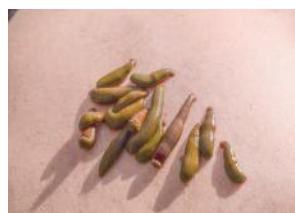


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P3 CITY

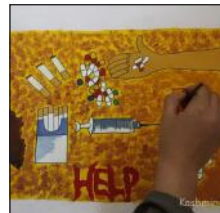
BEE LINES FOR LEECH THERAPY AT HAZRATBAL

A number of people visited practitioners of 'leech therapy' on the occasion of Novroz on Monday as the therapy is believed to be more effective on this particular day. Scores of people were seen standing in queues, waiting for

P5

KASHMIR IN DRUG DRAGNET: WHEN 'BADSHAH' BELIEF GAVE BIRTH TO A BEAST

IT'S a busy market place with a shrill of tooting horns. The fruit vendor enumerates his list of fruits in a voice so loud. The autowalla fights with the passenger for his denied extra ten rupees.



P7 STATE

STUDENT ENROLMENT IN J&K GOVT COLLEGES SIX TIMES HIGHER THAN PVT COLLEGES

In Jammu and Kashmir, the student enrolment in government-run colleges was six times higher than the private colleges. Out of the total students enrolled in



Quote!

I would rather die of passion than of boredom

-Vincent van Gogh

NEWS DIGEST

Director NIT Srinagar Calls On LG

SRINAGAR: Director National Institute of Technology (NIT), Srinagar, Prof. Rakesh Sehgal on Monday called on the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan here. Prof. Sehgal briefed the Lt Governor about functioning of the institute and also discussed various important issues **More on P6**

Engineer Found Dead In Ramban

SRINAGAR: An Assistant Engineer of the Public Works Department (PWD) was found dead on Monday inside his home in Ramban district of Jammu division, official sources said. They said that an AE of PWD identified as Jamsheed Ahmad Khan son of Ghulam **More on P6**

8 Injured After Snowslide Hits Cab

SRINAGAR: All eight passengers onboard a sumo vehicle which was swept away by a snow slide and fell into a gorge along Sadhna Top in frontier north Kashmir's Kupwara district have been rescued in injured condition, officials said Monday. Among the injured include three members of a family **More on P6**

Minor Dies After Falling Into Pit

SRINAGAR: A 2-year-old boy died after falling into a pit in Bategam in north Kashmir's Kupwara district this afternoon. Reports said that a child namely Sabzar Ahmad Shiekh son of Fayaz Ahmad Shiekh, a resident of Shiekh Mohalla Bategam fell into a pit whereupon he was rescued by locals and taken to Sub-district hospital **More on P6**

Civilian Shot Dead In Budgam Street Vendor From Bihar Injured In Pulwama Attack



File Photo

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Unidentified militants on Monday shot dead a civilian and injured a Bihar resident in two separate attacks in central Kashmir's Budgam and south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said.

Unknown militants barged into the house of Tajamul Mohiud-din Dar in Gotpora village of Budgam on Monday evening and fired indiscriminately upon him, a police spokesperson said. In the militant attack, he said, Dar sustained critical gunshot injuries and was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for the treatment.

"However, doctors declared him dead on arrival," he said.

In a separate militant attack in Pulwama, the spokesperson said that around 7:45pm, militants fired upon a street vendor Bisujeet Kumar of Bihar. Kumar, he said, received gunshot injuries and was immediately shifted to SMHS Hospital Srinagar in a critical care ambulance where he is being treated.

The spokesperson said that senior police officers along with reinforcement reached at both the "terror crime spots". He said that the respective areas have been cordoned and search in these areas is going on. "Police have registered cases regarding both the terror crime incidents. Investigation is in progress **More on P6**

POLICE HAVE REGISTERED CASES regarding both the terror crime incidents. Investigation is in progress and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances leading to these terror crimes."

Situation Along LoC Stable: Govt In RS

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The situation along the Line of Control remains stable after the armies of India and Pakistan agreed to observe a ceasefire in February last year, the defence ministry said on Monday.

Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt, replying to a question in Rajya Sabha, said the Army has been keeping a strong vigil on the situation and it remains prepared to thwart any threat from "inimical elements".

In a sudden and significant move aimed at reducing tensions, the Indian and Pakistani armies on February 25 last year announced that they would cease firing across the LoC while recommitting themselves to a 2003 ceasefire agreement.

Without **More on P6**

'Hot And Dry' Weather To Continue This Week: MeT Department

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Weatherman on Monday predicted mainly hot and dry weather during this week barring March 23 and 24 when there is possibility of brief spell of light to moderate rains.

"Except for 23-24th, weather will remain hot and dry this week," a meteorological department official said, adding, "On 23-24th, a brief spell of light to moderate rain with thunderstorms is likely at scattered places." However he said there's no forecast of any major rain or snow till the end of March.

Meanwhile, night temperature saw a drop across the J&K with Srinagar, the summer capital of J&K, recording a low of 6.8°C against last night's 8.2°C, the official said. The temperature was 2.1°C above normal for Srinagar during this time of the year.



KO Photo / Abid Bhat

Qazigund recorded a low of 4.0°C against 5.8°C as on the previous night. The temperature was above normal by 0.4°C for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said, as per news agency GNS.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of

4.8°C against 5.2°C on the previous night. It was 1.3°C more than normal during this time of the season, the official said.

Pahalgam, the famous resort in south Kashmir, recorded a low of 1.5°C against 2.9°C last night. The temperature **More on P6**

'J&K Registers Rs 3400 Cr Power Losses Annually'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday said that in the past many decades no serious effort was made to prevent power losses with the result the UT continues to face huge transmission and distribution (T&D) losses to the tune of Rs 3400 Crore a year.

He also announced that Jammu areas getting electricity from four feeders comprising 6603 houses having smart meters installed will get uninterrupted power supply. Addressing a function in Jammu, LG Sinha said that J&K's power losses are huge. "Power theft and losses due to the T&K are very high. We buy power worth Rs 6000 Cr

annually; get only Rs 2600 Cr revenue while our loss figure is Rs 3400 Crore," LG Sinha said.

He said that all previous regimes failed to explore the power potential of J&K and to prevent power losses.

He said the administration led by him is committed to provide quality and uninterrupted power supply to the people who have meters installed in their homes. He said the government has taken a slew of measures in the past one-and-a-half years to prevent huge power losses caused by power theft and T&D losses. "In Kashmir, we are going to install smart meters to prevent power losses and power theft. We are aware and people are ready to install metered and to pay power bills," Sinha added.

POWER THEFT AND LOSSES due to the T&K are very high. We buy power worth Rs 6000 Cr annually; get only Rs 2600 Cr revenue while our loss figure is Rs 3400 Crore."

Highway Reopens After 15-Hour Closure

Press Trust Of India

BANIHAL: Traffic movement resumed on the 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway early Monday after remaining suspended for over 15 hours due to a landslide in Ramban district, officials said.

The only all-weather road, linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was blocked

by the landslide at Mehar near Ramban late Sunday afternoon and the clearance operation was hampered by frequent falling of boulders from a hillock overlooking the road, they said.

The officials said mostly trucks were left stranded due to the closure of the road. They were allowed to move towards Jammu around 8 am on Monday after **More on P6**

When Nauroz's Syncretic Spirit Would Charm Everyone In Kashmir

Zaid Bin Shabir

Four decades back, Altaf Shora was one of those spirited persons in old Srinagar who would eagerly participate in the community level preparations for Nauroz.

Back then, he recalls, his birth-place would erupt with communal celebrations, as people of different beliefs came together to embrace a new year.

Deeply influenced by this 'brethren-belief', Altaf's locality would add different colour and composition to spring.

"Kashmiri Pandits would ready their water-soaked walnuts for the occasion, while the Sunnis prepare Sharbat and the

Shias cook special non-veg delicacies for their Kashmiri compatriots," Altaf recalls the times when the Old City would erupt with the spring festivities.

"Those celebrations have died in the din of disturbances we have been facing since the turbulent eighties now."

While the old and redefined neighbourhoods would erupt with festivities, Nauroz would see Hakeems setting up their open-air clinic at the corners of the seven bridges or mostly outside the six revered shrines of the Shehr-e-Khaas to treat patients with their popular Derkhe-Ilaj (Leech Therapy).

On the same day, Altaf along with an amalgam of his Sunni,



Shia and Pandit companions walked for several meters from their congested houses, before finally reaching the Naqshband Sahab shrine's lawn.

Amid their moment of endurance, they watched hundreds of Muslims and Pandits turning up in hordes to offer a prayer outside the shrine, as a customary

NAUROZ WASN'T JUST AN IRANIAN CULTURE, it was a festival that had spread its shackles deep into our culture and tradition."

token of their faith.

For the next one hour, devotees would stand with a copper bucket, collecting the pouring rain water.

In the early 1980s or perhaps even before that, it was a common belief among Kashmiris that

if one bathe with the collected rain water on the day of Nauroz, his whole year will pass on without any serious health problems.

"These perceptions may have been superficial in nature but they represented Kashmir's non-sectarian ethnicity," says Altaf, a balmy looking figure who has now migrated to the civil-lines of Srinagar.

"Nauroz wasn't just a Shia festival but it belonged to everyone in Kashmir. But in past 40 years, Kashmir has changed a lot. Culture never subsided due to faith and vice versa, but now it does."

Some of these diehard Eighties celebrants now express concern over the new customs overlapping the century-old traditions

that have now become a thing of the past.

"Before the 90s, it was everyone's day but after our gardens became graveyards, Nauroz merely became a Shia celebration," laments Ghulam Nabi Shahid, a noted Kashmiri writer.

"It's unfortunate that Kashmiris have forgotten who they actually were and what their culture represented."

The biggest reason for this drastic change in Kashmiri culture is the brutal migration of people from downtown to other parts, Shahid argues.

"Shias have mostly settled in Hassanabad, Nishat, Zadibal, Saidra Kadal and some other parts and Sunnis **More on P6**



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IIT Madras, US University Develop Algorithms To Enhance 3d Effects In Phone Videos

Press Trust Of India

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras and the US-based Northwestern University have developed deep learning algorithms that can greatly enhance the depth perception and 3D effects in videos shot using smartphone cameras.

According to officials, such algorithms will prevent mobile phone images from being "flat" and impart a realistic 3D feel. A crucial advantage of the algorithm developed is that it eliminates the need for fancy equipment or an array of lenses to capture videos with depth.

"It is a common complaint, especially among amateur and professional photographers, that photographs and videos shot using smartphone cameras have a flat, two-dimensional look. Apart from the flat look, some 3D features such as the 'Bokeh Effect' the aesthetic blurring of the background that are easy with the DSLR camera, are challenging in smartphone cameras," Kaushik Mitra, assistant professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Madras told PTI.

"While a few mid and high-end smartphone cameras are now programmed to incorporate such effects in still photographs, especially in portrait mode, it is not yet possible to render them in videos captured using smartphones," he added.

Mitra explained that the advanced professional cameras capture information about both intensity and direction of light in a scene, known as Light Field (LF), to give the perception of depth.

"The LF capture is achieved through the use of an array of micro lenses that are inserted between the



main lens of the camera and the camera sensor. Multiple micro lenses cannot be placed on mobile phones because of space constraints. Instead, algorithms that can post-process the image captured by the existing mobile cameras are being developed. "Artificial Intelligence and machine learning techniques are used for such image manipulation. Our team looked into this issue and has built a deep learning algorithm that converts the stereo images captured using a smartphone into LF images," he said.

The research has been published in the 'Proceedings of International Conference on Computer Vision (ICCV), 2021'.

"The algorithm first captures two videos (called stereo pair) simultaneously using the two adjacent cameras that are present in many smartphones these days. These stereo pairs go through a sequence of steps involving deep learning models. The stereo pairs are converted into a 7X7 grid of images, mimicking a 7X7 array of cameras, thereby producing the LF image," Mitra explained.

