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P3 CITY

## TULIP GARDEN OPENS FOR VISITORS IN SRINAGAR

Asia's largest tulip garden overlooking the famous Dal Lake here was thrown open to the public on Wednesday, marking the beginning of the new tourism season in the Kashmir

P5

BE A WORDLE MASTER

As Wordle has skyrocketed in popularity, multiple media outlets have published articles that explore the best word to use as your initial guess. Often the authors of these pieces theorize that the word ought to be one that uses as many vowels as possible,



P7

STATE

## DELHI HC DECLINES REGULARISATION OF GOVT QUARTERS TO RETIRED KP MAN

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to regularise the allotment of government accommodation to a Kashmiri migrant, who was retired from service,



## Quote!

Peace is the only battle worth waging

- Albert Camus

## NEWS DIGEST

### Soldier Shoots Self Dead In Uri

SRINAGAR: An army man on Wednesday allegedly committed suicide along the Line of Control (LoC) in Uri area of Baramulla district. 22-year-old Vikram Kumar Yadav shot himself dead with his service rifle at Mike post in Uri sector along LoC on Wednesday **More on P6**

### Man Found Dead In Kulgam

SRINAGAR: A man was found dead under mysterious conditions at his relative's house on Wednesday in Damhal Hanjipora area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district. 34-year-old Ashiq Hussain Hajam of Kuljar Frisal was **More on P6**

### Tiffin Creates Bomb Scare In Magam

SRINAGAR: An unclaimed hot case lying along the Srinagar-Gulmarg road in Magam town triggered a bomb scare on Wednesday prompting police to suspend movement of traffic. The hot case was spotted lying unattended in Magam town on Wednesday **More on P6**

### Police Arrests Timber Smuggler

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested a timber smuggler from south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Acting on specific information about timber smuggling, a team from Police Station Rajpora established a checkpoint at Shadimarg and intercepted a **More on P6**

## 3 Cops, CRPF Man Injured In Grenade Attack

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: At least five people, including three policemen, a CRPF constable and a civilian were injured on Wednesday in a grenade attack in Rainawari area of this capital city.

According to reports, unidentified militants lobbed a grenade towards a checkpoint manned by police and CRPF near Zindshah Masjid in Rainawari area of the city here on Wednesday evening. In the grenade attack, an on-duty policeman and two off-duty traffic cops, besides a CRPF Constable identified as Tirath Singh and a civilian were injured.

The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

"All are fully stable and completely out of danger. Kindly don't spread wrong figures by talking to unreliable sources," police said in a statement.

Soon after the incident, a search operation was launched in the area to nab the attackers.

Pertinently, the grenade attack on cops comes a day after a policeman on covert operation was killed in a brief shootout with militants in Soura area of this capital city.

Selection grade constable Amir Hussain Lone of Hirri Bala in Kupwara was critically injured when a group of three militants roaming in a car exchanged gunfire with a covert team of police in Zoonimar area of Soura on Tuesday afternoon, police said on Tuesday. Lone, who received **More on P6**

# Investment Environment Created In J&K Post Art-370: FM

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said after abrogation of Article 370, militancy-related activities have declined in Jammu and Kashmir, and an environment for investment has been created.

Replying to a discussion on Budget for Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister said people are benefiting after implementation of 890 central laws. Also, people, who did not have any rights there earlier, can now get government jobs, and purchase properties.

Besides, she added, 250 "unjust and discriminatory" state laws too have been removed, and 137 were modified.

"The various impediments which prevailed in the state for industrial development have also been removed, and the industrial promotion scheme of J & K given by Government of India has opened new doors for the development in J & K," Sitharaman said.

Currently, a delegation from



the Gulf Cooperation countries is looking at possibilities of increasing their investment in the Union Territory

Referring to the law and order situation, she said there has been an overall decline in militant activities.

She said there has been a 33 per cent drop in infiltration in 2021, 90 per cent decrease in ceasefire violations, 61 per cent decline in militancy related incidents, and 80 per cent fall in abductions by militants.

Also, there has **More on P6**

## PM Hails LG's Efforts To Draw More Investments

After Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha addressed a Gulf countries investment summit in Srinagar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hailed "exemplary efforts" to draw more investment to the Union Territory and ensuring greater opportunities for the people. The PM was responding to a tweet by the office of J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha which stated that the LG addressed the Gulf countries investment summit in Srinagar and highlighted the scope for J&K Union Territory & Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) companies' economic cooperation to make the "paradise on earth" as the most beautiful investment destination in the world. Tagging the tweet, Modi said, "Exemplary efforts to draw more investment to Jammu and Kashmir, and ensure greater opportunities for the people." In his remarks at the summit, **More on P6**

## FM Blames Nehru For Internationalising Kashmir Issue

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday accused the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru of internationalising the Kashmir issue by taking it to the United Nations and said India's neighbour was still misusing it.

The minister targeted the Congress on the issue while replying to a discussion on the Budget 2022-23 for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J-K) in Rajya Sabha.

"The Congress internationalised the issue. It was our first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru ji who took it to the United Nations in December 1947. Why?"

"The issue was internationalised and our neighbour is still misusing it. Who is responsible for this," Sitharaman said.

The minister said the Kashmir issue should not have



gone to a global forum.

"It is essentially an Indian issue. We could have handled it. We are handling it, and we are showing the difference now," she said, maintaining that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma, however, sought to defend Nehru's actions.

"I would like to set the record straight. If the matter was taken

to the UN Security Council, the issue was whether there would be a cessation of the military conflict or not. India did not accept the plebiscite," he said intervening in the minister's reply.

"The UN Observers' Office was never given that sanctity. India conducted elections. There were elected governments in the state of Jammu & Kashmir."

"Not only that, we fought wars and we made **More on P6**

## India Slams China's Remarks On J&K

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday rejected as "uncalled for" Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's references to Jammu and Kashmir in an address at a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Pakistan, asserting matters relating to the union territory are entirely internal to the country.

India's rejection of Wang's comments came in the midst of hectic consultations between the two sides over a possible visit by him to New Delhi in the next two days.

"We reject the uncalled reference to India by the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his speech at the opening ceremony," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, in response to Wang's reference to Jammu and Kashmir in his speech at the OIC meeting. Bagchi said matters **More on P6**

## Close Shave For BJP Leader As Leopard Spotted In House



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) General Secretary Organization Ashok Kaul had a narrow escape on Wednesday after a leopard entered his official residence at S1 Church Lane.

BJP's Media In charge, Manzoor Bhat said that Kaul was busy in morning activities at his official residence when a leopard appeared in the lawn. However, he managed to

flee from the spot, they said, adding that the wildlife department was informed in this regard.

Meanwhile, a team of wildlife department captured a leopard in Sonwar area of Srinagar.

Officials said that a leopard had taken shelter in Church Lane Sonwar following which the Wildlife team successfully caught the leopard and dispatched it to Dachigam Park.

## Youth Have Immense Potential In Building A New J&K: LG



### Says Spirit Of Kashmiriyat Most Effective Tool To Counter Radicalisation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday that Jammu and Kashmir has always been a land of syncretic culture, all faiths & beliefs and

this inclusive society, spirit of Kashmiriyat is the most effective tool to counter radicalisation.

"Families, Islamic scholars play important role in challenging the ideology and countering the narrative that legitimises and supports terrorism. A strong force of women, youth and Islamic scholars will certainly make the communities more resilient to terrorist ideology and propagandists," Sinha said.

He made these **More on P6**



Tourists dancing in excitement at seeing the tulips in full bloom at Srinagar Tulip Garden which was thrown open for the public on Wednesday. KO Photo | Abid Bhat









## Investments In J&K To Bring Unemployment Down: KCCI

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) held a Press conference, a day after holding a meeting with the delegation of businessmen from Gulf countries. President KCCI Shiekh Ashiq said the arrival of such a delegation is welcome step and will help create employment opportunities for the youth.

“There is no dearth of talent in the valley but we lack exposure” he said.

He said that the businessmen have promised to establish J&K Business Centre in Dubai. “Once this centre is established our young generation will get lot of guidance through this centre”.

He said that we need more International connectivity which will help us to showcase our talent at the International arena.

He also noted that investments in J&K have the potential to bring unemployment rate down.

“This year Spring has come with a fresh breeze of positivity and we should try to make most of it”, he said.

## SMC's Revenue Shows Significant Dip Since 2018

Agencies

Srinagar: In the previous fiscal, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) witnessed a fall in revenue generation by 44 percent official data reveals. Besides, the fiscal year 2019-2020, the Corporation has also recorded a dip in revenue generation by 35 percent in 2018-19 in comparison with the financial year 2020-21.

According to the official documents available, SMC in the past two years has witnessed a dip in revenue generation by 44.36 percent (2019-20) and 35.4 percent (2018-19) respectively in comparison with the previous fiscal.

The figures reveal that in the financial year 2018-19, SMC has generated Rs 204,468,004 followed by Rs 237,391,883 in the fiscal 2019-20.

However, in the financial year the Corporation has generated only Rs 132,100,480 in the 2020-2021.

This information was revealed by the SMC Public Information Officer (PIO) in a reply to the queries of the Right to Information (RTI) application filed by the activist M MShuja.



## Tulip Garden Opens For Visitors In Srinagar

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Asia's largest tulip garden overlooking the famous Dal Lake here was thrown open to the public on Wednesday, marking the beginning of the new tourism season in the Kashmir Valley.

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, formerly known as SirajBagh, was opened in 2008 by then chief minister of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir State Ghulam Nabi Azad.

The idea of the garden, spread over 30 hectares in the foothills of the snow-clad Zabarwan range, was conceived to advance the tourism season in the valley by two months.

The garden was thrown open to the public by J-K chief secretary Arun Kumar Mehta on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters, Mehta said the last six months have seen the highest-ever tourist footfall in the valley.

He said the tourism has been revived and people are not getting rooms at hotels in the valley are fully booked.

He said the administration was working on opening and promoting 75 new tourist destinations.

This year the garden houses 1.5 million flowers of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and muscari.

The flowers include 68 varieties of tulips, In-charge of Tulip Garden InamRehman Sofi said.

He said the visitors will be able to see six new varieties of tulips.

Sofi said last year, 2.25 lakh people vis-

too much heat can destroy them.

The Floriculture Department plants tulip bulbs in a phased manner so that the flowers remain in the garden for a month or more.

It feels so good to be here. We are seeing unbelievable flowers, the beauty of Kashmir, a tourist from Gujarat, Nehal Mehta, said.

“Most of the visitors today were from outside the UT, which is a good signal. The garden pre-pones our tourist season and I think this is a good omen for this year's tourist season, Sofi said.

ited the garden and this year we expect more.

Most of the visitors today were from outside the UT, which is a good signal. The garden pre-pones our tourist season and I think this is a good omen for this year's tourist season, Sofi said.

This year, the department has made provisions for online ticket sales as well to avoid the rush at the ticket counter.

The average lifespan of tulip flowers is three to four weeks, but heavy rains or

## Mass Marriage Brings 31 Couples Together

Agencies

Srinagar: Thirty One couples tied knot in a simple mass marriage function held at Babadamb area of Srinagar City on Wednesday.

The couples hailing from different districts tied the knot in a mass marriage function, organised by ‘The Helping Hand’s foundation, a local NGO.

President of NGO, ‘Helping Hands foundation’, Umer Ahmad told KNO that “as per the latest survey held in J&K, almost 35000 females and 45000 males are average now but

as per our survey, almost 75000 males are now overage, who can’t afford marriage because of unemployment and financial issues.”

He further said that this year they have a set target of 150 mass marriages after two months. He added that they get donations through social media by putting a list of goods needed for marriages.

