dramatic effect on the thymus, Dixit and his colleagues expected to also find effects on the immune cells that the thymus was producing, changes that might underlie the overall benefits of calorie restriction. But when they sequenced the genes in

those cells, they found there were no changes in gene expression after two years of calorie restriction.

This observation required the researchers to take a closer look, which revealed a surprising finding: "It turns out that the action was really in the tissue microenvironment not the blood T cells," Dixit said.

Dixit and his team had studied adipose tissue, or body fat, of participants undergoing calorie restriction at three-time points: at the beginning of the study, after one year, and after two. Body fat is very important, Dixit said, because it hosts a robust immune system. There are several types of immune cells in fat, and when they are aberrantly activated, they become a source of inflammation, he explained.

"We found remarkable changes in the gene expression of adipose tissue after one year that were sustained through year two," said Dixit. "This revealed some genes that were implicated in extending life in animals but also unique calorie restriction-mimicking targets that may improve metabolic and anti-inflammatory response in humans."

Recognizing this, the researchers then set out to see if any of the genes they identified in their analysis might be driving some of the beneficial effects of calorie restriction. They honed in on the gene for PLA2G7 -- or group VII A platelet-activating factor acetylhydrolase -- which was one of the genes significantly inhibited following calorie restriction. PLA2G7 is a protein produced by immune cells known as macrophages.

With such a dramatic effect on the thymus, Dixit and his colleagues expected to also find effects on the immune cells that the thymus was producing, changes that might underlie the overall benefits of calorie restriction. But when they sequenced the genes in those cells, they found there were no changes in gene expression after two years of calorie restriction.

Pahalgam Becomes First Destination To Register Home-Stays



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Pahalgam has become the first destination to launch 10 home-stays under the Crown of Incredible India project.

Crown of Incredible India project is an initiative of the Govt. of UT of J&K for rural home-stays at tourist destinations throughout the UT in collaboration with OYO Rooms.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Piyush Singla said that the experiment started in Anantnag a few months ago and the overwhelming response has resulted in the project being upscaled at the UT level.

He said that all stakeholders have been taken onboard during the discussion to ensure that the initiative fills the void in supply as well as is a meaningful employment opportunity for the youth. He said that the initiative will be instrumental in boosting tourist footfall, both domestic and international.

Talking about the groundwork behind the initiative, Dr Singla said that concerted efforts were made by the district over the last few months and detailed planning went into making this initiative a success. The substan-

tial impact that this project will have on the rural economy will be unprecedented and the youth should come forward and exploit this opportunity. This project will be a game changer in the field of rural tourism.

In Pahalgam, while 10 home-stays have already been registered and are live on the online portal, another 10-20 home-stays are being made operational. Several youth in Daksum, Verinag, Kokernag have also expressed their interest in setting up similar home-stays and efforts are underway to make this a reality soon.

Under the initiative, any resident can collaborate and provide residential accommodation to tourists. The idea has been gaining prominence globally and is operational in various parts of the country. Home-stays provide an alternate sustainable source of income for the home-stay owners.

In collaboration with Mission Youth, JK the District Administration is currently exploring the possibilities of setting up home-stays in other prominent tourist destinations, with focus on those destinations that are yet to be unexplored due to infrastructural deficiencies.

Govt Contained Retail Inflation At 6.2% Despite Biggest Contraction In Economy: Sitharaman

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the retail inflation was contained at just 6.2 per cent despite the Indian economy suffering the biggest contraction of Rs 9.57 lakh crore.

Replying to a general discussion on the Union Budget in Rajya Sabha, the minister said the Budget for 2022-23 stands for continuity, brings stability to the economy and predictability of taxation.

She stated that the objective of the Budget is a stable and sustainable recovery in the economy.

Compared to the performance of the UPA government, she pointed out that retail inflation was 9.1 per cent during the financial crisis of 2008-09, while it is at 6.2 per cent during the COVID-19 pandemic that has a bigger impact on the economy.

The minister said the Indian economy suffered the biggest contraction because of the pandemic.

She explained that the Indian economy suffered Rs 9.57 lakh crore loss due to the pandemic, compared to a Rs 12.12 lakh crore contraction during the global meltdown in 2008-09.

She also told the House that capital spending gives much more multiplier than revenue route, and therefore, the government has increased public capital spending to boost the economy.

Sitharaman said the government is also encouraging startups and that resulted in the cre-



ation of many unicorns during the pandemic.

She also said that there is no cause to worry because of different numbers of GDP in the Economic Survey and Budget documents, as it was a result of sources of data being different.

About public spending, the minister said Rs 7.5 lakh crore spending will create jobs and employment creation is not limited to 60 lakh jobs from productivity linked incentive plan for 14 sectors.

The MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) was infested with ghost accounts and people not born were receiving money, she pointed out.

The MNREGA is a demand-driven programme meant to provide jobs to rural unemployed in the lean season, and whenever demand comes, it is funded, the minister noted.

She said Rs 73,000 crore is provided for rural employment guarantee scheme MNREGA and will give more if demand comes.

Fertiliser subsidy rose from the budgeted Rs 79,530 crore for FY22 to Rs 1.4 lakh crore in the revised estimates and

shows the government is receptive to the needs, she added.

Replying to the opposition charge that small businesses were shuttered, she stated that 67 per cent of MSMEs were temporarily shut due to the lockdown.

India has witnessed breaching the 6 per cent tolerance limit for inflation on 6 occasions since 2014 (when the NDA government came into power at the Centre) as inflation management is robust, she told the House.

The economy was Rs 1.1 lakh crore 7 years ago, and now it is Rs 2.32 lakh crore, she stated on the charge of the economy running on a treadmill.

Sitharaman said there is no question of slowdown or recession, citing estimated 9.2 per cent GDP growth in the current fiscal.

About the cryptocurrencies, she noted that the decision about banning or not banning will come subsequently after consultations.

She also stated that "(whether it is) legitimate or illegitimate, it is a different question, but I will tax because it is a sovereign right to tax".

Govt Has Sovereign Right To Tax Cryptocurrency: FM

Says decision on banning or not banning to come later

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the government has sovereign right to tax profit made from cryptocurrency transactions, and the decision on banning or not banning will be taken based on feedback from consultations.

Replying to the general discussion on Union Budget, the minister said, "I am not going to legalise it or ban it at this stage. Banning or not banning will come subsequently, when consultations give me input".

About the profit emanating from transactions in cryptocurrencies, she stated that "(Whether it is) legitimate or illegitimate, it is a different question, but I will tax because it is a sovereign right to tax".

The minister was responding to the questions raised by Congress member Chhaya Verma on cryptocurrency.

Verma had asked about the legitimacy of taxing cryptocurrency.

In her Budget speech on Feb-



ruary 1, Sitharaman had said that only RBI-issued 'Digital Rupee' will be recognised as currency, and the government will levy a 30 per cent tax on gains made from any other private digital assets from April 1.

The Budget 2022-23 has proposed a 1 per cent TDS on payments towards virtual currencies beyond Rs 10,000 in a year and taxation of such gifts in the hands of the recipient.

The threshold limit for TDS would be Rs 50,000 a year for specified persons, which include individuals/HUFs who are required to

get their accounts audited under the I-T Act.

Also, no deduction in respect of any expenditure or allowance shall be allowed while computing income from transactions in such assets. It has also specified that losses from the transfer of virtual digital assets will not be allowed to be set off against any other income.