It is a common complaint, especially among amateur and professional photographers, that photographs and videos shot using smartphone cameras have a flat, two-dimensional look. Apart from the flat look, some 3D features such as the 'Bokeh Effect' the aesthetic blurring of the background that are easy with the DSLR camera, are challenging in smartphone cameras

"A crucial advantage of the algorithm developed by our team is that it eliminates the need for fancy equipment or an array of lenses to capture videos with depth. The Bokeh and other such aesthetic 3D effects can be achieved with a smartphone that is equipped with a dual-camera system.

"In addition to providing depth, our algorithm enables us to view the same video from not just one point of view but from any of the 7x7 grid of viewpoints," he said.

Research Reveals Most Boring Person In The World

IAN S



The most boring person in the world has been discovered and it is a religious data entry worker, who likes watching TV, and lives in a town, said researchers from the University of Essex. According to the researchers, after examining more than 500 people across five experiments they found that the blandest jobs are seen as cleaning, banking, data analysis and accounting. "The irony is studying boredom is actually very interesting and has many real-life impacts," said researcher Wijnand Van Tilburg. "These papers show how persuasive perceptions of boredom are and what an impact this can have on people," Tilburg added. The paper, published in the journal 'Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin', also discovered the dullerest hobbies as religion, watching TV, bird watching and smoking. Boring people are also perceived to shun large settlements to live in small cities and towns, the research indicated. The research revealed that stereotypically boring people are generally disliked and avoided due to preconceptions. It also showed that being perceived as boring likely conveys low competence and low interpersonal warmth.

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KIND ATTENTION : ENERGY USERS IN 13 NOTIFIED SECTORS

Submission of Report on the Status of Energy Consumption under Energy Conservation Act 2001 (52 of 2001)

All users/class of users of energy in the following energy intensive sectors having Annual Energy Consumption of and above the specified limit shown against the following energy intensive sectors are notified as designated consumers vide S.O. 394 (E) dated the 12th March, 2007, S.O. 3542 (E) dated 29th Dec. 2015, S.O. 1388(E) dated 02nd May, 2017 and 502147 (E) Dated 17th June, 2020, under clause (e) of section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act (52 of 2001).

S. No.	Notified Sector	Threshold Energy Consumption in metric tonne of oil equivalent (mtoe) per year
1.	Aluminium	7,500
2.	Cement	
	(a) Integrated Cement Unit	30,000
	(b) Cement Grinding Unit	10,000
3.	Commercial Buildings or Establishments	
	(a) Hotels	500
	(b) Airports	500
4.	Chlor-Alkali	12,000
5.	Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs)*	All licensed distribution companies by SERC/JERC
6.	Fertilizer	30,000
7.	Iron & Steel	20,000
8.	Pulp & Paper	20,000
9.	Petroleum Refineries	90,000
10.	Petrochemical units having gas crackers or naphtha crackers or both	1,00,000
11.	Railways	
	(a) All Zonal Railways (Traction)	70,000
	(b) Workshops	750
	(C) 8 Production Factories of Railways namely ICF, RCF, CLW, DLW, DCW, RWF, MCF & RWP	-
12.	Textile	3,000
13.	Thermal Power Stations	30,000

(*Energy Consumption of DISCOMs shall be considered equivalent to the total of Aggregate Technical & Commercial Losses (AT & C), which is equivalent to 1000 Million kWh)

All units/establishment consuming more than the listed threshold energy consumption under respective sectors, notified by the Central Government under S.O. 1264 (E) dated 31st March, 2016 and S.O. 998(E) dated 30th March, 2017, S.O. 1409(E) dated 28th March, 2018, S.O. 1473(E) dated 29th March, 2019, S.O. 1254(E) dated 13th April, 2020, S.O. 4491 (E) dated 26th October, 2021 are requested to submit to the concerned designated agency, with a copy to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, a report on the status of Annual Energy Consumption, together with their annual production, for the last two years, namely, 2020-21 and 2021-22 in Form 1 notified under clause (I) of Section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (52 of 2001), duly authenticated by the Energy Manager/Chief Executive Officer.

A copy of the required sector applicable Pro-forma or Form-I could be downloaded from BEE website: <https://beeindia.gov.in/content/pat-performa>.

If any person fails to submit a report on the status of annual consumption etc by 30th June, 2022, he shall be liable to a penalty under clause 26 of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.

For more information/query please contact us on 011-26766700 or send mail on newdc@beenet.in.

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Government of India

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2) **Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar**

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Spring At Badamwari



Dilapidated road outside Badamwari causes inconvenience to travelers visiting the famed garden



Authorities have failed to remove heaps of garbage in and around Badamwari

Two Accused Involved In Theft Cases Arrested

Agencies

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday arrested two accused persons involved in theft cases in the Police jurisdiction of Shergari area of Srinagar city.

In a statement issued to media here, the police spokesman said, "Police station Shergarhi received an application from a complainant namely Rizwan Ahmad Bhat of Haftchinar Srinagar to the effect that some thieves had entered into his premises, wherefrom Battery bank cells (600 AH) of a mobile tower had been stolen by them."

"In this regard Case FIR No 38/22 U/S 379 IPC was registered in PS Shergari& during investigation, one suspect namely Sahil Tariq Sheikh son of Tariq Ahmad Sheikh of Haftchinar was taken into custody for questioning who confessed to the crime & recoveries were made from his possession in the form of battery bank cells, juice box, filled gas cylinder, LCD and Inverter Battery.

The statement reads Apart from the above, one more complaint was received from Mehrajud din Mir (shopkeeper) to the effect that burglary has taken place in his shop during the intervening night of 20/21 March 2021 at Sarai Bala& in this regard Case FIR No 39/22 U/S 380,457 IPC stand registered in the PS. During the course of investigation one suspect

Beelines For Leech Therapy At Hazratbal

Agencies

Srinagar: A number of people visited practitioners of 'leech therapy' on the occasion of Novroz on Monday as the therapy is believed to be more effective on this particular day.

Scores of people were seen standing in queues, waiting for their turn to go through the procedure, at many places in the valley, especially at Dargah Hazratbal in Srinagar.

It is believed that leeches can cure frostbite, skin diseases and other blood infections, as they suck out the impure blood from the body.

Wali Mohammad, a practitioner of leech therapy said "I am doing this practice for the last 40 years and as per my experience, people are getting cured with this therapy. People understand that this therapy is the best cure for their illness which they don't get from other medications."

Manzoor Ahmad, a patient from Hyderpora, agreed. "I tried medicines of almost 10 to 20 thousand rupees but couldn't find any relief in my pain with



KO Pic/Abid Bhat

any medication. But later when I tried this leech therapy, I am now feeling relief in my pain," he said.

The practice of leech therapy is very old, and the tradition is still kept alive in

Kashmir, particularly on Novroz. Practitioners earlier used to collect leeches from local water streams and rivers but now those connected with this trade get them from outside of Kashmir. (KNO)

LCMA Kick Starts Plantation Drive

Observer News Service

Srinagar: On the occasion of World Forestry Day, Lake Conservation and Management Authority started a plantation Drive in Srinagar.

The plantation drive was kick started by Vice Chairman LCMA, Bashir Ahmad.

Among others present on the occasion were Secretary LCMA, Irfan Ahmad, Executive Engineer LCMA, Shafat Ahmad; Project Officer LCMA, Gazalla Abdullah; Range officer, LCMA, Younis Ahmad and other staff members besides students from various schools.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chairman, Bashir Ahmad spoke about the importance of trees and how the siltation is controlled by growing more and more trees.

It was informed that the Watershed Management Division is going to plant 72500 number of plants during this month at three different areas



of catchment of Dal Lake.

Watershed Manager Gazalla Abdullah, while taking the reference of the theme of this year of World Forestry Day, Forests and sustainable

production and consumption talked about the importance and role of forests and urged the people for the conservation and safeguard of the forests.

Spring Blossom Festival Begins At Zawoora

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to promote Horticulture tourism, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole kick started Spring Blossom Festival at Center of Excellence, Zawoora in Srinagar.

Vice Chairperson Jammu and Kashmir, Khadi Village Industries Board KVIB), Dr HinaShafi Bhat was also present on the occasion.

The festival is being organized by the Horticulture department Kashmir in a bid to woo tourists and promote unique horticulture affluence of the region. The Center will be kept open from 21st March to 15th of April for general public and will showcase blossom of world class high density exotic fruit plants.

The main attraction of the programme was display of world class high density planting material besides exhibition of different fruits and latest Horticulture machinery.

Divisional Commissioner and VC inspected the stalls and interacted with the farmers and entrepreneurs who had come from various districts to participate in the event.

Divisional Commissioner,

while speaking on the occasion, said that the aim of the festival is to attract tourists and increase the income of the farmers. He urged upon the farmers and other entrepreneurs to take advantage of various government schemes.

Emphasizing that government of India is bringing a tremendous transformation in the development scenario of Jammu and Kashmir, VC KVIB said that people should take full advantage of the interventions and subsidy schemes of Horticulture, KVIB and other departments.

She exuded hope that the present day youth will be the drivers of the change as they are at the fore front in adopting new technological interventions in the field.

Director General, Horticulture Kashmir, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, in his welcome address gave a brief about the festival saying that the aim behind holding the event was to divert attention of the tourists to Horti-Tourism apart from other locations. He said that Horti-tourism is a first of its kind approach in Jammu and Kashmir for strengthening farmers' economy.

Tourism Deptt Holds Festival To Welcome Spring

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Tourism hosted a Tourism Festival at Zabarwan Park situated on the famous Dal Lake shore on Monday evening to celebrate the arrival of spring in Kashmir.

The Festival was inaugurated by Secretary Tourism, SarmadHafeez. He said the idea was to welcome the onset of the spring season and to promote the tourism sector in Kashmir.

A host of activities including cultural performances by versatile local artists were held during the festival but

the special attraction of the festival was the display of different varieties of local breads and traditional bakery from all over Kashmir.

Visitors, particularly tourists from outside J&K, exhibited keen interest in the whole range of breads and were seen wanting to know about the process for making these types of breads.

As part of the festival, a shikara rally comprising scores of beautifully illuminated shikaras was taken out in the Dal Lake which gave a festive look to the lake.



KO Pic/Abid Bhat

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



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FAJR	5:10
ZUHR	12:40
ASR	4:58
Magrib	6:47
ISHA	8:07

This Day In History

- 972 - Kareem Abdul-Jabbar named NBA MVP
- 1977 - Indira Gandhi resigns as PM of India
- 1978 - France performs nuclear test
- 1979 - Israeli parliament approves peace treaty with Egypt
- 1979 - The Provisional Irish Republican Army explode 24 bombs in various locations across Northern Ireland
- 1981 - Soyuz 39 carries 2 cosmonauts (1 Mongolian) to Salyut 6
- 1982 - 3rd Space Shuttle Mission-Columbia 3 launched
- 1982 - Iran offensive against Iraq
- 1983 - Chaim Herzog elected Israeli president
- 1985 - NASA launches Intelsat VA F-10
- 1988 - US Congress overrides President Reagan's veto of sweeping civil rights bill
- 1993 - Intel introduces Pentium-processor (80586) 64 bits-60 MHz-100+ MIPS
- 1994 - Soyuz TM-21 lands
- 2004 - Ahmed Yassin, co-founder and leader of the Palestinian Sunni Islamist militant group Hamas, and bodyguards are killed in the Gaza Strip when hit by Israeli Air Force AH-64 Apache fired Hellfire missiles.
- 2006 - ETA, armed Basque separatist group, declares permanent ceasefire.
- 2008 - The French Swimmer Alain Bernard sets the world record of 47.50 for the 100 m free-style long course after winning the European LC Championships 2008.