“I have visited many world countries, but I am proud to say that Kashmiris always remain at the forefront to help the destitute and poor,” he said.

For the mass marriage, he said

that the couples register themselves with the organization and after verifying their credentials and other details, the council starts arrangements for their marriage.

The NGO is providing everything for the bride and grooms excluding the jewellery.

In January, the NGO held a mass marriage function in which 20 couples tied the knot.

“I request all the people to take part in the mass marriages so that the poor people could have a sigh of relief,” Umer said. (KNO)

## Mehjoor Nagar Residents Urge Authorities To Repair Footbridge

Agencies

Srinagar: Locals from Mehjoor Nagar area of Srinagar have sought the intervention of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for immediate restoration of Mehjoor Nagar foot-bridge.

“A couple of pillars of the vital bridge connecting Mehjoor Nagar and adjacent areas with Jawahar Nagar were damaged after a large volume of water was released into the flood channel in August 2020” locals said.

They said since then no efforts were made by authorities to restore the bridge.

The locals said that they have to take alternate lengthy routes to reach their destinations.

“We urge concerned officials to start work on this collapsed foot-bridge,” they said.

## Plantation Drive Held At Butterfly Park

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Tourism carried out a plantation drive at the Butterfly Park, Nigeenon Wednesday.

The plantation drive was supervised by Secretary, Tourism, Sarmad-Hafeez and Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G N Itoo in which students from several adjoining schools also

participated.

The Department is planning to develop the Butterfly Park, Nigeen into a Theme Park for which necessary work is underway. Officers and officials of the Department, on the occasion planted different varieties of plants in the Park. Students from nearby schools planted saplings and vowed to protect the environment for posterity.

## Laser Intervention in Pulmonology Starts at CD hospital

Agencies

Srinagar: In a first of its kind in Jammu and Kashmir, the department of Pulmonary Medicine, Government Medical College Srinagar, has added facility of laser to the armamentarium of interventional pulmonology.

“Laser is a useful tool for interventional pulmonologist. It is helpful

in management of various respiratory diseases like central airway obstruction and hemoptysis of varying etiologiescauses,” a senior doctor at GMC said. The facility is set up at the CD hospital.

Prior to this, a large number of patients had to be referred to higher centres outside J&K for management of such respiratory diseases.

از نیابت کنزور  
مضمون درخواست ثار احمد لون ولد غلام محمد لون ساکنہ ہرودہ بنی براد عطا گئی  
DOB certificate  
تجربہ پر حسب ثار لون و دختر صالحہ ثار  
استہار برادرہ اگانی ہر خاص و عام  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں دفتر بذراکایک درخواست بابت حصول  
تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفکیٹ موصول ہوئی ہیں۔ پولیس سٹیشن کنزورہ چوکیدار  
علاقہ سے سال کے دختر کی پیدائش اندراج نہیں کی ہے سال کے ثار احمد لون ولد  
غلام محمد لون بیان کرتا ہے کہ اس کا بیٹا حسب ثار لون کی تاریخ پیدائش  
20-04-2017 کو ہوئی ہے۔ اور اسکی دختر صالحہ ثار تاریخ  
پیدائش 12-01-2019 کو ہوئی ہے۔ اس نسبت ہر خاص و عام کو مطلع کیا  
جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض  
ساتھ ہیوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل  
قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نا تب تحصیلدار کنزور  
az k

از نیابت شاگس با اجلاس ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول شاگس  
درخواست منجانب: عبدالرشید ولد عبداللہ کو برساکنہ چٹوہ تحصیل شاگس ضلع  
بغرض حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ۔  
استہار برادرہ اگانی ہر خاص و عام۔  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سال کے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ دفتر منشی  
کیا ہے جو کنزورہ روڈانی ہے۔ پواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سال کے کا  
کنہہ بڑاں افراد ہیں۔  
نمبر شمار نام و ولدیت عمر پیشہ آمدنی  
1 شہید احمد ولد بدیعہ یوسف نا کو 45 سال ملازم 5000/= LPC  
2 محمود بیگم زوجہ شہید احمد نا کو 43 سال گھر بیگم کام  
3 نکس احمد ولد شہید احمد نا کو 23 سال زرعیت  
4 رانی عروم دختر شہید احمد نا کو 18 سال زرعیت  
5 سرن شہید احمد ولد شہید احمد نا کو 13 سال زرعیت  
اس طور پر سال کے کا کوید 05 افراد پیش رفتل ہے۔ سال کے کنزورہ آمدنی سالانہ  
= 10,000 رو پیہ تک ہے۔ اور فیور رقی آمدنی LPC ہے۔ لہذا سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کر نے میں اگر  
کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو گا وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک بندہ کے اندر دوران دفتر ای وقت میں اپنا اعتراض  
پیش کرے۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
na  
نا تب تحصیلدار۔

از نیابت شاگس با اجلاس ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول شاگس  
درخواست منجانب: عبدالرشید ولد عبداللہ کو برساکنہ چٹوہ تحصیل شاگس ضلع ہٹ ناگ  
بغرض حصول ST سرٹیفکیٹ۔  
استہار برادرہ اگانی ہر خاص و عام۔  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سال کے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول ST سرٹیفکیٹ دفتر منشی  
کیا ہے جو کنزورہ روڈانی ہے۔ پواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سال کے کا  
کنہہ بڑاں افراد ہیں۔  
نمبر شمار نام و ولدیت عمر پیشہ آمدنی  
1 عبدالرشید ولد عبداللہ کوید 58 سال زمینداری 5000/= LPC  
2 ندیمہ کوید محمد عبدالرشید کوید 56 سال گھر بیگم کام  
3 عبادہ عبدالرشید کوید 26 سال زمینداری 5000/= LPC  
4 زرنہہ دختر عبدہ عبدالرشید کوید 24 سال گھر بیگم کام  
5 اویس احمد ولد عبادہ احمد کوید 5 سال زرعیت  
6 سادیہ جان دختر عبادہ احمد کوید 7 سال زرعیت  
7 نصرت جان دختر عبدالرشید کوید 20 سال گھر بیگم کام  
8 طفیل احمد عبدالرشید کوید 15 سال زرعیت  
اس طور پر سال کے کا کوید 08 افراد پیش رفتل ہے۔ اور سال کی زرقی آمدنی = 40,000 تک ہے۔ اور فیور  
زرقی آمدنی تقریباً 120,000 تک ہے۔ اس طرح سال کی کل سالانہ آمدنی زرقی، فیور زرقی آمدنی  
تقریباً 160,000 رو پیہ تک ہے۔ لہذا سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کر نے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو گا  
وہ اپنا اعتراض ایک بندہ کے اندر دوران دفتر ای وقت میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کرے۔ معاذ کرنے کے بعد  
کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
na  
نا تب تحصیلدار۔

DIAL-EMMA  
TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686  
PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883  
PDD: 0194-2450213  
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES :  
2479488,2452222,2452155  
CAPD: 18001807011  
SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081  
Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS  
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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

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

PRAYERS  
FAJR 5: 07  
ZUHR 12:40  
ASR 4:59  
Magrib 6:49  
ISHA 8: 09  
HIJRI  
CALENDAR  
20 Shaban  
1443

## This Day In History

- 1379 - End of Gelderse war victory
- 1545 - German Parliament opens in Worms
- 1550 France & England sign Peace of Boulogne
- 1603 - Scottish King James VI son of Mary Queen of Scots, becomes King James I of England in succession to Elizabeth I, thus joining the English and Scottish crowns.
- 1765 - Britain enacts Quartering Act, required colonists to provide temporary housing to British soldiers.
- 1837 - Canada gives its black citizens the right to vote
- 1878 - British frigate Eurydice sunk; 300 lost
- 1882 - German scientist Robert Koch discovers and describes the tubercle bacillus which causes tuberculosis (Mycobacterium tuberculosis)
- 1894 - 37 miners killed at Franklin, Washington
- 1905 - A group of Cretans dedicated to Crete's union with Greece led by Eleutherios Venizelos, meet at the village of Therisso and proclaim a union in defiance of the Great Powers
- 1913 - Netherlands soccer team's 1st victory over England
- 1916 - German submarines torpedoed the unarmed French cross-channel packet 'Sussex'
- 1924 - Greece becomes a republic
- 1941 - British troops defeat British Somalia
- 1941 - German troops occupy El Aghaila Libya
- 1945 - Largest one-day airborne drop, 600 transports & 1300 gliders
- 1959 - Iraq withdraws from the Baghdad Pact
- 1965 - US Ranger 9 strikes Moon, 10 miles (16 km) NE of crater Alphonsus
- 1972 - Great Britain imposes direct rule over Northern Ireland
- 1975 - Muhammad Ali TKOs Chuck Wepner in 15 for heavyweight boxing title
- 1981 - Bombay beat Delhi by innings & 46 to win Ranji Cricket Trophy
- 1981 - Colombia drops diplomatic relations with Cuba
- 1986 - US & Libya clash in Gulf of Sidra
- 1986 - NASA publishes "Strategy for Safely Returning the Space Shuttle to Flight Status".
- 1990 - Indian troops leave Sri Lanka

## From KO Archives

## Omar, Soze Asked To Vote For BJP's 'Consensus' Candidate

Observer News Service

New Delhi - National Conference has directed its two members in the Lok Sabha, Omar Abdullah and Saifuddin Soze, to vote for Ganta Mohan C Balaypgi, TDP candidate for the Lok Sabha Speaker. Balaypgi happens to be the "consensus" candidate of the ruling BJP alliance.

Farooq Abdullah, sources said, has personally spoken to his son Omar and Soze, asking them to be present at the time of Voting, which is scheduled for tomorrow.

The decision to support the BJP government in New Delhi, has been taken by Farooq Abdullah, despite reservations by a section of the party, which says "this will ruin the popular base" of the party in the state, especially Kashmir and other Muslim dominated areas of Jammu, supposed to be party's vote bank.

Today's decision of Farooq Abdullah gives a clear indication that National Conference, in future, is all set to become a part of the BJP led alliance government at the center.

Abdullah who attended the swearing in ceremony of Vajpayee government, last week, held a series of meetings with senior BJP leaders on the post poll scenario. Defence minister George Fernandes, Urban Development minister Ram Jethmalani, Parliamentary Affairs minister Madan Lai Khurana, besides Home minister L K Advani and Prime Minister Vajpayee, had long discussions on this issue, when Farooq was in New Delhi.

(Kashmir Observer, 24 March, 1998)

### PUBLIC NOTICE

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K O V I E W

BJP's complete  
dominance

With 2024 national elections around two years away, there is little indication that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reigning popularity could be severely tested by either Congress or any other opposition party. After the resounding defeat in UP and Uttarakhand, the opposition remains in utter disarray. Samajwadi Party led by Akhilesh Yadav is the only one that could put up some fight against the saffron party. The BSP and Congress could manage only fewer seats. Going forward, the victory for the BJP in four out of five state elections is going to make the opposition's job further difficult. The continuing rumblings in opposition ranks is a bad news for opposition unity and good news for the BJP.

Truth is, the country's opposition is in tatters and fighting over scraps. There is no major pan-India leader to take on the overarching persona of Modi. While Rahul Gandhi and many others look like minions, the likes of Arvind Kejriwal and Mamta Banerjee will still take time to shape up into credible rivals. Other than Akhilesh Yadav's SP, caste-based Uttar Pradesh parties who were the only hope to stop Modi's juggernaut have bitten the dust. And they are unlikely to recover until the 2024 parliament polls draw around. It looks now almost certain that the still potent Modi wave will win BJP the next general election. There is no dislodging the Modi yet. That is, if no credible political rival emerges from the shadows in the near future, a prospect that looks bleak.