The provisions related to 1 per cent TDS will come into effect from July 1, 2022, while the gains will be taxed effective April 1.

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel Expands Presence To J&K, Opens Retail Outlet Hypermart

Agencies

NEW DELHI: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) -- a joint venture between two of the world's leading steelmakers ArcelorMittal and Nippon Steel -- marks the expansion of its business to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) with the opening of its first Hypermart outlet.

Located at Purmandal Morh in Jammu, the outlet will provide direct and immediate access of quality steel products to businesses operating in various segments such as infrastructure, housing, and Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

Hypermart is AM/NS India's integrated platform for retail, trade and last-mile sales of steel grades for diverse segments involved in a range of manufacturing activities, including the production of fabricators, engineering goods and auto components. Businesses across J&K will benefit from customisation of orders and a wide range of value-added steel products available through Hypermart.

Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Department of Industries & Commerce, Government of Jammu and Kashmir inaugurated AM/NS India's latest Hypermart outlet and said, "We are delighted that ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India marks its footprint in J&K. Over the last year, we have accel-



ated the economic and industrial development of the region in an unprecedented manner. We have received formal investment proposals with detailed project reports to the tune of Rs 50,000 crore. The entry of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India will surely help in fast-tracking the infrastructure and industrial development of the region, besides immensely benefiting the people. I am also confident that with the success of Hypermart, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India will further expand its operations, going forward."

Alain Legrix, Director & Vice President - Sales & Marketing, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India, said, "We are pleased to have brought Hypermart to Jammu and Kashmir. We're proud to bring our premium range of steel products to support infrastructure development and industrial activity in this important region of northern India. Businesses will now have direct access to a range of bespoke steel products, underpinned by the quality, value and technology."

Growing Revenues Will Lower Fiscal Deficit: Revenue Secretary



Press Trust Of India

KOLKATA: Union Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj on Friday said that the country's fiscal deficit will come down once revenues start to grow.

Speaking at a webinar organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Bajaj said that the government had adopted a loose fiscal policy on the backdrop of increased capital expenditure.

"The fiscal deficit at present is 6.9 per cent of the GDP. The target for 2025-26 is to bring down to 4.5 per cent. If we continue to grow our revenues, the fiscal deficit can come down by 0.1 or 0.2 per cent", he said.

Next year, the targeted fiscal deficit is 6.4 per cent, Bajaj said, adding that the government had the opportunity to lower it fur-

ther. "But increased capital expenditure by almost 35 per cent had forced us to keep the fiscal level at that level", he added.

The Revenue secretary said since last year, the Centre had started giving money to the states for making capital expenditure. Unless this is done, the last mile infrastructure will not take place, Bajaj added.

"The intention of the government is to keep the GDP growing. Then only income and revenues will be better", he stated.

On the taxation part, he said the emphasis was on to maintain stability so very little tinkering was done. On the direct taxes, he said 55 per cent of the revenue on this count was coming from transactions based on TDS.

Bajaj said increased capital expenditure will lead to increased consumption and spending.

SHORT TAKES

N Chandrasekaran Reappointed Tata Sons Chairman

NEW DELHI: N Chandrasekaran was on Friday reappointment as the chairman of Tata Sons - the holding company of the salt-to-software Tata Group - for a second five-year term.

His reappointment was backed by Ratan Tata, chairman of Tata Trusts, the majority owners of Tata Sons. Tata Sons board met on Friday to review the last five years and consider the reappointment of its Executive Chairman N Chandrasekaran, it said in a statement. "Ratan. N. Tata who was a special invitee to this meeting expressed his satisfaction on the progress and performance of the Tata Group under the leadership of Chandrasekaran. He recommended his term be renewed for a further five-year period," it said.

The Board commended the performance of the Executive Chairman and "unanimously approved the reappointment of Chandrasekaran as the Executive Chairman for the next five years." Chandrasekaran, 58, said, "It has been a privilege to lead the Tata Group for the last five years and I am delighted at the opportunity to lead the Tata Group for another five years, in its next phase."

Chandra, as he is usually referred to, took over the reins of Tata Sons in 2017 at a time when the group faced a leadership crisis and a trust deficit after the ouster of his predecessor, Cyrus Mistry, by the board. (PTI)

Sensex, Nifty Join Global Selloff As Scorching US Inflation Spurs Rate Hike Fears

MUMBAI: The Sensex plummeted 773 points while the Nifty dived below the 17,400-level on Friday, tracking heavy selling in global equities after US consumer inflation soared to a 40-year high in January, raising the prospects of faster-than-expected rate hikes by the Federal Reserve.

A sharp fall in the rupee and unabated foreign fund outflows added to the pressure, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 773.11 points or 1.31 per cent to close at 58,152.92. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty plunged 231.10 points or 1.31 per cent to 17,374.75.

Tech Mahindra was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.94 per cent, followed by Infosys, HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Wipro, SBI and Kotak Bank.

Only five counters managed to close with gains -- IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel, NTPC, M&M and ITC, rising up to 0.94 per cent.

"Aggressive FIIL selling resulting from negative global cues wreaked havoc in the domestic market today. Globally, markets traded in red amid mounting concerns of surging US inflation which fuelled fears of a hawkish rate hike by the central bank. (PTI)

Gold Marginally Up; Silver Declines Rs 626

NEW DELHI: Gold in the national capital on Friday gained marginally by Rs 22 to Rs 48,669 per 10 grams in line with firm global trends and rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 48,647 per 10 grams. Silver in contrast, declined by Rs 626 to Rs 62,214 per kg from Rs 62,840 per kg in the previous trade.

The Indian rupee declined 23 paise to close at 75.38 against the US dollar on Friday. In the international market, gold was trading with gains at USD 1,827 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.02 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded marginally up with spot gold prices at COMEX trading at USD 1,827 per ounce on Friday," Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (commodities) at HDFC Securities, said. Gold prices pared some of the previous gains following stronger dollar and rally in US bond yields he added.

"However, the yellow metal has kept firm as the US CPI rose in January to 7.50% which capped the downside as inflation hedge," Patel added. (PTI)

Rupee Slumps 24 Paise To Close At 75.39 Against US Dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee plunged by 24 paise to 75.39 (provisional) against the US currency at close on Friday due to fears of an aggressive rate hike by the Federal Reserve after US inflation raced to a 40-year high in January.

Forex traders said muted domestic equities, sustained foreign fund outflows and elevated crude oil prices weighed on the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 75.40 against the American dollar, and later witnessed an intra-day high of 75.27 and a low of 75.46 against the greenback.

The local unit finally ended the day at 75.39, down 24 paise from the previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 75.15 against the US dollar, after the Reserve Bank of India kept the benchmark lending rate unchanged and said it will continue with the accommodative stance.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.35 per cent higher at 95.88.

The rupee became the worst-performing currency among Asian peers following policy divergence, broad-based strength in dollar, risk-averse sentiments and foreign fund outflows from equities, said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. (PTI)

'Pak Has To Return USD 3 Bn To Saudi Within One Year'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has to return USD 3 billion to Saudi Arabia within a year which it had borrowed from Riyadh in 2021 to improve its dwindling foreign exchange reserves, it emerged on Friday.

Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin told the Senate, the upper house, that the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) in October 2021 placed the amount in the account of the country's central bank, the State Bank of Pakistan.

