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P5 STATE

HAJJ 2022: FINAL QUOTA ANNOUNCEMENT FOR J&K EXPECTED BY MAR 1

The final quota of Hajj 2022 for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is expected by March 1 and that it depends on the quota whether all pilgrims registered till February 15 would

P7 VLOGGERS OF VALLEY

Imad came out to capture the carpeted landscape in its alluring form the moment it snowed in Kashmir this winter. The Srinagar-based content-creator has been picturing the quaint valley in all shades and seasons for years now. His ability to take his 'surging' social media audience on the



P11 SPORTS

ROHIT SHARMA NAMED INDIA'S NEW TEST CAPTAIN

Rohit Sharma was on Saturday appointed the new Test captain of the Indian team as selectors initiated the transition phase by dropping



Quote!

Whoever is happy will make others happy too

– Anne Frank

NEWS DIGEST

Mine Blast Injures Girl In Poonch

JAMMU: A 12-year-old girl was seriously injured in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Saturday. Jameela Bi was returning home after grazing her | [More on PIO](#)

Train Mows Down Youth In Sopore

SRINAGAR: A youth was killed after being hit by a moving train, along Banihal to Baramulla railway line, at Hamray of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said. 21-year-old Waseem Ahmad | [More on PIO](#)

Northern Army Commander Visits Ladakh

LEH: Northern Army commander Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday reached Leh on his four-day maiden visit to the Union Territory of Ladakh after taking over as the general officer commanding-in-chief (GOC-in-C) of the Udhampur-based command this month, a | [More on PIO](#)

Man Killed In Rajouri Accident

JAMMU: A man was killed while two other persons were injured when a vehicle they were travelling in met with an accident and fell off from a bridge into a river in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday. A police officer said during last night at about 1:30 hours, | [More on PIO](#)

2 Soldiers, Militant Killed In Shopian Gunfight

House Owner Arrested

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two soldiers and a militant were killed on Saturday in a fierce firefight in Zainapora area of south Kashmir's Shopian district.

The encounter broke out after police, army's 1RR and the personnel of CRPF in a joint operation laid a siege around a cluster of houses in Chermarg village of Zainapora (Shopian) after receiving input about the presence of a militant, a police spokesperson said Saturday. The civilians, he said, were evacuated by the joint team during the search operation.

"During the process, as the search party started searching house belonging to Gowhar Ahmad Bhat, the house-owner intentionally misled the search party and denied sheltering the



KO File Photo

terrorist in his house," the police spokesperson said.

While questioning the house owner, he said, a militant hiding in his house opened fire on the search party resulting in grievous injuries to two Army men.

"The fire was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter. The injured jawans were immediately evacuated to hospital

for treatment however; both of them succumbed to their injuries and attained martyrdom," the police spokesperson said.

The deceased soldiers have been identified as Sepoys Santosh Yadav and Chavan Romit Tanaji.

In the ensuing encounter, he said, the hiding militant was killed and his body was retrieved from the site of | [More on PIO](#)

TRF Militant Held In Srinagar: Police

Observer News Service

Corona Cases Fall Further

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported on Saturday lowest daily cases of Coronavirus in the last 47 days as 166 people tested positive for the virus, while no fresh fatality was reported in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, Kashmir Valley registered 63 fresh cases of novel Coronavirus while the | [More on PIO](#)

Ex-SPO Gets Life Term For Killing Wife, Brother-In-Law

Press Trust Of India

BANIHAL: A local court on Saturday sentenced a former special police officer (SPO) to life imprisonment for killing his wife and brother-in-law in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district over a decade ago.

Principal Sessions Judge, Ramban, Haq Nawaz Zargar also slapped a fine of Rs 1 lakh on the convict Abdul Gafoor,

who caused his appearance through video conference from district jail, Udhampur, where he is currently lodged.

Gafoor had shot dead his wife Rehmat Begum and brother-in-law Farooq Ahmad Malik using his AK-47 rifle in Mitra village of Ramban on May 10, 2011. He was subsequently arrested on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway while he was trying to flee. | [More on PIO](#)

NIA Raids 8 Locations In J&K, Rajasthan

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at multiple locations in Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan in connection with a militancy conspiracy case, its spokesperson said.

Twenty-eight accused have been arrested in the case so far, the spokesperson said.

The NIA said the searches were conducted at eight locations in Sopore, Kupwara, Shopian, Rajouri, Budgam and Ganderbal of Jammu and Kashmir and Jodhpur district of Rajasthan.

"During the searches conducted today, various incriminating documents, digital devices, SIM cards and digital storage devices have been seized," the spokesperson said. | [More on PIO](#)

Widespread Rain, Snow On Feb 22-23

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The meteorological department on Saturday predicted widespread rains and snow across Jammu and Kashmir for two days from February 22.

According to a meteorological department official, a Western Disturbance, of moderate intensity, is going to bring widespread rain and snowfall across Jammu and Kashmir on February 22 and 23.

The main intensity as per the current forecast, the official said, is expected between the intervening night of February 22-23.

"Due to cold winds associated with the system, there is also a possibility

of snowfall in plains of the Valley. However, the intensity will remain light (or moderate spell) is expected at a few places," the official said.

The weather department official further said that the twin districts of Shopian and Kulgam may see good snow accumulation, of greater than 5 inches. The upper reaches of Shopian, he said, could witness one foot snow.

"Heavy snowfall is also possible in the upper reaches of Bandipora (including Tulail and Gurez), upper reaches of Baramulla, Kupwara and Ganderbal. Tourist places: Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg are likely to | [More on PIO](#)



A tourist enjoys sledge ride in the snow-covered Gulmarg Valley on Saturday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

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ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Govt Orders Crackdown Against Violators

Demolish Illegal Structures, Recover Charges From Violators: Pole

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In what seems to be a major offensive against the people raising illegal structures across the Valley, the Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday directed officers to pace up anti-encroachment drive and recover demolition charges from violators to stop construction of buildings illegally.

These directions were passed by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole to the officers while chairing a meeting regarding demolition of illegal structures and removal of encroachments, an official spokesperson said Saturday.

The meeting was attended by VC, J&K LCMA, Srinagar; ADC, Srinagar; Chief Town Planner; SP Srinagar, CEO, Badami Bagh Cantonment; SMC Officers, Executive Officers of | [More on PIO](#)

Delhi HC Orders 3 Retired KP Officers To Vacate Govt Quarters

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High court has dismissed the petitions moved by three retired central government officials refusing their claims.

The petitioners sought permission to retain the government accommodation claiming they are Kashmiri migrants. They had challenged the eviction orders issued by the Central government.

Justice V Kameswar Rao dismissed the petitions observing, "The petition is devoid of merit, the same is dismissed.



The bench directed, "The petitioners shall vacate the government accommodation allotted to them on or before March 31, 2022 and an undertaking shall be filed in the

court within one week."

The High Court said in a recent order that the plea advanced by the counsels for the petitioners that they are entitled to the benefit of retention of the house for three years is unmerited.

The court said that the petitioners being ineligible under the office memorandum of March 28, 2017, cannot rely on the order of 7 October 2021, as they were not covered under the scheme, and such were not entitled to the retention of the government accommodation at all.

The bench made it clear that the scheme which | [More on PIO](#)

'Beggar' Robs Woman Of Gold Rings

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A robber masquerading as a beggar on Saturday allegedly decamped with jewellery of a woman after barging into her house in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Station House Officer, Police Station Devsar S.S. Reen told Kashmir Observer that a robber masquerading as a beggar entered into the house of one Mohammad Yunus Rather of Zaipora, Agroo and asked his wife for a glass of water.

"After finding | [More on PIO](#)

Matric Results: Most Govt Schools Fail Again

All Students Fail In Eight Schools, 30 Percent Pass In 75

Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR: The class 10th results announced by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (BOSE) have once again displayed the dismal performance of government schools which saw a pass percentage of 67.25 as compared to 91.18 percent by the private schools in the Valley.

Data available with the Kashmir Observer suggested that the government schools failed for the fourth time in a row to perform better than the private schools.

As per the official figures, in year 2021, a total of 38,721 students appeared in the Class 10th examination and 26,040 qualified. On the other hand, the pass percentage of the private



schools was 91.18 percent. Out of 33,963 students who appeared in the examination, 30,967 passed the exam.

Similarly in 2020, the pass percentage of the government schools was recorded at 62.76 percent. Out of 41,026 students who

appeared in exams, only 25,749 qualified. The pass percentage of private schools was 89.82, as out of 34,106 students who wrote the exams, 30,635 qualified.

During the year 2019, the pass percentage of the government schools was recorded at

62.96 percent while that of private schools was 86.26.

In 2018, the pass percentage of the government schools was recorded at 63.71 and private schools 85.85.

The data clearly indicates the poor performance of government schools in the Kashmir Valley.

Sources in BOSE told Kashmir Observer that around 75 government high schools (GHS) recorded less than 30 percent results in class 10th examination, eight among them with zero percentage.

On 19 February, the government suspended around 17 teachers in three government schools in Anantnag zone after all their 30 students failed in the matric exams.

Reports said for the 2nd

consecutive year, a government school in Mattan area of south Kashmir's Anantnag District registered zero pass percentage in 10th standard results.

The government had announced 30 percent relaxation in the syllabus for classes 10th to 12th in their annual regular 2021 examination. The relaxation was given because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Academics and the parents allege that the lack of accountability and manpower is the main reason for the poor performance of government schools.

"Most of the time these government teachers don't attend schools due to shutdown calls, pandemic etc. If government provides them huge salaries, why is their performance poor?" Mohammad Arif. | [More on PIO](#)

54 Foreigners Among 4900 Lodged In J&K Jails

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Around 54 foreigners are among more than 4900 persons lodged in different jails of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory, official data reveals.

According to reports, as on December 31, 2021, 54 foreign nationals were lodged in different jails of UT.

Among the foreign prisoners, 10 are convicts, 39 under-trials, four detainees and one in other category.

According to the data, 4970 persons were lodged in different jails of J&K as on December 31, 2021. Of them 4916 were Indian nationals and remaining 54 foreign nationals.

Among the Indian nationals, 176 were convicts, 4492



under-trials and 248 detainees.

Detenues are those who are lodged in jails under the Public Safety Act- a law which empowers the government to detain a person for a period ranging from three months to two years on apprehensions of being threat to law & order and security of the State.

At present, J&K has 13 functional jails which include two central jails, | [More on PIO](#)



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Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: K. C. Mahindra Scholarships for Post-Graduate Studies Abroad 2022

Description: K. C. Mahindra Scholarships for Post-Graduate Studies Abroad 2022 is an opportunity offered by K. C. Mahindra Education Trust for graduate students to pursue postgraduate studies abroad.

Eligibility: Open for Indian candidates who have secured admission or applied for admission to pursue postgraduate studies abroad in various fields in reputable foreign universities for courses commencing from August 2022, but no later than February 2023. Applicants must hold a first-class degree or an equivalent diploma of a similar standard from a recognized university.

Prizes & Rewards: Interest-free loan scholarship up to INR 8 lakh
Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2022
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/KMG2

Scholarship Name 2: SERB Start-up Research Grant 2022

Description: SERB Start-up Research Grant 2022 is an opportunity offered to PhD or M.D./M.S./M.D.S./M.V.Sc degree holders. The aim of the scheme is to assist the researchers of the country to initiate their research careers in a new institution.

Eligibility: Open for Indian citizens who hold a PhD degree in Science or Engineering or M.D./M.S./M.D.S./M.V.Sc degree and a regular academic/research position in any recognized academic institution or a national laboratory or any other recognized R&D institution.

Prizes & Rewards: Research grant of INR 30 lakh plus overheads for 2 years
Last Date to Apply: 01-03-2022
Application mode: via email only



Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SRB2

Scholarship Name 3: Kotak Shiksha Nidhi
Description: Kotak Shiksha Nidhi invites applications from school and college students who have lost a primary earning member of their family due to COVID-19, for continuity of their education from Class 1st to diploma and graduation level courses.

Eligibility: Loss of both parents
Loss of one of the parents
Loss of primary earning member of the family (other than parents)

Applicants must be school or college going students aged between age 6 to 22 years i.e., class 1 to diploma or graduation course
Prizes & Rewards: Terms and Conditions Apply. Selection and the quantum of assistance under Kotak Shiksha Nidhi will be based on fulfilment of the eligibility criteria and will be at the discretion of Kotak Education Foundation.

Last Date to Apply: 31-03-2022
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/KSFA1



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- Irregular Heartbeats
- Lips Turning Blue

HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS

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

STROKE SYMPTOMS

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

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Office of The Regional Transport Officer Kashmir

NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from DR Syed Rayees Ahmad S/O Bashir Ahmad Shah R/O Deva Colony Janglatmandi Anantnag (Transferor) of SWIFT DISEAR bearing registration No. JK01AB 9001 in favour of MIR MUBASHIR REHMAN S/O ABDUL REHMAN MIR R/O DIALGAM ANANTNAG (Transferee).

Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office,
Kashmir

ma

مشتاق میموریل ٹرسٹ کے زیر اہتمام سالانہ تقریب کا انعقاد۔

سیر ہمدان انتہا ناگ میں ہزاروں عاشق رسول ﷺ کی شرکت، وادی کے جدید علمائے کرام کا خطاب خاص۔



انتہا ناگ // اشفاق ڈانگرو // اریٹنی نیوز // 19 فروری بروز پیر اور مشتاق میموریل ٹرسٹ جموں و کشمیر (بانی خطیب ملت مولانا مشتاق احمد خان صاحب کے زیر اہتمام ایم وصال خطیب ملت نقیب عاشق مصطفیٰ مولانا مشتاق احمد خان صاحب کے سلسلے میں سر زمین سیر ہمدان پر ریاست گیر اجتماع منعقد ہوا جس میں ہزاروں لوگوں کے علاوہ وادی کشمیر کے معروف علمائے کرام، مشائخ عظام، خواجہ نوان رسول ﷺ نے شرکت کی اور خطیب ملت کے تلقینی، تحریری، ادبی، اور تصوف کے حوالے سے خدمات کو سراہا اور آغا کر کے خراج عقیدت پیش کیا۔ اجتماع کی صدارت مولانا ثناء شکت حسین صاحب نے انجام دی۔ جن مہتمموں نے علمائے کرام نے ہماری اجتماع سے خطاب کیا ان میں مولانا ڈاکٹر ثناء احمد مہارکی، مولانا مہارک حسین ربانی مولانا فیاض احمد رضو کی مولانا ناگڑا احمد شیدائی، مولانا عبدغنی نعیمی، مولانا ارشاد احمد حیدری، مولانا ڈاکٹر نعیمی شیخ عبدالقی صاحب وغیرہ قابل ذکر ہے۔ مولانا غلام محمد الدین نقیب صاحب، مولانا عبدالرشید داودی صاحب نے بذریعہ فون پر اجتماع سے خطاب کیا۔ اجتماع صلوٰۃ و سلام اور وقت آمیز دعاؤں کے ساتھ اختتام پزیر ہوا۔ واضح رہے مشتاق میموریل ٹرسٹ کے زیر اہتمام خطیب ملت، مولانا مشتاق احمد خان صاحب کے ایم وصال پر 19 فروری ہرسال سیر ہمدان میں تقریب منعقد ہوتی ہیں اور ہوتی رہے گی۔ انشاء اللہ

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Office of the Assistant Director Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Anantnag.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public of District Anantnag that the PDS- Kerosene Oil will be distributed to AAY/PHH ration cards as per the SRO 285@ 3.00 liters/per ration card for the month of February 2022.