The deft blend of ideology, welfarism and PM Modi's overarching leadership is expected to help the BJP triumph in 2024. The party could even get a stronger majority than it did in 2019. While the opposition is struggling to form a common front, the BJP is busy strengthening its base by single-mindedly pursuing its ideological agenda. And considering its electoral machinery has become all-encompassing, it is likely to get a political foothold in the important Southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. A reasonable success in the South after the political dominance in the North will make the BJP invincible for decades to come.

Also compared to the BJP, the opposition has no discourse. The opposition in India has only, what the Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar once said, "a reactive narrative". The BJP, on the other hand, can always bank upon its strong ideological moorings. This has enabled the party to forge a monolithic Hindu vote bank. The strategy has been a factor in the rise of BJP as a national party, up from two seats in 1984 polls to 85 in 1989. Things can still turn around for the opposition if the different parties unite. A coalition at the national level might halt the BJP's march, though there is no such guarantee given the PM Modi's spell on masses.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Little Learning

Rigour and depth of learning are no longer of value. The new curriculum for the four-year undergraduate course proposed by the University Grants Commission reduces the proportion of the honours or major subject in the workload to 30 per cent from around 73 per cent in the choice-based credit system of 2015. More, the proposed credit system is so arranged as to include an array of subjects unrelated to the central one. The compulsory 'common courses' in the first three semesters are, apart from a regional language and English, 'understanding India' — whose India? — and yoga education. Environmental science and sports, reminiscent of school, must be read too and, alarmingly for humanities students shaky in mathematics, mathematical and computational thinking and analysis as well as digital and technological solutions. The logic is enigmatic. Since every credit matters, a brilliant history student might end up doing badly in this segment of 24 credits after struggling with subjects far afield of his discipline. Is the UGC aiming at mediocrity and ignorance all round? The curriculum appears to undermine intellectual maturity by forcing students to spread themselves thin and that, too, possibly without any interest.

What is noticeable is the lack of choice. Freedom of thinking is being squeezed out. It is the same with universities, which, according to another UGC proposal, will have to accept a fixed number of PhD students on the basis of two central tests instead of having their own admission criteria. The restriction of choice begins from the undergraduate level. Even when students start on the major subject, one of the two minor subjects, earlier meant to complement the major one, has to be vocational. Specialization becomes a hollow word with 27 credits to be earned from three 'elective' subjects from the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. The concept is absurd, with multiplication of labour and overlapping of disciplines. The UGC cannot be unaware of the effect that this curriculum will have on the learning, thinking and research capabilities of young people. Is it to be inferred that the grinding down of the country's intellectual potential is deliberate? One of the meanings of the Latin root of the word, education, is to lead forth, or out. That can be imagined as being from darkness to light, not into outer darkness.

Telegraph India



A panchayat building in South Kashmir's Anantnag. Photo credit: Sameer Mushtaq/Scroll.in

Potential of PRIs in J&K

A people's movement or an aware citizenry is necessary for realizing the full potential of the local state

Haris Rashid

People's awareness and local representatives' capacity building is important for the success of local government bodies. Since the UT of Jammu and Kashmir is just beginning its decentralization journey, it must make sure that people are regularly made aware of the rules and regulations of the local state and the different schemes implemented and benefits for them under Panchayati Raj System

After the abrogation of Article 370, there has been a greater focus on Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. While the governments in the erstwhile state of J&K had been resisting the devolution of power to PRIs, the current UT administration has implemented and amended the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 to devolve substantial power and authority to the local village state. This has the potential to radically change the state-society relationship in J&K.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India aim to develop self-government at the local level. The idea is to socially and economically transform villages through these institutions. While this decentralization move was done with greater enthusiasm, there are certain problems that are plaguing the system and not much has been done to improve the system. In his recent book, "Last among Equals: Power, Caste, and Politics in Bihar's Villages", M.R. Sharan studies the local state in Bihar and argues that despite two decades of their existence in Bihar, PRIs are not living up to the expectations and they are not delivering the services efficiently. Sharan's account of the local state in Bihar applies to most states in India. The nascent Panchayati Raj System in Jammu and Kashmir will have to learn from the experiences of other states and keep a check that it is not plagued by the same problems that the system in other states face.

One of the biggest problems that hinders the PRIs from realizing their full potential is the lack of capacity building among the elected representatives and the lack of awareness among the people of the villages. Since the main aim is the local self-government, the common people of the village are involved in the decision making. Their opinion on the works that need to be carried out and the fund allocation to different projects is taken in Ward Sabhas and Gram Sabhas. Awareness of common people and capacity building of elected representatives at individual and organizational level is a must for PRIs. Unlike political leaders in office or the ministers, the elected representatives at the local government level do not have an advisory staff or the bureaucracy attached to them. They need to implement a plethora of schemes directly and there is much

higher expectation attached to them.

People's awareness and local representatives' capacity building is important for the success of local government bodies. Since the UT of Jammu and Kashmir is just beginning its decentralization journey, it must make sure that people are regularly made aware of the rules and regulations of the functioning of the local state and the different schemes implemented and benefits for them under Panchayati Raj System. As Sharan shows in his book, elected representatives do not want the citizenry to be aware. Despite MGNREGA wages being published online on the government websites, the elected representatives do not pay the wages to the people involved and sometimes the state governments have to paint that list on the walls of the villages so that everyone is made aware of how much wage they are entitled to. In fact, Sharan's whole book is about a people's movement that wants to reap full benefits of local level democracy versus resisting local elected representatives. Therefore, a people's movement or an aware citizenry is necessary for realizing the full potential of the local state.

Another problem plaguing the local government is the lack of resources. There are a lot of studies on how lack of resources affects the outcomes of rural development. As mentioned above, the local state is involved in implementing a plethora of schemes and there are higher expectations from them but they usually lack resources. In the case of J&K, Panchayati Ghars have been built and the recent budget has allocated funds for construction and renovation of hundreds of Panchayati Ghars. At present, most of the Panchayati Ghars lack adequate basic facilities, including broadband and electricity that are necessary for functioning of the office. The present staff of Panchayat Secretaries, Panchayat Account Assistants and the Village Level Workers is also insufficient as the local state involves lots of decision-making and planning and implementation processes. Further, all these employees are inadequately trained and they lack necessary skills to do their tasks. Even though approval has been given to the creation of new posts in PRIs in J&K, there is a lot to be done to back up the local state with necessary human resources.

Further, the local state in most of the states in India are either not empowered to extract revenue or have

shied away from generating their own revenue and continue to be dependent on the state and central government funds. One of the basic functions of a state is to extract revenue and for the PRIs to qualify as a local state or a local self-government, they must generate their own revenues through taxes and non-tax resources. The UT government in J&K should make sure that Gram Panchayats are from the beginning put in the habit of generating revenue through taxes and non-taxes. The Own Source Revenue (OSR) of Gram Panchayats at present is very low and the government needs to make sure that guidelines and instructions are given to Gram Panchayats on tax collection and other revenue sources.

Another problem that has been highlighted by Sharan in his book and can be seen in case of PRIs in J&K also is the case of elected women representatives being proxy of their male relatives. One-third seats for all the three tiers of the PRIs are reserved for women but the lack of awareness among women representatives makes them dependent on their male relatives. The women are thus reduced to proxy for their male relatives and the very motive behind the reservation is subverted by the men. There have been a number of studies on how male and female representatives work differently in the local state as they have different policy preferences. Therefore, the government must make sure that proxy representation of women is discouraged from the beginning and that women as well as villages are empowered through the reservation system.

Apart from this, the circumstances in J&K are very different from other parts of India. The recent spate of killings of local elected representatives show that the risk associated with this is very high in Kashmir. The more the risk, the more the representatives will be looking for incentives. This should be kept in mind by the government. The incentives proportionate to the risk should be institutionalized rather than replicating the patronage model that had been in place before the revocation of Article 370.

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

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Build Reading Culture

It is said that "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one". Reading is an essential part of human life. Like air and water are the necessities for survival, reading is necessary for the growth of our soul and mind. There was a time

when books were considered precious gifts and people used to wait eagerly for morning newspapers. However, the situation has changed now and fancy things have replaced books. Today, people are far away from the habit of reading despite having many sources like PDFs and

e-books. Therefore, there's a dire need to ignite the spark for reading as well as writing through various activities. We need to enhance activities like book challenges on social media where readers post their favourite books and study circles to create the aura of words. Seeing people read

gives me pleasure and a beacon of hope that one day books will regain their place on the shelves along with antique decorative items.

Mool Raj  
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# Be a Wordle Master

Derek Horstmeyer

As Wordle has skyrocketed in popularity, multiple media outlets have published articles that explore the best word to use as your initial guess.

Often the authors of these pieces theorize that the word ought to be one that uses as many vowels as possible, contains letters that frequently appear in English or possesses features that regularly occur in the language.

Well, my finance students and I decided to tackle this question in as definitive a manner as possible by determining the optimal first word to play in Wordle.

Our analysis actually ran through all possible combinations of five-letter words and ran simulations across all possible iterations – over 1 million of them – to figure out the best starting strategy.

A 'tried' and true approach

In Wordle, players have six attempts to guess a five-letter word. Each time the player makes a guess, they learn whether each letter is correct and in the right location, appears in the word in another location or isn't in the word at all.

Players can have different approaches. Some might simply want to solve the word, even if it takes six tries. Others try to do it in as a few guesses as possible.

Based on our analysis, if you're trying to win in as few guesses as possible, the top three words to go with are "slice," "crane," and "crane." Using any of these three words will produce an average number of word attempts of 3.90, 3.92, and 3.92, respectively, if you're using an optimal strategy to play (more on that later).

If, on the other hand, you're simply trying to win within the allotted six guesses, the top three words to play are "adept," "clamp," and "plaid." Using any of these three words will yield an average success rate in winning the game of 98.79%, 98.75%, and 98.75%, respectively, if you're playing the optimal strategy.



“If you're playing to win in the allotted six guesses, it appears best to play a word that has just one vowel and four consonants in it, as six out of the top 10 words have just one vowel. But if you're playing to win in as few guesses as possible, it's best to play a word that has two vowels and three consonants: All of the top 10 have two vowels

mal strategy.

And herein lies the first interesting distinction between playing to win and playing to win in as few guesses as possible.

If you're playing to win in the allotted six guesses, it appears best to play a word that has just one vowel and four consonants in it, as six out of the top 10 words have just one vowel. But if you're playing to win in as few guesses as possible, it's best to play a word that has two vowels and three consonants: All of the top 10 have two vowels.

Inside the simulations

Other researchers, such as David Sidhu at University College London, have tried to determine the "best first word" from a linguistic perspective. In these efforts, the best selection is decided by how often certain letters appear in the English language, or the frequency of where these letters are located in five-letter words.

While these approaches are noble, our analysis extends beyond them by actually performing simulations across all possible word options to find the best type of word to play first.

To perform this analysis, two of my students, Tao Wei and Kanwal Ah-

mad, constructed a program that went through all 2,315 official five-letter words in Wordle's dictionary. The program attempted each possible word as a first guess and ran simulations across all possible end word solutions, checking how long each attempt would take to guess the correct end word – 1,692,265 total simulations.

We then averaged all attempts for each word to see how many guesses one could expect to make to get to the correct end word.

To perform this massive simulation requires a method for picking the optimal word on the second guess, third

guess and so on.

To give yourself the best odds on each ensuing guess, it's important to select letters that are most likely to appear in each position. So the program used the list of 2,315 total words to determine the frequency at which each letter appears.