From KO Archives

Student Killed, 10 Hurt In Baramulla School Blast

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A student was killed and ten others were injured when a powerful blast rocked a school, which also housed troops of Rashtriya Rifles in Baramulla district of North Kashmir on Friday, official sources said.

The blast followed by several firing shots took place at Government High School, Nadihal, 55 Km's from here, killing a 10th class student Mohsin Dawar Lone and injuring ten other boys, the sources said adding condition of two students was critical.

The incident took place at 1:05 PM when the students were leaving the school, the sources said adding today being Friday the school observes half day to facilitate the students the students to offer prayers.

The cause of the explosion was not known, the sources said adding that it was either grenade or IED explosion. Rashtriya Rifles troops who were camping in the school, fired several shots in air after the explosion rocked the area, the sources said.

A police party from Bandipora police station immediately rushed to the scene and the whole area was cordoned off, they said. Immediately after the incident panic-stricken villagers rushed the school to inquire about the welfare of their wards.

Several thousand people gathered outside the school and were protesting against the presence of the troops inside the educational institute, the sources said. Reinforcements had been rushed to the area to maintain law and order, the sources said.

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobsrver.net

K O V I E W

Political Turmoil
In Pakistan

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday praised India’s “independent foreign policy” in his address at a public rally in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, which some have started calling his swansong. Khan lauded India for importing crude oil from Russia despite American sanctions. Pak PM’s speech was part of his attempt to mobilize public opinion in the run-up to the no-trust motion being brought against him by the opposition. And considering that many of Khan’s party’s members have switched sides, it looks unlikely that the government will survive. So, the week ahead promises to be full of political turbulence for the neighbouring country. It is too early to say who will replace Khan if his government is toppled. Or whether the country will go for fresh elections. But one thing is clear, in the case of the Khan’s government losing a no-confidence motion, it will take at least another six months for Pakistan to stabilize.

Looking back, we can very well say that the last three and a half years of Khan’s term saw relations with India nosedive. And with the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, the ties deteriorated almost to the point of no-return. Khan became one of the fiercest critics of the Indian government. But in February 2021, the militaries of the two countries dramatically signed a ceasefire agreement. The move came reportedly following an extended back channel dialogue between the two countries. But thereafter there were no efforts to improve the relations. Or to resume dialogue which otherwise appeared a logical course of action following the ceasefire. The reason for this was Pakistan’s insistence that India reverse the repeal of Article 370 but for New Delhi the move is now a fait accompli.

Going forward, the situation looks bleak. Should Khan’s government fall, there will be little chance of the relations between India and Pakistan reviving in near to medium future. That is, if at all there was any chance at all..

Meanwhile, a halt to the frequent firing exchanges along the Line of Control has made a redeeming difference to the lives of lakhs of border residents on both sides of the border. But it won’t change anything as far as the situation in the Valley where militancy continues to linger. This problem could certainly have been addressed through a sincere dialogue between the two countries, whose chances now look slim until after the fresh national elections are held, first in Pakistan and then in India. Khan’s survival in power or otherwise will make no difference to this reality.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Mounting pressure: On
India’s options on Ukraine

What the visits by NATO and Quad allies of the U.S. all have in common is their planning at short notice, and putting discussions on India’s stand on Ukraine at the top of their talks. Even Japanese PM Fumio Kishida, who had a full bilateral agenda to discuss with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at their much-delayed annual summit meeting, arrived in Delhi on a very short visit, and made it clear that finding a common position on Ukraine and telling India that it must not “condone” Russia’s actions was a “priority”. The message from the West is clear: that India must shift its position on three counts: to do more at the UN, where New Delhi has consistently abstained from resolutions criticising Moscow; to join the sanctions regime; and to avoid contracting for more Russian oil, or sending civil or military supplies to the Putin regime until the war ends. The flurry of visits, comments by officials, and press statements by diplomats indicate that tensions between Russia and the West have reached a point of no return, and New Delhi is being asked to make a very pointed choice between them.

While there are several reasons why New Delhi has declined the attempts to steer it from its course on Russia that are linked to its strong partnership with Russia, there are some global interests that the Modi government must consider more closely. The civilian toll in Ukraine is mounting, and while Russia has denied reports of targeted attacks on schools and theatres, it is necessary for New Delhi to acknowledge any Russian violation of human rights, especially as the Kremlin has not yet fully clarified its endgame. Second, while India has expressed concerns over nuclear safety, it must be willing to make this an issue with Moscow, if necessary. Another area is the threat of chemical and biological warfare, and while the Indian representative spoke strongly at the UN Security Council about the importance of fully implementing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Government must be prepared to vote on the issue and call out any side that violates these. As the war progresses, more such debates will arise, and New Delhi must retain its ability to judge and shift its position from “being neutral” and “abstentionist” to one more wholly seized of the issues, and as a leading nation that is able to exercise its “strategic autonomy” on matters of principle, when required.

The Hindu

World Water Day

Use Solar Energy in J&K to
Tap Groundwater

Govt must explore solar energy to irrigate Kandi areas of J&K ,
supplement drinking water needs for migratory population

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Half of the world’s drinking water sources come from Ground Water. Around 40 % of the irrigation facilities are also supplemented by ground water across the world which sustains ecosystems, maintains the base flow of rivers and prevents land subsidence and seawater intrusion. Groundwater is an important part of the climate change adaptation process and is often a solution for people without access to safe water.

During its 30th meeting in Rome, between Jan 31st to Feb 1st 2019, the headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN Water (an interagency mechanism of the United Nations) adopted the theme for 2022 “Groundwater: making the invisible visible”. The theme was actually proposed by the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC) which is a UNESCO centre that works under auspices of World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and is supported by the Government of The Netherlands.

During the 30th UN-Water meeting in Rome participants discussed the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-6) which is related to clean water and sanitation. Participants also addressed ongoing work on SDG 6 indicators and upcoming global awareness-raising events.

In Spite of the fact that enormous groundwater is available in different nations, this invisible gift of nature is out of sight and out of mind for most of the human population. In many areas of Jammu & Kashmir where we have scarcity of drinking water or not enough water is available for irrigation especially in the areas located on hills and Karewas (wodder), authorities can explore pumping up the ground water. In many hilly areas of Chenab and Pir Panjal regions of J&K there are in fact rivers , canals and streams full of water but that is of no use for the population living on top of hills like in Ramban , Doda , Kishtwar , Rajouri or Poonch districts. In many areas the J&K Govt has set up huge borewells under various schemes , but still a lot needs to be done. The uncontrolled and unscientific human activities, urbanisation and population growth and climate variability are rapidly increasing the pressure on groundwater resources especially in Indian states of Delhi , Haryana , Maharashtra or Madhya Pradesh.

Using solar energy to pump out water

The solar water pump market has been growing significantly for the last several years. In the next three to five years due to the increasing application of solar based water pumps , motors in the agriculture sector, a huge growth in this sector is expected. In many states Governments are giving a good amount of subsidy to farmers for setting up solar water pumps. These water pumps are easy to install due to which it is becoming popular among the end user. In India, the solar water pump is mainly used for irrigation and drinking purposes. The solar water pump of capacity 5 HP (horsepower) can deliver about 1,24,000 litres of water per day. Nowadays there are portable solar water pump sets. The solar panels and motor can be taken back by the farmers with them once they are done with irrigation work and the panels can be further used for lighting their homes at night. In India the farmers currently irrigate their fields with more than 30 million water pumping machines. Out of these, 22 million pump-sets operate on electricity, 10 million pumps are diesel based and only 3.50 lakh water pumps work on solar energy. In Jammu & Kashmir, I haven’t come across any solar based water pumping machines in any district till date. These machines can be of great use to apple growers of Kashmir as well. The pump-sets that operate on electricity (grid connected) consume more than 18% of the total annual electricity consumption of India and diesel pump sets consume over 5.5% of the overall diesel import bill. In the year 2017-18 period, the annual electricity subsidy for agriculture alone amounted to over Rs 1.1 trillion (14.7 billion US dollars) and the annual diesel import bill towards agro-



In the case of Jammu & Kashmir , there won’t be any of such challenges as we have huge sources of ground water which only need to be explored. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough electricity available in the upper reaches of J&K and the ground water is thus not properly tapped

pump sets was estimated at around Rs 0.4 trillion (Indian Rupees)

India is one of the biggest agriculture-driven economies, making our farmers front-runners in the race. The agriculture sector alone accounts for nearly 18.33% of India’s electricity consumption. The use of solar-powered water pumps will thus help in reducing electricity consumption and shifting that load to clean energy. Maharashtra is significantly contributing in the Indian solar water pump market and the state offered approximately 95% of capital subsidy to farmers.

Last month, this author along with Chairperson of District Development Council Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan were invited by a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) to Maharashtra’s Amravati and Gadchiroli districts to see the implementation of Forest Rights Act (FRA). We saw a large number of solar water pumps having been established in many remote areas which is not only fulfilling the needs of drinking water for the local tribal population but the water from these pumps is significantly contributing towards agriculture and afforestation programmes as well. I had written a detailed piece on this issue

Challenges

New Delhi based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in a survey conducted around 2019 revealed that the solar water pump scheme started by the Maharashtra government for the farmers in the Vidarbha region had some flaws. The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd had supplied solar pumps in Vidarbha under the Mukhyamantri Saur Krishi Pump Yojana (CMS solar energy pump scheme). Maharashtra Govt had targeted the deployment of one lakh off-grid solar powered agricultural pumps in 3 years in a phased manner with effect from January 1, 2019. A subsidy of 95 % was provided to the farmers under this project.

The CSE survey conducted in April 2019 revealed that the beneficiaries of solar pumps in the Buldhana district in Vidarbha were grossly under-utilised in the area. The survey revealed that the number of hours for irrigation actually decreased after the use of solar pumps, from nearly 800 hours to 600 hours. This was because of depleting ground water level in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. Down to Earth magazine had car-

ried a detailed research article on this issue in its June 2019 issue.

In the case of Jammu & Kashmir , there won’t be any of such challenges as we have huge sources of ground water which only need to be explored. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough electricity available in the upper reaches of J&K and the ground water is thus not properly tapped. If the Government of J&K gives a similar subsidy as is provided by the Government of Maharashtra, our barren lands will get irrigated within a short span of time.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission -JJM as well, the Government can explore providing community based solar pumps as have been provided in many districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

Conclusion

March 22nd is celebrated as World Water Day every year and it highlights a specific aspect of freshwater. As discussed above this year’s annual theme is “Groundwater: making the invisible visible”. If solar based water pumps are provided to farmers of Jammu & Kashmir on subsidized rates , the same will have a great impact especially in unirrigated areas also referred to as Kandi belts in local parlance. The agricultural activities in J&K start in March and end by October and during this period we get enough sunshine, plus our water table is not too deep also. This is the only requirement for solar water pumps. The solar water pumps can be of great use for migratory populations like Gujjars , Bakerwals and Chopans as well who migrate to highland pastures during summer months. As I have observed, the drinking water sources in these pastures are located in low lying areas and the women have to travel a long distance to fetch drinking water. The pasturelands get very bright sunshine and I am sure the water in local springs, streams and or even underground water can be pumped up easily which will be of great use for the local migratory communities and their livestock as well.

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

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is a Srinagar based activist and columnist. He is an Anant Fellow for Climate Action



OBSERVER
MAIL

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Is Hybrid the Future of Work?

I am writing this as a response to a nice write-up that appeared in KASHMIR OBSERVER, dated March 18, 2022, “The Future of Work is Hybrid”

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered the perception to the extent that companies globally are willing to extend the ‘work from home’ concept, and this ‘new normal’ has become the ‘accepted normal’ ever since the outbreak of Coronavirus. When employees work from home, companies benefit on costs in terms of rent, water, electricity and fuel allowances. Work stations worldwide are generally crowded. There

may be a situation of an asymptomatic employee who could potentially infect the whole office, and hence it is better to err on the side of caution.