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Assistant Director,
FCS&CA Anantnag

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مضمون درخواست خطیب: جسٹس باؤ پیو وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ ساکنہ پورہ تحصیل منٹن
بغرض حصول ایگل سیر فلکیت

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نمبر شمار	نام ولدیت	رشتہ برادری	پیشہ	عمر	آمدنی
01	حسن باؤ پیو وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	بیوہ مستوفی	گھریلو کام	68 سال	
02	نبیل احمد خان پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	بیوہ مستوفی (شادی شدہ)	مزدوری	45 سال	6000/=
03	بام چان خان پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	دختر مستوفی (شادی شدہ)	گھریلو کام	46 سال	
04	گل رحمان ولد وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	بیوہ مستوفی (شادی شدہ)	مزدوری	43 سال	6000/=
05	پروین چان خان پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	دختر (شادی شدہ)	گھریلو کام	41 سال	
06	اختر نیکم پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	دختر (شادی شدہ)	گھریلو کام	40 سال	
07	نبلی چان خان پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	دختر (شادی شدہ)	گھریلو کام	35 سال	
08	جسید اختر پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	دختر (بلا شادی شدہ)	گھریلو کام	30 سال	

مستوفی کا کنیہ آجھہ افراد پر مشتمل ہے۔ سر فلکیت اجرا کرتے ہیں۔ اگر کسی شخص کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ پٹری ملازمت سے ان کے اندر اندر پیش کریں۔ بعد از معیار گذرنے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
(تحرا الصدرا پٹری نیکیو جھڑ پٹری دہرہ پورہ)

ان خیانت دہرہ پورہ با اجلاس غلام محمد الدین صاحب دہرہ پورہ
مضمون درخواست خطیب: جسٹس باؤ پیو وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ ساکنہ پورہ تحصیل منٹن
بغرض حصول: ڈیپنڈنسی سر فلکیت

ادھار براد آگاہی بر خاص و عام۔
معاملی نسبت پٹاری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے۔ جنکی رو سے ساکنہ کا شوگر PHE میں ملازمت کرتا تھا اور دوران ملازمت مورخہ 21/01/2022 کو ٹوٹ ہوا ہے۔ مستوفی کے ڈیپنڈنسی تفصیل پائل ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	نام ولدیت	رشتہ برادری	پیشہ	عمر
01	مسما قاسم باؤ پیو وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	بیوہ مستوفی	گھریلو کام	68 سال
02	جسید اختر پٹری وزیر اعلیٰ ناگ	نبلی مستوفی (بلا شادی شدہ)	گھریلو کام	30 سال

اسطور مستوفی کے صرف وہی ڈیپنڈنسی موجود ہیں۔ ان کے علاوہ مستوفی کو کوئی ڈیپنڈنسی موجود نہیں ہے۔ اسطور سالانہ ڈیپنڈنسی سر فلکیت حاصل کرنے کی خواہ کرتی ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ پٹری ملازمت سے ان کے اندر اندر پیش کریں۔ بعد از معیار گذرنے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
(تحرا الصدرا پٹری نیکیو جھڑ پٹری دہرہ پورہ)

ان خیانت دہرہ پورہ با اجلاس ارشاد احمد ملک
مضمون درخواست خطیب: عامر رشید و دانش رشید و وقت رشید وادان عبدالرشید بٹ ساکنہ تر کہ بٹ پورہ
بغرض حصول RBA سر فلکیت تحت ایس آر آ 126
اشتہار: براد آگاہی بر خاص و عام۔
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول RBA سر فلکیت دفتر پٹری پیش کیا ہے۔ اس بارے میں عملہ فیلڈ سے رپورٹ طلب کیا گیا جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل کا کنیہ دھندلا میں گزشتہ پندرہ سالوں سے رہائش پذیر ہے۔ سائل کی مہانت آمدنی 67298 ہے اور سائل کا کنیہ پٹری ہے۔

نمبر شمار	نام افراد کنیہ	عمر	پیشہ	آمدنی
01	غلام رسول بٹ ولد عبدالخالق	65 سال	عمر سیدہ	
02	علی محمد ولد غلام رسول	40 سال	زمینداری	
03	حلیہ بیگم زوجہ علی محمد	39 سال	گھریلو کام	
04	نذیب علی دختر علی محمد	12	زیر تعلیم	
05	نذیر احمد بٹ ولد غلام رسول	32	سرکاری ملازم	
06	جسید بیگم زوجہ نذیر احمد	31	گھریلو کام	
	باسمہ بیٹول دختر نذیر احمد	02	شیر خوار	

اس کے علاوہ اوکوئی افراد کو نمین تھلا یا کیا ہے۔ لہذا زیر بحث سر فلکیت اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ وہاں کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض مہر و جوبات پیش کرے۔ معیار گذرنے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
نائب تحصیلدار msk

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the RC of my P/Tanker Bearing Regd No:- Jk03C-6289. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO ANANTNAG. Within a period of seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name :- Jamat Ali
S/o :- Chowdhary Bhura
R/O :- Bathindi Jammu

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:- Mudasir Ahmad Thoker
S/O :- Abdul Hamid Thoker
R/O :- Thokerpora Verinag

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Contact:- 0194-3550112
G-mail:- yardimicini92@gmail.com
I.G: yardimci_multi_venture
F.B: yardimci multiVenture

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10X MOBILE STORE

All types of Mobile and Mobile Accessories

Main Market Sannat Nagar Srinagar
Contact:- 7889657769

TECH WORLD

All Mobile and Electronic

Accessories Xerox also

available.

Sannat Nagar Srinagar

Contact:- 9149965005/ 9682370979



Govt Throwing Tulip Garden Open From March 20

Agencies

Srinagar: Commissioner Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Floriculture department, Sheikh Fayaz on Saturday said that Tulip garden will be thrown open from March 20 onwards for public.

Keeping in view the pleasant climate this year, the garden will be opened from March 20 onwards, Fayaz said.

He further said that like previous year, 15 lakh tulips will bloom which had set a record of about 2 lakh tourists visiting the garden last year.

“Department is fully prepared this year and new projects are being started for beautification and maintenance of new gardens and parks in the Kashmir valley,” he added.

He informed that 100 kanals of land has been identified in Sonamarg for setting up a Tulip garden there and a rose garden would be developed at Pahalgam which will attract more tourists.

“Department, besides maintaining old gardens is all set to develop new theme based gardens in the valley to attract more tourists. Department is handling now those parks which have more than 10 kanals of land and rest of the small parks have been handed over to municipality,” he said.

He further said that the department has taken over such parks which were earlier handled by J&K Bank like Iqbal Park and Badamwari. (KNS)

Police Trace Missing Hajin Youth From Srinagar

Agencies

Srinagar: Police Saturday traced missing Hajinyouth within 48 hours from Srinagar city.

In a statement, police said that on Thursday Hajin police received a complaint from a family stating that their Son namely Manzoor Ahmad Bhat (28) son of Ghulam Mohiuddin Bhat of Hajin, has been missing since 16 February. The parents as well as relatives of the said youth have searched for him but could not trace him.

Accordingly, a missing report was registered in the daily diary of police station Hajin and an investigation was initiated.

Acting swiftly on this complaint a technical team was constituted headed by DySPHajinLatief Ahmad Khan and SHO PS Hajin.Search was launched to trace the missing youth, the official said.

The traces and leads were further developed and after strenuous efforts, the investigation team was able to trace the said missing youth within 48 Hours in Srinagar. Accordingly, he was recovered and was handed over to his family.



Dilapidated road at Badamwari area of old city is dotted with potholes which hampers smooth vehicular movement.

Land Passbooks Handed Over to Land Owners in Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As a reform to give fillip to transparency in the public service delivery in the Revenue Department, the District Administration Srinagar Saturday rolled out the process to issue Land Passbooks to the legal owners of land.

In this connection, a function was organized in the meeting hall of DC Office Complex Srinagar wherein, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole in presence of Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar Mohammad AijazAsad handed over Land Passbooks to land owners of Tehsil South of District Srinagar.

Speaking on the occasion, the Div Com termed the initiative a historical step towards transparency and Good Governance. He complimented the Revenue Department and concerned the IT agency for making this facility a possibility in a very short

time.

He stressed them to extend the facility to all the landowners of Kashmir Division.

The Div Com further said that this Land Passbook has been written in Urdu, English and Hindi languages as a measure to further improve service delivery to fill the information vacuum and promote people's ease of access to the revenue record.

He also observed that the Land Passbook will provide Revenue related information to the land owners in a very simple form, besides shall act as a valid paper to present before financial and other institutions. He felicitated the land owners who received this vital document on the occasion.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar also spoke on the occasion and described the initiative as a milestone to further improve Service delivery, enhance Transparency, Accountability in Revenue record system. He

said Under the Digital India Land Record Modernization Programme (DILRMP), the Revenue Department has scanned voluminous revenue records and placed them in the public domain under the 'ApniZameen-ApniNigrani' for people's scrutiny.

Highlighting the benefits of the Land Pass Book, the DC said the Land Pass Book prescribed by the Revenue Department is true to the Revenue record and can be generated online without any hassle.

The DC further said Land Pass Book is an evidently valid entity carrying the same evidentiary value as if being certified copies of Record-of-Rights for all intents and purposes before Courts and Financial institutions. He said Land Passbooks issued to every landholder contains entry from the Jamabandi in Revenue Estate, so as to enable the landholder to make its use for Credit facilities and for other matters connected

therewith.

The DC added that each Land Pass Book has a unique ID and QR code as an additional security feature, and with the help of QR code any institution, individual or an agency can verify the credentials and authenticity of the Land Pass Book. “It is going to be a tool for redressal of various grievances, litigations, disputes at various forums and for reference”, he added. He said Land passbook is an identity card for the Land ownership.

Among others, Tehsildar South Srinagar, MoeanKakroo, concerned NaibTehsildars and other concerned Officers were present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, similar functions were also held in other Tehsils of Srinagar District including Panthachowk, Shalteng, Khanyar, Srinagar North, Channapora and Eidgah during which Land Passbooks were issued to the legal land owners.

Deaf and Dumb siblings Qualify 10th, 12th Exams with Flying Colours

Agencies

Srinagar: YasmeenaBano, a resident of Brain Nishat in Srinagar district is struggling hard to teach her two girl children who are deaf and dumb.

Bano while talking about her specially-abled children said that her elder daughter GousiaFayaz passed 10th class last year and has secured 339 marks out of 500 while her younger daughter Mehwish-Fayaz passed 10th class this year and secured 415 marks.

She said that both her daughters are deaf and dumb since their childhood and are her only two children.

Bano said that within first two

years after their birth, they came to know that both are deaf and dumb and despite spending around Rs 5 lakh for their treatment, no positive sign was witnessed.

She said that doctors told them that they need at least Rs 30 lakh for their treatment but being financially weak, they were unable to treat them.

After realizing that her both daughters have to live with lifelong disability, Bano said she decided not to deprive them of education at least, adding that both were admitted in Abhedananda Home (Higher Secondary Institution for Deaf & Mute and Blind Children) in Solina, Srinagar.

“Every day I take my daughters to school in the morning and bring them

back in the evening and if any day I have any unavoidable work, they can't attend the school,” she said.

“It is not an easy thing to take care of two deaf and dumb children especially daughters when source of income is very low. Their father is a laborer but he too is suffering from diabetes and other issues,” she said.

The parents said that it wouldn't have been possible to educate their daughters, had there not been a school for specially-abled children.

“The government must start such schools at zonal level in every district so that such students won't remain deprived of education,” they said.

Demise Of Nazir Wani Widely Mourned

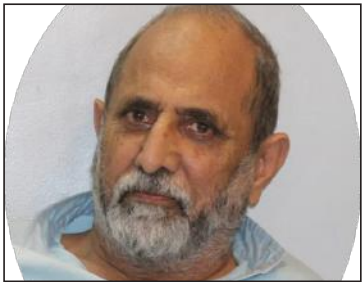
Srinagar: Noted businessman Nazir Ahmad Wani was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard in Srinagar on Saturday.

A large number of people from different walks of life joined his Namaze Jinaza.

Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Inc) deeply mourned his demise.

Nazir Ahmad Wani who passed away on Friday in New Delhi had a long association with KCC&I. He was elected as Sr. Vice President of the KCC&I in 2011.

Special tributes were paid to



the late Nazir Ahmad Wani by President and office bearers of the KCC&I and the remarkable contri-

bution of the late Nazir Wani for safeguarding the interest of trade commerce and Industry and serving the organization was unanimously appreciated.

In his death, the business community in general and the KCC&I in particular have lost a noble and gentle colleague, who will always be remembered with respect by the fraternity of Trade, Commerce and Industry.

“We pray for eternal peace to the departed soul and courage for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss,” the statement said.

اطہار تعزیت

اہلیہ مرحوم سید غلام محی الدین بخاری مورخہ 19 فروری صبح

دس بجے اس دار فانی سے رحلت ہوگئی مالک کون ومکان

کی رمتوں کی ادبی سکون آسیر چھاوں تلے ہمیشہ ہمیشہ کے

لئے آسودہ خاک ہوگئی

إِنَّا لِلّٰہِ وَإِنَّا اِلَیْہِ رَاجِعُونَ

اس سلسلے میں تعزیت صرف تین روز تک رہے گا۔ کوئی

چہارم نہیں ہوگا۔ رب ذلجلال سے دست دراز کر گئے کہ

اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت نصیب کرے۔ (آمین)

سوگوران

inf

Public Notice


I want to change my name on my passport from FARIDA FAYAZ TO FARIDA. If anybody has any objections regarding the same may contact the Passport office, Srinagar within a period of seven days. After that no objection can be entertained.
Name: SHAHID FAYAZ PANDIT
Residence: ARABAL, shalimar, Srinagar
Contact number :8899783312
Passport number : K5567680

Public Notice

My name has been wrongly spelled in my driving license bearing DL No: JK0320100012251 as Latief Ahmad Wani While the correct spelling is Lateef Ahmad Wani Which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Anantnag within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertaiend.
LATEEF AHMAD WANI
S/O MOHD KHALIL WANI R/O SHANGUS ANANTNAG


DIAL-EMMA

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




AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311




RAILWAYS


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



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI CALENDAR

18 - Rajab

1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 55
ZUHR	12:45
ASR	4:39
Magrib	6:21
ISHA	7: 43

This Day In History

- 1864 Civil War battle of Olustee, Florida
- 1921 - Riza Khan Pahlevi seizes control of Iran
- 1922 - Vilnius, Lithuania, agrees to separate from Poland
- 1932 - Japanese troops occupy Tunhua China
- 1938 - UK Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden resigns stating Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain has appeased Nazi Germany
- 1938 - Adolf Hitler announces his support for Japan during the Sino-Japanese War
- 1941 - Nazi Germany orders Polish Jews barred from using public transportation
- 1952 - Britain's Jeannette Altwegg wins the Olympic women's figure skating gold medal at the Oslo Winter Games ahead of American Tenley Albright, who goes on to win in Cortina d'Ampezzo (1956)
- 1952 - American alpine skier Andrea Mead-Lawrence is only multi-gold medalist at the Oslo Winter Olympics when she wins the slalom, after taking out the inaugural giant slalom
- 1953 - US Court of Appeals rules that Organized Baseball is a sport & not a business, affirming the 25-year-old Supreme Court ruling
- 1954 - General Zahedi wins election in Persia
- 1962 - John Glenn becomes the 1st American to orbit the Earth, aboard Friendship 7
- 1965 - Ranger 8 makes hard landing on the Moon, returns photos, other data
- 1965 - Turkish government of Uerguplu forms
- 1966 - Author Valery Tarsis banished in USSR
- 1975 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalinsk USSR
- 1975 - A feud begins between the official Irish Republican Army and the Irish National Liberation Army; the two groups assassinate a number of each other's volunteers until the feud ends in June 1975
- 1978 - Egypt announces it is pulling its diplomats out of Cyprus
- 1983 - Japan launches Tenma satellite to study x-rays (450/570 km)
- 1989 - An IRA bomb destroys a section of a British Army barracks in Terhill, England
- 1998 - UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan lands in Baghdad, for peace negotiations
- 2001 - The United States Supreme Court declines to consider an appeal by five major oil companies against Unocal's patent on production of cleaner "reformulated" gasoline sold in California
- 2003 - During a Great White concert in West Warwick, Rhode Island, a pyrotechnics display sets the club ablaze, killing 100 and injuring over 300 others.
- 2005 - Spain becomes the first country to vote in a referendum on ratification of the proposed Constitution of the European Union, passing it by a substantial margin, but on a low turnout.
- 2012 - South Korea angers North Korea as it proceeds with live fire drills in disputed Korean sea borders
- 2012 - Scientists successfully regenerate the flowering plant, Silene stenophylla from a 31,800 year
- 2016 - US primary elections: South Carolina Republican Primary - Donald Trump wins with 32.5%
- 2017 - Famine is declared in Unity State, South Sudan, affecting 4.9 million

From KO Archives

Hajj Pilgrim Held Up For Not Bribing CID

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR -Refusal to 'bribe' a police department sleuth has cost an intending Hajj pilgrim the final green signal to proceed to the holy land. Even after travel documents, including pilgrim pass, had been issued to the pilgrim, authorities have dashed his hopes of performing the Hajj and asked him to stay put at his Kupwara home.

According to a NAFa report, Habibullah Kashi s/o Budullah r/o Anwarabaad, Salkot (Kupwara district) had been selected for this year's Hajj vide serial No 4478. He was scheduled to fly to Jeddah tomorrow. His flight has to take off from here at 10.30 a.m. He has already received his pilgrim pass and other travel documents.

Surprisingly, the authorities have stopped his departure for the holy pilgrimage at the last minute. He has been asked not to leave his home. The divisional commissioner who is also the convener of the state Han committee is understood to have informed him that he would not be allowed to be proceed before CID clearance. His frantic efforts to reach the in-spector general of police, CID failed as the letter's office avoided him.

Family sources told NAFa an official from the CID had approached Habibullah in connection with verification and allegedly demanded Rs 500. He expressed his inability to bribe the official as he was proceeding for a holy pilgrimage. The official might have forwarded an adverse report, they suspected.

Interestingly, report said, Habibullah Kashi visited Pakistan-controlled Kashmir in October 1999 on a valid passport bearing number A-6579375. The passport had been issued only; after proper verification of his antecedents. "If the CID didn't have any objection for his visit to Pakistan or Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, why did they withhold clearance on my pilgrimage for Hajj which is mandatory for the eligible Muslim", he asked.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 20 February, 2001)

Plea In Supreme Court To Legally Enforce Parties' Poll Manifesto Promises



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking direction to the Centre and the Election Commission to take steps to regulate poll manifestos and make political parties accountable for promises made therein.

Filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, the PIL seeks direction to the Election Commission (EC) to seize the poll symbol and deregister/derecognise the political parties that fail to fulfil their promises made in their manifestos.

The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, contended that the Centre and the Election Commission have not taken steps to regulate political parties' manifesto.

"Petitioner submits that election manifesto is a vision document to achieve the particular goals if the political party gets elected. It is a published declaration of the intentions, motives and views of the political party and government," the PIL began.

"The political parties must refrain from giving exaggerated promises as it may burden the public money kept in state funds, during times of financial distress. It also agreed that not all promises

are corrupt, but many are and so guidelines must be given by election commission," the plea said.

Pointing to a case as example, the petition said the Aam Aadmi Party promised Janlokal Bill-Swaraj Bill in 2013, 2015 and 2020 election manifesto but did nothing to effectuate them.

This is happening in all states because neither the Centre has enacted a law to regulate the functioning of political parties and their election manifesto nor has the EC made any guideline, it said.

Referring to another example, the plea said that Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been repeatedly making the promise to enact a Uniform Civil Code.

"It currently has absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, even if it is short of numbers in the Rajya Sabha. In such a situation, what would be the legal hassle if someone takes the BJP to Court seeking fulfilment of the promise? Let it, at least, introduce a UCC Bill and leave it to the machinations of parliamentary democracy, to be settled in due course," argued the plea.

"An election manifesto is a window for voters to see through a political party's governance agenda to make an informed decision. Voting is a transactional act. Once a vote is cast on the basis of the transactional value the voter sees in the party, a legal contract arguably comes into existence if the said party forms the ruling government," the PIL said.

"Direct and declare that the Election Manifesto is a vision document, a published declaration of the intentions, motives and views of the political party and used to achieve the particular goals, if political party gets elected. Hence, it is statutory and legally enforceable," the plea said.

Nuclear Talks With Iran At The Moment Of Truth: Germany's Scholz



German Press Agency

Iran should not squander the negotiations to salvage the 2015 nuclear agreement, warned German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday, calling on Tehran to make concessions.

"The Iranian leadership now has a choice: Now is the moment of truth," Scholz said at the Munich Security Conference.