Under an agreement, Saudi Arabia revived its financial support to Pakistan, including about USD 3 billion in deposits and USD 1.2 billion to USD 1.5 billion worth of oil supplies on deferred payments. Pakistan also pledged to return the USD 3 billion within a year.

Tarin said that the interest rate on the loan was four per cent which would have to be paid every three months.

"Interest rates are rising across the world. The interest rate for the Saudi loan being four per cent is not something bad," he said, adding the principal amount would have to be returned in lump sum. He said there was no clause in the agreement to extend the loan.

The Saudi government has told us that they can ask for their money back if Pakistan defaults at any point," Tarin said and added that there was no question of default. (PTI)

Students Protest Demanding Reopening Of Jamia Campus



Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Student outfits protested on Friday to demand the resumption of offline academic activity at Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) and were assured by university officials that it will soon be reopened in a phased manner.

The left-affiliated All India Students' Association (AISA), along with other student outfits and JMI students, demanded re-opening of the campus.

"Jamia has been closed for more than two years and students from all over the country have been demanding its reopening ever since the DDMA (Delhi Disaster Management Authority) guidelines to reopen all schools and colleges were released in the first week of February," the outfits said in a statement.

They claimed that when they reached in front of Gate No. 7 for the protest, the Delhi Police started detaining them, a charge denied by police.

Seven students were detained

in one batch and two students in the next batch, they alleged.

While these nine students were detained, many others gathered outside Gate Number 20 demanding the reopening of Jamia and the immediate release of the detained students, they said.

The Chief Proctor spoke to the protesters and announced that Jamia would reopen in phases and the notification for the first phase would be released by Tuesday.

The protesting students threatened to go on a stir if the notification for reopening was not issued by Tuesday.

Waseem Ahmad Khan, Chief Proctor of the university, said, "A meeting was held between the Deans and Chairpersons and by next week, a notification for phased re-opening of campus will be issued."

The university first plans to call those students whose PhD submissions are near and students from the dentistry department where practicals are needed, said another official.

Journalists' Bodies Raise Objection To New PIB Accreditation Guidelines, Write To I&B Minister

NEW DELHI: Various journalists' bodies on Friday wrote to Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Anurag Thakur raising objections to the new guidelines issued recently for the accreditation of media persons by his ministry's arm Press Information Bureau (PIB).

In their letter to the minister, the journalists' bodies said the new accreditation guidelines were discussed at a meeting organised under the aegis of the Press Club of India and it was noted that the I&B Ministry has taken "unilateral and unfair" decision to "drastically" alter the accreditation guidelines in violation of the existing guidelines of the Press Council of India.

Among those who signed the letter included the presidents of the Press Club of India, Indian Women's Press Corps, Press Association, Delhi Union of Journalists and Working News Camaramen's Association.

"Various journalists' organizations, associations and unions under the aegis of the Press Club of India held a meeting today and discussed the new PIB accreditation guidelines," the letter to the minister stated.

"The meeting, after a detail discussions, strongly opposed the unilateral and unfair decision of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in drastically altering the guidelines and forming a lopsided

Central Media Accreditation Committee (CMAC)," it read.

"Both the guidelines and the CMAC violate the existing guidelines framed by the apex media body Press Council of India," it added.

According to Central Media Accreditation Guidelines-2022, announced on February 7, accreditation is liable to be withdrawn or suspended if a journalist acts in a manner prejudicial to the country's security, sovereignty and integrity, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in any relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

Accreditation can also be suspended if a journalist or the media organisation the scribe represents is found to have furnished false or forged information or documents.

In such an event, the journalist/media organisation shall be debarred from accreditation for up to a maximum of five years but not less than two years, as may be decided by the CMAC (Central Media Accreditation Committee), the guidelines stipulate.

Besides, accredited media persons have been prohibited from using the words Accredited to the government of India on public/social media profile, visiting cards, letter heads or on any other form or any published work.

The new guidelines also provides for setting of a Central Media Accreditation Committee (CMAC), to be chaired by the principal director general of the PIB. The committee will comprise up to 25 members, nominated by the government.

The committee will function for two years from the date of its first meeting and will be responsible for suspending the accreditation of journalists.

A sub-committee of the CMAC consisting of five members nominated by the CMAC will take decisions on accreditation cases. The sub-committee will also be chaired by the principal DG, PIB.

"The new guidelines are against the spirit of the Constitution of India and against the freedom of speech and expression as well. This is an attempt to curb the voice of the media and control it," Press Club of India president Umakant Lakhara said.

He demanded that the new accreditation guidelines be withdrawn immediately and fresh guidelines be formulated in consultation with "the stakeholders including journalists' bodies and the Press Council of India.

"An action plan to organise protests against the new guidelines is being prepared in consultation with various journalists bodies and it will be announced shortly.

BJP MP Seeks Action Against Bhu Professor Who Taught Students How To Make Cow Dung Cakes

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A BJP MP on Friday demanded in Lok Sabha that strict action be taken against a political science professor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) for teaching students the technique of making cow dung cakes on the campus.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, BJP MP Sanghmitra Maurya said these types of activities by a professor of a prestigious institute is regrettable and needs to be condemned.

She demanded strict action against the professor for promoting "such activities in the temples of learning".

Speaking in Lok Sabha, Rahul Kaswan of the BJP said the government and the Reserve Bank should take strict action against app-based loan providers which are exploiting customers by charging exorbitant rates of interest and penalty.

He said that there are about 1,100 such companies operating in India and many of them are acting like "digital mafia" and blackmailing customers to recover loans.

The app-based companies which are operating illegally in the country should be banned by the Reserve Bank, he said.

Syed Imtiaz Jaleel of the AIMIM demanded that District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committees (DISHAs) meet regularly.



DISHAs were set by the government to ensure better coordination among all the elected representatives in Parliament, State Legislatures and Local Governments (Panchayati Raj Institutions/ Municipal Bodies) for development activities.

Taking note of Jaleel's concern, Speaker Om Birla asked Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh to issue appropriate directions for holding regular meetings of DISHAs.

Singh said the issue has been raised by several members and it is regrettable that DISHA meetings were not being held regularly.

"We will try to find out a way to ensure that DISHA meetings are held regularly," the Minister assured the House.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG Gives Nod

while ensuring complete adherence to SoPs.

"There will be flexibility in attendance and consent of parents/guardians will be obtained, as per the guidelines issued by the Centre. Students willing to study from home with the consent of parents will be allowed to do so," the LG said.

On the issue of vaccination for 15-18 years age group and distribution of Sehat Golden Cards, the LG, he said, passed directions to the District officers to speed up the efforts.

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 of 15-18 years age group, CAB enforcements, and percentage achieved in weekly and overall BIS Registrations' progress under AB PM-JAY & AB PM-JAY SEHAT.

"He informed that there has been significant growth in vaccination for 15-18 years age group," he said.

Cases Drop To 34-Day

In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar reported the highest 89 cases of Coronavirus, Budgam 32, Baramulla 29, Kupwara 26, Bandipora and Ganderbal 15 each, Pulwama 12, Anantnag 7 and six cases each in the twin districts of Kulgam and Shopian in south Kashmir.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu registered a maximum of 131 new cases of virus, Doda 61, Ramban 36, Kathua 27, Udhampur 22, Reasi 12, Rajouri 9, Samba 7, Poonch 6 and Kishtwar 1.