Though it is a real challenge to work remotely, it also gives an opportunity for one to acquire and hone many new skills like planning, forward-thinking, coordination in times of distress, and so on. In addition, it is natural that when you are working from home, you save a lot of commute time and get to spend it with your family.

But then there are issues that employees face in the ‘work from home’ model. The combination of work

and personal, and collective health anxiety are contributing to a specific kind of burnout brought on by the pandemic. Uncertainty took hold of the entire work-force, leading to stress and worries to emerge. In fact, the emotional trauma from stress has been even higher among remote workers due to the challenges of balancing home life and office work in the same setting. However, there are ways to deal with burnout.

It could be like taking a few deep breaths or smelling a wonderful fragrance, since it is important for our brain to take small breaks from often monotonous tasks. Also talking to

friends and relatives can be helpful as they may give some insights into how you can reduce your stress during the pandemic days.

In the final analysis, a shift towards home working doesn’t mean that an employee has to necessarily work from home always. Often splitting time between home and the workplace is, perhaps, the most productive and profitable solution irrespective of whether Covid will end or not.

Ranganathan Sivakumar
siva19kumar@gmail.com

KASHMIR IN DRUG DRAGNET

When 'Badshah' Belief Gave Birth to a Beast

“

A happy home is the starting place for love, hopes and dreams. I dreamt too and I dreamt big but what followed was life – that which runs oppositely parallel to the tender expectations of human heart; that which drags one from innocence to experience

Asma Majid

It's a busy market place with a shrill of tooting horns. The fruit vendor enumerates his list of fruits in a voice so loud. The autowalla fights with the passenger for his denied extra ten rupees. The shopkeeper slaps clean his goods with the duster. The woman bargains for a few extra mint sprigs. The child caterwauls to have the grossly overpriced toy. A random guy walks through unnoticed while people are engrossed in their own affairs. But I have learnt to seek their attention.

My strangely dusky face, dishevelled demeanour and queer gait that makes them look at me in awe has a long story – untold and even unrecalled before. But today, I summon my memories to play my past once again before these watery eyes.

Among the trio of brothers, I, the middle child of my parents and perhaps the most pampered one never experienced a lack of love as a child. The father, a businessman tried his best to keep us unaware of the crackling effects of financial crunches. He even left no stone unturned to treat my adenoid, an illness that haunted my entire childhood. I sensed it all, more than my brothers could – the financial instabilities that made life far from convenient.

A happy home is the starting place for love, hopes and dreams. I dreamt too and I dreamt big but what followed was life – that which runs oppositely parallel to the tender expectations of human heart; that which drags one from innocence to experience.

Post the ancestral property division, we shifted to a new roughly erected single-storeyed house, the maximum my father could do given his income owing to his lack of dexterity in the field of business. Back in the house of my grandparents, huddled up with my eight fussing cousins in a room of 6x8 which was supposed to be the kid's room, I dreamt of a new big house and father would ensure me of my personal space there.

But as a 14-year-old with mammoth expectations, this house was not an inch near to what I had fantasized. It was rather akin to a lodge or a temporary encampment fit for a night's shelter.

Back in school, I had heard the story of Gulliver among Lilliputs. But here, the case was obverse. Our new abode was a Lilliput among the Gullivers – the towering villas that surrounded our shack and there it stood amid them all, so distinctly small and negligible. My then callow self could not be pacified with the idea that we owned the place and it was home.

New house was followed by new school. On the very first day, I carried the memories of my old pals and their souvenirs with me which included a pack of tattoos, a miniature plastic car, few shiny Pokémon cards and a red hand band. These had been my farewell gifts from those I had grown with and spent my entire childhood. This indeed was my treasure and sensitive to its handling, I made sure to hide these keepsakes in the secret inner pocket of my school bag.



In the school, I was rather a wallflower. I spoke with a lisp and this added to my introversion.

Days passed and I could hardly get along with others. I feared they would tease me for my lisp or that I didn't carry everyday canteen money like they all did and thus kept aloof. Moreover, I had no attraction, no talent enough to lure somebody into my friendship. A boy or two talked to me randomly but no one ever invited me to stay or play along.

Instead of getting accustomed to the new place and the new school, I felt all the more detached. One can relate to the kind of ennui that comes when one tries to adjust to times and ends up a failure. I was never extraordinary at studies in my former school, but now, I began to struggle to get just a little good at it.

Notebooks bereft of brown paper cover, diary not signed by the father, poor grades and lack of interest in the co-curricular activities – these were complaints enough to summon my father now and then to school. He dropped his head in shame there but I received my fair share of scoldings at home. I wasn't obstinate but feigned I was, for I couldn't explain all the complexes I was caught into.

One fine day, as I left the school furtively just to make sure none could trace my path back to my despicable abode, I sensed a heavy tap on my shoulder. Petrified, I looked back to see who it was and with this I never looked forward again. This was the inception of a long journey towards regression and deterioration.

He was tall, dark and skinny, square-jawed, some five to six years older than I was, with intense eyes and curly burgundy hair. He asked me with a grin, "You live in the house with the fencing of corroded roof-sheets, don't you?"

A drop of sweat trickled down my temple as if a worm crawled down my face. Unable to utter anything, I ran as far and as fast as I could. The sense of shame stemming from the reverberations of his words clouded my vision and I stumbled upon a stone and fell. Now I realise that stumbling was but a

foreboding of my eventual fall.

I couldn't sleep that night for his horrible countenance kept me awake. I never saw him for the next couple of days but somewhere I knew he would show up again and so he did.

This encounter was more or less similar to the previous one but this time he politely asked, "Can we be friends?"

There was no scope of refusal. After all the months of loneliness, this was a ray

of hope for companionship. I realised he wasn't as bad as I had deemed him to be.

After a day or two of friendly conversations, he understood my problem and assured me of a personality overhaul – that which would make me the Badshah (the king) and make others look up to me.

The idea of being a Badshah was enticing, plus it required no great effort on my part. All I had to do was to smoke a cigarette. I had seen a distant uncle of mine do so and he had a big car and an iPhone too. So I agreed.

Friends keep each other's secrets and upon his reiterations, I assured him of my complete silence on this matter for the fear of losing my newly-found friend, Kaif.

It was only two weeks after Kaif introduced me to heroin that I started to feel it seeping through my body and not leaving a single vein dry. My secret inner pocket was ready to hide the new treasure. Kaif would call smoking heroin a recreation just like the ones we did in the play-time periods at school. But this recreation had more to it than mere play.

When I was a freshman, that was like a fun state and I started smoking whatever cigarettes Kaif offered me characterized with increased dose and variety. I began to like it and didn't want to stop.

In medias res, I lost my grandfather, my longtime compadre and with his passage from the world, I became a wreck.

But after this, I became unambivalent re-

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One fine day, as I left the school furtively just to make sure none could trace my path back to my despicable abode, I sensed a heavy tap on my shoulder. Petrified, I looked back to see who it was and with this I never looked forward again. This was the inception of a long journey towards regression and deterioration

garding my recreation which was now my only refuge from the appalling face of life.

Thus I repudiated all thoughts coming down from my super-ego that spoke against my refuge.

From moderately fair, my skin tone assumed a dusky colour. My body movements became involuntary and all of it did not go unnoticed by my parents. Dismissing my initial fits of hysteria as mere tantrums, much to their shock, they finally encountered my incognito self – that which I had been trying hard to hide so far.

As my addiction got worse, my parents became desperate to cure me. The drill was usual, they put me in rehabilitation centres, one after the other, but I had mastered the art of elusion. Nothing could bind me now that I had already broken free of the manacles of my troubled life.

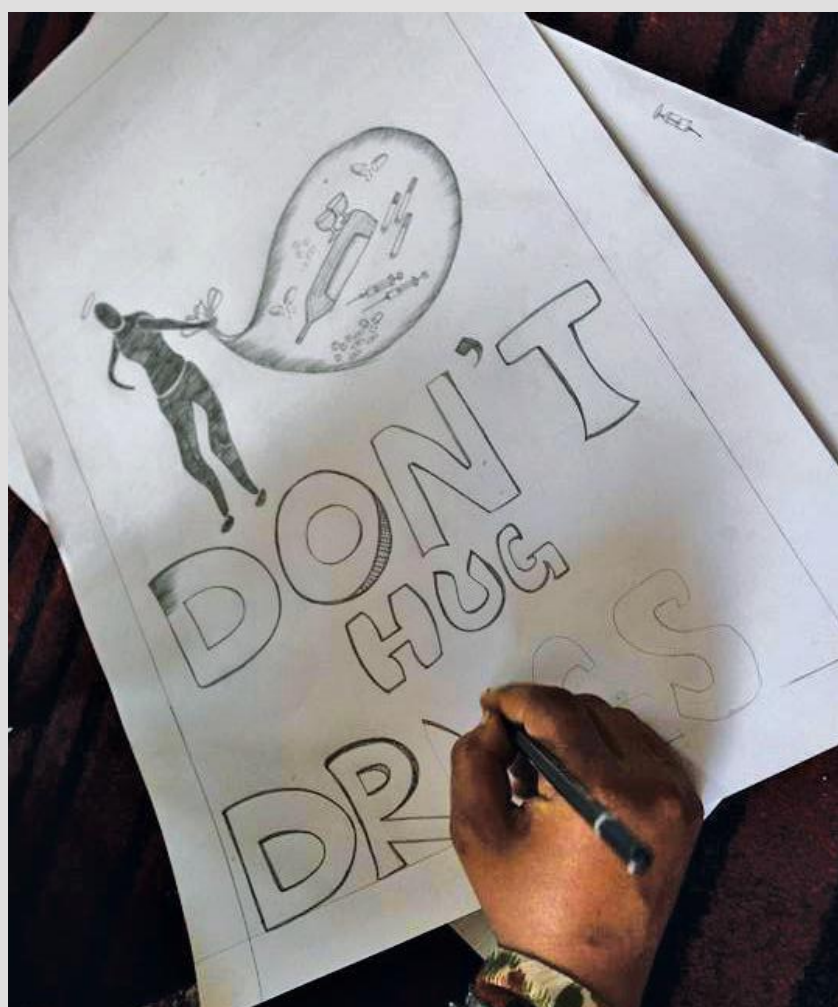
Discharged from school, I had now the entire time in the world for my recreation. Kaif had his restrictions and I was supposed to have my own money to make things work.

With each passing day, my desire to have more rose its head like an intoxicated bull. My feral instincts had by now completely overruled my docile self. Whenever I was denied money, I would lose control and break things, bang the doors, slash the windowpanes, push whoever tried to subdue the animal in me.

No good word, no warm hugs and no patting of hair would calm me down. I was beyond reproach and unruly. My recreation had held my soul captive and I had bowed down in utter submission.

Five years and still counting, my life is a sore. What I started off with as a fun thing has become a necessity for my body without which the edifice of my being might crumble down to the ground. It's like my body is inhabited by a beast and all my family's efforts for my restoration are for nix.

I lack the resolve to get rehabilitated. They all say drugs would quadruple my chances of dying but then who lives forever? I always wanted to escape my life but had no talent to escape into. So, this, my recreation is my escapism, my new escapism!



Hopes Of Survivors Among 132 People Aboard In China's Plane Crash Recede

Agenceis

BEIJING: Hopes to find the survivors among the 132 people travelling by the crashed Chinese aircraft in the thick forests in the southern Guangxi province on Monday receded as the night fell making efforts by scores of rescuers difficult.

The Boeing 737 aircraft of China Eastern Airlines, which flew from Kunming to Guangzhou, crashed in Tengxian County near the city of Wuzhou, causing a mountain fire in the worst air disaster in the country in over a decade.