After receiving the results from the previous guess, the program filtered down the possible words to those that meet the criteria. Say the first guess were "bloke," and L and E were in the correct position, while B, O and K didn't appear in the solution. The program would then narrow down the list of possible words to those like "flume" and "slate."

The program then assigns a score to each word in this list, where the score is the sum of the frequency of its letters. The word "slate," for example, has a score of 37% because the letter "S" appears 5% of the time in the full list, while the letter appears "A" 8% of the time, and so on. The word with the highest score is then submitted as the next guess.

Running this simulation over all possible first guesses and against all possible solutions yielded the results.

But maybe you don't want to start with the same word every time you play. In that case – and if you want to win with the fewest guesses – try making sure your first guess has two vowels, with one of them at the end of the word.

If you're just looking to win within the allotted six guesses, then you may want to consider a word with fewer vowels – and definitely a word that ends in a consonant.

Hopefully our mathematical approach to Wordle hasn't sucked all the joy out of the game. At the very least, it'll give you a leg up if you decide to put a friendly wager on tomorrow's game.

*The author is a Professor of Finance, George Mason University. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation*

## Post-COVID Psychosis Is Real. Here's What To Know About It.

*There are reports of otherwise healthy people developing extreme anxiety, delusions and hallucinations — for reasons experts don't yet understand.*

Catherine Pearson

From the very beginning of the pandemic, it has been clear that COVID can have as profound an impact on mental health as it does on physical well-being.

Rates of depression and anxiety have spiked around the globe, even among those who've never been sick. For those who have been infected, the risk is higher. People who've had COVID-19 and have recovered are more likely to be diagnosed with depression or anxiety in the year after their illness, and they're more susceptible to sleep problems and substance abuse, too.

For a small subset of those patients, the connection can be especially sudden and severe. For more than two years, doctors around the world have published case reports describing COVID-related psychosis, telling stories of previously healthy individuals who suddenly develop symptoms like hallucinations or violent delusions.

And the causes are still not clear.

### THE COVID AND MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

In so many ways, the pandemic has whipped up a perfect storm for mental health issues. There's the stress and isolation of pandemic living, and there are millions of people dealing with the fallout of an infection and long COVID. Loss, fear, uncertainty and physical pain have upended many people's lives.

But researchers increasingly believe there is a biological underpinning to the COVID-related mental health crisis as well. The virus puts people at greater risk of health problems like inflammation and blood clots that can take a toll on the brain. There's also some evidence suggesting the virus may directly

enter the brain itself – though that research is still very preliminary.

Regardless, it is clear that the relationship between COVID and mental health issues is complex. Mental health experts have known for some time that people with schizophrenia or

Regardless, it is clear that the relationship between COVID and mental health issues is complex. Mental health experts have known for some time that people with schizophrenia or mood disorders, like depression, may be at greater risk for getting really sick if they are infected with COVID. The why, again, isn't known

mood disorders, like depression, may be at greater risk for getting really sick if they are infected with COVID. The why, again, isn't known.

It is possible, for example, that people with schizophrenia have underlying immune system disturbances that increase their risk of severe illness if they are infected with COVID-19. But researchers haven't ruled out the very real possibility that it could be something else. Social determinants of health, like economic stability or access to health care, could also be factors. Those kinds of stressors



can put people at greater risk of certain mental health issues, and can also increase the likelihood of severe illness if they get COVID.

### THE MYSTERIES OF SUDDEN-ONSET PSYCHOSIS

There are no solid estimates on how many people around the world have developed sudden-onset psychosis after a COVID infection, but the available data shows that it is rare. Still, mental health experts say it is an important issue to track because there's still so much they do not understand about it.

Most case reports are puzzling, in that they've cropped up in individuals with no previous mental health issues, and the symptoms are severe. Case studies have described patients becoming physically and verbally aggressive, seemingly out of the blue. Some came to believe their health care providers are out to kill them. Others began hearing voices. With psychotic disorders – a category that includes schizophrenia – people become detached from reality, and can experience hallucinations and delusions.

including infection," said Dr. Christopher Bartley, an immunopsychiatrist at the University of California San Francisco who worked on a 2021 study looking at three teenagers with COVID who developed severe and sudden psychiatric symptoms. Bartley explained that other viruses, such as herpes simplex, can cross into the central nervous system and cause severe complications like autoimmune encephalitis – basically, inflammation of the brain that can cause psychosis. But he cautioned that the evidence at this point that SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID) can directly infect brain cells is "weak."

One hypothesis that Bartley said is gaining traction is the idea of autoimmune psychosis. The SARS-CoV-2 virus basically wreaks havoc on the immune system to the point where the body starts attacking itself, including the central nervous system. But that theory, at this point, is by no means a perfect one, Bartley emphasized. Doctors aren't

finding the kinds of biomarkers of autoimmune psychosis that would support the idea.

"This COVID-19 psychosis is mysterious," Bartley said. "Most cases seem to occur out of the blue and we don't know why."

"There's still a lot we don't know about the relationship between COVID-19 and psychosis. What we do know is that there are many causes of psychosis,

Mental health experts stress that researchers need to take the phenomenon seriously, if for no other reason than the virus is not going anywhere.

Psychosis itself remains undertreated, with many people waiting years before seeking help. So it is possible that in some cases the timing of people's psychosis is coincidental, Bartley said. About 3.5% of people experience a psychotic episode at some point in their lives, making it more common than many realize.

It is too soon at this point to tell what the long-term outlook is for people who develop severe symptoms of psychosis after COVID infection. There are some reasons to be hopeful, however.

"Fortunately, there are a number of cases where COVID-19 psychosis seems to resolve without intervention," Bartley said. "We don't have indications yet that SARS-CoV-2 leads to schizophrenia, which is a stable lifelong form of psychosis. This is reassuring."

Still, much about why some otherwise healthy people develop this kind of severe response remains a mystery – which makes treatment and prevention difficult.

Psychosis can be treated through a combination of therapy and antipsychotic medications. Sometimes it's necessary for people to receive care in a hospital or rehab setting. In the case of chronic conditions like schizophrenia, there are ways to manage it throughout a person's life.

But in order to help, doctors and researchers must understand the root causes. And with post-COVID psychosis, there are more questions than answers at this point.

"There's still a lot," Hartley said, "that we don't know."

A CALL FOR MORE RESEARCH

—Huffpost



# 11 Migrant Workers From Bihar Killed In Hyderabad Blaze; Prez, VP, PM Grieve Deaths

**HYDERABAD:** Eleven migrant workers hailing from Bihar were killed in an early morning blaze on Wednesday that swept through a scrap godown in the city.

The godown at Bhoiguda was allegedly operating without fire safety measures and a lone internal spiral staircase hardly helped the deceased flee the fire, although one person managed to escape, fire and police officials said.

The lone survivor, who saved his life by jumping from the window of the room in which they were staying, has been admitted to a local hospital.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Telangana Governor Tamilasai Soundararajan and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao expressed grief over the incident.

The PM and Rao also announced ex-gratia to the victims.

The twelve workers, aged between 22 to 35 years, were sleeping in a room constructed above the godown when the incident happened, the officials said.

The fire started in the building at around 3.40 am and a call was received at around 3.54 AM, Regional Fire Officer (Central Region- Hyderabad) V Papaiah said.

The entire ground plus one floor godown was engulfed in smoke when the fire officials reached the spot, he said.

The fire spread rapidly and the 11 people trapped in the first floor were charred to death, he said. Eight fire tenders were deployed and the bodies were recovered after four hours of fire fighting, he added.

Plumes of smoke emerged amid high temperature due to the flammable nature of the materials which included old papers and plastic items.

It was a heart-wrenching scene as charred bodies were found in a heap as they apparently collapsed upon inhaling the smoke, another fire official said.

The bodies were shifted to the nearby state-run Gandhi hospital to conduct post-mortem and other official procedures.

The migrant workers hailed from different villages in Bihar's Chhapra and Katihar districts. While some of them were working at the scrap godown for the past two years, others had joined recently.

The workers were engaged in segregating, loading and unloading scrap material at the godown and used to reside in the first floor of the godown.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner C V Anand, who inspected the scene, said fire safety conditions appeared to have been violated at the ill-fated godown.

The workers were provided

with accommodation in the first floor of the godown by its owner and many residents in the locality were not aware that they lived there, he said.

Though the 12 migrant workers were residing in the room, no one was actually supposed to stay there, the police official said.

Regretting the loss of life in the tragedy, he said timber depots and others were situated in the area and that there is a need to go into the safety aspect. The exact cause of the fire would be known after investigation, the officials said. Though the officials initially felt that DNA tests would have to be conducted to identify the bodies, all the 11 bodies have been identified with the help of relatives and friends of the deceased.

The bodies would be flown to Patna on Thursday, the officials said.

Police registered a case against the godown's owner on

charges of causing death by negligence and others.

State Home Minister Mohd Mahmood Ali, who held a meeting with senior police officials, said a long term plan was being chalked out to prevent incidents of fire. Some immediate measures would be implemented to minimize such accidents, he said in a release.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) would conduct a thorough survey in the city to make all commercial establishments/godowns to take necessary fire safety measures, he said.

Meanwhile, President Kovind expressed grief over death of the workers in the incident. "The death of workers in a fire accident at a godown in Secunderabad, Telangana is a tragedy beyond words. My thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families. I wish speedy recovery for the injured," Kovind said on twitter.

**Press Trust Of India**

**JAIPUR:** A Dalit man was allegedly forced to rub his nose on a platform inside a temple in Rajasthan's Alwar district after he made derogatory remarks about Hindu deities in an exchange on social media on the controversial film 'The Kashmir Files', police said on Wednesday.

An FIR was registered against 11 people on Tuesday night under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and seven accused have been arrested, polcie said.

The incident occurred under Behror Police Station on Monday. A video of the same went viral in which the victim, Rajesh Kumar Meghwal, is purportedly seen rubbing his nose in a temple under pressure from people present there.

Circle Officer at Behror Police Station Rao Anand said Meghwal, who works in a private bank, had criticised 'The Kashmir Files' movie on Facebook two-three days ago. He had written a post against the movie, which invited critical comments.

In the Facebook post, the victim questioned whether atrocities had happened with Pandits only and not with Dalits. He wrote that atrocities are happening with the poor dalit and they are not safe.

Responding to his post, some users wrote 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Jai Shri Krishna' in the comments. Meghwal allegedly reacted to this with some derogatory remarks against the gods which provoked the people.

Later, Meghwal sought an apology on social media for his comments but some locals forcibly took him to a temple on March 21 and asked him to seek apology there.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### 5 Cops, CRPF

gunshot wounds in upper parts of body including neck, was removed to the nearby SK institute of medical sciences for treatment where he succumbed.

Meanwhile, four alleged militant associates were arrested and as many grenades recovered from their possession in the city, police said.

Zubair Altaf Sheik, a resident of 90 Feet Soura Srinagar on way towards Hamandi Colony was intercepted by a naka party at Bemina Chowk, a police spokesperson said.

"During his frisking, the police party recovered one Chinese hand grenade from his possession", he said, adding, "the accused was instantly arrested and a case vide FIR number 15/22 u/s 7/25, 13 of ULA registered in this regard," he said.

The spokesperson said that the accused was put to sustained examination and during questioning he revealed that he had received the grenade from another OGW namely Shamim Ahmed Chilloo of Tankipora Shaheed Gunj.

"This accused confessed that he had received a consignment of four hand grenades and handed over one grenade each to Amir Rehman Dar of Tengpura Bypass, Shahid Ahmed Mir of Dangerpora Nowgam and Zubair Sheikh (1 arrestedee).