"Moreover, 1626 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 682 from Jammu Division and 944 from Kashmir Division," the officials said.

Also, they said that two more people died of Covid-19 related complications

in Kashmir Valley during the last 24 hours, raising the death toll due to the pandemic to 4741 in J&K—2320 in Jammu and 2421 in Kashmir.

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

Delimitation Panel

panel has proposed an overhaul of assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in the union territory.

Jammu and Kashmir at present has no legislative assembly. It is a union territory with a provision for a legislature.

The panel would ask the government for a two month extension which is likely to be given.

The Commission has asked the associate members to give their inputs and objections to the draft in the coming days.

Then they would be asked whether their objections, if any, should be printed before the next draft it put out in public domain.

Once people share their inputs and objections, the panel would start working on the final report, the sources explained.

Delimitation is the process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country or a province with a legislative body.

Cop Killed, 4 Security

BSF ASI has been identified as Umesh Singh.

The killed policeman, according to the reports, had got engaged around four months ago. He was the youngest in his family and is survived by his parents and elder brother.

Soon after the attack, the area was cordoned off and a search operation launched to nab the attackers.

"Police has registered a case in this regard under relevant sections of law. Investigation is in progress and officers

continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this terror crime," he added.

Friday attack in Bandipora town comes almost two months after militants shot dead two policemen in an audacious broad daylight attack on December 10 last year.

The two policemen Mohammad Sultan and Fayaz Ahmad were killed in an ambush by militants in the busy Gulshan Chowk in the main town Bandipora.

A week later, police claimed to have killed Pakistani militant Safiulla alias Abu Khalid involved in the killing of the two cops, besides a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, his brother and father in the north Kashmir district, in an overnight encounter in Harwan area of this capital city.

Meanwhile, National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah have condemned the grenade attack.

"Violence in any of its manifestations is always unacceptable and will yield nothing except further death and destruction. The vicious cycle of death has caused much loss to human lives in J&K while devastating the socio-economic conditions of the people during the last over three decades. My heartfelt sympathies are with the kin of the slain cop. I pray for the fast recovery of all injured," Farooq said.

Condemning the attack, Omar Abdullah said, "I unequivocally condemn the cowardly act of violence. I send my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of the slain cop. I also pray for the speedy recovery of all those who have sustained injuries."

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) also condemned the grenade attack on the police party.

In a statement issued here, a party spokesperson termed the attack on police personnel as a shameful act, saying

another family has been devastated.

JKPCC expressed profound grief over the loss of police official and conveyed deepest condolences to bereaved family and prayed for speedy recovery of injured personnel

10th Std Results

which around 74,385 students were enrolled to appear in the examination of English papers in the Kashmir region in more than 384 designated examination centers.

Pertinently, the government had reduced the syllabi of secondary and higher secondary classes of Jammu and Kashmir by thirty percent following the closure of schools in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier, the Board of School Education (BOSE) on Tuesday declared annual regular results of 12th standard of Kashmir division with an overall pass percentage of 75 percent.

Delhi Court

accused in the case - Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, Muzaffar Ahmad Dar and Talib Lali.

The court also sought a report from the jail officials within 15 days after Muzaffar Ahmad Dar complained that he was not allowed e-meeting with his family members by the authorities concerned.

The court will hear the matter further on March 30.

ED initiated investigation under PMLA based on an FIR lodged by NIA in 2011 which claimed that Mohammad Shafi Shah and his associates were involved in execution of sensational blasts in Jammu and Kashmir and huge quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives were recovered from them.

ED said its investigation revealed that Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, allegedly the most active militant outfit in Kashmir, has been responsible for funding militant and secessionist activities in Jammu & Kashmir headed by Syed Salahuddin, its chief based out of

Rawalpindi Pakistan.

Govt Transfers

JKAS, Administrative Officer in the office of Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue in the Jammu Municipal Corporation, against an available vacancy.

Wahid-ul-Rehman, JKAS, District Social Welfare Officer, Ramban, has been transferred and posted as Sub Divisional Magistrate, Basantgarh, vice Vivek Mod, JKAS, has been asked to report to the General Administration Department for further posting. "Wahid-ul-Rehman shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Basantgarh, in addition to his own duties, till further orders and the charge of the posts of Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Ramnagar and Sub-Registrar, Ramnagar, till Gopal Singh, JKAS, resumes duties after availing leave," reads the order.

Mudasir Hussain Famda, JKAS, DIO Bandipore, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, against an available vacancy.

Dr. Priya Darshani Gautam, JKAS, BDO Phallain Mandal, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, J&K Housing Board.

Stone Pelting

police officer (SPO), when villagers attacked them with stones in the Galuta village of Mendhar tehsil.

"The police team had gone to the village in connection with some investigation. The injured policemen are being treated in the hospital while a case has been registered against the protesters," sources said.

4 Gamblers

Feroz Ahmad Ganie of Hathishah Ningii and Nasrat Rasool Sofi of Panjipora were arrested by a police team in a raid in the orchards at Sangrama area of Sopore, a police

spokesperson said Friday. The input driven raid, he said, was carried out under the supervision of SDPO Sopore.

Besides playing cards, the police spokesperson said, an amount of Rs 1, 03,000 was also seized from the alleged gamblers.

"They have been shifted to police station where they remain in custody. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 13/2022 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Tarzoo and further investigation has been initiated," he added.

8 Held For Illegal

conducted in Tanda Seri, Tawi Khad, Pouni and Ghayala Anji areas of the Reasi district, they said.

Nine FIRs were lodged against eight persons involved in illegal mining and overcharging in the district, they said, adding that Ravi Kumar, Kishore Singh, Satvir Singh, Budhi Singh, Davinder Singh, Kuldeep Kumar, Vijay Kumar and Kripa Ram were arrested.

The police are committed for protecting the public property and 'rights of consumer' and enforcing genuine rates of goods & services in their jurisdiction, they said.

Ladakh Sees

in Leh and 64 in Kargil, they said. With these, the total number of cured patients is 26,383, they said.

Of the 131 fresh cases from Union territory, 97 such cases were reported from Leh and 34 from Kargil district, they said.

With this, the total number of COVID-19 active cases in Ladakh is 670 including 480 cases in Leh and 190 cases in Kargil district.

The union territory has recorded 226 Covid-related deaths -- 167 in Leh and 59 in Kargil since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, they said. There was no death reported from union territory on Thursday, they said. (PTI)

Despite being geographically distant from Kashmir how Kashmiris in West maintain cultural, social, and emotional linkages with their homeland. Tune-in to latest KO podcast

KASHMIR
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KO PODCAST

Clinical India Complete 3-0 Whitewash Of West Indies



Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: Rohit Sharma's tenure as India ODI captain began with a 3-0 demolition of the West Indies after the impressive hosts put up an all-round performance to win the third game by 96 runs here on Friday.

Shreyas Iyer's responsible 80 coupled with Rishabh Pant's aggressive 56 powered India to a challenging 265 in the inconsequential fixture.

The hosts then shot out their opponents for 169 in 37.1 overs as the visitors continued their dismal batting show.

With one eye on the 2023 ODI World Cup, the Indian team management gained plenty positives from their experiments in the third-match series including the emergence of pacer Prasidh Krishna as the strike bowler. He ended with nine wickets in the series.