"We have come a long way in the negotiations in Vienna in the last 10 months. All the elements for a conclusion of the negotiations are on the table," Scholz said.

However, he said, if Iran continues to enrich fuel and at the same time suspends monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), then that is unacceptable.

"An Iranian nuclear weaponization is unacceptable for us. Also because Israel's security is not negotiable."

Therefore, he said, it had been

repeatedly pointed out that it would now soon have to be decided whether a return to the 2015 nuclear agreement was still appropriate.

"We now have the chance to reach an agreement that will lift the sanctions," Scholz said, but also warned: "If we don't manage to do this very quickly, the negotiations risk failing."

Germany, France and Britain, together with Russia and China, have been mediating between Iran and the United States for months. The aim is to lift U.S. economic sanctions and, in return, to restrict Iran's nuclear program again. The next few weeks are considered crucial for whether the 2015 agreement can be revived.

During former U.S. President Donald Trump's reign, the U.S. had unilaterally withdrawn from the agreement. As a result, Tehran violated the conditions of the agreement. Among other things, the Islamic Republic enriched uranium to a level that is no longer far from a weapons capability.



Joe Biden Now 'Convinced' Russia Will Launch Invasion Of Ukraine

Agencies

KYIV, UKRAINE: U.S. President Joe Biden says he is now "convinced" Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided to invade Ukraine and assault the capital, an ominous assessment that emerged as the country's war-torn east saw more attacks that the West said could be designed to establish a pretext for an attack.

After weeks of saying the U.S. was not sure if Putin had made the final decision, Biden said Friday that his judgment had changed, citing American intelligence.

"As of this moment, I'm convinced he's made the decision," Biden said. "We have reason to believe that." He reiterated that the assault could occur in the "coming days."

The president's comments at the White House followed a day of rising violence that included a humanitarian convoy hit by shelling and a car bombing in the eastern city of Donetsk. Pro-Russian rebels began evacuating civilians from the conflict zone with an an-

WE HAVE clear and precise goals conforming to national interests."

nouncement that appeared to be part of Moscow's efforts to paint Ukraine as the aggressor instead. Meanwhile, the Kremlin announced massive nuclear drills to flex its military muscle, and Putin pledged to protect Russia's national interests against what it sees as encroaching Western threats.

Biden reiterated his threat of crushing economic and diplomatic sanctions against Russia if it does invade, and pressed Putin to reconsider. He said the U.S. and its Western allies were more united than ever to ensure Russia pays a steep price for any invasion.

As further indication that the Russians are preparing for a major military push, a U.S. defense official said an estimated 40% to 50% of the ground forces deployed in the vicinity of the Ukrainian border have moved into attack posi-

tions closer to the border. That shift has been under way for about a week, other officials have said, and does not necessarily mean Putin has decided to begin an invasion. The defense official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal U.S. military assessments.

The official also said the number of Russian ground units known as battalion tactical groups in the border area had grown to as many as 125, up from 83 two weeks ago. Each group has 750 to 1,000 soldiers.

Lines of communication remain open: The U.S. and Russian defense chiefs spoke Friday. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov agreed to meet next week.

Immediate worries focused on eastern Ukraine, where Ukrainian forces have been fighting pro-Russian rebels since 2014 in a conflict that has killed some 14,000 people. With an estimated 150,000 Russian troops now posted around Ukraine's borders, the long-simmering separatist conflict could provide the spark for a broader attack.

Russian-Backed Ukraine Separatists Call Full Mobilisation, Tensions High

Agence France-Presse

MOSCOW: The leaders of Ukraine's two breakaway regions announced a general mobilisation Saturday, spurring fears of a further escalation in fighting in the ex-Soviet country.

The announcements came after observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported a significant rise in attacks on the frontline in parts of eastern Ukraine controlled by pro-Russian rebels.

The two sides accused each other Saturday morning of fresh attacks.

"I urge my fellow citizens who are in the reserves to come to military conscription offices. Today I signed a decree on general mobilisation," Denis Pushilin, the leader of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, said in a video statement. The leader of the Lugansk sepa-



ratist region, Leonid Pasechnik, meanwhile published a decree saying the measure in his region was signed to prepare for "repelling aggression".

Western leaders have for weeks raised the alarm over a build up of Moscow's army around Ukraine with Washington warning that an imminent attack could take place.

Pushilin claimed his region's forces had prevented attacks he said were planned by Ukraine security services, and that the Ukrainian army had continued attacks.

"Together, we will achieve for all of us the victory we desire and need. We will protect Donbas and all Russian people," Pushilin added, using the term for eastern Ukraine.

Kyiv has repeatedly denied any plans to regain control of separatist-held areas using force or of the Crimean peninsula, which was annexed by Moscow in 2014.

More than 14,000 people have been killed in fighting between Ukraine's army and Moscow-supported separatists since fighting broke out in 2014.

'Committed Crime, Face It'

SC Declines Urgent Listing Of Plea By Sulli Deals App Accused

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday declined to entertain a plea seeking urgent listing of petitions seeking clubbing of various FIRs across the country in connection with offences related to the app 'Sulli Deal of the day' in which scores of Muslim women were put on "sale".

Advocate Sahil Bhaliak mentioned the plea before a bench, headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, submitting that multiple FIRs have been filed against his client and sought urgent listing of the plea. "It is covered by T.T. Anthony's judgment," he said.

At this, the Chief Justice said: "If you have committed a crime. You'll have to face it. Covered or uncovered will be decided at the date of hearing."

The plea by accused Aumkareshwar Thakur, filed on January 24, prayed for clubbing of various FIRs filed throughout the country with respect to offences relating to the app. The petitioner is accused in 3 FIRs registered in New Delhi, Noida, and Mumbai.

The app had created a major uproar last year for targeting Muslim women and uploading their images without their consent. The 'Bulli Bai' case appears to be a clone of the 'Sulli Deals' app.

The plea said: "The relief sought in the present writ petition is in terms of the judgment passed by this court in T.T. Antony vs. State of Kerala for quashing of all the same or similar FIRs except the first one and that a single investigation may be proceeded with. In the alternative, the petitioner prays for clubbing of all the

THE PETITIONER was interrogated by the IO in connection with FIR registered at PS Sector 23 Noida, UP while he was in the custody of the Delhi police in connection with FIR No. 1. The Noida police have failed to provide a copy of the FIR.

subsequent FIRs with the first FIR, registered at PS Special Cell, Delhi."

The plea submitted that the successive registration of FIRs in Delhi, UP and Maharashtra is beyond the purview of Section 154 and 156 of CrPc and is a case which exhibits abuse of statutory power of investigation by different investigating agencies.

The first FIR was registered on July 7, 2021, by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police under Section 354-A (3) of the IPC inter alia alleging that Github, which is a hosting platform, has created portal namely 'Sulli Deal of the day' on their platform and that they have uploaded hundreds of pictures of women on their platform without their consent.

"The petitioner was interrogated by the IO in connection with FIR registered at PS Sector 23 Noida, UP while he was in the custody of the Delhi police in connection with FIR No. 1. The Noida police have failed to provide a copy of the FIR. After the subsequent grant of judicial custody, the petitioner was taken into custody by Mumbai police and is currently in their custody," added the plea.

Akhilesh Yadav Equates UP Farmers' Killing To Jallianwala Bagh Massacre



LAKHIMPUR, UP: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday equated the mowing down of farmers in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and said on coming to power, his government will act against people shielding perpetrators of the crime.

Eight people, including four farmers, were killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence last October.

The farmers were mowed down allegedly by cars carrying BJP workers. Police had arrested Union minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish in the case. Ashish Mishra got bail recently. Addressing election rallies in Pilibhit and Lakhimpur Kheri, Mr Yadav said the violence reminded him of the Jallianwala Bagh incident during the British rule.

"Those who got bail in the case will lose their deposits in the court of people during voting," he said, adding that his party's government will ensure action against those who shielded perpetrators of the crime.

Speaking on pending sugarcane dues in the Terai belt, Mr Yadav promised that on coming to power, his party's government will set up a corpus fund to ensure payment to farmers

within 15 days of selling the crop.

He also accused the ruling BJP of suppressing farmers during the stir against the Centre's farm laws.

"The BJP government acted against the farmers' agitation in all its capacity," Mr Yadav alleged referring to the installing of spikes and barricades near the Delhi border where farmers protested against the laws. Mr Yadav said the BJP repealed the farm laws only for votes and it could bring back any law any time.

He also slammed the BJP government for rising inflation and paucity of fertilisers.

Farmers, youth, Dalits and the poor have been looted by this government, diesel and petrol have become expensive, cooking gas has become expensive, education system has deteriorated, business and work has been snatched, Mr Yadav said.

In his address in Pilibhit, he observed a two-minute silence in the memory of the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, Ahmed Hasan.

Mr Hasan had died on Saturday. Mr Yadav said Mr Hasan supported his father and party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav throughout his life.

SHORT TAKES

US Firm Makes Real Rifles For Children



and operates just like Mom and Dad's gun."

The JR-15 is only 31 inches (80 centimeters) long, weighs less than 2.5 pounds (one kilogram) and comes with magazines of five or 10 rounds of 22 caliber bullets. It was released in mid-January with a price tag of \$389.

The adult model, the AR-15, is the civilian version of a military-style weapon and has been used in multiple mass killings in the United States, including in schools. Mass shootings are a recurrent scourge of the United States, where the right to own weapons is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Attempts to regulate their sale is often blocked in Congress, where the powerful gun lobby -- in particular the National Rifle Association -- wields great influence.

On December 14, 2012, a young man used an AR-15 to kill 26 people, including 20 children, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

An AR-15 was also used in a Las Vegas attack in 2017 that left 58 people dead, making it the deadliest shooting in recent US history, and in the Parkland High School shooting in Florida that killed 17 in 2018. -AFP

Kumar Vishwas Gets High Security After Kejriwal Row



NEW DELHI: The Centre on Saturday decided to give 'Y' category security to former leader of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Kumar Vishwas, official sources said. The central government had reviewed the security of Mr Vishwas and the threat perception based on intelligence inputs

in the wake of his allegations against AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

After the review, it was decided to give Mr Vishwas 'Y' category security through the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the sources said.

Under the 'Y' category security, Mr Vishwas will be protected by four personal security officers round the clock. Mr Vishwas had accused Mr Kejriwal of supporting separatists during the high-voltage campaign for the assembly elections in Punjab, but the AAP chief has dismissed the allegations. Polling in the Punjab assembly elections will be held on Sunday. -PTI

Skype Users Can Now Call 911 From Desktop



This move from Skype to enable 911 calls comes with a few limitations, but could be crucial for users who still have an adequate Internet connection when they lose access to a cellphone or landline in an emergency.

In a 'Notice and Disclosures' warning that appears before opting in to location-sharing, Skype cautions that the service doesn't operate the same as a traditional phone call. Users are encouraged to not make an emergency call through Skype when outside of their home region since the call could potentially be rerouted elsewhere. It also made clear that a Skype outage, internet problems, or power outage in the area could cut off calls in situations where a traditional telephone would still work. In addition to making 911 calls with Skype 8.80, users can now leave a five-minute voice message instead of capping off at two minutes.

As per The Verge, users will also notice the choice of light or dark mode while they're on a call, can send custom reactions, and have the ability to zoom in or out when they share their screen. -ANI

2 Held For Kupwara Man's Murder In Punjab: Police

SRINAGAR: Punjab Police has arrested two persons including a lady for murdering a businessman from north Kashmir's Kupwara district, who was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Friday morning in Firozpur area of Punjab.

As per a statement issued to a local news agency KNO by District Ferozepur Police, it has arrested the accused while exposing the blind murder of Kashmiri youth within 24 hours.

The statement said that Mohammad Amin Beg, son of Mohammad Rustam of village Sarajpura, police station Vesgas Handwara, district Kupwara (Jammu and Kashmir) had informed the police that he and other resident of his village have been coming to Ferozepur city for about 20 years to sell warm clothes.

"This year too he is living on rent in Khanuwali Basti along with his friends and working to sell warm clothes by cycling in two different villages. He was accompanied by Mushtaq Ahmed Mir, son of Habibullah Mir of Siraj Pura Tehsil, Handwara district," the statement added.

It said that he and his companions come back every evening till around 5/6 pm, but on Feb 17, 2022, Mushtaq Ahmed Mir did not return and his mobile number 19149745999 was also blocked.

"When they searched for Mushtaq Ahmed Mir, they found a dead body lying in a sack on the side of the road from Ferozepur to Malawal. The body was of Mushtaq Ahmed Mir, with blood oozing from his mouth."

A case under number 36 dated 18-02-2022 against 302 Bhad Police Station Sadar Ferozepur was registered by the Chief Officer Sadar Police Station Ferozepur against unknown persons on the basis of the above information.

A team headed by Jagvinder Kumar, Deputy Captain of Police (Inv.) Ferozepur and Inspector Jagdish Kumar in charge of CIA Staff, Ferozepur was formed, it said, adding that the team formed was thoroughly investigated by different teams to trace the unidentified culprits and technical, scientific methods were used.

Two accused involved identified as Sonu son of Janta Singh of village Arif K Hall resident of village Sodhe Wala Police Station Sadar Ferozepur and Beant Kaur, wife of Shaan Singh resident of Aav Ke Hall resident of village Baure Wala Police Station Sadar Ferozepur were arrested today, police said.

It added that a motorcycle under number PB-66-A4699 Bajaj Paltina, Photo copy of late Mushtaq Ahmed's bicycle purse along with cash, Bhagiat and Aadhar card 045 were recovered—(KNO)

NC Alleges Security Cover Of Many Of Its Leaders Scaled Down

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The National Conference (NC) on Saturday alleged that the security cover of several of its leaders in Jammu and Kashmir has been downgraded and said the move reeks of vindictive and vendetta politics.

NC spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said the security of several party leaders including NC general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar has been scaled down without any legal or legitimate reasons being stated and demanded its restoration.

"The ruling party has descended to the ultimate personal vendetta mechanism, compromising the lives of the former ministers of J-K, legislators and prominent party leaders, he alleged.

The NC spokesperson said only a popular government can restore some lost sense of confidence and normalcy in the beleaguered region.

"The resumption of a genuine political process in the region is going to be long haul. This unjust move will deter the ongoing efforts of NC leaders from strengthening the political process on ground, he said.

The party said the continuation of "political void" in the region won't benefit the country.

"On the contrary, it will compromise the supreme interests of the nation. The security cover should be restored irrespective of political affiliations, he added.

Earlier, the security cover of four former Jammu and Kashmir chief ministers - Farooq Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti - had been scaled down.

The Special Security Group (SSG) cover for them was withdrawn and their protection entrusted to the security wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, which will be backed by central armed paramilitary forces.

Women Stabbed To Death At Home In Kathua

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: 27-year-old woman was stabbed to death inside her home allegedly over a family feud in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, police said.

Shilpa Shama was alone at her Mahanpur residence when an unidentified person broke in and

repeatedly attacked her with a sharp-edged weapon, they said. The assailant was later identified as her relative Om Parkesh (34) and arrested, a police official said, adding that a family dispute is said to be the cause behind the murder.

A case was registered and further investigation is on, the official said.

HAJJ 2022

Final Quota Announcement For J&K Expected By Mar 1

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The final quota of Hajj 2022 for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is expected by March 1 and that it depends on the quota whether all pilgrims registered till February 15 would perform Haj or the Haj committee would go for draws.

This was stated by the Executive Officer Hajj Committee of J&K Dr Abdul Salaam Mir

"The last date of submitting the forms for Hajj 2022 was February and there was no further extension. So far, 11500 applications from Jammu, Kashmir and Leh. A few hundred applications are in the pipeline that include those who have incomplete forms and invalid

passports etc," he said. Mir said that at all India level, 90,000 applications have been received so far.

Asked whether all 11500 registered Hajj pilgrims would perform Haj this year, he said it was up to the quota to be allotted to J&K and Leh. "This all depends on how much quota Saudi government would allot to India. If given quota is good, then I believe all the registered Hajj pilgrims will be allowed to proceed for the pilgrimage. But if it is less, then we will have to go for draws," Mir said.

He said that the final announcement by the Saudi government about Hajj 2022 quota is expected by March 1. "Things will be clear by March 1," he said.

He, however, said that it would be after two years that Haj will be allowed by the Saudi government this year. "We lost two years to pandemic—2020 and 2021. Now that Umrah is going on and pilgrims are allowed to perform Umrah and visit both holy cities of Mecca and Madina, we expect good quota," Mir said.

The Hajj officer said that this time around, every pilgrim has to have Covid vaccination certificate. "This is mandatory as per the fresh guidelines," he said. Pertinently, Saudi government has announced that this year annual pilgrimage of Hajj will be allowed amid strict adherence to Covid Appropriate Behaviour (CAB)—(KNO)

CS Pitches For Strengthening Democracy At Grassroots Level

Directs RDD To Complete 2 Lakh MGNREGA Works During Current Fiscal

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta on Saturday made a strong pitch for strengthening democracy at the grassroots level as he urged for the proactive role of gram panchayats in developmental activities and doubling down on the developmental initiatives, taking advantage of the immense resources under various schemes of the central government.

While laying thrust on progress of rural areas, with particular focus on farmers, womenfolk and unemployed youth, Dr Mehta said J&K should move towards becoming best performing UT amongst all the states/UTs in the country as it improves governance through enhanced transparency and efficient service delivery.

The Chief Secretary was speaking in a meeting held to approve the annual action plans of various schemes of the rural development department for the year 2022-23.

The meeting was attended by various senior secretaries including administrative secretary RDD and joint secretary land resources in the rural development ministry in the central government.

Dr Mehta laid emphasis on convergent actions amongst various departments for maximizing the impact of MGNREGA and asked the department to work in convergence with the departments like jalshakti, forest, school education, industries & commerce, agriculture/horticulture etc. so that the twin aims of resource optimization and accelerated development are achieved.

The Chief Secretary said there is an abiding need for the department to look to do high value and high impact works with tangible outcomes under



MGNREGA

Earlier, administrative secretary, RDD while making a presentation on the annual action plans for the next fiscal year informed that 54000 houses are proposed to be constructed under PMAY(G) in the year 2022-23. The financial outlay for this initiative is proposed to be Rs 1303.10 cr.