Later raids were conducted on these locations and three other OGWs were also arrested.

"On their instances three more hand grenades were also recovered," the spokesperson said, adding, "During course of investigation, it came out that the accused were working on directions of the (militant) group LeT,"

The spokesperson also claimed that the first arrested accused was on his way to throw the recovered hand grenade today evening and the plans were thwarted by timely preventive action of the naka party."

**Investment Environment**

been 33 per cent decline in number of police and security personals who were killed in 2021 over the previous year.

Further, she said there was no incident of weapon snatching in 2021 and even 2022 as far as now.

Sitharaman also referred to the number of militants killed. She said 180 militants (148 locals and 32 foreigners, including 44 top commanders) were killed in 2021.

She also informed that 100 per cent Covid vaccination of eligible population has been achieved in J&K.

**Parliament Okays**

the Article 370, "you see justice reaching, democracy reaching, economic development reaching" to the residents of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. (PTI)

**PM Hails LG's Efforts**

Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir is at a transformative stage and prosperity and employment opportunities will come and people will coexist peacefully.

He also said that about seven lakh jobs will be created in the Union Territory once outside investments bear fruit.

**J&K Will Be**

"I believe the operationalization of these augmented facilities will ensure all-round development in the region," the LG said.

According to the spokesperson, the Sinha said that the newly executed power projects will substantially improve the power supply in all 10 districts of the Kashmir Valley.

Recalling that in August 2019, Prime Minister had laid the foundation of a developed and progressive Jammu & Kashmir, the LG, he said, noted that the UT administration had ensured to the common citizens the access to basic necessities of quality roads, electricity and water on priority basis.

The LG, he said, while speaking on the reforms introduced by the government highlighted the initiatives taken to strengthen and improve J&K's power infrastructure which had remained dilapidated for the last several decades.

"Our AT&C losses are high and it is our social obligation to make power a self-sustaining, fast-growing sector of J&K," Sinha said.

"To address the current power deficit, we have initiated a large-scale capacity augmentation programme. In 70 years, J&K was able to harness only 3500 MW, and now generation capacity is set to be doubled in three years and trebled in seven years," he added.

The LG, as per the spokesperson said that currently, transmission & Distribution projects worth Rs 2000 crore are being completed, and an additional amount of Rs 6000 crore has been allocated by the central government to strengthen the Sub-Transmission & Distribution network across the UT.

"This will help the administration to bridge the basic infrastructural gap between cities and villages," Sinha said.

Complimenting the workforce of JKPDD for setting new standards in the timely completion of power projects, the LG, as per the spokesperson said that the aim of the administration is to provide quality electricity to all citizens and businesses.

"These augmented facilities will address the important need of the growing economy," the LG said.

According to the spokesperson, Sinha reiterated Government's commitment to make the UT power surplus in the next four years, and urged people to be equal partners in this transformative journey.

"Every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir is a participant in the process of nation-building and their contribution to socio-economic development and progress in every sector is invaluable," the LG said.

"I appeal to the people to support the efforts of the administration by installing smart meters to reduce power theft and enabling government to provide 24x7 quality power supply to all the consumers across the region," he added.

Basharat Qayoom, MD JKPDCL, in his welcome address, briefed about the efforts being made to provide quality power supply to the people, the spokesperson said.

He said that the projects inaugurated today include augmentation of GSS Mirbazar from 320 MVA to 475 MVA, GSS Mattan from 70 MVA to 100 MVA, GSS Lissar from 50 MVA to 100 MVA, GSS Amargarh from 97.5 to 135 MVA; new 100 MVA, 132/33 kV GIS Khanyar; D/C 132 kV grade underground cable from GSS Wanganpora to GIS Khanyar; 15 new 33/kV receiving stations across Kashmir, augmentation of eleven 33/11 kV receiving stations, sub-transmission & distribution works.

"Pertinently, the long-pending Capacity Augmentation of Grid Sub Station of Mir Bazar costing Rs 30 crores and Mattan Grid Sub-Station costing Rs 7.7 crores will directly benefit more than a million population of Anantnag, Kulgam and Pulwama districts," he added.

**Vows To Create**

excellent initiative like "Mission Wapsi" campaign to wean away youth from drug abuse, an official spokesperson said.

"We reaffirm our strong commitment to eliminate the drug menace and achieve the goal of a drug-free society," the LG said after flagging off "Spring Run for Drug-Free Srinagar" on Wednesday morning at Dal Lake.

"Mission Wapsi", according to the spokesperson, is an endeavour of the District Administration Srinagar to rehabilitate the victims of drug addiction by providing them dignified livelihood through proper handholding and guidance under Government Self-Employment schemes. He said that the

initiative also involves community participation on a large scale.

"Around 1500 youth participated in the Spring Run and pledged to eradicate drug menace from the society. The event was a part of IEC activities of the District Administration to spread mass awareness against drug abuse," the spokesperson said.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole; IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz, besides senior officers of Youth Services & Sports and District Administration Srinagar were present on the occasion.

**FM Blames Nehru**

it very clear repeatedly, and this has been India's consistent position, prior to 2014, that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are an integral part of the sovereign State of India," Sharma added.

Sitharaman criticised the Congress for questioning the removal of Article 370 and quoted Prime Minister Nehru's reply in Parliament in 1963 that "Article 370 is part of a certain transitional provisional arrangement. It is not a permanent part of the Constitution".

"For 70 years that transitional arrangement remained and when we removed it, you should have gone by what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said in 1963 and supported it," she told Congress members.

Stressing that from Jan Sangh days their manifestos have spoken about the abrogation of Article 370, Sitharaman said, "It was a promise given to the people of the country and we have fulfilled it."

The minister also rebutted the Opposition's charge that the BJP too shared the responsibility for the failure to check the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 as it was supporting the then V P Singh-led government at the Centre.

She pointed out that militant killings were being carried out in Kashmir before 1990 when the National Conference was in power in J-K in alliance with the Congress and recalled the then governor Jagmohan's warning about dark clouds of militancy overpowering the Valley.

She listed "seven major events" or killings of Hindus by militants in 1989 along with the related FIR numbers.

During the discussion, the Congress party had targeted the BJP, saying it was supporting the V P Singh-led government at the Centre in 1990 when Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave the Valley after they were targeted by militants.

"I just want to put the facts on record. The National Conference government with the support of the Indian National Congress was in power in J&K from November 1986 to January 18, 1990.

And Governor Jagmohan reached J&K (on January 20, 1990) after the resignation of the then Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah....20th January 1990 is when the Governor eaches Srinagar," the minister said.

"...whatever happened in 1990, we all know we listed out and we are all seeing it also.

But what happened in 1989 when this (Farooq Abdullah) government was still in place, November 1986 onwards till 18 January 1990. I will take just the example of 1989 when that government of National Conference and Indian National Congress was still there," Sitharaman said.

The Finance Minister also told the opposition that Governor Jagmohan (in his first tenure) in July 1989 had warned the then state government regarding the danger of militancy.

"Is it not true that even Jagmohan Ji, in his first phase of being Governor when he was asked to leave in July 1989, didn't he warn authorities at that time itself that the dark cloud of terrorists are really overpowering J&K, and necessary steps have to be taken by the state government," the minister

said.

While she was referring to the killings of 1989, certain opposition members asked her to focus her reply on the Budget.

To this, Sitharaman said even the speeches of opposition members were focused on Kashmir Files' (movie) and not on the Budget, therefore, she has every right to reply on all issues.

The minister also told the House that since the abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir, militant activities have significantly declined, and development works are happening in the Union Territory.

**India Slams**

related to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are "entirely" internal affairs of India.

"Other countries including China have no locus standi to comment. They should note that India refrains from public judgement of their internal issues," he said.

Bagchi was responding to media queries on the comments by Wang.

"On Kashmir, we have heard again today the calls of many of our Islamic friends. And China shares the same hope," Wang said at the OIC meeting.

**New Delhi Hotel**

employee said she had orders not to give room to anyone with an ID from Kashmir, he said, "I can give you my passport as well." As Kashmir's address was mentioned on the passport, it was denied as well.

The video, which was shot by the Kashmiri man himself, was shared by many on social media.

The man said that he has been living in different states of the country for the last 12 years and has never faced such humiliation.

"I think the hotel owner might have some issues with Kashmiris otherwise there was no advisory from the police," he said adding that "he got a room in another hotel in the same locality within no time,"

Talking to Kashmir Observer, Public Relations of the Delhi Police (PRO) Suman Nalwa said that they don't have any information regarding the incident and neither did anyone file a complaint.

"If anyone comes with a complaint, we will look into it," she said.

Soon after the video went viral on social media, OYO Rooms took cognisance of the matter and removed the hotel from its platform immediately.

Responding to a tweet, OYO Rooms, also known as OYO Hotels & Homes, issued a clarification and wrote: "We are appalled that this happened. We have taken the hotel off our platform immediately.

"Our rooms and our hearts are open for everyone, always. This is not something that we will compromise on, ever. We will definitely check what compelled the hotel to deny check-in. We thank you for bringing this to our notice," the hotel aggregator said further.

**Youth Have Immense**

remarks while addressing a national symposium on counter-radicalisation, a very significant initiative by youth, women and Islamic scholars of Kashmir Valley, at SKICC, here on Wednesday, an official spokesperson said.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, the LG urged the community elders, religious heads and women to spread the message of Peace and Harmony among the new generation.

According to the spokesperson, Sinha appreciated the efforts being made to discuss the role of religious leaders and women in counter-radicalization, preventing the youth from choosing wrong path, and creating a violence-free society

The LG, he said, reiterated that the responsibility of stopping the people to deviate from the right path lies on the shoulders of the community elders,

religious heads and the enlightened people of the society.

"I believe that by following the path of peace, we can live the ideals inherent in our society and make the dreams of a better future a reality. The aim of every human being should be to live peacefully, do good to all and work in the interest of the nation," Sinha said.

The LG, as per the spokesperson said that the energies of the youth should be channelled into constructive & creative works and in building a new J&K, sustained peace, prosperity having ample avenues of growth and development.

He said that the LG also called upon the present generation, especially the community elders, religious heads and women folks to work together so that the message of peaceful co-existence should be passed on to the new generation.

"Noting that most of the youth have chosen the right path, despite continuous efforts of many anti national elements and foreign terror groups, the Lt Governor said efforts are still being made to incite our youth by the handlers in neighboring country which is biggest exporter of terror and radicalization," he added.

The spokesperson said that the LG further stated that the family members of the youth who is seen as vulnerable to radicalization should take timely steps to prevent the worst from happening.

"They must keep a watch if there is any change in the behaviour of a child and take the help of community elders to save their child from entangling in wrong influences and environment," the LG said.

On the occasion, the LG also highlighted the strides made the Power, Education, road connectivity and other sectors.

Regarding expansion of road network, Sinha, as per the spokesperson said that now road are being built at twice the length at which it was built earlier and road macadamisation is being done at three times the previous pace.

Saying that Government is aware of increasing developmental aspirations and needs of the people, the LG said that 947 villages remained without road connectivity until last year.

"UT Government is working to connect 186 villages and though the central scheme under which these roads were to be built, is ending this March, Hon'ble PM has assured that all the remaining villages of the UT would be connected with proper roads at any cost," the LG added.

According to the spokesperson, the LG also mentioned about the 5900 houses of Srinagar where 100% smart metering has been done, will receive 24 x7 reliable and quality power from three feeders. He said that the number of houses would increase in future.

Comparing the recent budget of J&K UT with the per capita spending for people of POJK, the LG, as per the spokesperson said that \$950 will be spent in terms of per capita share in J&K Budget 2022 which is much higher than \$78.55 being spent per capita in POJK.