Deepak Hooda, who did not play the third ODI, showed promise as a middle-order batter while Suryakumar Yadav showed that he could curb his natural aggressive intent if such a situation arises.

The wrist spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, who made a return as a pairing, did not bowl together but did well individually.

An ordinary batting performance the West Indies batters also made the Indian bowlers' task easier throughout the series.

The away team was never in the chase and was blown away by another stellar show of fast bowling.

Pacer Deepak Chahar, playing his first game of the series, struck twice in the fifth over. First he sent back Brandon King (14), who edged to Suryakumar Yadav in the slip cordon and then on the last ball of the over, removed Shamarh Brooks (0), leaving the visitors at 25/3. West Indies could not recover from there on.

The ODI series will be followed by three T20 in Kolkata beginning February 16.

Earlier, Shreyas and the flamboyant Pant resurrected the India

innings with their 110-run stand after India suffered a top-order collapse to be reeling at 42/3.

The duo toyed with the opposition attack even as the south-paw displayed his hard-hitting prowess, striking six fours and a six.

The Mumbaikar, who was playing his first game after COVID recovery, looked in his elements, as he mixed caution and aggression. He completed his ninth ODI fifty with a single to deep extra cover.

After his fifty, Shreyas upped the ante as he and Pant completed their 100-run stand in 112 balls.

Pant too notched up his fifth ODI 50 with a single. But in the 30th over, he perished, giving leggie Hayden Walsh (2/59) his first wicket and Suryakumar Yadav (6) followed suit, as India lost half their side for 164.

But a determined Shreyas played his shots at will before giving a sitter to Darren Bravo at long-off in the 38th over. In his 111-ball knock, he hit nine boundaries.

However, Chahar (38; 4x4; 2x6) and Washington Sundar (33, 2x4; 1x6) played their parts to perfection and forged 53 runs for seventh wicket. Their knocks propelled India past the 260-run mark.

After opting to bat, India lost opener Rohit Sharma (13) cheaply. Pacer Alzarri Joseph (2/54) pegged the hosts back, by first cleaning up Rohit on the third ball of the fourth over and then dismissed Virat Kohli (0) on the fifth ball to leave the hosts teetering at 16/2.

Kohli tried to flick a delivery that was going down the leg, but edged to Shai Hope in what was a soft dismissal, extending the wait for his 71st hundred in international cricket.

Shikhar Dhawan (10) and Shreyas tried to rally the innings but were able to add only 26 runs for the third wicket.

Dhawan, who too played his first game of the series after recovering from COVID, became pacer Odean Smith's (1/36) first victim as he was caught by Jason Holder in the slip cordon.

Delhi HC Suspend TTFI Executive Committee For 6 Months

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has suspended the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) Executive Committee for six months over match-fixing allegations saying that its faith was shaken in view of the sports body's "sorry state of affairs".

The court said that the federation must have an administrator appointed in a week and also found that national coach Soumyadeep Roy indulged in match-fixing during the Olympic qualifiers in March.

Justice Rekha Palli, who was dealing with the petition filed by the Commonwealth Games gold medallist and Khel Ratna awardee Manika Batra, said that the report of the three-member committee, constituted by it to look into the allegations of match-fixing levelled by the paddler, showed that TTFI "safeguarded the interests of its officials" and that "instead of promoting players, TTFI is dictating terms".

The judge said that this country takes pride in its sportsperson and people who don't understand how players are to be treated "should be out".

The report reveals a sorry state of affairs. The court is appalled to note some of the observations made by the committee with regard to the manner in which respondent no 1 (TTFI) and respondent no 3 (national coach) were functioning," the judge said.

"These people should be out of this, people who don't understand how players are to be treated, to give them dignity. These people are the pride of



the nation. These people (TTFI officials) have to be suspended," the judge remarked during the hearing.

"In view of the circumstances, the court is left with no option but to appoint an administrator... The Executive Committee of the respondent no 1 will no longer be allowed to take any decision or interfere in the manner in which the administrator decides to discharge the duties assigned to him under the Code," the court dictated in its order as it clarified that since there are a number of tournaments coming up, it was expected that the present management will render all assistance to the administrator.

The name of the administrator along with other relevant details concerning his appointment will be given in the court order.

India's star paddler Manika Batra had filed a case in September last year accusing Roy of asking her to lose a match so that his student Sirtha Mukherjee qualifies for the Summer Games.

At Tokyo Olympics, the world number 56 had refused to be coached by Roy saying she would not have been able to focus on her match if someone who asked to her indulge in match-fixing months earlier was sitting by her side.

IPL Auction 2022: Teams, Players, All You Need To Know

Agencies

BENGALURU: The 15th IPL auction, commencing on Saturday, will be the last of its kind in the cash-rich T20 extravaganza as the Board of Control for Cricket in India is planning to do away with the concept, as most franchises do not want their stable core to be tinkered with.

Ahead of Saturday's event, here's a lowdown of ready references for the auction.

City of Auction: Bengaluru
Venue of Auction: ITC Gardenia
Time of Auction: 12 noon

Dates of Auction: February 12 and 13

Teams (10): Chennai Super Kings, Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Kolkata Knight Riders, Delhi Capitals, Punjab Kings, Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Gujarat Titans*, Lucknow Supergiant* (*indicates new teams)

Total Purse for Auction: INR 90 crore per franchise

Minimum Amount per Franchise must spend: Rs 67.5 crore/90 crore

Squad Strength: Minimum Players: 18; Maximum Players: 25

Slabs of Base Prices: INR 2 Cr, 1.5 Cr, 1 Cr, 75 lk, 50 lk, 40 lk, 30 lk, 20 lk

Distribution of Players: 229 capped (Int'l), 354 Uncapped (domestic), 7 from ICC Associate nations

Saturday's Bidding Process: 161 players will come under the hammer on Day 1; Day 2 will have accelerated process.

Meaning of Accelerated Process: Here franchises put up a common wish-list of players they want auctioned.

Status of Right To Match Cards (RTM): NO RTM Cards available

Concept of Silent Tie-Breaker: When two teams are tied and exhausted all their purse trying to bid for a player, they can submit a final closed bid amount and the one who's bid more will get the player. The extra amount bid is to be deposited



with the BCCI and will not be part of INR 90 crore purse. Process can be repeated till a clear winner emerges.

Oldest player at auction: Imran Tahir of South Africa, at 43 years

Youngest Player at Auction: Noor Ahmed of Afghanistan, at 17 years

Name of Auctioneer: Hugh Edmeades

Purse Left: DC (47.5 cr), MI (48 crore), CSK (48 cr), KKR (48 cr), Gujarat (52cr), RCB (57 cr), Lucknow (59), RR (62cr), SRH (68 cr), PBKS (72 cr)

Major Players Retained: Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya, Rashid Khan, Kieron Pollard.