It was further informed that the department proposes to generate an aggregate of 426 lakhs person days at an outlay of Rs. 1610.56 cr under MGNREGA in the next fiscal year.

RDD Secretary said that under NRLM, out of 21194 SHGs proposed to be set up, 18000 SHGs will be linked with banks during the next financial year. The department also proposes to set up 1644 VOs.

The department has set a financial target of Rs. 111.88 cr for this purpose.

The department proposes to provide revolving fund and community investment fund facility to 2000 SHGs in 2022-23 at an outlay of Rs. 116.67 cr.

Under Rurban, the department proposes to complete 207 works while further saying that it expects to train 50000 youth for employment in the private sector under HIMAYAT in the next financial year.

The Committee approved the annual action plans of the department for submission to the empowered committee scheduled to meet on 25th of this month in the rural development ministry for consider-

ing these plans.

Saying that the generation of economic activity should be the aim of the various initiatives of the department, Dr Mehta said the department needs to ensure that the target of setting up 15000 SHGs in the current year is met.

He also emphasized on conducting evaluation of the functionality of these groups to ensure that their continued existence on sustained basis is guaranteed.

The Chief Secretary asked the department to ensure that at least 2 lakh MGNREGA works are completed by the end of this fiscal year while further adding that spill over of these works in the succeeding years should be completely avoided.

Dr Mehta asked the department to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries under PMAY(G) are given the pending instalments for construction of houses by March 15 of the current financial year.

Laying emphasis on cleanliness, he said that the implementation of an running campaign 'Mera Gaon Swachh Gaon' has to be given further push by implementing village action plans in real earnest.

The Chief Secretary asked the department to complete the pending 82 projects under IWMP by the end of the current fiscal year while directing the department to ensure that assistance available under IWMP1.0 from the Ministry is fully availed to address the issues of water stress in J&K.

Teacher Held For Poaching Bird Of Rare Species In Rajouri

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A government school teacher was arrested on charges of poaching and carcass of a female Himalayan Monal, a rainbow-coloured bird locally named as Haam, was seized in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri on Saturday, officials of the wildlife department said.

Mukhtar Ahmad was arrested near Panar bridge on Mughal Road, that falls under the jurisdiction of Tatakutti Wildlife Sanctuary, while his three associates managed to escape, the officials said.

A team headed by Surankote control room in charge Mohammad Yaqoob intercepted Ahmad's car based on specific inputs. Efforts are on to nab the three men who escaped, the officials said.

The carcass of the bird which is native to the Himalayas, about 2.5 kg meat, a 12-bore gun barrel, three live cartridges and an empty cartridge of a 12-bore gun were seized, they said. The officials said they have secured Ahmad's custody till February 24 for further investigation.

DELIMITATION EXERCISE

Apni Party Seeks PM, HM's Intervention Over Panel's Draft Report

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party president Syed Altaf Bukhari on Saturday expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah would pay attention to the voices of concern over the delimitation commission draft proposal.

He also sought the resignation of the five parliamentarians from Jammu and Kashmir three National Conference and two BJP members -- for their alleged failure to safeguard the interests of the people despite being the associate members of the commission.

The Delimitation Commission, in its draft report, has proposed an overhaul of assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, triggering massive protests in the Union territory. The draft report was circulated on February 4 to the associate members who had submitted their objections on February 14.

We are hopeful that after the elections in five states, the prime minister and the home minister, on first priority, will pay their attention to the voices of concern over the draft proposal of the delimitation commission so that a catastrophe, injustice and disenfranchisement of vast majority of voters is stopped and a message conveyed to the people that their voices matter, Bukhari, a former minister, told reporters here.

Dismissing the draft proposal as disempowerment of the public, Bukhari said the report needs to be withdrawn in the interest of the people and the country.

In the constitution of India, we have equal rights the interest of the people remains supreme and no party is supreme over the security of the country, he said.

Criticising the five MPs from J&K, the Apni Party leader said, They were supposed to represent the people instead of their parties, but they failed to represent the interests of the people of J&K.

He accused the delimitation

commission of ignoring the national security aspect by disempowering the people, especially in the border areas. By this draft proposal, Bukhari alleged that an attempt was made to ensure regional and communal divide, but said the party is thankful to the public that they are not buying it.

We have not rejected the report because one region was given additional six seats and another one only one, but the way the exercise should have taken place was not done, he said.

In an apparent reference to the reports about the merger of some parts of Rajouri and Poonch districts with the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency, he said it looks that they have a plan to implement Owen Dixon of 1951 to make America happy or give practical shape to some generals behind operation Tupac (of Pakistan).

Dixon, the UN Representative who came to the subcontinent pursuant to the Security Council's 1950 resolution on the Kashmir dispute, had assigned Ladakh to India, the Northern Areas and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) to Pakistan, split Jammu between the two, and envisaged a plebiscite in the Kashmir Valley.

The plan popularly known as Dixon plan was rejected by India and even by the then prime minister (after 1953, the post was called chief minister) of Jammu and Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah.

Bukhari said he had no hesitation in saying that the report was made keeping in mind the interests of the BJP, ignoring the security of the country as many border constituencies like Suchetgarh either vanished or merged in such a way which triggered resentment among the border population.

I would have no objection if the reports had safeguarded the interests of the country, he said.

Asked if he believed that the report was made at the behest of the RSS as alleged by some parties, he said there are invisible forces operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

Workshop Held On Mechanised Snow Clearance

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu & Kashmir State Centre in collaboration with Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir conducted one day workshop on Mechanised Snow Clearance (Evolution, Process & Scope) on Saturday.

Shailendra Kumar (IAS), Principal Secretary to the Govt., Public Works Department inaugurated the workshop as the Chief Guest in virtual mode.

Athar Aamir Khan, IAS, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Abid Hussain, KAS, Additional Commissioner were the Guests of Honour.

Besides them a huge number of Engineers & other dignitaries also participated which included Chief Engineers, Corporate Members of IEI, Students & Research Scholars.

Addressing the workshop through virtual mode, Shailendra Kumar appreciated the efforts of the organizers to hold workshop of such importance and appreciated Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir for executing a huge hectic task of snow clearance.

He also stressed that Mechanical Engineering needs to be

properly utilized in all the sectors including hospital services for better public deliverance.

Dr. Raof Ahmad Khan (FIE), Chairman, IEI J&K State Centre, Srinagar welcomed all the guests, participants & speakers and assured that our prestigious Institution is committed to hold workshops, seminars and colloquiums which are beneficial to public in general and engineers in particular.

The Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation appraised about the snow clearance operations being conducted by his Department and stressed on effective use of all available resources for better public deliverance.

The program was coordinated by Er. Ferdous Ahad Bhat, Honorary Secretary IEI. Among others, Chief Engineer, PW (R&B) & Chief Engineer, PMGSY Kashmir also spoke on the occasion.

Er. Rashid Ahmad Dar, Chief Engineer, MED Kashmir, Er. Mir Tanveer, Chief Engineer, PMGSY, Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat (Executive Engineer Retd.), Er. Nadeem Akbar Najar, Mr. Mohammad Asif Khanday & Mr. Amaan Muhammad Qadri (IUST) were key resource persons on the occasion.

The workshop was held in Auditorium of IEI J&K State Centre, Church Lane, Sonwar, here.

Gurez-Bandipora Road Likely To Open In 15 Days

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The 85 kilometers Bandipora-Gurez road in north Kashmir's Bandipora district is expected to be open within the next 15 days, the administration said on Saturday.

The administration is ensuring that the connectivity is restored that will subsequently benefit the border residents besides movement of security forces.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Dr Owais Ahmad said that the Bandipora-Gurez road is set to open within 15 days as the snow clearance work on the road is going on in full swing.

"If the weather remains favourable, the only road connecting the Gurez region with the

rest of Jammu and Kashmir is likely to open within the next 15 days," he said.

He said that the administration is making all efforts to clear the snow to make the road through for vehicular traffic.

It is noteworthy that the snow clearance work by the 56RCC unit of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on the road has been going on for the last few months.

The authorities provide helicopter services to ferry patients and other stranded people, including students from Gurez during the winter season.

Notably, the Gurez area remains cut off from the rest of the Kashmir valley due to the accumulation of snow along the high peaks through which the road passes

SKUAST-K Holds Seminar On Implementation Of NEP-20 In Agricultural Institutions

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir organised a seminar on 'Implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by Agricultural Institutions' for deans, directors, HODs, professors and other officers of the university.

Vice Chancellor, GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology Pantnagar, Prof Tej Pratap, and Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, conducted the workshop to acquaint the SKUAST-K academics and office bearers with the various objectives and implementation process of NEP-20 by the agricultural institutions.

Prof Pratap, who is also chairman of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) committee set up for the implementation of NEP-20 in agricultural universities and heads the 6th Deans Committee for modification of farm education curriculums as per the new education policy, gave a detailed overview on the changing role and preparedness of agricultural institutions into multidisciplinary pro-



fessional and skill universities as envisioned in the NEP-20.

He said the courses offered by agriculture varities will have a more flexible structure and will be encouraged to become interdisciplinary with flexibility in choosing vocational courses as the ICAR is working to bring agricultural education in line with the vision of the new policy unveiled by the Centre.

While preparing the students for creativity, critical thinking and conflict of perceptions, Prof Pratap said, NEP aims to enhance student employability by equipping them with different skills to overcome the challenge of unemployment.

Prof Tej Pratap, who also served as the vice-chancellor of SKUAST-K from 2010 to 2015, while complementing the university for its overall development over the years, said he is happy to see the university growing in each aspect of agricultural education, be it research, extension, academics, or innovations.

After listening to Vice Chancellor Prof Ganai about the SKUAST-K's institutional development plan and its vision related to the implementation of NEP-20, Prof Tej Pratap said, "There are very few institutions in the country, who are at the level of thinking for creating its own path, the

way SKUAST-K has envisioned its unique path in modern agri-education. This is beyond NEP. And this is the way forward."

Prof Ganai gave a detailed overview of the varsity's institutional development plan for making SKUAST-K a preferred Agri-Education destination and to develop a model education system to generate the next-gen graduates who will steer technology-driven agriculture in J&K and the country.

Drawing parallelism between NEP and the IDP of SKUAST-K, the vice chancellor said the university under the NAHEP had embarked on a mission to create an inspiring ecosystem for outcome-based learning to foster creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial aptitude.

Prof Ganai said SKUAST-K has already got approval for establishing the innovation and entrepreneurship centre and AI&ML Centre for fostering startups and tech-based solutions for agriculture.

Besides scientists and scholars, all the directors, deans HoDs, professors and administrative officers of the varsity attended the seminar.

Understanding Budget 2022

Following Is The Transcript Of An Interview That KO Did With Economist Ejaz Ayoub About The Union Budget On 7Th Of Feb, 2022

Tooba Towfiq

Finance Minister Ms Nirmala Sitharaman announced the Union Budget 2022 at the beginning of this week. Now, everybody doesn't seem too happy. The opposition has called out the apathy of the union budget towards the poor and the salary class. As is obvious, the party in power, especially PM Modi, have stood behind the union budget and have gone on to call it people friendly and progressive. Today on Kashmir Observer, we are going to analyse the budget for you to understand. Here from Kashmir, I am joined by Economist Ejaz Ayoub to see what really is going on behind the numbers.

The Interview

OVERVIEW

Has the union budget been promising or has it been underwhelming?

From a policy point of view, there's a lot of status-quoist nature of the budget. By that, I mean to say that sometimes you must have seen budgets are populists wherein a lot of benefits are given to the common people, be it middle class or sometimes to the farmers and sometimes for MSMEs too. We say Budget as a populist, wherein nothing substantial seems to be. Sometimes the budget is growth oriented wherein it's seen that maybe the government tries to speed up demand, the government tries to speed up particular sectors to maybe explore or something. Where, particular focus is laid on annual growth but here the budget presented, has quist hues in it, which means the government seems to be, which might not be correct or which can be correct, with whatever is happening with the economy in terms of recovery.

So, India's GST collections have been getting a bit better. Job creation has been a problem, but to some extent the government seems to be happy with that. So in these areas, the government hasn't changed much in the budget. No changes in direct or indirect taxes. One highlight though that is to be mentioned is that the capital expenditure has increased by 35%, which is very substantial about which we'll talk about in detail later on. But about the expectations that people had, given the state of the Indian economy, nothing important seems to have been addressed in the Union Budget. For example, India's prime problem of unemployment, which is at its 48 year high according to a 2019 report, and we're going even downhill since. Meanwhile the policy decisions taken, apart from the capital investment, nothing has been done. Instead, in some of the schemes that helped in creating employment in rural areas, e.g., MGNREGA, the allocations have been reduced which is very unfortunate, food subsidy has been reduced because "we are still in the pandemic". Likewise, the subsidy on fertilisers has been reduced, which supported a large portion of farm and farm based jobs. If we talk about healthcare, keeping in mind that we are still in the pandemic and this pandemic is not something which happens after 10 years, in even healthcare the government is lacking proper action. Governments across the globe have been beefing up their health care budget. They have been investing a lot in creating capacities wherein they can support the emergency events that are happening globally. Unfortunately, as compared to the last year's budget, this year's budget for healthcare is in fact reduced in real terms, if we add inflation.

My first disappointment, apart from the middle class income tax thing, was the government's totally negligent attitude towards unemployment. They gave a supposed vision of '25 years', a very long vision. There is a difference between intention announcement and delivery and the speech was filled with intention announcement but when it comes to delivery, the announcement doesn't match with it. For example, Tooba, you must remember, you must have heard about '100 smart cities'. We heard about a five trillion economy. We heard about doubling farmers' income, right? These were all announcements and intentions, very good and important intentions and announcements but when it comes to delivery there has been a very bad track record in the last five, seven, eight years. We have not seen such things happening. Similarly, if we now talk about the current 25 year vision as proposed by the Finance Minister, She talked about 'Amrit Yug' or something, for the next twenty five years for 100 years. In terms of rhetoric and in terms of the announcement and intention, it sounded very nice. But we have some immediate problems that need immediate attention rather focussing on a long term vision and talking exclusively about that. We should also have oversight very much towards problems like unemployment, problems like inflation, which are eating away households' income etc. So it was very disappointing.

Do you think that the same status quoist approach has been replicated in J&K's budget?

J&K's budget in itself has not been announced yet, because whatever has been announced in the government of India's budget, that is a revenue support, for example, our budget is, let's say, one lac crores. We have resources in terms of taxes and other income taxes, let's say 70,000 crores, these are just numbers that I'm using as an example. About the gap of 30,000 crores, we are kind of centre support status in those things. It's not just J&K they're supporting, they're supporting a lot of states, the north-eastern states, even U.P. government, a big state with a huge population and good revenue. Bihar has a lot too. So this is one of the components that every year the union government covers some revenue shortfalls of states. About 35 thousand crores now are accredited to Dal and Nigeean, and also 500 crores for the capital expenditure. This is largely for the revenue gap, very minute things. So this is nothing substantial, for example, talking about J&K's economy, since 2019 August it's in a lockdown phase which has resulted in a severe decline in demand. Tourism is recovering a bit though. We saw many challenges in agriculture, for example, recently the 8-9 thousand crores apple industry was shadowed by the import of Iranian apples. Our Trading sector, which is the largest after the agricultural sector, gives employment to a large portion of people. This sector depends on markets. When markets are open then and only transactions can happen, and that's how the trading sector creates value in the economy and creates jobs. Since we're in a lockdown since 2019, we're seeing reports that are not very positively indicative. E.g., the recent CMI report reveals the unemployment rate of J&K for the last 5-6 months has been very high, yesterday January's data came in and indicates 15% employment. So, this is because our economy is in a decline. The manufacturing is shut, they are not able to pay the EMIs for their loans. They are at the verge of collapse. So, the chamber of commerce, the trade federation etc. repeatedly were voicing their demands in open mainstream media, in the hopes that some kind of rehabilitation package would be given in their favour. But this didn't happen. Their demands were perfectly valid and they were asking for what was their right, and I'll explain how. See, the government is the custodian of its assets. When someone in the state does business, he pays taxes—in the form of GST, etc. Under normal conditions when all this money reaches the government, it supposedly uses it for the benefit of the people. However when the same businesses are unable to stay afloat financially due to reasons which are out of their hands like lockdown, pandemic etc, the government has a constitutional responsibility to bailout these businesses because they're the custodians. Unfortunately we don't see the responsibility being fulfilled by the government.

If we look at last year's revenue grant, that wasn't up to the mark



either. Something like 1000 crores or 800 crores, I don't remember the exact figure. This year, there is no mention of any kind of support, no rehabilitation package or anything, which has been very disappointing. Although people don't say it openly, trade bodies were expecting some support.

Now they are pinning hopes on the UT government. The UT government will come up with its own budget with the money that is already earmarked for us, like 35000 crores, including that money. We can only hope that maybe the UT government will come up with some kind of package, which will rehabilitate businesses and households. Tooba there is one important thing which is very essential to address for J&K, that its poverty is increasing drastically. No surveys are being conducted but the anecdotal evidence suggests it very strongly. The reasons for this are inflation and unemployment. When something like this happens, there is one important responsibility of the government, which is to provide social security to the people under a welfare system called 'Welfare Net'. For example you must have heard, funds which widows used to get, scholarships for students, discounts for the poor, subsidised ration etc. These things are very important for people of J&K. In the upcoming UT Budget, we hope not just businesses, but also households below the poverty line will get support from the government.

IN RETROSPECT

Have the middle class been largely ignored?

There are three, four categories of middle class. Salaried people don't constitute much of the middle class most likely, given the fact that only about 5% of the people pay income taxes. There's an income drop in the middle class. There was an Oxfam report recently which detailed that the incomes of the top 20 richest people has increased by around 40% in the last 5 years and the bottom 20% strata's income has decreased by 53% which means the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. The income of the middle-class, instead of growing, has gone down by 7-8%. So it's a two edged sword going down their chest: on one side unemployment is on the rise and on the other those who have jobs are witnessing a decrease in their incomes. Now what can the Government do about the middle-class? This is the meat of the electoral thing, middle-class are significant in terms of demand in the market, e.g., demand for two-wheelers, four-wheelers, consumer durables, apparel, food items. This is like the meat of your demand and these people are electorally important because they make the large strata of votes. If you remember the last time when tax breaks happened, it was in February of 2019 February, why? Because it was an election year. So if we follow the pattern, these populist decisions are always done right before elections. They contribute to the 'recency effect'. We are still one or two years away from elections and most likely the government is saving these decisions for that time.