The LG, he said, also asserted that youth of J&K is immensely talented which is evident from the laurels brought by J&K youth in national and international platforms in the academic, sports and other fields.

The spokesperson said that the LG recalled his visit to convocation of Islamic University and said that most of the gold medalists were girl students.

"J&K Youth have become role models, Sinha said.

The LG, as per the spokesperson also spoke on the NEP. He said that NEP will contribute to the holistic growth and development of youth, and will lead to creation of a self reliant J&K and the nation. Sinha, he said, announced NEP will be implemented in its letter and spirit by the next session.

"The Lt Governor said that the appointment of Vice-Chancellors of J&K Universities has been done purely on the basis of academic and research achievements, result of which would be visible in the coming days," he said.

The LG, he said, also mentioned about the recent visit of CEOs of UAE and GCC countries who visited J&K to explore investment opportunities and increase the export potential of J&K.

Speaking on the menace of Drug Abuse, the LG, as per spokesperson said it is the second biggest threat which is affecting the youth. Drug abuse deprives the youth of making the best of their lives, destroying their present and future capabilities. Sinha, he said, stressed the need of systematic community efforts against drug abuse to destroy this social evil completely.

"He further said that Youth of J&K have immense potential and talent so they have to play a pivotal role in the development and progress of J&K," he added.

Earlier, speakers highlighted the teachings of the different religions and unanimously said that all religions teach peace, love, amity and communal harmony implying violence has no place in any religion and civilized society, and peaceful co-existence is what takes us forward as a society creating a safe and bright future for our next generations.

The day-long National symposium witnessed huge participation of Islamic Scholars, women, civil society members and was attended by religious leaders, public representatives, a large number of youth and senior citizens from different parts of the valley.

**Soldier Shoots**

afternoon, officials said. The young soldier was posted with the army's 21 Kumaon.

"The army man was shifted to Brigade hospital Uri and later referred to SDH Uri for legal formalities", the officials said.

A police official said that a case has been registered in this regard for necessary investigations. (GNS)

**Man Found**

found dead under mysterious circumstances at the house of his relative in Yarikah village of the district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

After preliminary assessment, the body was taken into the custody for postmortem, the official said—(KNO)

**Tiffin Creates Bomb**

afternoon following which a joint team of army's 2 RR and police immediately reached the spot, reports said. The bomb disposal squad was also called in to check if the hot case was not carrying any explosives.

Reports said that the movement of traffic was also stopped briefly by the government forces.

"The hot case was finally opened and it turned out to carry only rice," a police officer told a local news agency GNS.

"Since the hot case was found in a suspicious manner and as such the security establishment did want to take any chance for the safety of everyone," he added.

**Police Arrests**

vehicle (JK03B-3975), a police spokesperson said. During the search of the vehicle, he said, a huge quantity of illicit timber was recovered.

"The driver of the vehicle identified as Mohd Altaf Dar son of Gh Mohd Dar resident of Ayangund Rajpora was arrested. Besides, vehicle used in the commission of the crime has also been seized. He has been shifted to PS where he remains in custody," the spokesperson said.

Accordingly, he said, a case FIR No. 18/2022 under relevant sections of law stands registered at Police Station Rajpora and investigation has been taken up.



## PIB Workshop Highlights The Role Of Developmental Journalism



Observer News Service

**KUPWARA:** Aimed at highlighting the role of media to bring awareness among people about different government sponsored schemes and to inculcate a sense of developmental journalism, Press Information Bureau (PIB) Srinagar organized a one day Media Workshop on Wednesday at Conference Hall DC Office Kupwara.

The workshop focussed on sensitization and capacity building of journalists from Kupwara and Handwara about various Centrally Sponsored Schemes and the role of media in developmental journalism.

The programme was conducted in collaboration with district administration and included about 50 eminent media persons and other administrative officers. Media persons hailed the efforts of PIB for organising such program.

In his inaugural address Additional Deputy Commissioner, Ghulam Nabi Bhat laying emphasis on fact checking before reportage said that journalism has historically changed the perspective of people. He said that there is a need for constructive criticism to bring sociological transformation. "Negative news spreads at an alarming rate, so it is mandatory for a journalist to check facts properly before reporting," he added.

Addressing the participants Deputy Director, Press Information Bureau, Ghulam Abbas highlighted the role of PIB and presented a detailed overview about aims and objectives of the workshop. He stressed upon media fraternity to highlight developmental initiatives on priority basis.

"Government has schemes and initiatives for all walks of

life and it is the responsibility of media to highlight these initiatives for maximum utilisation," he said.

Abbas congratulated media fraternity and district administration for working in sync towards the development of the frontier district.

Speaking on the occasion, Media and Communications Officer PIB Srinagar, Majid Pandit said that media acts as a direct link between society and administration and there is an urgent need to strengthen this link. Emphasizing on the need for developmental reporting, he said that media should play an active role in bringing about awareness for the holistic development of the society.

On the occasion News Editor, All India Radio Ishfaq Shah spoke about the impact of mass media to ensure development through communication. News Editor Doordashan Kendra Srinagar, Shabir Dar spoke about the need for developing synergy between administration and people during challenging times.

Chief Education Officer, Kupwara A. Hamid Fani presented a detailed overview of the educational scenario of the District. Senior Journalist Syed Ishfaq spoke about developmental communication through vernacular media to reach out to the grassroots. Media and Communications Officer PIB Srinagar, Muzafar Wani briefed the participants about media ethics to maintain the standards of objectivity.

The lectures were followed by interactive sessions in which participants put forward their comments and observations with the experts. Media persons expressed their intentions for more such programs in future.

## IUST Hosts Four-Day International Webinar On Post-Truth And Literature

Observer News Service

**AWANTIPORA:** With the objective to unearth the ambiguity surrounding the post-truth phenomenon, the Department of English Language and Literature, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Tuesday hosted a four-day International Webinar on Post-truth and Literature: Perspectives and Reality.

The highlight of the event would be to deliberate upon the difficulty of clarifying the truth value of most of the information disseminated through technology like the internet and social networks.

The event is intended to engage in meaningful conversations on how the landscapes of literary representation and criticism may react to the post-truth era.

The Chairpersons and the paper presenters of the Webinar hail from prestigious universities within the country and abroad including University of Cambridge, University of New Mexico, Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, IIT Roorkee, University of Kashmir, Seacom Skills University, West Bengal, to name but a few.

Associate Dean and Head, Dept of English Language and Literature, IUST and Webinar Director, Dr. Munejah Khan, presented the welcome address and deliberated on the theme of the Webinar.

Underscoring the importance of interdisciplinary research, Vice Chancellor IUST Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo who was the Chief Guest of the inaugural session complimented the department for conducting academic ventures of contemporary relevance from time to time.

The keynote speaker, Dr Lee McIntyre, author of POST-TRUTH (MIT Press, 2018) & Research Fellow, Center for Philosophy and History of Science, Boston University, spoke on "What is Post-truth?" and touched upon



the vistas of post-truth as a phenomenon of information warfare. He also spoke about post-truth situation which means political subordination of truth. He explained the concept by focussing on science deniers and science denials, creation of doubt and how it leads to control of information.

Prof. Shohini Ghosh, Sajjad Zaheer Chaired Professor & Officiating Director, AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, who was the Guest of Honor talked about the intricacies of documentary-making as it borrows the various elements like narrative from any other form such as fictional piece thereby challenging its very premise of faithful representation of truth. Ghosh also spoke about documentary and observational cinema and cinema vérité. She underscored the role of cameras not as observers but catalysts. She further expounded on role of documentaries in pursuing truth.

Dean Academic Affairs, IUST Prof. Manzoor Ahmad Malik, spoke on the importance of truth in the post-truth era and raised few significant questions related to Post-truth situation.

Isma Hamid, Asst. Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature, IUST anchored the inaugural function and Fayaz Sultan, Asst. Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature, IUST presented the Vote of Thanks. Many dignitaries across the globe, research scholars, faculty members and participants attended the webinar.

'THE KASHMIR FILES' CONTROVERSY

## BJP Promoting Film To Instigate People On Religious Lines: Mehbooba

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti alleged on Wednesday that the BJP is promoting "The Kashmir Files", a film on the plight of displaced Kashmiri Hindus, to incite people on religious lines and called for the setting up of a panel to probe the circumstances that led to the exodus of Pandits from the valley.

Her demand came a day after National Conference (NC) chief Farooq Abdullah also called for setting up a panel to investigate the killings and the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley.

Asking people to watch the film but not harbour hatred towards Muslims, Mufti said the circumstances that led to the 2020 Delhi riots and the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 should also be probed.

"Of course, the government of India should take a decision in this regard (probing the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits)," she told reporters on the sidelines of her party's convention here.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the Centre should set up a "truth and



reconciliation commission" to probe not only the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, but also the Gujarat and Delhi riots.

"I have not seen 'The Kashmir Files'. I have heard that the film shows a lot of violence and bloodshed and that it has painful scenes. What happened with the Kashmiri Pandits was horrible. We feel their pain. But you cannot hate every Kashmiri Muslim (for the exodus of Pandits)," she said.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief recounted the massacres of Sikhs in Chittisinghpura, Hindus in Bajrara (Doda) and Kothdara, and Muslims in Surankote and said, "Every community faced the worst oppression in Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Jammu and Kashmir were caught between the guns of Pakistan and India. The Kashmiri

Pandits were also victims of it."

Maintaining that the makers of the "The Kashmir Files" have to make money, Mufti accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of promoting the film to incite people on religious lines.

"The prime minister and the BJP are promoting it by giving free tickets and making it tax-free. They are inciting people. They divide people on religious lines," she said.

Taking a dig at the saffron party for its "failure" to address the concerns of Kashmiri Pandits, Mufti said had it done anything for the Pandits in the last eight years, their situation could have improved.

"Whatever was done for them -- employment packages, rehabilitating them in flats after bringing them out of tents (refugee camps), transit accommodation facilities at Vessu, Sheikhpora, Mattan or Tulmulla -- all of it was done when Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was the chief minister during the rule of Atalji (former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee) in the country," she added.

## J&K Reports 26 Fresh Covid-19 Cases, No Death

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir reported 26 fresh Covid-19 cases while there was no death due to the virus in the last 24 hours, officials said on Wednesday.

They said 14 of the fresh cases were reported from Jammu Division and 12 from Kashmir Valley, taking the overall tally to 453595.

Giving district wise details, the officials said that Srinagar reported 9 cases, Baramulla 0, Budgam 1, Pulwama 1, Kup-

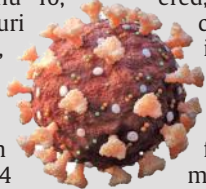
wara 0, Anantnag 0, Bandipora 0, Ganderbal 0, Kulgam 1, Shopian 0, Jammu 10, Udhampur 0, Rajouri 0, Doda 3, Kathua 1, Samba 0, Kishtwar 0, Poonch 0, Ramban 0 and Reasi 0.

There was no death reported in the last 24 hours, they said. So far 4750 persons have succumbed to the virus—2327 in Jammu and 2423 in Kashmir.

Besides, they said, 13 Covid-19 patients—five from Jammu and eight from Valley—

recovered during the time. So far 448733 people have recovered, leaving the active case tally at 112—38 in Jammu and 74 in Kashmir.

They said there was no new confirmed case of mucormycosis (black fungus) reported today. So far 51 black fungus cases have been confirmed in J&K, the officials said. They also informed that 13789 doses of covid-19 vaccine were administered during the time in J&K.



## Student's Death Due To Electrocution Sparks Protest At GDC Bijbehara

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** A student Of Government Degree College (GDC) Bijbehara died due to electrocution while playing volleyball at the College on Thursday afternoon.