High End India Players to Watch Out for (Likely INR 10 cr to 20 Cr bracket)

Shreyas Iyer
Ishan Kishan
Shardul Thakur
Deepak Chahar
Harshal Patel
Avesh Khan
Yuzvendra Chahal
Washington Sundar
Shikhar Dhawan
Devdutt Padikkal
Deepak Hooda

Senior Players To attract Decent bids (Likely INR 5)

Bhuvneshwar Kumar
Dinesh Karthik
Ambati Rayudu
Robin Uthappa
Ravichandran Ashwin
Umesh Yadav
Mohd Shami

Capped and Uncapped young Indian players (INR 5 cr plus)

Shahrukh Khan
Ravi Srinivas Sai Kishore
Nitish Rana
Rahul Tripathi
Rahul Chahar
Rinku Singh

Likely Big Foreign Buys (INR 10 cr to 15 cr bracket)

David Warner
Quinton de Kock
Kagiso Rabada
Jason Holder
Jason Roy
Jonny Bairstow

Under-19 pick performers

Rajvardhan Hangargekar
Raj Angad Bawa
Vicky Ostwal
Yash Dhull

Syed Mushtaq T20 and Vijay Hazare One Day Performers

Yash Thakur
Abhinav Manohar
Mujtaba Yousuf
Mayank Yadav
Ritwick Roy Chowdhury
Abhishek Sharma

Cristiano Ronaldo Hits 400M Followers On Instagram

Agencies

Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo has broken another record – this time off the field – by crossing 400 million followers on Instagram and becoming the most popular person on the social media platform. The record was previously held by American reality star and makeup mogul Kylie Jenner, who has now fallen to second place with 309 million followers. Argentinian footballer Lionel Messi follows closely in third with 306 million followers.

ESPN FC tweeted the news, calling the footballer the GOAT (greatest of all time). "Cristiano

Ronaldo becomes the first person to reach 400 million followers on Instagram. The undisputed GOAT of social media."

Ronaldo fans celebrated the milestone calling him the "most popular man on the planet."

"No comparison. Great man," this user wrote in Portuguese.

In September 2021, Ronaldo had 237 million followers that made him the most followed man on the application and in a matter of mere months, his follower count grew exponentially and landed him at the top.

The footballer had celebrated his 37th birthday just a day before his following spiked to 400 million. "Life is a roller coaster. Hard work, high speed, urgent



cristiano
3,242 posts
400m followers
501 following
Cristiano Ronaldo

goals, demanding expectations... But in the end, it all comes down to family, love, honesty, friendship, values that make it all worth it. Thanks for all the messages! 37 and counting," he captioned the birthday post.

Roundup Of Olympic Gold Medals From Friday, Feb 11

Agencies

BEIJING: A roundup of gold medals from Friday, Feb. 11, at the Beijing Games:

ALPINE SKIING WOMEN'S SUPER-G

Lara Gut-Behrami of Switzerland won the women's super-G at the Beijing Games, capturing her first Olympic gold medal.

Two-time Olympic champion Mikaela Shiffrin finished ninth after failing to finish in either of her two previous races in Beijing.

It was Gut-Behrami's first Olympic gold after two successive fourth-place finishes in super-G at the Winter Games.

Mirjam Puchner of Austria won silver and Michelle Gisin of Switzerland won bronze.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING MEN'S 15KM CLASSIC

Finland's Iivo Niskanen maintained his classic skiing dominance, winning gold in the 15-kilometer cross country race.

Niskanen crossed the line and collapsed, spread eagle, with a time of 37 minutes, 54.8 seconds. It was his third Olympic gold. He won the 50-kilometer classic race in Pyeongchang and

the classic team sprint at the 2014 Sochi Games.

Alexander Bolshunov of Russia won silver 23.2 seconds back, while Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo of Norway secured the bronze 37.5 seconds behind the Finn.

SHORT TRACK SPEEDSKATING WOMEN'S 1,000 METERS

Suzanne Schulting of the Netherlands defended her title in 1,000-meter short track speedskating.

She set the world and Olympic records in the quarterfinals. She wasn't as fast in the final, finishing in 1 minute, 28.391 seconds.

Choi Minjeong of South Korea took silver. Hanne Desmet of Belgium earned bronze.

Arianna Fontana of Italy was penalized for a lane change that caused contact with American Kristen Santos. Both skaters went down and slid on their sides into the padding.

Fontana was chasing an 11th career medal, having already won two medals in Beijing.

Schulting was the silver medalist behind Fontana in the 500.

SKELTON MEN'S

Germany has its first Olympic

skeleton champion.

Christopher Grotheer was a runaway winner in the men's skeleton event that ended Friday night, the first German to win gold in the discipline where sliders navigate the icy chute headfirst at speeds that can exceed 80 mph.

Grotheer's four-run time over two days of competition was 4:01.01. Axel Jungk, another German, won the silver medal in 4:01.67 and Yan Wengang of China won the bronze in 4:01.77.

It was China's first Olympic medal in a sliding sport.

SNOWBOARD MEN'S HALFPIPE

Japan's Ayumu Hirano won gold with a boundary-pushing run in the men's halfpipe at the Beijing Olympics.

There was no doubt over the winner after Hirano's electric performance as the last rider to go. His run included an intricate and unprecedented series of flips and spins that pushed a sport obsessed with progression to new heights. His score of 96 reflected that and the two-time Olympic silver medalist moved past Scotty James of Australia. Jan Scherrer of Switzerland took bronze.

Hazlewood Shines As Australia Beat SL In Rain-Hit T20



Agencies

SYDNEY: Pacer Josh Hazlewood claimed career-best Twenty20 international figures of 4-12 to guide Australia to a 20-run victory over Sri Lanka at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday, in a rain-affected opener of the five-match series.

Australia comfortably defended a Duckworth-Lewis-Stern adjusted target score of 143, with spinner Adam Zampa (3-18) inflicting early damage before Hazlewood iced the game with late wickets.

The tourists ended on 122-8 after 19 overs, with the chase reduced after rain interrupted in the 15th over.

The Sri Lankans struggled to adjust to the pace of the wicket, with opener Pathum Nissanka (36) making the only meaningful contribution before being caught off Zampa.

"I thought we had to bowl well to defend that total on this wicket, it wasn't the easiest wicket to bat on," said Australia skipper Aaron Finch. "It was pretty clinical with the ball."

The home side, playing their first white-ball international since winning the T20 World Cup in Dubai last November, were sent in to bat after losing the toss.

Ben McDermott struck three sixes in his knock of 53, combining with debutant Josh Inglis (23) to lay a solid foundation for Australia.

From 75-1 after 10 overs, the middle and lower-order faltered but Marcus Stoinis scored a quick 30 to ensure a competitive total of 149-9.

The world's top-ranked T20 bowler, leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (3-38), had mixed fortune with his low-release round-arm variation, conceding multiple boundaries but also accounting for Glenn Maxwell who holed out for seven.

Seamer Binura Fernando was the most economical of Sri Lanka's bowlers with 2-12 from four overs.

"We didn't get any partnerships going from the start ... (so) we should come up with a better plan for the next game," said Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka.

The hosts have experienced a tumultuous month in which the men's team went from winning the Ashes to unceremoniously parting ways with head coach Justin Langer, who resigned citing a lack of support from senior players.

The second match, on Sunday, will also be played in Sydney before the series moves to Canberra and Melbourne.

Chelsea 'Desperate' To Avoid Club World Cup Flop



Agencies

ABU DHABI: Chelsea aims to put a turbulent past couple of months behind them by winning the Club World Cup final against Palmeiras on Saturday, the start of a season-defining period for the European champions.

The Blues have fallen off the pace in the Premier League after winning just three of 10 games but are still competing for multiple honours at home and on the continent.

Chelsea are through to the League Cup final against Liverpool on February 27, four days after the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie against French club Lille and just before the fifth round of the FA Cup.