One more thing that is important to mention is that the government gave some tax breaks in 2019 September to corporations, in corporate tax, which relates to the report we earlier mentioned of rich getting richer and the poor poorer. These tax breaks for corporations are not exactly justified, given the fact that they are very able to pay the taxes without these breaks. On the other hand there's no tax incentive for middle-class and the poor are steeping lower due to inflation and unemployment, both of which the government is neglecting again and again. All of this contributes to making the country's structure very unhealthy. More wealth is concentrated with fewer people and the majority of people are living in misery.

So, it was hoped that maybe in this budget the tax policy will be designed to avert all this. Maybe corporate taxes would increase and that money would be used in subsidies, employment schemes like MGNREGA. But none of this happened and the reason is that the government wants to reserve these populist decisions for election year, so I don't see anything happening anytime soon for these middle and lower strata of society.

What would you say about the job scenario right now? And has the budget really addressed the jobs crisis at all and have done anything to sort of create a scope for job creation?

See when this dispensation, which is ruling the country came into power, they said they will provide two crore jobs every year. So that was the slogan. And now the latest speech says 12 lacs. So it has come down drastically, meeting with reality. If we check the Labour Ministry website, they've estimated, which is still a very conservative estimate, that 1.3 crore people are looking for jobs and they don't have jobs and there are only 2 lac jobs available in the system, so this is the ratio of unemployment. So the government has largely underestimate the scale of the problem here. In this budget, they promised 12 lac jobs each year for the next 5 years, which is around 60 lac jobs, but every year the number of people like graduates, engineers, people who have attained the age of working, who hit the job market, are around 50 lac, and we know that already, 20-40 lac people are already unemployed.

In addition to that, there's one more important aspect, Tooba which we need to understand. When the pandemic initially hit, a lot of people from industries and service sector working in urban centres and semi-urban centres, went back to agriculture. So there was a very strange data point that came into existence that the labour force increased in agriculture which was like going back to the primitive economy. Normally, when the economy is advanced, it traverses from agriculture to industry, and from industry to services. And as the skills and education increase, working people go into more corporate sectors, but because of the pandemic the people went back to agriculture. Now that they went back, obviously they will be attaining education and they'll also look now for jobs. There will be people from the farm sector coming back to look for jobs.

So the number of people looking for jobs will be much higher and there's a complete mismatch between what is promised and what reality is.

So what happens now is that people go into poverty just because of the lack of jobs. The entire India can be seen through a lot of indicators. When these very people, when they go out to buy stuff. Demand is created. Now that they don't have jobs, they don't go out as much as they would to buy stuff, just because they are not earning, and so the whole economy is affected. Same thing replicates, at a very aggressive scale in J&K because a lot of people have lost jobs and they don't have money and you don't see markets buzzing. Even if it's some festivity, or marriage season, you don't see that much demand in the market. So the government's ambition that through Capex, (which they increased by 35% for constructing roads and bridges, and railways etc.) they'll create jobs, is a very short-sighted ambition. Another data example, when India was growing fast in economy, from 2000 to 2012, India's average job creation per year was seventy five lac non-farm jobs. That is when India was going cruising like anything and after that this has dropped drastically. I think, from 2014 till now, India is creating only 29 lac jobs per year. Because of that there's a large imbalance in job creation and supply and demand. That is what is happening and the budget has not addressed that, and it's the core problem of India.

Has healthcare gotten its due?

Indians created a new policy in 2017, 'National Health Policy', a very comprehensive document. National Health policy targeted a goal for the government for combating the poor healthcare infrastructure. As a result, it was to be implemented that 2.5% of your GDP should be spent on health care. So the government followed suit, except now it has been 5 years since that policy and still no visible effect is seen in the national healthcare infrastructure. Last year's budget, along with the current budget, it's still 1.3%. So the scope of investment in healthcare in India, I think it's the lowest in emerging market economies like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South-Africa), India is lowest in spending on healthcare with respect to the percentage of GDP. That's one.

One more important thing to mention is that normally healthcare is a State subject, not Union's, but 80% to 85% of your state's expenditure which is spent on health is the revenue expenditure, which means, salaries of paramedics, doctors, cost of medical supplies, electricity etc. They are not able to spare a lot of money to create new facilities, like creating new blood sugar hospitals, for example, you must have seen in J&K, there's still that Saura, there is still that SMHS and you still have old hospitals. You don't have hospitals coming every five years or something. So normally this is where the union government chips in. They come up with capital expenditure, they come up with big hospitals like AIMS etc. like they've announced recently, although can't tell when the work on that will be started. That is where health care has been very disappointing. And importantly, like I said in the beginning, we are still in the middle of the pandemic. It's not gone yet, there is no quick fix solution. We still don't have a working vaccine for it. The budget for healthcare has somewhat increased since last year but inflation is happening at a faster rate, as a result, it has remained near to the same as the last year, which is very disappointing for healthcare. And the government is acting as if the pandemic is over and "we need to look forward to something else", but the pandemic hasn't left yet. People's lives and jobs have been devastated. People are still not able to invest in the private sector. No restaurant owner is thinking of expansion, right? Or no factory owner is thinking of expansion, because the pandemic is still at people's throats but the government is acting as if it is over.

One important thing which I liked about the budget is that there has been an increase in investment in the education sector, yet the 12 lac vacancies of teachers are still pending across India, which is still not being covered. But the allocations have been increased as compared to last year's budget. Also, the government's approach towards other things like e-commerce, I.T., telecom, has been positive because of the increase in allocations.

DIVING DEEP

The recent unexpected taxation on crypto-currency has gotten everybody to question the status of crypto-currency, whether it's legal or not?

So whenever the government taxes something. It means that it has accepted it. For example, lotteries or gambling are allowed to operate in India, but they are taxed heavily. So the same is the case with crypto-currencies. For example, you have liquor or you have smoking and all. They are allowed to sell these products but the government looks towards them as sin products and they are taxed heavily as a revenue stream. They have been very careful regarding crypto-currencies, and they have also included a lot of other things, including NFTs and all. So this is an acknowledgement of legality of an asset which is something to be very happy about for the crypto investors but there's still some ambiguity. For example, they talked about digital form of assets, Gold ETF is also a digital form of asset. For example, the gold that we digitally buy. Does the 30% tax imply it too? So a lot of things are not clear but for crypto-investors. This is good news for them because the apprehension that crypto exchanges will be banned is over since it's a part of mainstream, very important policy document, fiscal policy of the government and it's looking towards it as a revenue stream, which means it is partially legalised and it's a part of now the fiscal entire thing. Yes of course there is a big disappointment that it's heavily taxed, But the thing is, it's better than not getting identified by the government or recognised by the government. Paying heavy taxes is better than that.

Capital expenditure, which has increased by about 35%. What do you think that does to the health of the economy?

That is one of the very bright spots in the entire budget. It is a substantial jump in the capital expenditure. First thing, despite having profits, most of the private investment by big corporations is held back because of ambiguities, because of uncertainty and all. But the moment the government starts pouring in money in the system and with this much of scale, private investment also gets an impetus. It's like they also jump in. So this is very important. And the core sector will benefit more, which we saw when the announcement happened, the steel and cement companies, their stocks increased. So there are core sectors and labour intensive sectors. A large portion of it 20,000 crore will be given to create 25,000 kilometres of highways.

There's a possibility of increased engagement of the farm sector given the fact that because of this investment a lot of money will go into private hands, contractors, corporates then trickle down to the labour class and other skilled and semi-skilled people. So it's a very important thing for India's growth. J&K also needs to kind of be aggressive in demanding its share. Why? Because J&K is a landlocked place. Our connection with the rest of the world is through the Jawahar tunnel. So in case we can, we should benefit from the government asking to spend a share in constructing roads and railways here. That will be something, because our market linkages will increase, our raw material access will increase, and because of an all-weather connectivity our export potential will express itself which is held back. So in my opinion, it's definitely a good thing for India but the J & K government should take a stand with the Indian government in seeking a good share of the investments which will benefit its economy.

What would you have to say about the collapsing MSME?

Yeah, MSME is the backbone of India's employment. 6-7 crore people work there. Big potential for a generation of employment. Normally, there's a traditional path of developed economies which I talked about earlier. First there is the agrarian economy, and the industries and then services. Services have a lot of potential, it absorbs growth, so this is how economies grow, in parallel. Likewise production in agriculture increases because of technology.

Industries create finished foods and help in export as well as help in domestic demand. The problem with both India and J&K as well is that this transition from agriculture to industries happened too quickly. Our people directly shifted from agriculture to services. So the middle section between these two sections didn't develop well, like J&K's factories, there only a workforce of 45 lac and in J&K only 1.5 lac people are absorbed, and among that 1.5 lac 80% are migrants. That is very small, but the capacity of industries to absorb human resources is quite large. Last year, we saw a scheme initiated during the pandemic, which was purely based on credit, bank loans were given without mortgage, moratorium was increased, and MSMEs were supported a little. That scheme worked ok but it was not enough, because mainland India's problems were different compared to J & K. The span of lockdown in J&K was quite large. That credit worked for us, because we were already indebted to banks and now the government came with more credit through banks, they had no ability to repay their loan. As a result, you must have seen, repeatedly, Industries Federation Commerce Industry of Kashmir repeatedly they came on newspapers and they said, "We are going to wind up, we are going to collapse", because their debt profile increased very much, and the market didn't open because of which the income flow would've started.

Now, what should have this budget done, maybe it should have come up with some kind of relief, maybe like many kinds of reliefs like GST support, or rental support, the electricity support. Little incentives which could've helped a factory owner save some money. But this didn't happen. MSME is also a large vote bank for the government and these populist policies, in my opinion, are reserved by the government for elections. Last year, they said that they'll divest the money from selling government companies. They had to divest only half of it, meaning only 1.78 lac crore, of which only 75,000 crores are divested till date, which means 1 lac crores still fall short on part of the government. So they don't have the resources.

Another interesting thing is Tooba. They increased the Capex, do you know where this money is coming from? It is coming from our pockets. How? Because the majority of our taxes on petrol and diesel, amounts to a large amount of money as compared to the amounts collected via direct taxes, i.e., corporate taxes, which they reduced back in 2019. So the taxes on fuel is what is directed to CAPEX. Like they reduced shares for MGNREGA, subsidies etc.

Overall, there have been mixed reviews about the union budget. Some have called it underwhelming, there have been others who called it surprising and some have called it ambitious as well. Now you started with saying that it did more or less status quoist and might move on to become populist by 2024. Now who do you think does the Union Budget target or favour the most?

The meat of the budget goes towards infrastructure, and as a result, the corporations directly deal with the government in terms of developing these highways. Steel companies, cement companies, they are going to benefit a lot. Like I said, you must have seen the way stocks of these companies started behaving the moment the budget came out so these companies are going to directly get benefitted. Of course, there will be spill-over benefits to the economy in terms of job creation and other things, the capacity increasing of the economy. But another thing which is also important is that the government did not fiddle with the corporate tax, which was expected kind of because maybe that money will be used for social welfare and other things. So the corporate sector will again be happy because their corporate taxes were not increased which was drastically reduced back in September 2019.

The third thing, no taxes were increased for the super-rich. So in my opinion, a small section of people which have big companies, influential companies which have a lot of wealth, which have huge income, they'll be happy with the budget. And about the people that come below this class who are directly related to farms etc.

There are two more things which I kind of missed, which are really good for common people. One is, there is this housing Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna, a housing scheme for low income groups. The government has put a substantial amount of money in that, 48000 crore. That is one good thing for the lower strata of the people and increased allocations for Jal Jeevan Mission, an initiative for providing lower class with Tap water. These two things are very important for the lower strata of society besides the corporate thing. But yes, unemployment has not been addressed. Not a word about inflation although it's a monetary policy, a domain of RBI but something as important as this should have been addressed. That was very, very surprising and similarly the lack of concern about healthcare has been very disappointing.

The interview was transcribed by Muhammad Shuayb

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

Watch the entire video on Kashmir Observer's social media handles and youtube channel

IN THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, THE ERA OF digital content creation is in early phase,” he reckons. “It’s yet to see the peak and its future prospect is immensely bright.”

Vloggers Of Valley

Syed Mohammad Burhan

IMAD came out to capture the carpeted landscape in its alluring form the moment it snowed in Kashmir this winter.

The Srinagar-based content-creator has been picturing the quaint valley in all shades and seasons for years now. His ability to take his ‘surging’ social media audience on the regular visual tours has made Imad one of the celebrated content creators of the contemporary Kashmir.

Hailing from Lal Bazar locality and holding an MBA degree, Imad Ur Rehman began capturing meadows and mountains as an avid vlogger during his home vacations.

But after wrapping up his work outside and returning to his homeland in 2018, he started making YouTube videos and eventually became a name in adventure vlogging. His YouTube channel features vlogs in which Imad is seen travelling across sprawling landscapes of the valley.

After building his digital following in a place where internet goes off suddenly due to situational twists, Imad is currently earning a decent living.

“But still,” he says, “it’s difficult to vlog in Kashmir as compared to other places.”

As a vlogger, Imad says, he has to face frequent checks and queries about his work-driven forest forays and summit scaling.

Using drone footage of the valley’s pristine locations has been an important feature of Imad’s vlogging. “I became popular because of my drone photography only,” says Imad.

“As an adventure-vlogger, I travel to far-off places and carry cameras, drones and other equipment. Government forces often question my heavy gadgetry in no-man’s land. But then, challenges are part of life.”

The “conservative” society, he says, has equally become a challenge for content creation.

“In other parts of the world, people take content creation as a profession but Kashmir is a challenging place where people look at us with suspicion,” Imad says.

“They think that we only show a happy side of Kashmir and we’re associated with some government agency. It doesn’t end there. I always have to post content which is suitable and dignified to Kashmiri audiences, otherwise people can mock you big time.”

Amid these social and security hassles, Idrees Mir, 26, has emerged as one the most popular Kashmiri content creators having more than four lakh followers on Facebook and around one lakh subscribers on YouTube.

Hailing from north Kashmir’s Baramulla district, Idrees is pursuing his PhD in Journalism from Jai-pur’s NIMS University. He wanted to be a photojournalist but eventually learned that a lot more can be done on social media platforms.



“AS A DIGITAL CONTENT CREATOR, SOCIAL MEDIA sites like Instagram and YouTube are my digital offices,” Ruman says. “My clients see my work on social media and strike a deal with me right away. My projects get finalised online and I meet my clients directly on the day of shoot.”

As a “lifestyle-vlogger”, Idrees started content creation in 2017 and it took him time to figure his content call.

“I initially started making poetry and fitness related videos but eventually I turned to travel videos,” he says. “I figured out that it suits both me and my audience.”

Idrees’s “family-oriented” content can be seen by people of all ages. His growth has been steady and it has taken him few years to build his audience. Some of his videos have hit millions of views on Facebook.

Given his massive social media acceptance, he has upgraded his vlogging setup and does not like to get restricted to only one platform.

USING DRONE

footage of the valley’s pristine locations has been an important feature of Imad’s vlogging. “I became popular because of my drone photography only,” says Imad.

“I’m not a YouTuber,” he says. “I’m a content creator. My content is more watched on Facebook than YouTube.”

He seeks a profession in Academics — but not at the cost of content creation.

“In the third world countries, the era of digital content creation is in early phase,” he reckons. “It’s yet to see the peak and its future prospect is immensely bright.”

Another vlogger from the valley is an engineer-turned-cinematographer, Ruman Hamdani.

His passion started with photography and his regular image-posting on social media platforms.

With time, his Instagram page helped the 30-year-old content creator to showcase his work and boosted his online prospects. He eventually got his gigs.

“As a digital content creator, social media sites like Instagram and YouTube are my digital offices,” Ruman says. “My clients see my work on social media and strike a deal with me right away. My projects get finalised online and I meet my clients directly on the day of shoot.”

After completing many photography and videography projects, he co-founded the Master Visual Studios where he shoots commercials, weddings, music videos for local artists.

But vlogging, Ruman says, remains his first love—as the same helped him to come of ‘digital age’ in life.

What Caught The Web Acing Age In English



Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR- A 36-second video of an elderly Kashmiri woman flaunting her newly acquired English skills has taken the internet by storm.

The video, which was originally uploaded on Twitter by one Syed Sleet Shah, has found its way to other platforms such as Whatsapp and Facebook as well.

The young man names certain fruit, vegetables and animals in Kashmiri and asks the woman, clad in traditional attire and easily looks to be in her 80s, to identify them in English.

Though she falters the first time while identifying cat’, she then makes up for it by

pronouncing the animal as kyaet’, and her overbearing Kashmiri pronunciation seems to have won over the people.

She goes on to identify onion, apple, garlic and dog in a unique accent, and the video has become a social media hit.

Although the location of the woman is not known, the accent of the man recording the video suggests that they belong to a rural district of the valley.

Many Twitter users responded with kind comments on the post.

The fluency of Kashmiris in English - even of people in their 80s is always impressive - ia (is) it because the languages have a mother root? one of the users wrote.

KODAK MOMENT



LIFE GOES ON. Picture Credits: Faisal Bashir

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Heather Muir

International Space Station How Nasa Plans To Destroy It And The Dangers Involved

“

Nasa's plans for the decommissioning operation will culminate in a fiery plunge into the middle of the Pacific Ocean a location called Point Nemo, also known as the spacecraft graveyard, the furthest point from all civilisation.

“

Design for demise is an important principle for the engineering of satellites and other orbiting space infrastructure. Objects that fall freely from orbit must disintegrate into tiny pieces to make sure they don't pose a danger to people on the ground.



Cambridge- Nasa has announced plans for the International Space Station (ISS) to be officially decommissioned in 2031. After dozens of launches since 1998 got the station up and into orbit, bringing it down will be a feat of its own the risks are serious if things go wrong.