State television showed teams of rescuers armed with search lights scurrying through the sprawling area in the forests on the remote mountainous area Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region as darkness enveloped the forest region.

The 132 people included 123 passengers and nine crew members, the Civil Aviation Administration of China said on its website.

While the airline has announced that no foreigners were on board, families of some crew members from the crashed Eastern Airlines flight have arrived in the company's branch office in Yunnan Province and they were being assisted to work on follow-up issues , state-run CGTN-TV reported.

A "shocked" Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered "swift action to identify the cause of the crash



and to strengthen the safety overhaul of the civil aviation sector to ensure the absolute safety of the sector and people's lives, Xinhua reported.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has promptly mobilized rescue forces in the city of Wuzhou to the crash site of the China Eastern Airlines flight, the Southern Theater Command said on Monday.

According to the official media, the plane sharply descended onto the mountainous area and crashed.

Footage shot by locals in their phones showed the area of the crash was engulfed by massive mountainous fire

with explosions heard in the background.

There is no official word here yet on the number of casualties or survivors except speculation about the unlikelihood of survivors.

The crash shattered China's airlines record of over 100 million continuous hours of safe flight as of February 19.

The last domestic fatal air accident was in 2010, when an Embraer passenger plane crashed in Yichun, Heilongjiang province, killing 42 people.

As soon as the plane crashed in the forest area, Chinese officials rushed hundreds of fire brigades as well as rescue teams to find the survivors before the night fell.

The fire has been put out and the rescue operation is underway, said Chen Jie, an official with the regional emergency management department.

In his instructions issued soon after the incident, President Xi said he was shocked to learn about the incident involving China Eastern Airlines flight MU5735 from Kunming to Guangzhou.

He ordered the immediate launch of emergency response, all-out search and rescue efforts and proper settlement of the aftermath, Xinhua reported.

He said swift action should be taken to identify the cause of the crash and to strengthen the safety overhaul of the civil aviation

sector to ensure the absolute safety of the sector and people's lives.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang urged efforts to console the families of the victims and provide them with assistance, release accurate information in a timely manner, conduct a serious probe into the incident, and take strong measures to strengthen the safety of civil aviation.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said via Twitter that it was ready to assist in investigation efforts if asked.

Boeing China said it was aware of the media reports of the plane crash and is working to gather more information.

Meanwhile, China Eastern Airlines - one of China's three major air carriers - has grounded its all Boeing 737-800 after the crash on Monday, company officials said.

The airline also made its website have a black-and-white homepage after the crash as it prepared to announce the casualties.

According to news portal The Paper, a staff member at Guangzhou's Baiyun International Airport said that flight MU5735 from Kunming to Guangzhou has not arrived at its destined time, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

The domestic flight was scheduled to take off from Kunming at 1.10 pm (local time) and arrive at Guangzhou at 2.52 pm (local time) and is now marked out of reach on Baiyun airport's app.

Mandatory For Central Universities To Use CUET Scores For Admission To UG Programmes: UGC chairman

Agenceis

New Delhi: UGC chairman M Jagadesh Kumar on Monday said the central universities will have to use Common University Entrance Test (CUET) scores to admit students to undergraduate programmes this year.

He said the CUET, in all likelihood, will be conducted in the first week of July.

This means that apart from the eligibility criterion of different universities, Class 12 board examination marks will not have any bearing on the admission of the students.

"From the 2022-23 academic year, the National Testing Agency will be conducting the CUET for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. All the central universities will have to consider CUET scores for admissions to their programmes," Kumar said at a press briefing.

There are 45 central universities funded by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The syllabus of the CUET will be mirrored with the Class 12 model syllabus of the NCERT, Kumar said.

The CUET will have Section 1A, Section 1B, general test and domain-specific subjects. Section 1A, which will be compulsory, will be in 13 languages and candidates can choose the language of their choice.

The options are English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Section 1B

is optional and for students who want to opt for another language apart from the ones that are a part of Section 1A. Some of the languages on offer are French, Arabic, German, etc, he added.

Under the domain-specific subjects, a candidate can choose up to a maximum of six domains that they wish to pursue at the undergraduate level, Kumar said.

There are some universities that have general test as eligibility criteria for admission to even domain-specific courses so that is a part of the CUET, he said.

The UGC chairman said the reservation policy of the universities will not be impacted due to the CUET.

"The universities can enroll candidates for the general seats as well as for the reserved seats on the basis of CUET scores. It will not impact the existing admission and reservation policy that are in accordance with the Ordinances of the varsity," he said.

Explaining further, he said if a university has a certain percentage of seats reserved for local students, it will be able to retain that.

"But the thing is that these students will also have to take admission through CUET, he added.

Central universities like Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) reserve half of their seats for the minority students. Both the universities are yet to take a call on CUET.

SC refuses to entertain plea of sarpanches for declaring 21 'disputed' villages as part of AP

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea of five sarpanches seeking that 21 villages whose territory is claimed by both Andhra Pradesh and Odisha since 1968 be declared a part of the former.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Surya Kant also refused to quash the panchayat poll notification issued by the Odisha government for these disputed 21 villages.

The bench noted that a suit under Article 131 is pending adjudication in the matter and it cannot grant such a relief of declaration of 21 villages as part of Andhra Pradesh on a plea filed under Article 32 of the Constitution.

At the outset, advocate Bina Madhavan, appearing for the sarpanches, said that this is an Article 32 petition filed by elected sarpanches of Salur municipal town of Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh.

She said that since Andhra Pradesh came into existence these 21 villages are part of Vizianagaram district but a jurisdiction claim has been raised by Odisha.

"Since Andhra Pradesh came into existence, it has been conducting elections in these 21 villages," she said, adding that this plea may be tagged along with the Article 131 suit filed by Odisha, the poll notification be quashed and status quo be declared.

The bench asked when the election was scheduled as per the notification. Madhavan submitted that the elections were held in February.

The bench said that the petitioners need to challenge the election and it cannot subvert the elections and declaration of results under the Article 32 petition.

Madhavan said that they had filed the petition on February 11 before the conduct of the elections. The bench said that it has serious questions over the maintainability of the plea as it would open a Pandora's box.



Advocate Siblu Shankar Mishra, appearing for the Odisha government, said that the Article 131 suit is pending and court has also passed orders on a contempt plea.

On February 12 last year, the top court had asked Andhra Pradesh to file its response on a plea filed by Odisha seeking contempt action against senior officials of the southern state for notifying panchayat polls in three "disputed area" villages of the petitioner state.

The Odisha government had contended that the Andhra Pradesh government is conducting the panchayat elections in the disputed area controlled by it.

The top court had then sought a reply from the Andhra Pradesh government on the contempt plea.

More than five decades since the first status quo order on the territorial jurisdiction dispute with AP over 21 villages, Odisha had moved the top court once again seeking contempt action against officials of the southern

state for notifying panchayat polls in three of its villages.

The Naveen Patnaik government had said that the notification amounts to invading Odisha's territory.

The dispute over territorial jurisdiction over 21 villages popularly called as Kotia Group of villages first reached the top court in 1968 when Odisha on the basis of three notifications -- issued on December 1, 1920, October 8, 1923 and October 15, 1927 -- claimed that Andhra Pradesh had trespassed into its well-defined territory.

During the pendency of the suit filed by Odisha, the top court had on December 2, 1968 directed both the states to maintain status quo till the disposal of the suit and said, There shall be no further ingress or egress on the territories in dispute, on the part of either party."

The suit filed by Odisha under Article 131 (the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction over any dispute arising between the

states or between the Centre and a state) of the Constitution was finally dismissed on technical grounds by the top court on March 30, 2006, and with the consent of both the states it directed that status quo be maintained till the dispute is resolved.

Now, the Odisha government has sought contempt action against AP's three senior officials -- Mude Hari Jawaharlal (contemnor-1), collector of Vizianagaram district; Adityanath Das, Chief Secretary of AP (contemnor-2), and N Ramesh Kumar, State Election Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh (contemnor-3).

"Apparently, the said notification issued by contemnor number 1 in unison with contemnor number 2 and 3 is to invade into the territory of the petitioner state at the cost of wilful violation of order of this court. Therefore the contemnors are to be called upon to explain as to why contempt proceedings shall not be drawn against them and appropriate

punishment shall not be awarded to them, it had said.

The Odisha government has sought notice to the contemnors as to why contempt proceedings not be initiated against them for wilfully violating orders dated December 2, 1968 and March 30, 2006 passed by the court in the original suit.

The petitioner state of Odisha is invoking the contempt jurisdiction of this court against the alleged contemnor for having wilfully and deliberately violated the order dated December 2, 1968 and the judgement dated March 30, 2006 passed by this court in original suit filed by State of Orissa and State of Andhra Pradesh, the plea said.

The Odisha government further claimed that administratively and otherwise, it has been in control of these villages but of late clandestinely the contemnors have entered into the impugned act of contempt by which the order of this court has been violated .

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Civilian Shot

and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances leading to these terror crimes," the spokesperson added.

Pertinently, today's twin attacks came two days after Mohammad Akram, a carpenter from Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh was shot at and injured by militants in Arihal area of Shopian district on Saturday last.

Three CRPF men were also reportedly injured on the weekend in twin grenade attacks by militants in twin districts of Pulwama and Shopian.

J&K To Attract Rs 70,000

in Sharjah is also part of the delegation.

"The delegates are looking for avenues where investment can be made in Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

About the four-day programme, Sinha said, "I am hopeful that its good results will be witnessed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir."

Asked about the sectors that are expected to attract investment, he said a clear picture will emerge tomorrow. "The investment is going to take place in both regions of Jammu and Kashmir in different areas and sectors," he said.

According to the officials, J&K is aiming to attract new investment in industries and tourism by highlighting key opportunities and growth sectors to the delegation.

The officials said the delegation will also visit the famous hill resort of Pahalgam in south and Gulmarg in north Kashmir to explore investment opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sector.

They said there will be pitch presentations by several importers, exporters and start-ups in J&K along with an overview of the cottage and silk

industries, product displays and artisan meets.

The programme is in line with the initiatives taken by the government towards creating favourable infrastructure for export promotion and an entrepreneurial-friendly environment, the officials added.

Urges People

Convention Centre here on Monday, an official spokesperson said.

"The present government, for the last one and half year, is making sustained efforts to ensure reliable power supply to consumers, besides reducing transmission losses and improving distribution efficiency," the LG said.

According to the spokesperson, the LG said that in a major step towards ensuring uninterrupted power supply, the areas being installed with Smart Meters will be made curtailment free along with supply of quality power to the end user.

"From today, 6603 smart meter households connected to 4 feeders of Jammu will receive quality electricity," the LG said.

"I appeal to the people to install smart meters and help the administration in controlling theft and reducing wasteful consumption," he added.

According to the spokesperson, Sinha said that this move will enable consumers to monitor their power consumption behavior and regulate it accordingly.

"The Pre-paid feature, to be enabled in the coming days, will provide desired flexibility in the consumption of electricity to the consumers," the LG said, adding "Similar arrangements are being emulated in Kashmir as well,"

MPs Panel Asks

resolve the procedural/ administrative issues which are delaying the recruitment," reads the report which was

tabled in the Parliament on March 14.

According to the report, the UT of J&K informed the panel that under fast track recruitment, 20,323 posts have been advertised by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board since the year 2020 and presently selection process has been completed with respect to 9205 posts, remaining selection are under process at various stages.

"2119 selections for gazetted posts have been made by the Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission in various departments and selection for 726 gazetted posts is in progress," the report states--(KNO)

Situation Along

mentioning Pakistan, he said Indian security forces deployed along the western borders are "adequately poised to respond to any challenge posed by adversary across the entire conflict".

Referring to the international border (IB) with Pakistan, Bhatt said there are indications of an "emerging narco-terror nexus sponsored by inimical elements across the border".