A star-studded Chelsea side was beaten 1-0 by Corinthians in the 2012 final in Japan, and midfielder Mateo Kovacic is eager for the current group to make amends. "We are desperate to win this trophy. We could be the first team in Chelsea history to bring this trophy to London so we are happy that we are in such a big final," said Kovacic.

"We will do everything to win it on Saturday."

Standing in the way of their second title this season, after a penalty shootout win over Villarreal in the UEFA Super Cup, is a Palmeiras team aching to end the jibes from rival supporters about their failure to win the Club World Cup.

The Brazilians will be backed this weekend by an expected 15,000 fans in Abu Dhabi, prompting Chelsea assistant Zolt Low to say it would be like playing another away game -- after Saudi outfit Al Hilal enjoyed the majority of the support Wednesday.

The Hungarian has been deputising for Thomas Tuchel this week, with the German coach

stuck at home after testing positive for Covid-19.

"Everybody hopes that Thomas can travel as soon as possible," said Low. "He's following the government rules and is in self-isolation right now. Once he has a negative test, it opens the possibility for him to travel."

Abel Ferreira has steered Palmeiras to successive Copa Libertadores titles since taking charge in October 2020, following on from Portuguese countryman Jorge Jesus' triumph at Flamengo the year prior.

Ferreira, the former Sporting defender and Braga coach, said he owed his success to "hard work, persistence and dedication" in the wake of Tuesday's 2-0 victory over Egypt's Al Ahly. "I started really low down the ranks, wasn't at teams like Barcelona or Real Madrid," said the 43-year-old Ferreira.

"Every final we play the butterflies in the stomach are always the same. It's a natural thing. I believe all great coaches feel that as well."

European clubs have won the last eight editions of the Club World Cup, a competition that traditionally has meant more to teams from South America.

But Kovacic, twice a winner with Real Madrid, insists that is not the case, particularly for a squad with three players of Brazilian origin -- Thiago Silva, Jorginho and Kenedy.

"We know what it takes to come to such a big tournament because you need to win the Champions League, so we need to appreciate this moment and to not take it for granted," said Kovacic.

Whether he makes it out for the final or not, Tuchel faces a big decision as to who plays in goal after Kepa Arrizabalaga produced another accomplished display in midweek.

Trump Ripped Up, Stuffed Office Papers Down White House Toilet: Report

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: Documents ripped up, stuffed down the toilet or carted off to Florida -- the list of former US leader Donald Trump's alleged flouting of laws on preserving presidential papers grew longer and more bizarre Thursday.

Trump's shredding of many previously accepted norms of presidential decorum was part of his populist attraction to Republican supporters. But now the National Archives, which is in charge of preserving presidential records, reportedly wants Trump investigated over, among other things, his habit of literally tearing up White House papers while in office.

According to The Washington Post, the Archives requested the Justice Department open a probe into Trump's practices.

This came after the government records office confirmed Monday that it had recovered 15 boxes of documents from Trump's Florida estate, taken with him when he left Washington following his reelection defeat.

Among the documents were official correspondence with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un -- "love letters," as Trump described them at the time. Similarly included in the Florida stash was a letter outgoing president Barack Obama had left for Trump in the Oval Office.

Last week, the Archives confirmed reports that Trump had torn up documents, some of which have since been taped back together.

Under the 1978 Presidential Records Act (PRA), which was passed in the wake of the Watergate scandal, US presidents are required to transfer all emails, letters and other work documents to the National Archives.

Trump denies any wrongdoing. In a statement Thursday, he characterized his dealings with the Archives as "without conflict and on a very friendly basis."

"The media's characterization of my relationship with NARA

(National Archives) is Fake News. It was exactly the opposite! It was a great honor to work with NARA to help formally preserve the Trump Legacy."

Down the toilet

But on Thursday, a new twist developed.

A new book on Trump's time in office claims that a White House toilet would jam after attempts to flush away office papers, Axios reported.

The upcoming book "Confidence Man," by New York Times



journalist Maggie Haberman, says that "staff in the White House residence periodically discovered wads of printed paper clogging a toilet -- and believed the president had flushed pieces of paper," according to an exclusive preview by Axios.

The book, based in part on Haberman's post-presidential interviews with Trump, reports that the Republican has told people he remains in touch with North Korea's Kim.

Trump likewise denied the toilet story.

"Also, another fake story, that I flushed papers and documents down a White House toilet, is categorically untrue and simply made up by a reporter in order to get publicity for a mostly fictitious book," he wrote.

Haberman's book is set to be published October 4. The veteran Times journalist has been on the Trump beat for a decade and long had unrivaled access among journalists to the property tycoon-turned-politician's inner circle.

Two Foreign Journalists On Assignment For UN Detained In Kabul



Agenceis

KABUL: Two international journalists who were on an assignment for the UN refugee agency have been detained in the Afghan capital, the UNHCR said on Friday.

"Two journalists on assignment with UNHCR and Afghan nationals working with them have been detained in Kabul. We are doing our utmost to resolve the situation, in coordination with others," the UNHCR tweeted.

One of the journalists is Andrew North, a British former BBC correspondent who has covered Afghanistan for about two decades and has regularly traveled to the war-ravaged country.

"Andrew was in Kabul working for the UNHCR, trying to help the people of Afghanistan," his wife Natalia Antelava tweeted.

"We are extremely concerned for his safety & call on anyone with influence to help secure his release."

Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the authorities were looking into the issue.

"We have received information about this and are trying to confirm whether they have been detained or not," Mujahid said.

Since the Taliban seized power they have cracked down on dissent, by forcefully dispersing women's protests, detaining critics of the regime and beating several journalists.

Two Afghan journalists were detained for a few days earlier this month before being released.

Four women protesters have been missing since last month after taking part in anti-Taliban demonstrations. The Taliban authorities have denied any involvement.

'Things Could Go Crazy': Biden Asks Americans To Leave Ukraine



Agenceis

KYIV, Ukraine -- Diplomatic efforts to resolve the Ukraine crisis remained at a stalemate Friday, prompting a stark warning from NATO that Europe faces a "dangerous moment" as Russia kicks off a second day of major military exercises near Ukraine's borders that analysts say could presage an invasion.

President Biden, in an interview on NBC's "Nightly News," urged U.S. citizens in Ukraine to "leave now," adding that "things could go crazy, quickly," given Russia's military strength. Biden scheduled a call for Friday with his counterparts in Canada, the U.K. and other NATO partners to further coordinate "diplomacy and deterrence," the White House said Friday.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday during a visit to Australia that the West continues to see "troubling signs of Russian escalation, including new forces arriving at the Ukrainian border."

"As we've said before, we're in a window when an invasion could begin at any time, and to be clear, that includes during the Olympics," Blinken said. He referred to

speculation among some officials that Russian President Vladimir Putin may wait for the conclusion of the Olympic Games in Beijing to avoid angering China, its key partner. The exercises are scheduled to end on Feb. 20, the same day as the games conclude.

Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's foreign affairs minister, invoked diplomatic agreements to ask Russia for detailed information about its exercises, including precise locations, numbers of troops and dates of completed activity. Russia has 48 hours to comply, Kuleba said. Failing that could escalate to emergency meetings within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, experts said.