An official said that the student identified as Umer Farooq, son of Farooq Ahmed Bhat of Dargund Sirigufwara, a student of 2nd year at Degree College Bijbehara was electrocuted while playing volleyball at the college.

He came in touch with a live wire when he went to collect the ball and fell unconscious.

He was rushed to a nearby hospital, however, he died on the way to hospital.

Soon after the incident, the students of the college raised slogans against the college administration and demanded investigation in this regard.

Principal GDC Bijbehara Muzafar Ahmad told a local news agency KNO that since 2015,

a high tension wire is passing through the ground and the then principal had raised the issue with PDD to shift the wire and PDD shifted it outside the fence of the college but its height hasn't been kept so high.

He said several times PDD was informed about the issue but nothing has been done and today when ball went outside the fence and student while trespassing tried to collect the ball came in contact of live wire and died.

### KIIT Campus Placement 2022

## 5 Students Bag 52 Lakh Annual Package

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** History repeats itself when efforts are endured. Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) has not only grown to be a citadel but an achiever even in most adverse situations.

**A Notch Higher**  
From a milestone and flag bearer for knowledge, now, in a repeat, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, has achieved record campus placement with 270 plus top-notch companies doling out 4200 plus job offers for a batch size of 3500 eligible B.Tech students of 2022 graduating batch. This year, 50 new companies have participated in the placement process so far.

Seen in hindsight, it is not merely a record spree, but an outstanding result of years of tireless dedication and zeal that the Founder of KIIT Dr. Achyuta Samanta politely pursues. He is a man who never flaunts his triumphs.

The commencement of the campus placement season for the 2022 graduating batch started from May 2021 and KIIT is already pre-well-poised to achieve cent percent campus placement for yet another year, informed Prof. Sasmita Samanta, Vice-Chancellor,



KIIT-DU.

More than 3000 students got single placement offers, while the top 1500 students were placed in "Dream Companies" with an average CTC of Rs. 8.10 lakh p.a. Thirty-five companies offered CTC of Rs. 10.00 lakh and above per annum, while over 130 companies offered CTC of Rs. 5.00 lakh, said, Prof. Saranjit Singh, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, KIIT DU.

**A Whopping Outreach**

Five students of KIIT have got placement offers with the highest CTC of Rs. 52 lakh per annum. The average CTC is Rs. 6.05 lakh, which is 30% higher than the previous year. More than 3000 students are already placed and over 1200 students bagged multiple job offers.

## Delhi HC Declines Regularisation Of Govt Quarters To Retired KP Man

Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to regularise the allotment of government accommodation to a Kashmiri migrant, who was retired from service, observing that the government does not have "unlimited accommodation".

Petitioner Sushil Kumar Dhar, a Kashmiri migrant who was retired on March 31 last year, had challenged an earlier court order which dismissed a batch of similar pleas filed against the eviction orders issued by the central government.

The pleas were seeking regularisation of government quarters by charging normal license fees for three years referring to the Supreme Court order dated October 7, 2021, in the Union of India vs Onkar Nath Dhar case. The division bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Navin Chawla was hearing the appeal of Dhar who had stated that the state is unable to

give him proper security to re-establish his village in Kashmir.

During the course of the hearing, the petitioner's counsel said his client feels safe in Delhi. "As a Kashmiri migrant, pandit, I'm unable to go back," he said.

After the submissions, the court said it is not that the government authorities are discriminating against the appellant, asking what will be the plight of other people waiting in queue for government accommodation if it permits this plea. "Govt doesn't have unlimited accommodation," the bench said.

As per petitioner Dhar, he was transferred from Jammu and Kashmir to Delhi. He had joined in National Sample Survey Organisation in Udhampur in 1983.

In the earlier verdict, the bench of Justice Kameswar Rao had noted that the petitioner was transferred to Delhi in January 1993, that is after four years from 1989, and refused his claims on security issues.

## Plantation Drive Held At SKUAST-K On World Meteorological Day

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The World Meteorological Day-2022 was commemorated on Wednesday at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir with a unique concept of plantation drive in the Shalimar campus of SKUAST-Kashmir.

The day was organised by the Agromet Field Unit Srinagar in collaboration with Dean Students Welfare SKUAST-K, the World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) and India Meteorological Department, MoES, New Delhi today on 23rd March, 2022 with the theme Early Warning and Early Action. More than 150 students planted saplings of conifer, deodar and other ornamental plants during the plantation drive.

Vice-Chancellor of SKUAST-K, Prof. (Dr.) Nazir Ahmad Ganai was the chief guest of the occasion.

Among other prominent guests were Head Agro-met Advisory services IMD, New Delhi, Dr. K. K. Singh; Director Research SKUAST-K, Dr. Sarfaraz Ahmad Wani; President Association of



New Delhi, Dr. B. S. Tyagi; Director Education SKUAST-K, Dr. M. N. Khan; Director Education SKUAST-K, Dean Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-K, Shalimar, Dr. Shabir Ahmad Wani; Dean Faculty of Agriculture, SKUAST-K, Wadura, Dr. Raihana Habib Kanth; Dean Students Welfare SKUAST-K, Prof. M.A.A. Siddique; Co-PI NAHEP, Dr. Azmat Alam; Head Agromet Unit, SKUAST-K, Shalimar, Dr. Sameera Qayoom; Dr. Bilal Lone Associate Professor Agromet Unit, Dr. Aijaz Nazir, Technical Officer, Agromet Unit, Dr. Seemi Lohani, Assistant Students Welfare Officer and faculty members.

## Doda Admin Withholds Salary Of BDOs For Dismal Performance

Asked To Achieve 100% Targets To Avoid Further Stern Actions

**DODA:** Taking strong cognisance of the dismal performance in generating the order sheets under Awass plus PMAY-G, ACD Doda Phulail Singh on Wednesday withheld the salary of several Block Development Officers till further orders.

As per an order issued here today, the action has been taken against the BDOs of Assar, Bhagwah, Doda, Jakyas, Kahara, Kashtigarh and Marmat blocks.

The treasury officers of the respective RDD blocks have been asked not to entertain the salary bills of the above-mentioned BDOs till further orders. The BDOs have been directed to achieve 100% targets to avoid further action as warranted under rules.

## Congress, Allies Have No Commitment For Development Of J&K: Minister

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The government on Wednesday alleged that the opposition has no commitment for the development of Jammu and Kashmir and their "discrimination" against the Union Territory continues as before.

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal made the allegations in Lok Sabha after an MP from Jammu and Kashmir, Hsainain Masoodi, could not properly ask a supplementary question during the Question Hour due to the protests and sloganeering by the opposition over the fuel price hike.

"This shows their (opposition) commitment towards Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress and its allies have been discriminating against Jammu and Kashmir for years and they are doing the same even now. They are not allowing an MP from Jammu and Kashmir to ask a question," Goyal said.

However, the unrelenting op-

position continued their protests in the Well of the House.

The Lok Sabha at that time was taking up a question related to the Ministry of Textiles, which is handled by Goyal.

Earlier, when the opposition started the sloganeering against the Modi government for the fuel price hike for the second consecutive day, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said that people have shown the opposition their place in the recently held assembly elections in five states.

"The people have shown the opposition their place in the assembly polls. They have no right to protests, he said.

The BJP won elections in four states out of the five where the polls were held in February-March.

Petrol and diesel prices on Wednesday were hiked by 80 paise a litre each for the second day in a row since the ending of an over four-and-half month hiatus in rate revision.



## J&K Sports Council Conducts Screening Of Sqay Teams

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K Sports Council on Wednesday conducted screening of J&K Sqay teams in which 20 Men and 20 Women athletes have been cleared by the committee for the participation in J&K teams in All India Sqay Championship 2021-2022.

The All India Sqay Championship is scheduled to be held at Pahalgam, from 28th to 30th March, 2022.

According to the officers of J&K Sports Council, Jammu &

Kashmir is all set to host All India Sqay championship 2022 in which 22 States and UTs are going to take part.

The said championship will be organised by Jammu & Kashmir Sqay Association under the aegis of Sqay Federation of India.

Meanwhile, the Jammu & Kashmir Sqay Association expressed its gratitude to J&K Sports Council for supporting the traditional Martial Art of Kashmir, which presently has got recognition at national as well as global level.

## GCoE Srinagar Holds Annual College Road Race For Men, Women Groups



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Government College of Education (GCoE) M A Road, Srinagar on Wednesday organised the Annual College Road Race for Men and Women here in which 78 students participated.

The events were flagged off by the Principal Prof. Ruhi Kanth along with Prof. Rubeena Khatib, Mohd. Ayoub and Daljeet Kour. The faculty members of the college were also present on this occasion.

While the road race for men started from Nehru Park to Nishat Gate at 7:00 AM, the women

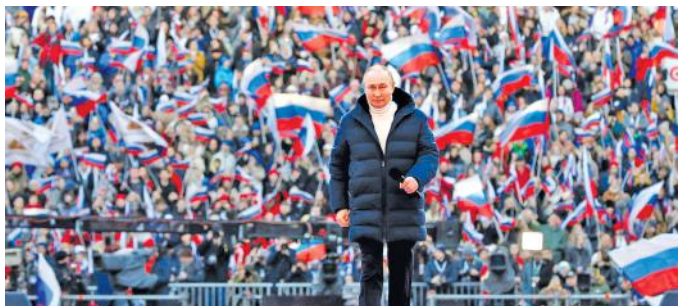
started their race from Centur hotel to Nishat Gate at 7:15 AM.

On this occasion Principal and faculty members highlighted the importance of sports activities for overall development of the students and teachers.

In men's category Yahya Bakhtiyar, Tariq Ahmad, Naveed Qayoom and Khurshed Ahmad got 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th position respectively while in female category Urfeela, Seerat-ul-Jan, Rashidah Rafeeq and Nahida Nissar got 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th position respectively.

The prize distribution ceremony was also held at Nishat garden.

## Russian Olympians Face Backlash After Vladimir Putin Rally



Agencies

**LONDON:** Russian Olympic athletes who participated in a rally supporting President Vladimir Putin and the invasion of Ukraine are facing a backlash, with one losing a sponsorship deal and facing a disciplinary investigation.

Medallists from cross-country skiing, gymnastics, figure skating and swimming gathered on stage at the Luzhniki Stadium on Friday as part of the concert and entertainment programme around Putin's speech.

Olympic champion swimmer Evgeny Rylov is under investigation for attending the event, the sport's governing body told The Associated Press.

"FINA is deeply disappointed to note the reports regarding Evgeny Rylov's appearance at the Luzhniki Stadium during Friday's rally. We are investigating the matter further," the governing body said in an e-mail Tuesday.

Rylov has also lost his endorsement deal with swimwear manufacturer Speedo because of his involvement in the pro-Putin rally.

"Following his attendance at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow at the weekend, Speedo can confirm that it has terminated the sponsorship of Evgeny Rylov with immediate effect," the company said.

"We condemn the war in Ukraine in the strongest possible way and stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, our athletes and our teammates who have been impacted by the conflict."

Speedo added it will donate the remainder of Rylov's sponsorship fee to UNHCR, the United Nations agency caring for refugees.

Most of the athletes, including Rylov, were pictured wearing

jackets with a "Z" on the chest at the rally. The letter isn't part of the Russian alphabet but has become a symbol of support for Russian troops after it was used as a marker on Russian armoured vehicles operating in Ukraine.

Other Olympic medallists athletes in attendance included figure skaters Victoria Sinitsina, Nikita Katsalapov, Evgenia Tarasova and Vladimir Morozov; cross-country skier Alexander Bolshunov; and rhythmic gymnastic twin sisters Dina and Ariana Averina.