Nasa's plans for the decommissioning operation will culminate in a fiery plunge into the middle of the Pacific Ocean a location called Point Nemo, also known as the spacecraft graveyard, the furthest point from all civilisation.

Finding Point Nemo will be the final stop in a complex and multi-staged mission to transition the operations of the ISS to new commercial space stations, and to bring the remaining structure safely down to Earth.

Originally commissioned for a 15-year lifespan, the ISS is outliving all expectations. It has already been in operation for 21 years, and Nasa has given the go-ahead for one more decade, thereby doubling its total planned time in orbit.

Purpose of the ISS

The ISS has enabled one giant leap for science and collaboration across mankind, involving five different space agencies (US, Russia, Europe, Canada and Japan). The modules and parts of the ISS have been built progressively by many different countries, only coming into contact for the first time in space.

The monumental conglomerate structure now stretches the length of a football field and is the largest human-made object in space. It is visible by the naked eye from Earth while it completes its 16 daily orbits, passing 400km above the Earth's surface.

Research in the so-called microgravity environment of the ISS has yielded breakthroughs in drug discovery, vaccine development and medical treatments in the last decade. The ISS also helps to monitor Earth's ecosystems and natural disasters in real time. It is used to test future spacecraft technologies and to study health effects of long term spaceflight for the possibility of future human exploration of the solar system.

Despite onboard research gaining momentum, Nasa has noticed signs of infrastructure and components slowing down. For every orbit around the Earth, the ISS gets scorched by so-

lar radiation on one side, and freezes on the other. These thermal extremes cause cyclic expansion and contraction which wears the material. Space radiation chars the transparent glass on the solar cells which are used to power the station, and repeated docking and undocking causes gradual structure degradation, which will ultimately lead to its demise.

The rise of flying space junk also poses unplanned and catastrophic risk of destruction. In 2016, a fly-away speck of paint chipped a window, and just last year, ISS crew went into evacuation standby when Russia obliterated a dead satellite with a missile, causing thousands of pieces of debris to fly by the station at 5km per second. Despite this, Nasa assesses there is high confidence the station will see it through to the end of 2030.

The decommissioning operation

While Nasa has committed to maintaining the station until 2030, its partner organisations are yet to officially sign on, meaning the final

decision to de-orbit will depend on politics as much as engineering.

If degradation or unplanned damage occurs before the official decommissioning, a free-falling ISS poses serious dangers. In fact, it would not be the first space station to fall out of the sky. In 1979, Nasa's Skylab station was not re-fuelled in time and came crashing down, out of control, leaving chunks of the station scattered across Australia. While no one was harmed, this led to reforms and design for demise guidelines.

Design for demise is an important principle for the engineering of satellites and other orbiting space infrastructure. Objects that fall freely from orbit must disintegrate into tiny pieces to make sure they don't pose a danger to people on the ground.

The ISS is too large to satisfy the design for demise principle, which is why we need special operations for de-orbit. Experts estimate that if it were to crash down uncontrolled in a metropolitan area, the worst case scenario could be

on the scale of a 9/11 event. However, this is highly improbable.

In the planned, controlled, de-orbit operation for the ISS, newly built modules will first detach from the main structure and remain in orbit to eventually recombine as parts of future space stations. The ISS will then be gently decelerated by onboard thrusters, causing its orbiting altitude to gradually lower over the course of a few months.

The remaining descent will be more rapid, but controlled by a series of spacecrafts sent to attach and steer the structure as it begins to plummet towards Earth. As it re-enters the atmosphere the majority of the structure will burn away, however the remaining mass should remain on a targeted trajectory to its deep-sea resting place.

A Russian space station was previously brought safely down in the same way, however the ISS is approximately four times larger, so an operation on this scale remains untested.

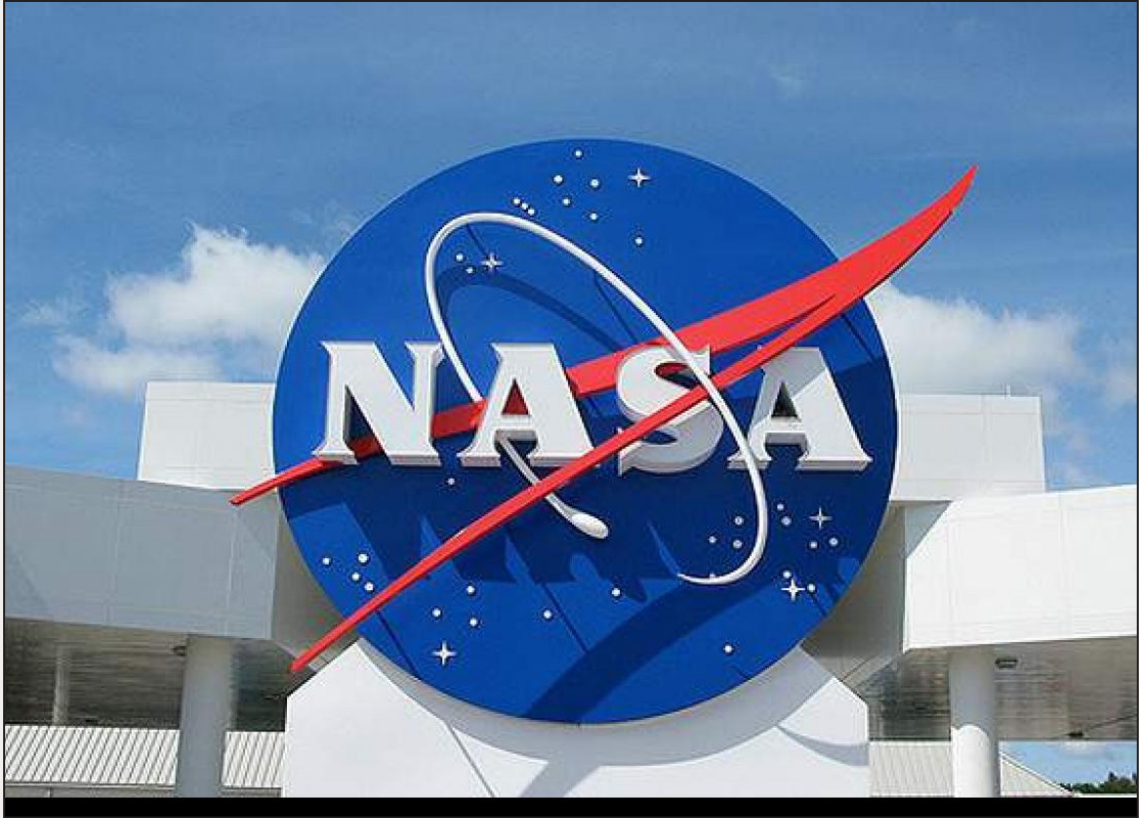
New era

Before complete de-orbit in 2031, the ISS will first undergo a transition phase to sustain the crucial scientific research currently being conducted, and to form the basis of new industries in space.

Jeff Bazos' Blue Origin recently announced plans to replace the ISS with the company's privately-operated space station. Other key players include Northrop Grumman and Axiom Space (partnered with SpaceX) who have a contract to start building modules off of the existing ISS as early as 2024.

There are also plans for a Russian space station which is likely to comprise of modules detached from the existing ISS. Meanwhile China launched the first module of their independent Tiangong Space Station last year, and plan to complete its expansion in the coming months.

At present, Nasa and its partner agencies oversee the use of their jointly owned infrastructure and are consulted on operations due to their governing expertise. However, times are changing and Nasa now purchases seats on board spacecraft owned by SpaceX. Ultimately, Nasa will become just another customer of commercial operators.



India-UAE Trade Pact To Boost Apparel Exports, Employment, Say Exporters



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Implementation of the comprehensive free trade agreement between India and the UAE would help boost the country's exports and creation of lakhs of jobs, according to exporters.

Welcoming the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Friday, Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) Chairman Narendra Goenka said that it will further strengthen India's dominant position in the UAE.

"With India supplying \$1,515 million of apparel to the UAE as against its total imports of \$3,517 million, Indian apparel exports contribute a decent share of 43 per cent. The trade pact would result in a drop of 5 per cent import duty for Indian readymade garments. This will further strengthen the dominant position of Indian apparels in the UAE," Goenka said.

He added that Indian apparel exports to the UAE also cater to the needs of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the UK.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President A Sakthivel said that the pact will be beneficial to Indian exports particularly for the labour-intensive sectors like agriculture and processed food including meat and marine products, gems and jewellery, apparel and textiles, leather and footwears.

"Having a large Indian diaspora, the UAE consumes a large quantity of Indian cereals, fruits and vegetables, tea, spices, sugar, etc. Indian companies will gain in services like travel and tourism, transportation, IT and ITES and construction services," he said.

Sharing similar views, Vikramjit Sahney, Chair of India-Arab Council, said that the pact

is set to reduce tariffs for 80 per cent of goods and gives zero duty access to 90 per cent of India's exports to UAE.

"Annual bilateral trade should increase from the current level of USD 60 billion to USD 100 billion and would augment Indian exports of gems and jewellery, textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods," Sahney said.

India giving tariff concessions to UAE on gold and UAE eliminating tariffs on Indian jewellery will augment exports. The UAE investment in India will increase manifold especially in health, infrastructure and renewable energy," he added.

Council for Leather Exports Chairman Sanjay Leekha said that the UAE is one of the key markets for the sector and it would also give access to certain EU countries and Africa.

"The pact would help in boosting exports and creating jobs," Leekha said.

Plastics Export Promotion Council of India (PLEXCONCIL) chairman Arvind Goenka said that currently India's annual imports of plastic raw materials are \$14 billion and imports from the UAE are \$800 million, so trade for plastics between India and the UAE is poised for a multi-fold growth due to this pact besides creation of about 2 lakh jobs in the sector.

"India's MSME industry will be the main beneficiary. Availability of cheaper raw materials as preferential import duty being offered by India will empower them to compete against cheap imports of finished plastic goods. Preferential access to the UAE market, as lower import duty is being offered for value-added plastics and further access to WANA and CIS countries, will increase plastics exports by at least 300 per cent by 2023-24," Goenka said.

India UAE Trade Pact To Boost Trade To USD 100bn In 5 Yrs, Create Lakhs Of Jobs: Goyal

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The comprehensive free trade agreement signed between India and the UAE would help the two-way commerce reach the USD 100 billion mark in over five years and create lakhs of jobs in both countries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

The agreement, dubbed as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is likely to come into force in May and will open doors to about 90 per cent of products of interest to India for export to the UAE "right from Day one", the minister told reporters after the signing of the pact.

The commerce and industry minister and the UAE Minister of Economy Abdullah bin Touq Al-Marri signed the pact during a virtual summit held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The two countries also unveiled a roadmap for the expansion of overall ties.

The agreement will provide significant benefits to Indian and UAE businesses, including enhanced market access and reduced tariffs. It is expected that the CEPA will lead to increase in bilateral trade from the current USD 60 billion to USD 100 billion in the next five years.

In September last year, India and the UAE formally launched negotiations for the trade agreement. The negotiations for the 881-page agreement were concluded in record 88 days in December. Goyal said this is a comprehensive and "balanced" trade agreement.

"It is a pathbreaking new deal that the pharma industry has got

for the first time and that will open the doors for our products in the UAE and as you are aware the UAE opens doors to many other countries in the Middle East and the whole African continent being a trading hub," Goyal said.

The CEPA would generate 10 lakh jobs in labour-oriented sectors like textiles, handloom, gems and jewellery, leather and footwear and will give a huge boost to exports to the UAE market.

On the pharma sector, Goyal said, the UAE has agreed that made in India medical products, approved by the EU, the UK, Canada or Australia, will get market access and regulatory approval within 90 days of submission of applications.

While the UAE has agreed to eliminate duties on Indian jewellery, India would give duty concessions on gold imports up to 200 tonnes.

About gains for the Indian services sector, he said the agreement has significant access on the services side in a plethora of areas.

"This is one agreement that has many firsts in terms of the speed with which it did, in terms of the range of goods and services that it covers and in terms of opportunities that it provides," he added.

"Estimates are that this pact would double bilateral trade in goods and expand our trade in services. Also provide over a million job opportunities for our young boys and girls here," the minister said.

Food security in the UAE will be taken care of through assured supply from India through MoU that has been executed in APEDA and DP World as the logistics supplies and Al Dara, which are their equivalent to our FSSAI.

Exhibition Showcasing Finest Of Kashmir Handicrafts Inaugurated At Gulmarg



Observer News Service

GULMARG: A 5-Day "craft mela" a unique handicraft exhibition showcasing the exquisite art and craft of Kashmir, was inaugurated at famous ski-resort of Gulmarg on Saturday.

The exhibition has been put together jointly by the o/o Development Commissioner Handlooms Government of India & Directorate of Handicrafts & Handlooms Kashmir.

The Director Handicrafts & Handlooms Kashmir Mahmood Ahmad Shah inaugurated the exhibition in presence of the officers of the Tourism Department, Gulmarg Development authority and J&K cable Car project.

Speaking on the occasion

the Director H&H Kashmir expressed that the Exhibition will give artisans a suitable marketing platform to sell their beautiful products directly to the buyers and further will give the tourists visiting Gulmarg an opportunity to get a glimpse of the rich art and craft of Kashmir.

The Director expressed that this exhibition will appeal to the connoisseur and the consumer alike as our skilled artisans have been giving creative expression to their rich folklore through this medium from centuries.

The special attraction of the ongoing exhibition that is attracting the visitors is the live demonstration of the various crafts including spinning and Kani.

The 5-day exhibition will showcase the finest crafts from Kashmir including Pashmina, Kani and other crafts.

Gulmarg Exhibition is the first physical exhibition of the year 2022 that has been organized by the Department of H&H Kashmir within the UT this year. The department is conscious of the fact that the inventory of the artisans has piled up due to COVID pandemic and platforms like this will be provided to the artisans both with and outside the UT so as to sell their products.

The Department is also participating in a big way in the forthcoming Suraj Kund Crafts Mela slated to be held at Haryana in the month of March 2022.

Dir Agri Reviews Preparedness For Valley Wide Vegetable Seedling Distribution Drive

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal Saturday took stock of the preparations for the valley wide distribution drive of vegetable seedlings among the farmers.

He visited different seedling production installations including Seed Multiplication Farm Gangbug, Seed Multiplication Farm Haran and Hi-tech poly house Kitchen Garden premises Lalmandi.

Director Agriculture impressed upon the concerned officers/ technical experts to ensure that all the preparations for this valley wide campaign are completed well in time.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director said that the valley wide seedling distribution drive will commence from 24th of February 2022 in a phased



manner. In addition to commercial vegetable cultivation, the vegetable enterprise is being adopted by the kitchen garden lovers, backyard farmers of the urban areas also, therefore this has raised the demand for vegetable

seedlings manifold, he added.

Director asked the concerned officers/technical experts to work in close coordination so that the valley wide seedling distribution drive could be made successful.

Agri Dept Organises One-Day Workshop On Market Linkage Of Farm Produce

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Department of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare department district Anantnag in collaboration with KVK also participated.

Chief Agriculture Officer, Anantnag while delivering the inaugural lecture briefed the committee about the potential of district Anantnag. The FPOs, organic vegetable producers and progressive farmers while interacting with the commit-

tee raised various issues and sought avenues for marketing of their products.

A committee headed by Ruchita Rane and Joint Director Agriculture Marketing responded to the queries of farmers and stressed on value addition, grading and packaging of the produce.

Committee later visited various fields of progressive farmers at Shangus and organic vegetable cluster Bangidar, Anantnag.

Retail Inflation For Farm, Rural Workers Rises To 5.49 Pc, 5.74 Pc In January

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Retail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers rose to 5.49 per cent and 5.74 per cent, respectively in January mainly due to higher prices of certain food items, official data showed on Friday.

Rate of inflation based on CPI-AL (consumer price index for agricultural workers) and CPI-RL (consumer price index for rural labourers) stood at 4.78 per cent and 5.03 per cent, respectively in December 2021.

In January 2021, rate of inflation based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL stood at 2.17 per cent and 2.35 per cent, a labour ministry statement said.

Food inflation for farm workers stood at 4.15 per cent and for rural labourers at 4.33 per cent in January 2022 compared to 2.99 per cent and 3.17 per cent, respectively in the previous month. In the year-ago



period, food inflation was 1.02 per cent and 1.22 per cent respectively. The all-India CPI-AL and CPI-RL numbers in January 2022 decreased by 2 points and 1 point to stand at 1,095 and 1,105 points, respectively as compared to that in December 2021.

Major contribution towards the fall in general index of agricultural labourers and rural labourers came from food group to the extent of 4.65 points and 4.17 points, respectively

mainly due to decrease in prices of pulses, mustard-oil, fish-fresh, sugar, gur, onion, vegetables & fruits, etc. The fall or rise in index varied from state to state.

In case of agricultural labourers, the index recorded a decrease of 1 to 9 points in 11 states and an increase of 1 to 8 points in 9 states. Tamil Nadu with 1,292 points topped the index table whereas Himachal Pradesh with 869 points stood at the bottom, it stated.

Sarmad Hafeez Stresses Need For Capacity Building Of Tourism Stakeholders

Tourism Deptt, KU joint programme for tourism stakeholders concludes



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The four day capacity building programme for tourism stakeholders concluded here on Saturday.

The programme was jointly organized by the Department of Tourism and University of Kashmir in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Tourism.

Secretary, Tourism & Culture, Sarmad Hafeez was the chief guest on the valedictory function of the programme who distributed certificates and rewards among the participant tourism stakeholders.

Academicians from the University and officers from Tourism Department besides stakeholders were present in the inaugural function.

Addressing the stakeholders, Sarmad Hafeez underscored the need for capacity building of tourism stakeholders, particularly in the post Covid scenario. He said in the changed environment of global pandemic, trade practices have undergone a change and the same should be factored in while conducting day to day businesses.

The Tourism Secretary reminded the stakeholders of age-old traditions of hospitality and fair practice and advised them

to stick to these if they want to maintain the edge among the competing tourism markets in the country. He hoped with today's capacity building programme, the stakeholders would be benefitted in terms of latest trade practices followed elsewhere in the world, post Covid precautions and the traditional courtesies the place has been known world over.

Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G N Itoo in his concluding remarks hoped the programme would go a long way in instilling confidence among stakeholders who have suffered during the Covid period.