"The situation along Line of Control (LoC) remains stable post the Directorate General of Military Operations (DGMOS) understanding of February 2021," Bhatt said.

The minister said both armies have exercised restraint in the interest of maintaining peace along the LoC.

"However, the situation is being closely monitored and Indian Army remains prepared to thwart any threat from inimical elements as also to respond in case of any escalation along the Line of Control," he said.

Bhatt said the security situation along western borders (IB sector) remains largely stable.

"However, there are indications of an emerging narco-terror nexus

sponsored by inimical elements across the border aimed at causing instability, especially along the border areas," he said.

"Our forces along Western borders are adequately poised to respond to any challenge posed by adversary across entire conflict spectrum," he added.

To a separate question, Bhatt said a total of 91 officers have retired in lower rank (Wing Commander) despite having served in the higher rank of Group Captain in the Indian Air Force. He, however, did not give the reason.

'Hot And Dry'

was 1.4°C above normal for the place, he said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 0.6°C against 1.8°C on the previous night, the official said. While minus 2.3°C is normal for the world famous skiing resort, the temperature was 2.9°C above normal for the place in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a low of 5.5°C against 8.2°C on the previous night. The temperature was 2.4°C more than normal, the official told Global News Service.

Jammu recorded a low of 18.6°C against 20.4°C on the previous night, the official said. The temperature was 3.7°C above normal for J&K's winter capital during this time of the year, he said.

Banihal recorded a low of 6.8°C, Batote had a minimum of 11.7°C while Baderwah recorded a low of 8.2°C, the official said.

Ladakh's Leh recorded a minimum of 1.5°C against 1.1°C previous night while automatic Kargil station recorded a low of 0.2°C.

Highway Reopens

road clearance agencies removed debris, they said.

Light motor vehicles were allowed

from both Jammu and Srinagar, and traffic was moving smoothly when last reports were received, the officials said.

When Nauroz's

have settled in civil lines. That Yakjut [togetherness] which was there some 50 years back was because of this reason that no one particular faith dominated any area."

In those days, Shahid says, festivals were purely celebrated as a part of culture.

But now, when many brag about saving the Kashmiri culture by introducing a new flavor into the centuries old tradition, argues Zareef Ahmad Zareef, the festival has literally lost in interpretations.

"Nauroz used to charm people of different faiths and bring them together in Kashmir," the celebrated Kashmiri chronicler says. "Nauroz wasn't just an Iranian culture, it was a festival that had spread its shackles deep into our culture and tradition."

After the 1990s, Zareef rues, the Old Srinagar changed and its culture ended.

"What remained with us was something that had no roots in our culture," he says.

"Back then, Shias used to invite Sunnis for a lunch on Nauroz but today because of the taboos created by us, that practice is no longer visible."

Director NIT

pertaining to the expansion of campus, construction of additional infrastructure, augmentation of water supply, drainage, and sewerage system, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, , while interacting with the Director advised him to take all needful measures for nurturing the students of the institute with professional excellence, promoting vibrant, and entrepreneurial environment,

besides strengthening institute-industry linkages to promote job creation and develop new start-up ventures for creating better prospects for the younger generation.

Engineer Found

Mohammad Khan, a resident of Hardbare Kaskoot was found dead inside his house on Monday morning.

The body was later shifted to SDH Banihal for post-mortem purpose.

A police officer confirmed the incident to a local news agency KDC and said that police have taken cognizance and started an investigation in this regard.

"The body has been handed over to his family members after completing medico-legal formalities," he added.

8 Injured After

and five minors, officials said.

They said that the snowslide hit the sumo vehicle (JK09 5693) at Sadna top at around 12:30 p.m.

Soon a rescue operation was launched by civil and army men along with locals. All eight passengers were rescued in injured condition and shifted to Sub District Hospital Tanghdar and condition of all but one is stated to be "stable", an official said. One among the injured women is being shifted from the SDH for suffering "bit serious injuries", he said, as per news agency GNS.

He identified the injured as Toffeq Ahmad (16), Ajmal Rafoeq(13), Abdul Rasheed (40), his wife Zameeda Begum (36), their daughter Sadiya Rashid (13), Sarwar Jan (70) and rehyan (7), all locals from Badharkote and Ibarkote areas.

Minor Dies After

Kupwara for treatment.

The doctors however after initial assessment declared the boy as brought dead on arrival. A police official concerned also confirmed the incident. (GNS)

MD JKPCCE Inspects Ongoing Works In Anantnag District



Directs Concerned To Pace Up Works For Early Completion

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Managing Director, JKPCCE, R.K. Shavan on Monday visited District Anantnag and inspected the progress and to review the pace of works under execution with JKPCCE Ltd.

During his visit, he also identified bottlenecks and passed instructions to resolve them. The projects visited today are summarized as below:

Construction of Tourist Facilities at Harnag Anantnag: The work is being executed by JKPCCE Ltd. at an estimated cost of Rs. 1373.30 lakh. Engineers were directed to complete the project at the earliest and also submit the work done claims to the Project Authority so that timely payments are made to contractor.

Construction of District Hospital Anantnag: The hospital building is already completed and functional except Block A. Managing Director apprised that the matter regarding approval for construction of G+4 instead of G+3 was already taken up by Principal GMC Anantnag with Additional Chief Secretary Health & Medical Education.

Construction of Medical College at Anantnag: The work is being executed by JKPCCE Ltd. at an estimated cost of Rs. 11653

lakh. Project Manager was directed to complete the lecture hall before 7th April 2022 and also submit the DPR for allied works including internal Roads to the Project Authority at the earliest.

Construction of Hostel Block at Govt. Polytechnic College Larkipora Anantnag: The work is being executed by JKPCCE Ltd. at an estimated cost of Rs. 500 lakh. The on-spot instructions were given to complete the work at the earliest.

Construction of Govt. Degree College Veering: The work is being executed by JKPCCE Ltd. at an estimated cost of Rs. 1152.78 lakh. Project Manager was directed to speed up the work and execute the work strictly within the Provision of Approved DPR.

Construction of Flats at Transit Accommodation Machbawan, Anantnag: Managing Director visited the site identified for the construction of above flats for Kashmiri Migrant Employees.

Construction of Trauma Hospital Bijbehara: The work is being executed by JKPCCE Ltd. at an estimated cost of Rs. 1304 lakh. The Hospital Building and Doctor quarters are completed and functional. On spot instructions were given to handover the Electrical & Mechanical components to Project Authority at the earliest.

It was reiterated that extra care should be taken to ensure quality work.

The Managing Director was accompanied by Project Managers of the works under execution.

3 Kashmir Districts In 'Gold' List Of Highest TB Reduction

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Three districts from Kashmir have shown 60-80 percent reduction in Tuberculosis cases in the last five years.

A report issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under the Government of India's National TB Elimination Programme for the year 2021, says that three districts from Kashmir division – Anantnag, Kupwara and Pulwama – have shown 60-80 percent reduction in TB cases in the last five years and have secured gold medals under the programme.

Five other districts in India which have secured gold medals are Malappuram and Wayanad in Kerala, Khargone in Madhya Pradesh, Ahmednagar in Maharashtra, and Purba Medinipur in West Bengal.

As per norms, districts or States/UTs which reported a decline of 20 per cent could have filed the claim under the 'Bronze' category which comes with a monetary award of Rs 2 lakh, those with a decline of 40 per cent could have filed the claim under 'Silver', and those with 60 per cent could have filed their claim for 'Gold'. Those with 80 per cent reduction were to be conferred with 'TB Free' status with a

monetary award of Rs 10 lakh as part of sub-national certification for TB Free districts and States.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Anantnag, Kupwara and Pulwama have shown progress of 60-80 percent reduction in TB cases and have claimed Gold category while Baramulla district has shown progress of about 20 percent and is under Bronze category along with 55 other districts in the entire country.

Earlier, the Ministry had sought claims from States/UTs, districts of the country for sub national certification in 2021 and 10 States/UTs filed claims. However, no state/UT managed to secure gold but Kerala, Dadra Nagar Haveli and Pondicherry secured silver while Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura and Ladakh secured Bronze. J&K and Karnataka failed to get any success as a whole State/UT.

Similarly, 201 districts of 33 states/UTs had filed claims under different categories in which 8 including three from Kashmir secured gold, 27 districts (none from J&K) secured silver, and 56 districts including Baramulla from Kashmir secured Bronze. The rest failed to get any success—(KNO)

Govt Committed For Ecologically Sustainable Development: LG

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Asserting that his administration is committed for ecologically sustainable development of Jammu and Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday that sustainable forest management and efficient use of its resources is the key to combat climate change and ensure a prosperous ecosystem for future generations.

The LG made these remarks during an event held here at the Convocation Centre to celebrate the International Day of Forests, an official spokesperson said.

The event under the theme "Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption" aims to raise awareness on combating climate change, environmental conservation, efficient use of forests for prosperity and well-being of current and future generations.

Speaking on the occasion, the spokesperson said that the LG termed the initiative as a significant effort to raise awareness among people for the protection of invaluable forests and making them realize their responsibilities to save Forests.

The LG, he said, observed that Sustainable Forest Management and efficient use of its resources is the key to combat climate change and ensure a prosperous ecosystem for future generations.

He said Sinha reiterated J&K government's commitment towards ensuring ecologically sustainable development and said that the biggest challenge today is to create a fine balance between man and nature.

"The wisdom and the experience of local communities must be utilized to preserve our forests and natural habitats," the LG said.

Highlighting the important role of forests in climate change mitigation, the spokesperson said that the LG called for involvement of PRIs, and other non-government institutions working at gross root level in forest protection and conservation efforts.

"This will prove to be an important step towards participatory governance in natural resource management," Sinha said.

According to the spokesperson, the LG further underlined that Forestry and Soil Conservation works should aim towards provision and augmentation of water in Kandi areas.

"The 'Green J&K Drive'; the 'One Beat Guard, One Village' initiative; 'Har Gaon Hariyal' campaign; besides promotion of eco-tourism through 'Tourist Village' network and thrust on development of viable wood based industries are proving to be strong efforts to increase forest cover conservation," Sinha said.



'Working On Policy For Ukraine Evacuated Students'

JAMMU: The government of India and the Jammu & Kashmir administration is deeply concerned about the future of the Ukraine evacuated students and working on a policy so they can complete their studies in the country itself, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Monday.

The LG made these remarks at Raj Bhavan here on Monday during an interaction with MBBS students of J&K who have returned from Ukraine, an official spokesperson said.

He said the students accompanied by Arvind Gupta, Secretary Jammu & Kashmir BJP expressed gratitude for the efforts made by the government for their evacuation from the war hit country. Through a memorandum, the spokesperson said, they also expressed their gratitude towards PM Narendra Modi for the successful conduct of "Operation Ganga", which led to safe return of Indian students,

who were stuck in Ukraine.

"The students shared their experiences about how they were brought out of the war zone and reached their homes safely. They were thankful to the local administration for working as a bridge between the parents and the government," he said.

During the meeting, the spokesperson said, the MBBS students studying in different years shared their worries about future studies due to the prevailing situation in Ukraine. The students, he said, requested the LG for helping them to continue their studies in India.

"The Lt Governor paid a patient hearing to the students and said that the Government of India and Union Territory government is deeply concerned about their future and working on a policy so they can complete their studies in the country itself," the spokesperson added.

The LG, as per the spokesperson stressed that it is important to ensure rights of traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in the nature's lap for generations are not infringed upon.

"The historic implementation of Forest Rights Act in the UT under the leadership of the respected Prime Minister has benefitted large population of our tribal brothers dependent on forests," he said.

The spokesperson said that the LG also stressed on the need to modernize the Forest and Wildlife management system and involving the forest dwellers in the social movement for the conservation of the environment.

Sinha, he said, further advised the Forest department to encourage and recognize the contribution of women in forestry and wildlife conservation.