The athletes stood on stage as the national anthem was played in an apparent reference to how Russian teams at last year's Summer Olympics in Tokyo and this year's Winter Olympics in Beijing didn't have the anthem at their ceremonies in the fallout from years of doping disputes.

The event was held on the anniversary of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, with patriotic songs and praise for troops and Russia-backed separatists.

"Not so long ago we supported them in this difficult Olympic season, now they support the war against us and our country," Ukrainian ice dancer Oleksandra Nazarova wrote on Instagram last week with a picture of four Russian skaters taking part in the rally.

Nazarova and partner Maksym Nikitin are both from Kharkiv, the mostly Russian-speaking city in northeastern Ukraine which has been subjected to intense bombardments by Russian forces.

Since the invasion, dozens of sports banned Russian and Belarusian athletes from their events after the International Olympic Committee recommended they be expelled from competition. Belarus has been an ally of Russia in the war. (AP)

## IPL 15: 25% Crowd Allowed Inside Stadiums

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The 15th edition of the Indian Premier League, which is set to begin in Mumbai on Saturday, will witness 25 per cent crowd attendance in stadiums, the organisers said on Wednesday.

The lucrative league gets underway at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday with defending champions Chennai Super Kings taking on Kolkata Knight Riders.

"This match will be a momentous occasion as the 15th edition of the IPL will welcome fans back to the stadiums after a brief hiatus owing to the pandemic," an IPL release stated.

"The matches will be played across stadiums in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai & Pune with an audience occupancy rate of 25% as per COVID-19 protocols," the release added.

With the addition of two new teams -- Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans -- the IPL will have 74 matches this season, with 70 of them being played at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium and Brabourne Stadium



along with Navi Mumbai's DY Patil ground and MCA International Stadium in Pune.

As many as 20 games each will be held at Wankhede and DY Patil, while 15 each will be hosted at Brabourne and MCA International stadium, Pune.

The IPL returns to India after about a year. In 2021, the league was played behind closed doors across a few venues in India but was suspended mid-way

in May after multiple COVID-19 cases were reported in its bio-bubble. The remaining matches were then played in the UAE in September-October.

The 2020 edition of the league was also played in the UAE.

The tickets for the league phase will go on sale from Wednesday and can be purchased from the league's official website www.iplt20.com, or from on www.BookMyShow.com.

## CSK To Miss Moeen Ali For IPL Opener Due To Visa Issues

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will miss the services of Moeen Ali for their IPL-opener as the star England all-rounder is yet to receive his India visa for competing in the lucrative T20 tournament, beginning in Mumbai on Saturday.

CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan confirmed the development

"It is almost certain that Moeen Ali will miss the first game. He has still not got the visa. We are on it as well as BCCI. Hope it is sorted in a day or two," Viswanathan told PTI. "It is disappointing that he has not been able to join us. They follow set procedures for players with Pakistan descent. That looks like the reason (for delay)."

His grandfather migrated to England from Pakistan-Administered Kashmir but Moeen is born in England and is a frequent visitor to India.

CSK, four-time IPL champions, will take on last edition's runner-up side Kolkata Knight Riders in the opening match of this year's IPL at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Saturday.

Viswanathan said even if



he manages to reach India by Thursday, Ali will be unavailable for the opener because of the quarantine protocol laid down by the IPL organisers.

"There is three-day mandatory quarantine which Moeen has to undergo before joining the IPL bio-bubble. So he will be out of the first game even if he gets his visa today or tomorrow."

Because of his fine all-round show which helped the team lift its fourth IPL title, Moeen was retained by CSK along side inspirational captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja and Rituraj Gaikwad.

Moeen scored 357 runs from

15 innings for CSK in the IPL last year, while also taking six wickets from 15 games with his off-spin bowling.

**DEEPAK CHAHAR TO MISS A GOOD NUMBER OF MATCHES**

Besides Moeen, CSK will also miss their star pacer Deepak Chahar, who has been ruled out of the first half of the IPL due to a right quadriceps injury which he sustained during the third and final T20 match against the West Indies in Kolkata last month.

Asked about Chahar's progress, Viswanathan said: "He will remain in the NCA until he gets fitness clearance from the BCCI."

## Rohit Says No 'Added Advantage' Of Playing In Mumbai

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said they will have no "added advantage" of playing their IPL matches in the city's three grounds as many in the "relatively new team" have not played a single game here in last two years.

The IPL-15 begins at the Wankhede Stadium with a clash between Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday.

"I hope you saw the auction, relatively new team, lot of new guys have come into the team, so I don't believe in added advantage because these guys, like lot of the guys 70 (or) 80 per cent of the squad has not played in Bombay before," Rohit said at a virtual press conference.

"So there is no such thing as added advantage," the five-time IPL winning captain added.

The league phase of the IPL will be held in Mumbai and Pune. Mumbai have been playing their home games at the Wankhede Stadium since the start of the tournament in 2008.

"Only myself, Surya (Suryakumar Yadav), (Kieron) Pollard, Ishan (Kishan), (Jasprit) Bumrah have played in Bombay a lot. Others have not played, so there is no such thing as added advantage," he reiterated.

"We all are playing in Bombay after two years, we have not played a single game in Mumbai, in fact the other franchises have played in Bombay last year, we didn't get to play, so no advantage," Rohit maintained.



**WELCOMES EXTRA DRS**

Rohit welcomed the move to have two DRS per innings in the forthcoming season.

"Look, that (Mankading) has become legal, so batters will need to pay more attention, when to come out of the crease and when not, so it is very simple, the rules have come and we need to follow them."

"Secondly, I think it is a good rule, the new batsman should face (the ball) if the batsman gets out, it is important that a bowler is bowling in good rhythm and he gets a wicket, a new batter faces him, especially when he catches out."

"It is a good opportunity for the opposition to keep up the pressure."

He added, "And having two DRS is also a good rule, because fewer mistakes in the game, the better it is. In international cricket we play with two DRS, so I think it is a good move to bring two DRS by the IPL," said Rohit.

With the IPL being a 10-team

affair this time, the franchises will be playing a different format, but Rohit maintained that nothing changes for the team in terms of planning.

"It's a format that we played in 2011. To be honest, nothing really changes in terms of planning. You have to play the opposition -- someone you will play only once or some twice."

"There's not too many changes that we need to make, it's just that you will be playing certain teams only once, so you need to be prepared because there is no coming back. You need to plan well against those guys, ensure that your bases are covered," he signed off.

Meanwhile, head coach Mahela Jayawardene heaped praise on MI's young recruit, Dewald Brevis.

"We haven't finalized (the top order), it is too early for us to give that information. But very excited to see him (Brevis) in the nets, he is a very committed young man and he is quite keen to learn and that is a good sign to see," said Jayawardene.

## Pakistan Dismissed For 268 In Reply To Australia's 391



Agencies

**LAHORE:** Pakistan were bowled out for 268 in their first innings on the third day of the third and deciding Test in Lahore on Wednesday, in reply to Australia's 391.

Australian skipper Pat Cummins finished with 5-56 and pace partner Mitchell Starc took 4-33 as Pakistan lost their last nine wickets for just 98 runs, giving the visitors a lead of 123.

Opener Abdullah Shafique (81), Azhar Ali (78), and Babar Azam (67) were the main run-scorers for Pakistan.

Australia were once again sloppy in the field as Steve Smith failed to catch Azam off spinner Nathan Lyon when Pakistan's dangerman was on 20.

Pakistan, resuming at 90-1, reached 159 at lunch without losing any more wickets but the second session saw Australia dismiss Abdullah Shafique (81) and Azhar (78) in the space of 44 runs.

Lyon got rid of in-form Shafique in the fifth over after lunch when he forced an edge for wicketkeeper Alex Carey to take the catch.

Umpire Aleem Dar ruled not out but skipper Pat Cummins successfully reviewed the deci-

sion in Australia's favour.

Shafique, who hit a century in the drawn first Test in Rawalpindi, batted for 323 minutes, hitting 11 boundaries.

Azhar, who put on an invaluable 150-run stand for the second wicket with Shafique, completed 7,000 runs in his 94th Test when he reached 74.

He is the 54th batsman and fifth from Pakistan to score 7,000-plus runs in Test cricket.

Australia took the second new ball after 80 overs with the total on 191-2 and seven overs later Cummins held on to a sharp caught-and-bowled chance to dismiss Azhar.

Azhar batted for 337 minutes, hitting seven boundaries and a six in his 35th Test half-century.

In the morning session, Australia toiled hard and could have had some reward in the last over before lunch when Azhar, on 62, edged leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson, but Smith at slip failed to hold on to the sharp chance.

Australia's first Test series in Pakistan for 24 years because of security fears has been marred by flat pitches where the bat has dominated the ball.

The first two Tests of the series -- the first between the sides in Pakistan since 1998 -- were drawn. (AFP)

## South Africa Cricketer Zubayr Hamza Positive For Banned Drug

Agencies

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa batsman Zubayr Hamza has tested positive for the banned diuretic Furosemide, the country's cricket federation said Wednesday. The 26-year-old Hamza is not disputing the positive test and has agreed to a "voluntary suspension" starting immediately while the case is investigated, Cricket South Africa said.

"Zubayr has been able to identify how the substance entered his system," CSA said in a statement. "The process to follow will entail presenting evidence that there was no fault or negligence, or no significant fault or negligence on the part of Zubayr."

Furosemide is not a performance-enhancing drug but is banned because it can be used to mask other substances. Hamza



tested positive following a doping test on Jan. 17, CSA said. He went on to play for South Africa in the first test in New Zealand last month.

Hamza has played six tests for the Proteas but hadn't represented his country in the long format for two years before his appearance against New Zealand. He withdrew from South Africa's ODI squad last week ahead of the home series against Bangladesh. (AP)

## World Cup Spot On The Line For Portugal & Ageing Cristiano Ronaldo

Agencies

**LISBON:** At 37 years old, it's no secret time is running out for Cristiano Ronaldo. Playing at a



high level is not getting any easier, and the opportunities to compete in top tournaments are becoming scarce. Missing out on the World Cup, at his age, could mean he's never playing in soccer's showcase event again.

Portugal faces two must-win games in the European qualifying playoffs, beginning Thursday when it hosts Turkey. The winner then plays next Tuesday against the winner of European champion Italy vs. North Macedonia for a ticket to Qatar.

Although no one knows if Ronaldo would still play in the next World Cup at age 41, not qualifying for this one would be one of the biggest setbacks of his career. Ronaldo tried not to think past the task at hand, though. Totally focused on the 2022 World Cup, he said this week on Instagram.

As always, I'm proud to represent Portugal. We know it won't be easy. We have the maximum respect for the opponents that we will face and they have the

same goals as us. But together we will fight to put Portugal where it deserves to be. Let's do it!

Ronaldo is trying to make it to his 10th consecutive major tournament. He is the only player to have scored at least once in the finals of nine top tournament in a row, a streak that started at the 2004 European Championship and includes four other Euros and four World Cups.

He is the active Portugal player with the most World Cup goals with seven, two shy of Eusebio. Portugal was relegated to the playoffs after a heartbreaking 2-1 loss to Serbia at home in the final Group A game in November when the hosts opened the scoring but conceded the deciding goal in the 90th minute. A draw would have been enough for Portugal, which is trying to qualify for the World Cup for the sixth straight time.

Only two consecutive victories will do now. It's not the ideal situation, but it is what it is and we have to face it with responsibility, Liverpool forward Diogo Jota said. We can't make too much drama about it. It's a soccer match and I believe we can win and make it to the World Cup.