Dean Research, University of Kashmir, Prof. Irshad Nawchoo also addressed the valedictory function.

During the four day programme experts from relevant fields sensitized the participants about the latest practices and precautions in the trade in the wake of Covid pandemic and economic sluggishness of the past two years or so.

This is the first of a series of capacity building programmes being organized by the Tourism Department for skill enhancement of tourism stakeholders at various destinations across Kashmir.

Five Firms Submit Rs 1.53 Lakh Cr Proposals To Set Up Semiconductor, Display Plants

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The government has received proposals from five companies for setting up electronic chip and display manufacturing plants with investment of Rs 1.53 lakh crore, an official statement said on Saturday.

Vedanta Foxconn JV, IGSS Ventures, ISMC propose to set-up electronic chip manufacturing plants with USD 13.6 billion investment and have sought support of USD 5.6 billion from the Centre under the Rs 76,000 crore Semicon India Programme.

"The applications have been received for setting up 28 nanometer (nm) to 65 nm semiconductor fabs with capacity of approximately 120,000 wafers per month," the statement said. The government is providing financial support of up to 40 per cent for chips above 28 nm to 45 nm and up to 30 per cent for setting up manufacturing units for 45 nm to 65 nm wafers.

Vedanta and Elest have proposed to set up display manufacturing units -- used in mobile phones, laptops etc -- with projected investment of USD 6.7 billion. They have sought support of USD 2.7 billion from the Centre under the scheme for setting up of display fabs in India, the statement said.

"Indian semiconductor market stands at USD 15 Bn in 2020 and is estimated to reach USD 63 billion by 2026. The semiconductor manufacturing process is a complex, capital and technology



intensive process of fabricating semiconductor wafers.

"India Semiconductor Mission, which has been set up as a dedicated institution for Semicon India Programme, has received 5 applications for Semiconductor and Display Fabs with total investment to the tune of USD 20.5 Bn (INR 153,750 crore)," the statement said.

The government closed the first round of application window for the Semicon Programme on February 15 but will start another round based on interest from the industry.

The government expects investments of around Rs 1.7 lakh crore and 1.35 lakh jobs to be created in the next four years under the incentive scheme for semiconductors approved by the Cabinet.

Besides electronic chip and display plants, four companies -- SPEL Semiconductor, HCL, Syrma Technology and Valenka Electronics -- have registered for semiconductor packaging. Ruttonsha International Rectifier has registered for compound semiconductors.

Three companies -- Terminus Circuits, Trispace Technologies and Curie Microelectronics -- have submitted applications under the Design Linked Incentive Scheme.

'Provide Quality Pesticides To Farmers'

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC) Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Sinnani Saturday chaired a meeting of Agriculture and Horticulture departments for making available the quality pesticides to the farmers of the district.

The ADC directed for proper market checking, complete ban on sale of fake pesticides and insecticides in this regard and warned of stern action against those found guilty of selling fake pesticides and insecticides to the farmers of the district.

The concerned officers were directed to ensure availability of pesticides and insecticides to the farmers through proper sale outlets before the start of sea-

son. They were also instructed to mobilize the field functionaries to check the sale, if any, of fake and spurious pesticides.

The enforcement team was directed for proper market checking and inspection to ensure quality standards of pesticides and insecticides products are available in the markets and stern action be taken against those found guilty of selling fake pesticides and insecticides. He also directed for sealing of their shops and canceling their licenses.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Shopian, Shahbaz Ahmed Bodha, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Food Safety, Enforcement Wing and other concerned.

Police Suspect Same Persons Behind Planting Of IEDs In Ghazipur And Old Seemapuri In Delhi



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police investigating the recoveries of IEDs in Ghazipur and Old Seemapuri has found that the design and component of the explosives were same and that a stolen motorcycle was parked near both the spots.

Investigators believe that the same persons were behind planting the IEDs within a month. The sketches of two suspects who claimed to be students hailing from Uttar Pradesh have been prepared, a senior police officer said, adding that efforts are being made to identify and nab them at the earliest.

The explosives recovered at the two spots in Delhi were similar in make and design to those that were recovered from Punjab two months ago, police said.

"Though the explosives recovered from Punjab and Delhi's Old Seemapuri and Ghazipur were of similar make and design, those recovered in Punjab were explosives of lightweight and those in Delhi have a metallic covering," the officer said.

Another officer said "we cannot rule out the possibility of the involvement of Pakistan's ISI which might have made such sophisticated design and sent it to Punjab and Delhi." The investigators are looking into it, the officer added.

According to the police, the owner of the house in Old Seemapuri where the explosive weighing 2.5 to 3 kg was found and a property dealer were being questioned.

The sketches of suspects prepared are of two people who told the house owner that they were students and hailed from Uttar Pradesh.

The two suspects stayed at the house for the last two months. The house owner had claimed during interrogation that he had

collected their identity proofs but the police said they were yet to recover any of it.

The IEDs found in the Old Seemapuri house on Thursday and in the Ghazipur flower market on January 17 were prepared with the intention of carrying out blasts at public places across the city, Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana had said on Friday. Such activities are not possible without local support, he had added.

The investigation revealed that both IEDs were made with a mix of ammonium nitrate and RDX, the senior police officer said. Both explosives were defused in a controlled manner and no one was injured.

In a CCTV footage collected from near the Ghazipur spot, a black Hero Splendor motorcycle was seen parked nearby.

And after the IED recovery in Old Seemapuri, the police recovered a similar motorcycle from near Dilshad Garden Metro Station. It was found to be stolen and investigators believe it is the same motorcycle seen in the CCTV footage collected from the Ghazipur spot.

The recovery of the IED at the Ghazipur flower market came ahead of Republic Day celebrations on January 26 for which the security apparatus in the national capital was on high alert. Delhi Police chief Asthana earlier said the Special Cell and other teams were investigating the case.

The investigators are probing forward and backward linkages. "We are trying to pre-empt every such incident in Delhi and expose any local and foreign network," he added.

Officials from the National Investigation Agency and the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad had on Friday visited the scene of crime in Old Seemapuri as multiple agencies have been working on the case.

Dubai Ruler's Daughter Tells UN She Is Well, Year After "Hostage" Videos

Agenceis

GENEVA: An Emirati princess, who last year said she was being held "hostage" in a palace, has assured the UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet that she is well during a meeting in Paris, the High Commissioner said Friday.

The meeting, which took place on an unspecified date at Dubai Sheikhha Latifa's request, took place a year after she said was being held hostage and feared for her life, in videos released by British media in February 2021.

"Latifa conveyed to the High Commissioner that she was well & expressed her wish for respect for her privacy," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Bachelet said in a tweet, which included a picture of the two women on a Paris street.

Bachelet's office didn't respond to an AFP request for details of the meeting, or whether Bachelet took the princess' comment at face value.

The tweet added that Latifa's legal advisor had organised the meeting and that the UN rights commissioner and Latifa had met in private.



Sheikhha Latifa, 36-year-old daughter of Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, had said back in June last year that she was free to travel.

Sheikh Mohammed is vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, of which Dubai is one of the seven members.

Latifa made an unsuccessful attempt to flee the emirate in March 2018, escaping by boat with the help of friends before being hauled back.

In February 2021, the BBC aired clips it said were filmed

roughly a year after she was captured and returned to Dubai, showing her crouched in a corner of what she says is a bathroom.

"I'm a hostage and this villa has been converted into a jail," she says in one cellphone video.

Bachelet's office, along with NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as well as the UK foreign ministry had closely followed the matter and sought proof that the princes was still alive.

Dubai's royal family had insisted that Latifa was being "cared for at home".

Hezbollah Drone Flies 40-Minute Tour Of Northern Israel, Returns To Lebanon

Agenceis

BEIRUT: A drone flown by Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has managed to cross into northern Israel on a 40-minute "reconnaissance mission", triggering air defences and the scrambling of fighter jets before returning to Lebanon.

Iran-backed Hezbollah, which fought a month-long war against Israel on the Lebanese border in 2006, said Friday's flight carried out a successful required mission. Earlier this week, its leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, said his militant faction had been manufacturing military drones in Lebanon and had the technology to turn thousands of missiles in



their possession into precision-guided munitions.

"Despite the enemy's multiple and successive attempts to shoot it down, the 'Hassan' plane returned from the occupied territories safely," it said.

The incident comes just a day after Israel shot down what it said was another drone, allegedly from Hezbollah, that had

crossed into its airspace.

The Israeli military said in its statement that the incursion set off air raid sirens in the north of the country, and that Iron Dome interceptors were deployed and fighter jets were patrolling the skies.

"After a few minutes, radar contact was lost with the aircraft," it said, adding that the event was under investigation and that "civilian life in northern Israel has returned to routine".

Hours later and roughly 100 kilometres to the north, a thundering roar was heard in Lebanese capital Beirut, caused by an Israeli fighter jet flying at very low altitude, jolting residents, rattling windows and setting off some car alarms.

Survey To Assess COVID-19 Impact On Delhi Govt School Children Soon

Agenceis

New Delhi: The Delhi government will soon commission a study to assess the impact on the mental health and emotional well-being of students due to the closure of schools, COVID-19 and the shift towards online education, officials said on Saturday.

Schools in Delhi were closed following lockdown in March 2020 and were opened this month.

The planning department of the Delhi government on Friday issued a request for proposal (RFQ) to hire a suitable agency to conduct the study covering government school students, parents and teachers.

The study is designed to assess the emotional well-being and mental health of all types of students, boys and girls, from different classes, age groups, social and economic backgrounds, which will provide an insight into how students from different backgrounds responded, adapted and handled the effects of COVID-19, the document stated.

As many as 44.80 lakh students had enrolled in Delhi schools during 2020-21. A total of 8,400 students, 1,680 parents and 1,680 teachers will be

surveyed for schools across 28 zones in Delhi, it said.

The sample data of students, teachers and parents will be provided by the government. The study will be conducted for students of Class I to XII as well as parents and teachers through personal interview from all 28 education zones of Delhi.

Separate questionnaires have been designed for each group of students by the Directorate of Education in consultation with the planning department. The questionnaires for teachers and parents have been designed irrespective of groups.

The selected agency will require to form survey teams of minimum 30 surveyors with each completing 15 surveys per day in a span of 30 days, including buffer period, to cover the selected students, parents and teachers, the document said. As per the RFQ, an agreement with the agency selected through bidding will be signed by March 21 and field work of survey will be wrapped up by April 29.

The data collected digitally will be compiled and analysed and a draft report will be submitted to the government by May 17. The final report of the study will be submitted by May 27, according to the document.

Assam Becomes First State To Launch Night Navigation Mobile App In Rivers

GUWAHATI: The first night navigation mobile application in rivers in the country was launched for ferries plying on Brahmaputra river here on Saturday, an official spokesperson said.

The inaugural night journey of an Inland Water Transport ferry fitted with the system sailed between Guwahati and North Guwahati at 9 pm and completed the return journey also in about an hour. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma ceremoniously launched the system during the day, the spokesperson said.

The night navigation mobile application was developed by the transport department in association with K Raju, the principal scientist of IIT Madras and

will survey the draft of the rivers, the spokesperson said. The chief minister also launched ten Aadhar-based contactless services of the department as part of its efforts to make public service delivery efficient and hassle free, an official release said.

These services are expected to reduce footfalls at district transport offices (DTOs) by about four lakh annually, it said.

Speaking at the programme Sarma said efforts are on in Assam to minimise the compliance burden of the common people in obtaining government services in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and the online services are a step in that direction.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

2 Soldiers, Militant

the encounter.

The police spokesperson identified him as Abdul Qayoom Dar of Kakapora in the neighboring Pulwama district, associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

As per police records, he said, the killed militant had a history of "terror crime cases" as he was working as militant associate before joining their ranks.

Giving further details, the spokesperson said that Dar's house was also being used as hideout for militants and in April-2020 an encounter took place in his house & subsequently he was booked under PSA.

"Post his release in August-2021, he continuously kept on working as an associate for active terrorists. Earlier this week, SSP Pulwama officially intimated that he had left house and joined terror folds of LeT outfit. Consequently he was listed as "C" category terrorist," he said.

He said that IGP Kashmir and all ranks of Kashmir Zone Police pay rich tributes to the soldiers, who made supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

"Incriminating materials, arms & ammunition including 01 AK-series rifle, 01 Pistol were recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation. In this regard, a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated," the police spokesperson added.

According to news agency PTI, the IGP said that the house owner has been arrested for misleading police and denying sheltering the militant.

NIA Raids 8

The case relates to planning and conspiracy for undertaking violent terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir and other major cities, including New Delhi, by cadres of the proscribed militant organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizbul-Mujahideen (HM) and Al Badr and their affiliates such as The Resistance Front (TRF) and People Against Fascist Forces (PAFF), the spokesperson said.

The NIA said further investigation in the case is underway.

Widespread Rain

receive heavy snowfall," the official said.

The official further said that heavy snowfall could hamper the reopening of Zojila and other higher passes.

The MeT department official said that moderate to heavy snowfall is also expected around Jawahar Tunnel, Gool and other higher reaches of Ramban district.

He further said that plains in Kashmir and Jammu might witness light to heavy showers.

Ex-SPO Gets Life

In his nine-page order, the principal sessions judge said Gafoor, a resident of Jhora-Thatri village of Doda, is punished for offence under Section 302 (murder) of the Ranbir Penal Code and sentenced to life imprisonment.

"He shall also undergo concurrent sentence of life imprisonment for offence under section 7/27 I A Act. Both sentences shall run concurrently," the order read.

Of the Rs 1 lakh fine imposed on Gafoor, Rs 50,000 shall be paid as compensation to his children with Rehmat Begum and the rest shall be forfeited in favour of the State, it said.

Corona Cases

remaining 103 were detected in the various districts of Jammu division, taking the number of people infected since the outbreak of pandemic in J&K to 452155.

In the Valley, officials said, Srinagar detected the highest 21 new cases of virus, Kupwara 13, Bandipora 10, Anantnag 6, four each in Baramulla and Budgam, Pulwama 3 and Ganderbal 2. The twin districts of Kulgam and Shopian in south Kashmir reported no new cases of Covid-19.

In the winter capital, officials said, Jammu registered a maximum of 51 fresh cases of Coronavirus, Doda 23, Kathua 8, Udhampur and Ramban 5 each, Reasi 4, Poonch 3, Kishtwar 2 and one new case each in Rajouri and Samba districts.

"Moreover, 469 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 242 from Jammu Division and 227 from Kashmir Division," they said.

Also, the officials said that the death toll due to pandemic remained 4746 in J&K as no fresh fatality was reported during the last 24 hours.

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.

Govt Orders

Municipalities of Budgam, Pampore, Ganderbal and other officers.

Pole, the spokesperson said, directed SMC officers to submit a detailed report of the total number of structures demolished during the period of previous year.

"He also directed officers to identify illegally constructed multi-storied buildings which are to be demolished. He further directed civil and police officers to visit the sites and prepare a strategy and plan of demolition," he said.

The Div Com, he said, also directed to publish the names of recurring violators and take strict action against them.

"He also directed regulation of commercial structures in residential areas with a rider that commercial structures must have parking space available within the premises," he said.

"Pole also directed SMC, SDA, LCMA and Municipalities to demarcate their area of jurisdiction with pegs or wall paintings for the convenience of the general public," he added.

Delhi HC Orders

was in place at the relevant time contemplated that the same shall be applicable to those employees of the central government, who were posted at Srinagar at the relevant time and have been transferred by the Central Government from Srinagar to Delhi on security grounds after November 1, 1989.

The bench observed, "It must be noted that the Supreme court through its judgment of 7 October 2021 has set aside the said office memorandum."

The petitioners, Sushil Kumar Dhar, Surendra Kumar Raina, Pridman Kirshan Kaul, had approached the High Court against the order issued by the central government on 2 December 2021, January 6, 2021, March 8, 2021.

The petitioners, claiming to be Kashmiri Migrants, had sought direction to the Central Government to regularise the allotments of government accommodations to them and charge them normal licence fees for three years as directed by the Supreme Court

in the case of Union of India vs Onkar Nath Dhar on October 7, 2021.

'Beggar' Robs

the women alone, he followed her inside the kitchen and threatened to burn her for want of two golden rings," Reen said.

The victim, who has been identified as Fancy Jan in order to save her life, handed over the rings to the robber after which he escaped from the scene.

The woman raised hue and cry to attract the attention of neighbors but till then the robber beggar managed to escape from the spot.

The husband of the woman who works as a plumber in Mir Bazar area of Qazigund said that her wife is safe.

The official said a case has been registered under FIR number 9/2022 and the hunt has been launched to trace the accused.

He said all the male members of the lady were not in the house at the time.

The SHO also rubbished the media reports claiming that the robber tried to chop off the fingers of the woman.

The SHO shared a picture of the woman with Kashmir Observer that clearly shows no major injuries on her hands except a band-aid on the middle finger.

He further said that the family didn't report the incident to the police.

54 Foreigners

nine district jails, one special jail and one sub-jail. The UT had two sub-jails but one of them was de-notified and declared as a holding center for lodging Rohingya refugees—(KNO)

All Students Fail

a parent from Baramulla questioned.

According to reports, as many as 23,000 government schools are functional in Jammu and Kashmir. Over 1.2 lakh teachers work in the department across the Union Territory, out of which nearly 65 thousand teachers were posted in Kashmir region only.

An official from BOSE told Kashmir Observer that due to the pandemic many students could attend online class because of no connectivity, while many couldn't use the smart phones.

"You can't always blame the teacher. You need to understand that the majority of the students from the government schools belong to poor or middle class

families, who couldn't afford tuition at home amid pandemic," he said.

The official further said there are a good number of students who belong to far flung areas and where there is no internet connectivity.

"Having said that, our schools still performed better this year despite no physical interaction with the students," he added.

Arsalan Habib, General Secretary of Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Forum (JKTF) agrees that the government schools are performing poorly in the annual examinations.

"Let's keep the 10 class results aside, the government schools don't perform well in lower classes. The government must look into the issues and address the same," Habib, who is himself a government teacher, told Kashmir Observer.

He said there is a lack of infrastructures and many institutions are headless across Kashmir.