"A sapling should be planted in every village in the name of a newborn girl child to create awareness among the present and future generations about the rights of our daughters, and de-

veloping consciousness amongst the people about our natural heritage," the LG said.

Earlier, the spokesperson said that the LG conferred UT level awards to front line staff of Forest and Wildlife Department for their outstanding contribution in protection of forests and wildlife, afforestation, and plantation works.

"I congratulate all the UT level awardees for their exceptional service in Forest and Wildlife Conservation. The Forest Department's endeavors towards the growth of sustainable forest economy and support to stakeholders dependent on forests, creating livelihood opportunities, especially for women SHGs are also appreciable," Sinha said.

During the event, the LG released report on City Biodiversity Index of Jammu and Srinagar cities, Wildlife Atlas of J&K and launched an Android App "Haryali" developed by the Social Forestry Department to facilitate the plant distribution schemes of Social Forestry Department.

Student Enrolment In J&K Govt Colleges Six Times Higher Than Pvt Colleges

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In Jammu and Kashmir, the student enrolment in government-run colleges was six times higher than the private colleges.

Out of the total students enrolled in both private and government colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, only 14 percent students were enrolled in private colleges.

According to the official figures, out of the total students

enrolled in private and government colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, only 14.19 percent students were enrolled in the private colleges.

The figures revealed in the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) states that a total of 22,577.1 were enrolled in the private and government colleges of Jammu and Kashmir.

It further states that the total student enrolment in the private un-aided colleges was

28,975 while in the private aided colleges was only 3083.

The AISHE figures further reveal that in the private colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, a total of 32,058 students were enrolled while in the government colleges the student enrolment was six times higher than the private colleges.

Till the last survey conducted by AISHE, a total of 193,713 students were enrolled in the government colleges of Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

August 5, 2019 'Black Day' For J&K: Bukhari

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Apni Party president Al-taf Bukhari on Monday termed August 5, 2019 as black day for Jammu and Kashmir and said the people are facing multiple issues including loot of their resources in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370.

He claimed that the BJP will taste a "crushing defeat" in the next assembly elections for its "anti-people" policies.

I want to ask those people who did injustice with J-K on August 5, 2019 - the day we consider as black day - that their perception about Article 370 being the stumbling block in the development has failed, Bukhari said, addressing a public rally at Vijaypur in Samba district.

He said the 200-year-old J and K state was reduced to a Union Territory and one of its parts, Ladakh, was also separated after creating a perception among the people that the scrapping of Article 370 was important to allow development in the region.

In last four years of your rule, we have not seen any development. Instead, the mining and wine mafia from UP and Bihar have taken over the natural resources and started unchecked loot, he said, expressing anger over the growing unemployment, underdevelopment and poor health care facilities at the village level.

He said the Apni Party would

not allow these outsiders in J-K.

The resources of J-K belong to the people of the erstwhile state and if we come to power, we will throw them out of Lakhampur.

He said after the revocation of Article 370, the people are facing multiple issues and there is a need to have an elected government.

It seems that until an elected government comes to power, the present form of government will loot the resources using the outsiders, he alleged.

He questioned those who celebrated the abrogation of special status and said time has come when people have to stand up like Punjab and fight back to throw the mafia out of J-K.

We have to fight like people in Punjab where they changed the traditional political parties and made a choice for a better future. Therefore, the people of J-K should also support the Apni Party for equitable development and employment, Bukhari said.

Questioning the snatching of land from the people in Jammu's different districts including Samba and Kathua on the pretext of anti-encroachment drive, he said it was not the right of the government to evict people from the land which they cultivated for decades.

We will not allow harassment of the people in J-K. The Apni Party will fight it back and restore the rights of the people on such lands which belong to them for a long time, he said.



Demolition Drive Carried Out In Rajouri

Observer News Service

RAJOURI: A team of the concerned officers from the BRO and District Administration on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Vikas Kundal visited Salani bridge and demolished an unauthorized structure which was being constructed there, an official spokesperson said Monday.

The concerned officer from the BRO informed that construction was in contravention of the Ribbon development act Samvat 2007.

He further informed that the said land had been acquired for construction of Rajouri Thanamandi Road. This piece of land was there on the already constructed steel bridge by BRO.

"After ascertaining the illegal encroachment, the team immediately demolished the structure", he said.

Moreover, the District Administration and BRO have also appealed to the public to construct buildings as authorised in the Ribbon development act Samvat 2007 and don't create any bottlenecks in the way of development.

KP Activist Alleges Harassment Over Remarks On 'The Kashmir Files'

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A prominent Kashmiri Pandit activist on Monday alleged he was harassed by "goons of the BJP" over his remarks on 'The Kashmir Files' movie, a charge refuted by the party as baseless and concocted.

Sunil Pandita (47) said he has informed the police on the phone, and that he will be visiting the police station shortly to lodge a written complaint.

The police, however, said they are yet to receive a complaint.

Pandita claimed that dozens of motorcycle-borne "BJP goons" harassed and threatened him during a rally in support of the movie on Sunday. "They were drunk, they came outside my residence and used foul language against me for over half-an-hour. My wife fainted twice and was so afraid that she did not let me step out of home," he told PTI.

He also claimed that he received a number of threatening phone calls for "speaking the truth".

Reacting to the allegation, Jammu and Kashmir state press secretary of the BJP Pardeep Mahotra said the party did not organise any rally in support of the movie anywhere and Pandita's allegations were baseless.

Mahotra also hinted that Pandita may be either working at the behest of someone to defame the BJP or was using the movie for cheap publicity.

"I checked with the party's migrant cell at Jagti camp and was informed that there was no rally organised by the party in support of the movie, 'The Kashmir Files'," he said.

Quoting the BJP's Jagti unit, Mahotra said the rally was taken out by some youth of the community on their own from the Jagti to the Purkho camp.

"Pandita's utterances have hurt the sentiments of his com-

munity, which has welcomed the movie as a true representation leading to their exodus in the 1990s," he said.

A migrant from Handwara in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, Pandita openly voiced his concerns over the recently released movie, terming it a "one-sided" story aimed at widening the gap between Muslims and Hindus.

The activist, who lives in the Jagti migrant camp on the outskirts of Jammu, however, said he was not against the movie but the "politics of polarisation and continuous exploitation of the pandit community".

"I felt the need to make people aware of the movie as I am the reality. This did not go down well with the BJP, which has largely exploited the community for its vote bank," he said.

Pandita said the picture is not going to help them return and resettle in the valley. "The fact of the matter is that many of our members are living a pathetic life in the camps and the picture has only helped in widening the gap between Muslims and Hindus," he added.

A college or a hospital for the community would have been better than making such a movie, the activist said.

Mentioning that he was not a Congress supporter, Pandita said former prime minister Manmohan Singh had sanctioned some 6,000 jobs for the community in the valley and the current government was yet to complete that process.

He said the people needed to understand the "dirty game" behind the making of the movie and they should not play into the hands of those bent on pitting one religion against another.

"We should support each other and maintain communal harmony and brotherhood to frustrate the communal forces," Pandita said.

Transforming J&K

Breaking Shackles Women Fast Marching Towards Entrepreneurship Journey With UMEED

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir women entrepreneurs in the Self Help Groups from various districts across the UT are scripting numerous success stories towards transforming their lives and the rural economy as well.

These successful business women are fast marching towards their entrepreneurship journey with UMEED scheme of J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) aided by training and soft loans.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission is being run in J&K as Jammu and Kashmir State Rural Livelihoods Mission (Umeed). The UMEED is turning the wheel of transformation for J&K women to become progressive and self-employed entrepreneurs.

The Rural Livelihood Mission aims to reduce poverty by building strong

grassroots institutions of poor, engaging them in gainful livelihood interventions and ensuring appreciable improvement in their income on a sustainable basis.

JKRLM has now emerged as a movement with one lakh rural women brought under the ambit of this ambitious Mission in the current financial year making it a network of 5 lakh women treading the path towards economic development. UMEED has the potential to give wings to aspirations of rural women who dream of becoming economically independent.

Jammu and Kashmir State Rural Livelihoods Mission (Umeed) has a mandate to reach out to 66 per cent of the rural population across the erstwhile 125 blocks linking them to sustainable livelihood opportunities. The mission nurtures these women beneficiaries till they come out of pov-

erty and enjoy a decent quality of life, informed an official spokesperson.

The programme, he added, is under implementation in 96 blocks across the 20 districts. So far, 405,226 poor women have been brought within the fold of SHGs while 4185 Village Organizations (VOs) and 442 Cluster Level federations have been formed. Besides, 46,720 SHGs have been constituted and uploaded on MIS. The members have contributed Rs. 135.98 crore as their own internal savings. The bank accounts have been opened for all the SHGs thus achieving 100 per cent target.

In March 2019, Pammi Devi along with other Self Help Group members of Bishnah block undertook a 30 day long training programme initiated by JKRLM UMEED at the Block Training Centre. They acquired the skills of making Jams, pickles, sauces, chutneys and concentrates. The training

was a part of JKRLM's vision of making the rural women self-reliant enabling them to start a lucrative livelihood for themselves.

Seeing her zest for making her life meaningful and become an earning hand for her family, the Mission motivated and helped her to start a food processing and preservation unit in Rehail in convergence with the department of Horticulture in April 2019. The Mission provided her a loan of around Rs 2 lakh from CLF and helped her obtain subsidy from the Department of Horticulture. It turned out to be a very successful venture with the beneficiary ladies earning over Rs 62,000 in 2019.

They got the opportunity to sell their products in SARAS fair in Delhi and other local markets. It has become a group initiative as around 7 ladies from various SHGs have also joined hands to work together in this unit.

Similarly, encouraged by the enabling atmosphere created by the government Reecha Sharma, SHG member from Kishtwar district, has established disposable products unit and provided employment to four other members of the group.

An official at UMEED says that hundreds of women are not only scripting their success stories in Jammu and Kashmir but are motivating others to come out of poverty and become successful entrepreneurs.

According to the officials, Umeed is immensely helping the women entrepreneurs to exhibit and market their products. Women Haat Srinagar provides a platform for the SHG members to exhibit their products and services. Every year a minimum of 5000 women get a chance to exhibit their products. He informed that Umeed Women Haat Jammu is also coming up soon.

Advisor Bhatnagar Tees Off JTGC Golf Champion Cup 2022



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu Tawi Golf Course in collaboration with Directorate of Tourism Department, Jammu, organised Golf Champion Cup, 2022, here on Sunday.

The tourney was teed off by Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, R R Bhatnagar.

The event was participated by 106 people who were honoured with goodie bags by Secretary, Jammu Tawi Golf Course.

Advisor Bhatnagar distributed prizes among the winning participants.

The event was hosted by RJ Juhie of Big FM, who was the radio partner for the event.

The prize categories included 'Best in Four Ball', 'General', 'Senior', 'Junior', 'Female Participation' and others like 'Straight Drive', 'Longest Drive', 'Bull's eye' and 'an earnest to Pin'.

The overall winner (General) was Pankaj Bhardwaj while

Pawan Parihar remained the overall runner up. Colonel Ramesh Chander and Shamsher Singh won overall winner and overall runner up respectively in Senior category while in Junior category, the awards were bagged by Arindam Sudan and Zorawar Singh as overall winner and overall runner up respectively.

Similarly, award for female participation was clinched by Chandra Gupta, who was the only lady to participate in the tournament. The award of honour was given to Colonel B.B.S. Bali while award for 'Bull's Eye' was a tie between Shakeel Ahmed Beig and Chandrajeet Singh. Likewise, 'Longest Drive' award went to Vedanta Handa (General) and Shamsher (Senior) while 'Straight Drive' award was bagged by Dr. Anil Slathia.

Advisor Bhatnagar congratulated the management of JTGC for successful conduct of the mega event especially the contribution of its Secretary, Manav Gupta.