Biden's remarks were aired after a tense encounter Thursday between British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and her Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in Moscow. She warned that a renewed Russian invasion of Ukraine would lead to "severe consequences," while Lavrov characterized their meeting as a conversation between the "deaf and the dumb."

In Berlin, negotiators representing Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany failed to come to an

agreement after nine hours of discussions seeking a resolution to a long-running conflict between Kyiv and Moscow-backed separatists in Ukraine's contested east. There were no immediate plans for another round of the "Normandy format" talks, although Ukraine's envoy said he hoped negotiations would continue.

Britain's diplomatic efforts were further stymied Friday following a meeting in Moscow between Russia Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and his British counterpart, Ben Wallace. The meeting came after Wallace announced that 350 British Royal Marines would soon be deployed to Poland in a gesture of solidarity.

"Unfortunately, the level of our cooperation is close to zero and about to cross the zero meridian and go into negative, which is undesirable," Shoigu said, Agence France-Presse reported, citing Russian news agencies. He blasted Ukraine's partners for "gorging" the country with weapons, a reference to the United States supplying antitank weapons, and to other NATO allies, such as Lithuania, spiriting antiaircraft launchers into Ukraine.

Iranians Get Behind Wheel To Mark 43rd Anniversary Of Islamic Revolution

Agenceis

TEHRAN: Tens of thousands of Iranians drove through Tehran and other major cities on Friday to mark the 43rd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, staying in vehicles rather than marching on foot amid COVID-19 restrictions.

Due to the pandemic, state television said this year, as the previous year, there should be "no gathering or marching" by those celebrating the 1979 overthrow of the US backed monarchy.

Instead, people travelled on motorbikes and cars driving through the streets in the Iranian capital toward the iconic Azadi (Freedom) Square, despite chilly temperatures.

Some had painted their cars in the red, white and green colors of the Iranian flag, while others chanted slogans of "Death to America" and "We will resist until the end" from windows as they drove by.

A number of US flags were also burnt by people chanting "We will not surrender" at Azadi Square, an AFP photographer said.

State television broadcast footage of similar rallies in other major cities, including Isfahan, Mashhad, Tabriz and Shiraz.

Demonstrators bore portraits of Iran's supreme leader Ayatol-



lah Ali Khamenei as well as the Imam Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic republic, and revered general Qassim Soleimani, assassinated by a US airstrike at Baghdad airport in January 2020.

This year's anniversary is the first since conservative President Ebrahim Raisi took office in August last year.

The anniversary also comes as negotiations to revive Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers continue in Vienna. Former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the deal in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions, and in response, Iran gradually reneged on its commitments.

President Raisi said that his country "never has hope" in the nuclear negotiations with world pow-

ers to restore the 2015 nuclear deal.

"We put our hopes in the east, west, north, south of our country and never have hope in Vienna and New York," Raisi said in a televised speech as Iran marked the 43rd anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

On the eve of the 43rd anniversary, fireworks displays were performed in Tehran and other cities at 9:00 p.m. overnight, as people chanted Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest) in an expression of support for the Islamic Revolution.

More than 6,300 Iranian and some 200 foreign journalists, photographers, and cameramen covered the Friday ceremonies, Press TV reported.

In Tehran, revolutionary songs played as marchers waved their national flags.

Canada's Anti-Vaccine Convoy Protests: What We Know So Far

Agenceis

Ottawa: Horn-blaring demonstrations demanding an end to Canadian COVID-19 vaccine mandates have caused gridlock in the capital Ottawa since late January. The protests by truckers and others are now spilling to key Canada-United States border crossings and disrupting trade.

The mayor of Windsor, Ontario, where protesters have closed the Ambassador Bridge border crossing to the United States, choking trade, said police were preparing to physically remove protesters if necessary.

How Did The Protests Start?

The "Freedom Convoy" driving across Canada toward Ottawa in late January ostensibly opposed vaccinate-or-quarantine mandates for cross-border truckers. But most truckers do not support the convoy.

The Canadian Trucking Alliance, an industry group, said it opposes protests on public roadways and the vast majority of Canadian truckers are vaccinated.

The protests have broadened to oppose a range of provincial and federal COVID-19 measures.

What Are The Authorities Doing?

Canadian authorities are scrambling to end the Ottawa occupation, hoping a combination of criminal charges, traffic tickets and the prospect of losing access to fuel will end the blockades.

A court granted an interim injunction this week, preventing people from sounding horns in downtown Ottawa.

Protesters say they are peaceful but some waved Confederate flags and swastikas in the occupation's early days. Some Ottawa residents say they were harassed.

Police in Ottawa have made about two dozen arrests while issuing more than 1,300 tickets for noise and other violations.

Ottawa Police lost their enforcement opportunity when the convoy first rolled into town at the end of January, said Carleton University criminologist Jeffrey Monaghan.

"There were just massive mis-

takes from the start -- the permissiveness, the cultivation of a never-ending frat party. ... We knew coming in that there were far-right folks itching for confrontation but because of an unwillingness to address that more freely, the police took a hands-off approach and allowed the whole neighbourhood to be held hostage."

What Are The Options For Police?

Canada has laws and bylaws against blocking traffic, excessive noise, harassment and dangerous operations of motor vehicles, among other things. But police forces have been largely unable or unwilling to crack down on occupiers, with enforcement complicated by factors such as the blockade's urban setting and the presence of children with many of the protesters. Police have said they feared violence if they were too aggressive.

Commercial vehicle licenses could provide authorities with another avenue of enforcement -- but they first must issue a charge or ticket.

A person can have their commercial vehicle registration suspended or cancelled if they rack up enough infractions.

What Are The Challenges For Enforcement?

Ottawa police say they need 1,800 people -- officers and civilian staff -- to beef up their response. Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino said Thursday the federal government, which has provided 275 Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers to Ottawa, will send more to Ottawa and to Windsor, Ontario, and Coutts, Alberta, where protesters are blocking border crossings. The Ontario provincial government has also said it is considering upping its support.

Protesters are also getting outside legal help. Right-wing organization Rebel News has said it would cover protesters' legal fees. Ottawa lawyer David Anber said he plans to file complaints about police conduct in some cases, particularly where people were taken into custody and released without being charged.

French Minister Slams Headscarf Ban For Muslim Footballers

Agenceis

PARIS: France's gender equality minister threw her support on Thursday behind Muslim women footballers who are seeking to overturn a ban on players wearing headscarves on the pitch.

Rules set by the French Football Federation currently prevent players taking part in competitive matches from wearing religious symbols such as Muslim headscarves or the Jewish kippa (a skullcap).

A women's collective known as "les Hijabeuses" launched a legal challenge to the rules in November, claiming they were discriminatory and infringed their right to practise their religion.

"The law says that these young women can wear a headscarf and play football. On football pitches today, headscarves are not forbidden. I want the law to be respected," Equality Minister Elisabeth Moreno told LCI television.

Two months from French presidential elections, the issue has become a talking point in a country that maintains a strict form of secularism that is meant



to separate the state and religion.

The French Senate, which is dominated by the rightwing Republicans party, proposed a law in January that would have banned the wearing of obvious religious symbols in all competitive sports.

It was rejected in the lower house on Wednesday where President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Republic on the Move party and allies hold the majority.

France's laws on secularism guarantee religious freedom to all citizens, and contain no provisions on banning the wearing of religious symbols in public spaces, with the exception of full-face coverings which were outlawed in 2010.



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