He said many regions are without Zonal Education Officer's (ZEO) while a number of schools are without headmasters and Principals.

"This is the situation which results in poor performance in higher standards," he added.

GN Var, president, Private School Association of Jammu and Kashmir (PSAJK) told Kashmir Observer the government sees the educational institutions as administrative issues rather than an academic thing.

"This sector is less administrative and more academic. The Government needs to understand it," Var said.

He said the sector needs educationist heads rather than bureaucrats.

"These bureaucrats are unable to do academic audits and lack a clear vision viz-a-viz education," he added.

He further added that the government needs to make the teacher accountable for the work.

According to reports, over 16,000 teachers working in government-run schools in Jammu and Kashmir are "undergraduate".

Dr. Tasaduq Hussain Mir, Director School Education Kashmir and Principal Secretary School Education Department (SED) Bishwajit Kumar Singh didn't respond to repeated phone calls by this newspaper.

Mine Blast Injures

IUST Bags Gold Medals At National Martial Art Championship

VC Prof. Romshoo Felicitates Players



Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) students have brought laurels to the University by winning two gold medals at the National Thang Ta Martial Art Championship held recently at Jammu.

Gold medallists Mujtahid Mushtaq and Ahtisham Baba and varsity's rugby player Mohd Azim who represented the JKUT at the Senior Rugby National Championship held at Bhubaneswar, Odisha, were felicitated by the Vice Chancellor IUST Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo during a special ceremony held at the campus.

While congratulating the players Prof. Romshoo called on

all the students to participate in different sporting events and extended full support to university's players for excelling in different co-curricular activities. He also complimented the Directorate of Physical Education and Sports IUST for its continued efforts for creating a genuine sporting ecosystem at the university.

Those present during the ceremony included Registrar IUST Prof. Naseer Iqbal, Sports Authority of India Members Dev Raj Singh, Rajeev Kumar Dogra, Gajendra Kumar, Finance Officer Mr. Sameer Wazir, HoD Department of Civil Engineering Shujaat Hussain and Assistant Director Physical Education & Sports Hilal Ahmad Rather.

Bhaderwah Skiing Festival Witnesses Huge Rush On Day 2



Observer News Service

BHADERWAH: The 3-day Jai Valley Snow Skiing festival of the 'Winter Carnival' is witnessing a huge rush of tourists which continued on the second day.

For it being a Sunday, the third day is expected to see a huge footfall of locals and outside tourists. The local administration has asked the management committee to stay prepared to receive and facilitate the visitors.

On the second day, the venue was visited by Vice Chancellor Jammu University, Rector Bhaderwah Campus, BDC Chairperson Bhaderwah East, BDC Chairperson Bhaderwah West, ADC Bhaderwah, and many local and

non local tourists. The visitors enjoyed the mesmerising landscape snow-clad Jai Valley amid colourful cultural programs, featuring folk dance and music, traditional sword and Stick dance performed by local tribal community members. The visitors also enjoyed Zorbing ball, Snow Skiing, sledging, Snow roping, Baloon shooting and local cuisine for which stalls were put up by locals.

Speaking to the media, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah Chowdhary Dil Mir and CEO Bhaderwah Development Authority, Navdeep Wazir said that visitors are highly appreciating the facilities made available by the administration.

Sri Lank No.1, India Remain 5th In Latest WTC Standings

POINTS TABLE						
AS ON 19 FEBRUARY 2022						
	PCT (%)	POINTS	WIN	LOST	DRAWN	SERIES
SRI LANKA	100.00	24	2	0	0	1
AUSTRALIA	96.66	52	4	0	1	1
PAKISTAN	75.00	36	3	1	0	2
SOUTH AFRICA	50.00	24	2	2	0	2*
INDIA	49.07	53	4	3	2	3
NEW ZEALAND	46.66	28	2	2	1	3*
BANGLADESH	25.00	12	1	3	0	2
WEST INDIES	25.00	12	1	3	0	2
ENGLAND	9.25	10	1	6	2	2

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India continued to remain in the fifth spot in the latest World Test Championship standings released by the ICC on Saturday.

India, the runners up of the inaugural edition of the WTC, are currently placed fifth in second cycle with a 49.07 percentage of points won (PCT), which is taken into account rather than the points earned.

India have played nine Tests in the second cycle of WTC, winning four, losing three and drawing two. They have 53 points, the highest among all teams so far.

They will have a chance to improve their standings next month when they host Sri Lanka for two Tests.

Sri Lanka lead the standings with 100 PCT, having won both the Tests they have played in this cycle. They are followed by Australia, who have a PCT of 86.66.

Pakistan (75 PCT) are third and South Africa are one slot behind with a PCT of 50.

Reigning champions New Zealand, who defeated South Africa by 276 runs in the first Test in Christchurch on Saturday, claimed 12 crucial points and are placed sixth with a PCT of 46.66.

J&K Cricket On Brink Of Victory In 1st Ranji Test

Abdul Samad century, Parvez Rasool fiver helps J&K on Day 3

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Abdul Samad blitzed a 68-ball century (103, 78 balls, 19 fours, 2 sixes) to help Jammu & Kashmir take a 83-run lead.

Pondicherry faltered in the second innings and the team was tottering at 113 for 9 at stumps on the third day as veteran off-spinner Parvez Rasool picked up five wickets. The

star all-rounder has notched up 9 wickets in the match, and chipped in with 31 on day 3.

Pondicherry is ahead only by 30 runs with one wicket standing and a defeat looks imminent on the final day.

J&K batter Qamran Iqbal fell 4 runs short of a century, but his 220-ball steadfast innings gave his team the much needed stability.

Pondicherry 343 & 113 for nine in 44 overs (Sagar Trivedi 26 batting, Parvez Rasool five for 29) vs Jammu and Kashmir 426 in 114.1 overs (Qamran Iqbal 96 (220b,13x4, 2x6), Jatin Wadhawan 69, Shubham Singh Pundir 51, Abdul Samad 103 (78b, 19x4, 2x6), Parvez Rasool 31, Abid Mushtaq 40, Sagar Trivedi five for 74, Sagar Udeshi three for 115).

Rohit Sharma Named India's New Test Captain

Selectors start transition with exclusion of Pujara, Rahane, Ishant, Saha

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Rohit Sharma was on Saturday appointed the new Test captain of the Indian team as selectors initiated the transition phase by dropping struggling veterans Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara, Wriddhiman Saha and Ishant Sharma for the Sri Lanka series.

The PTI had earlier reported that team management has decided to move on from Saha and 100-Test plus Ishant and chances were dim for both Pujara and Rahane to retain their places.

On Saturday, chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma made it clear that "Rohit was the unanimous choice" and will be the bridge between the new and old in the current set-up as they groom three potential captaincy materials in KL Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant.

All three have led or been deputy at some point.

The Sri Lanka Tests series, starting March 4, will also mark comeback of all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who has recovered from a knee injury. Shubman Gill too has recovered from shin stress fracture.

Washington Sundar and KL Rahul are nursing their hamstrings before start of Indian Premier League.

Kuldeep Yadav, who was dumped by Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri, has been brought back from the cold as he made his return into Test team.

Sanju Samson's start-stop international career got a lifeline in the T20s against Sri Lanka. Pant along with Virat Kohli has been rested while rookie left-arm spinner from Uttar Pradesh Saurabh Kumar made his maiden entry into Test side.

'Rohit the only choice'

While it was known long



BCCI Give Kohli 10-Day Break, To Skip Lanka T20Is

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The BCCI has given senior batter Virat Kohli a 10-day break from the Indian team's bio-bubble as he left for home before the third T20 International against the West Indies scheduled in Kolkata on Sunday.

As reported by PTI on Friday, Kohli will not be playing in the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka beginning on February 24 in Lucknow followed by two more games at Dharamsala on February 26 and 27.

"Yes, Kohli has left home on Saturday morning as India have already won the series. As it has been decided by BCCI, it will be a policy to give all the regular all format players periodic breaks from the bubble to ensure that their workload management and mental health is taken care of," a senior BCCI official privy to the development told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

The Indian team for the Sri Lanka series will be picked later in the day. (PTI)

back after Kohli tendered his resignation from Tests, Rohit's emergence as Test captain is a remarkable story of grit and determination. Once considered someone who would have a great Test career, opening the innings changed the course of his career. After the England Test tour, there was no looking back.

"Rohit Sharma is number one cricketer of our country and the most important thing is that he is playing all the three formats," Sharma made it clear that he

was the "unanimous choice" and there was no discussion about any other names.

He made it clear that even Rohit will get his breaks periodically as the body needs rest and that's something they will manage.

"The most important thing is how we manage Rohit. All the cricketers are professionals. They know their body and they manage their body and Rohit is absolutely (fit), there is no problem at all," he added.

BEIJING SNAPSHOT: Reporting, Inside And Outside The Bubble



Agencies

BEIJING: Journalists who spent weeks covering the Beijing Olympics while hermetically sealed inside the "closed-loop" system will leave with an incomplete picture of what reporting in China entails.

Inside the Olympic "bubble," those telling the story of the Games to the world are surrounded by volunteers offering help with a smile and marveling at how far you've traveled to come to Beijing. Security guards leave you to your filming from pre-assigned perimeters and locations with no interference.

When the Court of Arbitration for Sport held its doping

hearing for Russian skater Kamila Valieva, reporters were permitted to approach officials for comment. Inside the bubble, even the Great Firewall — China's extensive internet censorship — seems to have vanished from the official Wi-Fi.

For members of the press corps who move around in the bubble, it might seem there is some latitude and freedom in reporting. But that's not what everyday reporting in China looks like — not for foreign journalists and certainly not for Chinese reporters working for state-controlled media outlets.

Absent from the inside-the-bubble view are the ever-present surveillance-camera-crust-

ed lantern poles. Missing are the ubiquitous police and security agents who routinely question reporters and camera crews on public streets. Nowhere in sight are the plainclothes "tails" that hang around your hotel while on assignment, or the officers who shove you when you're filming something they don't want the world to see.

The frequently stated goal of the closed-loop system is to keep coronavirus infections at a minimum and ensure those attending the Games remain separate from the Chinese public.

But it also presents a sanitized version of China's reporting environment — one perfect for public, and global, consumption. (AP)

Faulkner Quits PSL In Contract Dispute, Gets Banned



Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Quetta Gladiators fast bowler James Faulkner quit the Pakistan Super League on Saturday and alleged that organisers failed to honour his contract, a claim the country's cricket board vehemently refuted.

Faulkner claimed the Pakistan Cricket Board lied to him during his six-game stint in the league.

"I apologize to the Pakistan cricket fans. But unfortunately I've had to withdraw from the last 2 matches and leave the (PSL) due to the (PCB) not honouring my contractual agreement/payments," he wrote on Twitter. "I've been here the whole duration and they have continued to lie to me."

The 31-year-old Australian said it "hurts to leave" because he wanted to help "get international cricket back in Pakistan ... But the treatment I have received has been a disgrace from the (PCB) and (PSL). I'm sure you all understand my position."

Pakistan's cricket officials disagreed, however, and banned Faulkner from future editions of its premier domestic Twenty20 league.

The PCB said it paid 70% of Faulkner's contract to his British bank account in December and that "the receipt of this pay-

ment was acknowledged by Mr. Faulkner." The remaining 30% is transferred to players' accounts within 40 days after the PSL ends.

The board said Faulkner's agent revised his bank information to an Australian account in January and that the player insisted that "a second duplicate payment of the same amount be made to his account in Australia."

Despite Faulkner's "reprehensible and insulting behaviour" during talks on Friday, the board said, it assured the Australian that his grievances would be addressed. Still, he pulled out of the crucial game for Quetta against Multan and demanded that his travel arrangements be made immediately.

Faulkner, according to the PCB, caused deliberate damage to hotel property and acted inappropriately and abusively at the airport ahead of his flight to Australia.

"Taking serious note of James Faulkner's gross misconduct that was an attempt to bring the PCB, Pakistan cricket and the Pakistan Super League into disrepute, it has been unanimously agreed by the PCB and the franchisees that James Faulkner will not be drafted in future Pakistan Super League events," the board said.

Faulkner took six wickets in six games for Quetta this season and scored 49 runs.

New Zealand Ends 18-year Drought Against South Africa



Agencies

CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand needed only an extended session to complete an innings and 276-run win over South Africa in the first test on Saturday, its first test victory over the Proteas in 18 years.

Tim Southee took 5-35 as New Zealand bowled out South Africa for 111 in its second innings after only 32 overs on the third day at Hagley Oval in Christchurch.

South Africa started the day at 34-3, trailing New Zealand by 353 runs after making only 95 in its first innings. New Zealand batted once and made 482 with Henry Nicholls making 105 and Tom Blundell 96.

Matt Henry was man of the match for his 7-23 in South Africa's first innings and his 58, batting at No. 11. Henry took 2-32 in the second innings, finishing

with match figures of 9-55.

It was pretty to come here and for us all to have a performance like that, said Henry who only played in the absence of Trent Boult who is on paternity leave.

Never out of the spotlight, Henry took the first wicket on Saturday with only the second ball of the day, accelerating New Zealand's progress to a victory which now puts it in a strong position to win a test series over South Africa for the first time. New Zealand's win on Saturday was only its fifth over South Africa in 45 tests.

The win also improved New Zealand's standing in the World Test Championship as it defends the inaugural title. It came into the match in sixth place after its shared series with Bangladesh last month.

The second test begins at Hagley Oval next Friday. (AP)

Champions League: Walker, Carrasco To Serve Bans After UEFA Dismisses Appeals



Agencies

ZURICH: Manchester City defender Kyle Walker and Atletico Madrid winger Yannick Carrasco will remain suspended for three Champions League matches for assaulting opponents after governing body UEFA dismissed their clubs' appeals on Friday.

Walker was sent off in City's last group stage game, a 2-1 loss to RB Leipzig, for kicking goal scorer Andre Silva while Carrasco received a red card in Atletico's 3-1 win at Porto for raising his hands to midfielder Otavio as tempers raged.

City already have one foot firmly in the next round after beating Portuguese side Sport-

ing 5-0 in the first leg of the last-16 earlier this week, so Walker would miss the first leg of the quarter-final if they qualify.

Atletico Madrid play Manchester United in their last-16 first leg next week.

UEFA also said Porto defender Wendell will serve a three-game ban after he was dismissed in the same game for appearing to lightly strike Matheus Cunha with his elbow, sparking a melee involving the players and coaching staff.

Porto finished third in their group behind Liverpool and Atletico and dropped down to the Europa League, where they beat Lazio in the first leg of the knockout round playoffs on Thursday.

All 117 Seats in Punjab, 59 in UP Go To Polls Today

Agenceis

LUCKNOW: Voting for 59 assembly constituencies spread across 16 districts of Uttar Pradesh will take place on Sunday in the third phase of the polls.

Campaigning for the third phase of the state elections ended on Friday, with senior leaders of the parties making a final effort to woo voters.

As many as 627 candidates are in the fray in this phase, in which over 2.15 crore people are eligible to vote.

Districts where polling will be held are Hathras, Firozabad, Etah, Kasganj, Mainpuri, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Etawah, Auraiya, Kanpur Dehat, Kanpur Nagar, Jalaun, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Hamirpur and Mahoba.

The Karhal assembly seat, from where Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is contesting, will also go to the polls in the third phase on Sunday.

The BJP has fielded Union minister S P Singh Baghel from the seat.

Polling on Sunday will also seal the fate of the Samajwadi Party chief's uncle Shival Singh Yadav, who is contesting from his traditional Jaswantnagar seat.

Before the campaigning ended for the third phase on Friday, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra undertook a door-to-door march in Kanpur, Kal-



pi, Jalaun and Hamirpur, while BSP chief Mayawati addressed election meetings in Jalaun and Auraiya. Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav sought votes for his son Akhilesh Yadav in Karhal.

The BJP had approached the Election Commission seeking deployment of paramilitary forces at all booths in Karhal.

Among the prominent faces in the fray in this phase are BJP's Satish Mahana (Maharajpur in Kanpur) and Ramvir Upadhaya (Sadabad in Hathras) and Louise Khurshid, who is contesting on the

Congress' ticket from Farrukhabad Sadar. Louise Khurshid is the wife of senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid.

Former IPS officer Asim Arun is contesting from Kannauj Sadar on the BJP ticket, while Uttar Pradesh minister Ramnaresh Agnihotri is also in the fray in this phase.

In the 2017 elections, the BJP had won 49 of the 59 seats while the SP had settled for nine. The Congress had got one seat, while the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) drew a blank.

Polling will begin at 7 am on Sunday and continue till 6 pm.

58 Girls Suspended From College In Karnataka For Wearing Hijab, Holding Protest

Agenceis

BENGALURU: Girl students in many parts of Karnataka were denied entry into their respective educational institutions on Saturday as they arrived in hijabs, despite a court order, as the issue showed no signs of abating after its flare-up about a fortnight ago that prompted the government to close down colleges and institutions for a couple of days.

As many as 58 students at Shiralakkoppa in Shivamogga district who had refused to remove their hijab and staged a demonstration against the gov-

ernment pre-university college administration were suspended.

They were suspended on Friday and were told that they should not come to the college, a student told reporters. On Saturday too, they came to the college, raised slogans and demanded their right to wear hijab. However, they were not let in.

"We came here but the principal told us that we have all been suspended and there is no need for us to come to the college. Even the police told us not to come to the college but we came here. Today, no one spoke to us," the students complained.

Despite a government order and the Karnataka High Court's interim order restricting the students from wearing hijab or saffron scarves inside classrooms, the girls came to schools and colleges donning the headscarf.

In the SJVP College at Harihar in Davangere district, girls wearing hijab were denied entry. The pupils refused to go inside without the scarf, stressing that it was as important as education and they cannot give up their right.

In Vijay Paramedical College in Belagavi district, students complained to the reporters that a holiday was

announced by the institution for an indefinite period due to the hijab issue.

"We will not sit without headscarves. Let the college realise how it affects our education. The principal is not listening to us," a student told the media.

In Ballari, a group of girls were not allowed inside the Sarala Devi College, which has been witnessing protests from the day the controversy erupted and the government had ordered that no one should wear clothes that could disturb peace, harmony and, law and order.

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