Danish Farooq Named In Indian Squad For Int'l Friendlies In Bahrain

Coach Igor Stimac includes 7 new faces



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India on Monday named seven newcomers in the 25-member squad for their international football friendlies against Bahrain and Belarus later this month. Kashmir Valley's Danish Farooq Bhat was also included in the 25-member squad.

Indian national men's team coach Igor Stimac has called up rookie players — Prabhshukhan Gill, Hormipam Ruivah, Anwar Ali, Roshan Singh, VP Suhair, Danish Farooq, and Aniket Yadav in the side for the two ties to be played in Bahrain on March 23 and 26.

"We are playing Bahrain and Belarus, and they are better-

ranked sides than us. But whatever the rankings are, you need to do it on the pitch. Bahrain will show us where we stand.

"We will give chances to some young players who have played well in the Hero ISL this season to see how much we can use them for the qualifiers in June," head coach Stimac said in an AIFF statement.

The international friendlies are a part of the team's preparation for the final round of the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 qualifying matches, which will be held in Kolkata from June 8 onwards.

India have been clubbed in Group D along side Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Cambodia. The 24 teams have been di-

vided into six groups and the group winners, and the five best second-placed sides will earn a ticket to the Asian Cup in China.

Final list of 25 players:

Goalkeepers: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Prabhshukhan Gill.

Defenders: Pritam Kotal, Seriton Fernandes, Rahul Bheke, Hormipam Ruivah, Sandesh Jhingan, Anwar Ali, Chinglensana Singh, Subhasish Bose, Akash Mishra, Roshan Singh.

Midfielders: Bipin Singh, Anirudh Thapa, Pronay Halder, Jeakson Singh, Brandon Fernandes, VP Suhair, Danish Farooq, Yasir Mohammad, Aniket Jadhav.

Forwards: Manvir Singh, Liston Colaco, Rahim Ali.

Numbers Are Part Of Journey Not Final Destination: Ashwin

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who recently became India's second highest wicket-taker in Test cricket, said he never ran after numbers in his career and considers personal milestones as "just part of the journey and not final destination".

Ashwin, who picked up 12 wickets at an average of 15.08 in the recent Test series against Sri Lanka, became India's second highest wicket-taker in Test

matches after he surpassed legendary Kapil Dev's tally of 434 wickets.

By doing so, he also became the eighth highest overall in the history of Test cricket with a tally of 442 scalps.

"The numbers are great, and it's humbling really to see what I've been able to do in terms of the numbers. The more I've played, the more it felt like the numbers are a part of the journey rather than the destination," Ashwin said in a release.

"In the past 2-3 years especially, the feeling has been great, with series' wins in Australia, comeback into the T20 team,

it almost feels like how I felt when I first broke into the team, wherein a lot has been going on for me."

The 35-year-old spinner, who will represent his fifth franchise in IPL after being roped in by Rajasthan Royals, said the lucrative T20 tournament has helped him develop into a better cricketer from its onset.

"The IPL is a tough tournament, there are a lot of variables leading into every season which can have an impact. Dew, pitches, the opposition, you name it and there's a variable that can impact a game in different ways - which makes it a challenge to prepare for things in advance and you've got to be ready at all times," Ashwin said in a release issued by RR.

"However, for me, personally, going into an IPL season is always exciting. The IPL gives a window of experimentation, something which has enabled me to come out a richer cricketer, irrespective of the results, every time I've been a part of it."

Pakistan Stun West Indies By 8 Wickets To Record First Win In ICC Women's WC



Press Trust of India

HAMILTON: Pakistan ended their 18-match losing streak with an eight-wicket win over the West Indies in the Women's ODI World Cup on Monday.

Spinner Nida Dar returned with impressive figures of four for 10 to help Pakistan restrict West Indies to 89 for seven after opting to field in the rain-curtailed match which was reduced to 20-over-a-side affair because of damp outfield at Seddon Park.

Besides Dar, Omaira Sohail (1/12), Fatima Sana (1/14) and Nashra Sandhu (1/24) picked up a wicket each as Pakistan produced an inspired bowling effort.

Opener Deandra Dottin (27) top-scored for West Indies, while Stafanie Taylor (18) and Afy Fletcher (12 not out) were the other two Caribbean batters to have managed double digit scores.

Chasing 90, Pakistan, who have so far lost all their four matches to be placed at the bottom of the eight-team standings, lost opener Sidra Ameen (8) in the sixth over with their scorecard reading 22.

Muneeba Ali (37 off 43) and skipper Bismah Maroof then

shared 35 runs for the second wicket before the former departed with Pakistan still needing 31 runs off 46 balls. Muneeba struck five boundaries during her knock.

But Maroof (20 not out) played sensibly without taking any risks and in Sohail's (22 not out) company stitched unbeaten 33 runs for the third wicket to romp home with seven balls to spare.

While the win be a huge morale booster for Pakistan ahead of their remaining two league games, the defeat put West Indies' semifinal hopes at a risk.

Despite the loss, West Indies still occupy the third spot with six points from six games. Pakistan still are in the last spot.

West Indies will face South Africa in their final league game on March 24, while Pakistan will play England (March 24) and New Zealand (March 26) in their final two matches.

Brief Scores:

West Indies: 87 for 7 in 20 overs (Deandra Dottin 27; Nida Dar 4/10).

Pakistan: 90 for 2 in 18.5 overs (Muneeba Ali 37, Omaira Sohail 22 not out, Bismah Maroof 20 not out; Shakeria Selman 1/15).

Pakistan Recover To Restrict Australia To 232-5 In 3rd Test



Agencies

LAHORE: Pakistan recovered from dropped catches to restrict Australia to 232-5 and deny Usman Khawaja a second consecutive century on Day 1 of the third and final test on Monday.

Fast bowler Naseem Shah, the only Pakistan change from the second drawn test at Karachi, picked up 2-36 to lead a fightback in the last session after Australia won the toss and opted to bat on another slow and low-bouncy wicket.

Cameron Green was unbeaten on 20 and Alex Carey was not out on 8 when bad light stopped play two overs before the scheduled close.

The Pakistan-born Khawaja, who scored 160 and 44 not out at Karachi and 97 runs in the opening test draw, fell for 91 when Babar Azam plucked a brilliant one-handed shin-high catch in the slip.

Khawaja batted for nearly 5-1/2 hours for his resilient 219-ball knock before he tried to flick off-spinner Sajid Khan (1-65) to mid-wicket. But the ball spun away sharply and took the thick outside edge of the bat.

Naseem was finally rewarded for his disciplined bowling when he had Steve Smith (59) trapped leg before wicket and also found the outside edge of Travis Head

(26). Smith faced 169 balls and hit six fours before he was undone by Naseem's delivery, which came back sharply and hit the batter's knee in front of the stumps.

Head's below-par series continued and despite getting a reprieve on 7 when Sajid couldn't grab a chest-high catch of his own bowling, he couldn't last long enough.

Khawaja and Smith had revived Australia from the early jolt of Shaheen Shah Afridi (2-39) with a 138-run stand in almost four hours before Pakistan hit back with three late wickets.

Left-arm fast bowler Afridi had picked up two wickets in his second over to cut Australia to 8-2 before Khawaja and Smith thwarted Pakistan.

Australia retained the same XI which toiled for nearly 172 overs on the last two days of the second test but couldn't force a win at Karachi, where Babar played a marathon innings of 196.

Australia's historic first tour of Pakistan in 24 years has added significance going into the series decider.

Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium is hosting its first test in 13 years since a terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka team's bus in 2009 that led to a lengthy absence of international cricket in Pakistan.

FA Cup: Manchester City To Face Liverpool In Semis

Agencies

MANCHESTER: Manchester City and Liverpool just can't be kept apart this season.

Engaged in yet another tight tussle for the Premier League title, the two rivals from northwest England must now squeeze an FA Cup semifinal meeting into their busy end-of-season schedules. Both won away matches in the quarterfinals on Sunday. City outlasted Southampton 4-1 and Liverpool edged past second-tier Nottingham Forest 1-0 and were paired in the draw for the last four.

It means the top two teams in the country will clash in the league at City's Etihad Stadium on April 10. City currently leads Liverpool by one point in a fascinating title race, and then in the FA Cup semifinals at Wembley Stadium on the weekend of April 16-17. In and around those games are a pair of Champions League quarterfinal legs for each of them, with City taking on Spanish champion Atletico Madrid and Liverpool facing Benfica.

David Beckham Hands Over Instagram Account To Kharkiv Doctor

Reuters

LONDON: Former England soccer captain David Beckham handed over his Instagram account on Sunday to a doctor helping women give birth in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv.

Beckham, the 46-year-old former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder and current co-owner of American Major League Soccer team Inter Miami, told his 71.6 million Instagram followers to look at his profile to see the work of Irina, a child anaesthesiologist, and her team amid the conflict.

Beckham, a goodwill ambassador for United Nations children's agency UNICEF, posted a video message and called on his followers to support the organisation's work in Ukraine.

Kharkiv has been hit by a barrage of Russian strikes that have destroyed many buildings since Moscow launched what it calls a "special operation" in Ukraine last month.

Russian President Vladimir Putin says the operation is aimed at disarming Ukraine and rooting out dangerous nationalists. Western nations call it an aggressive war of choice and have imposed punishing sanctions

aimed at crippling Russia's economy. Irina, head of the Regional Perinatal Centre, posted videos of a basement where she said pregnant women and mothers were evacuated on the



first day of Russia's invasion. She also shared images of newborn babies dependent on oxygen generators, which were donated by UNICEF.

"The first days were the most difficult. We had to learn how to work with bombings and strikes," she said.

"We are probably risking our lives, but we don't think about it at all. We love our work." One of Irina's videos showed a woman called Yana cradling her baby son Mykhailo, who was born on the second day of the war with breathing problems.

Irina said Mykhailo was now better but the family's home had been destroyed.

"Doctors and nurses here, we worry, we cry, but none of us will give up," Irina said.

Barcelona Makes Statement With Big Win At Real Madrid

Agencies

MADRID: Barcelona's players had just returned to the locker room when Gerard Piqué put out a message on Twitter.

"We are back," it read. Piqué and his teammates had stayed on the field at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium celebrating the team's commanding 4-0 victory over Real Madrid in the Spanish league. They jumped and sang along with the few hundred visiting fans still left at the mostly empty venue.

Inside, coach Xavi Hernández waited to embrace each player as they returned. "Vamos, vamos! (Let's go!)," was the common exchange.

It was the type of statement Barcelona needed in a difficult rebuilding year following the departure of Lionel Messi and the collapse of its finances.

The rout on the road against the team's biggest rival — which had been comfortably leading the Spanish league and had just eliminated Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League — reassured Barcelona that it's on the right path.

"This can change the dynamic of the present and the future," Xavi said.

"We hadn't been having many reasons to celebrate in the recent past and today we made a statement. You can say we are on our way back. We competed against Real Madrid in their stadium and could have won by more goals. It was spectacular."

Barcelona has finally found its stride after a slow start to the season, which included being eliminated from the Copa del



Rey and Spanish Super Cup.

Xavi revamped Barcelona's offense and it has thrived recently with a more vertical attacking style that damages opponents with quick and efficient bursts.

The club has outscored opponents 24-5 in its last eight matches in all competitions thanks in part to new signings Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Ferran Torres.

Aubameyang scored twice and Ferran added another Sunday to take their combined tally to 15 goals since joining the club this year. Ronald Araujo scored the other Barcelona goal against Madrid, which had won the last five consecutive "clásicos."

"This reinforces our project, reinforces our style, reinforces me as a new coach" Xavi said.

"There is no doubt this is how Barcelona has to compete." Xavi neutralised Madrid after counterpart Carlo Ancelotti tried to use Luka Modric as a false-nine to replace the injured Karim Benzema, Madrid's top player this season and the league's scoring leader. (AP)