



P3 CITY

6 RESIDENTIAL HOUSES DAMAGED IN MIDNIGHT BLAZE AT NAMCHABAL

At least six residential houses were damaged in a fire incident in a congested Namchabal area of Srinagar. Official sources said the fire erupted at midnight at around 12:00 a.m., apparently due to a

P5 THINK

FASTING AND HEALTH IN RAMAZAN

Ramazan is a month of self-regulation and self-training. Muslims fast in accordance with our religious requirements, but there are medical benefits as well. Generally, fasting has been used by patients for weight management, to rest the digestive tract, and for lowering lipids.



P7 STATE

PRAYERS, PROCESSIONS MARK MARTYRDOM ANNIVERSARY OF IMAM ALI IN KASHMIR

Thousands of fasting Muslims thronged shrines and Imambargahs on Saturday to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), one of the



22 ND RAMAZAN		
	Iftar TODAY	Sehri TOMMOROW
FIQAH HANAFIYA	7:12	4:21
FIQAH JAFARIYA	7:19	4:19

Widom Quote!

Integrity has no need of rules
- Albert Camus

NEWS DIGEST

Three New Corona Cases In J&K

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded three fresh cases of coronavirus, raising its tally to 4,53,978, officials said. Of the fresh cases, two were from Jammu division and one from Kashmir division of the union territory, they said. The officials said Jammu district recorded the highest **More on P6**

Electricity Shock Kills Policeman

SRINAGAR: A policeman was electrocuted to death and another injured in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Saturday, official sources said. While the circumstances leading to the incident have not been revealed officially hitherto, the official sources **More on P6**

10 Injured By Stray Dogs In Kupwara

SRINAGAR: Nearly a dozen inhabitants, mainly children, were hospitalized with dog bites on Saturday after canines struck in at least two places in Lolab area of frontier north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Reports said that canines attacked and injured the inhabitants at Tekipora and Diver **More on P6**

Worker Falls Into Stone Crusher, Dies

SRINAGAR: A worker died at Khrew area of Pampore in south Kashmir's Pulwama district after falling into a stone crusher on Saturday, sources said. 27-year-old Imtiyaz Ahmad Drabu (27) son of Mohammad Shafi Drabu, a resident of Chak Narwah Banihal died after falling into a screen shaft of a crusher. The deceased was **More on P6**

Red Alert In J&K On PM Modi's Visit



Venue Placed Under Siege; Frisking Intensified Along Highways, Vigil Up Along Border

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A day after a fierce gunfight between militants and security forces here, a thick security blanket has been thrown across Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Palli

Panchayat in Samba district on Sunday, officials said.

A red alert has been sounded across J&K following the encounter near Sunjwan army camp on the outskirts of the city which averted a major attack with the gunning down of two newly infiltrated militants armed with suicide vests and large quantity of arms and ammunition.

A Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer was also killed and nine others including two policemen were injured as security forces engaged the **More on P6**

NIA Chief Reviews PM's Security

NIA chief Kuldip Singh on Saturday visited Jammu's Sunjwan area where two suicide bombers of banned Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) were killed in a fierce gunfight with security forces ahead of the prime minister's visit, officials said. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) chief, who reached Jammu on Friday **More on P6**

Two South Kashmir Residents Arrested

Two Kashmir residents were nabbed in connection with the Sunjwan encounter in which two suicide bombers of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) were killed here, a senior police **More on P6**

J&K Parties, Social Groups Repeat Statehood Demand

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, a Jammu-based morcha of mainstream political parties and social organisations, including the Congress and the National Conference, on Saturday advocated the immediate restoration of statehood and democracy in Jammu and Kashmir.

The All Parties United Morcha (APUM), which also includes the CPI(M), CPM, Dogra Sadar Sabha,

United Peace Alliance and the Internationalist Democratic Party, sought the prime minister's intervention in addressing the shortcomings in the draft proposal prepared by the delimitation commission for J&K.

Addressing a joint press conference here, leaders of the morcha, including Congress chief spokesperson and former legislator Ravinder Sharma, former MP Sheikh Abdul Rehman and former minister Ram Paul of the National Conference, **More on P6**

PM In Jammu Today, To Launch Projects Worth Rs 20K Crore

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Sunday inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of development projects worth over Rs 20,000 crore in Jammu and Kashmir, including the opening of the Banihal-Qazigund road tunnel to establish all-weather connectivity between the two regions of the union territory.

Modi is travelling there to participate in the celebration for the National Panchayati Raj Day and address 'Gram Sabhas' across the country, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement. He will also visit Palli Panchayat in Samba district.

Seeking to develop and rejuvenate 75 water bodies in every district of the country, the prime minister will launch a new initiative named 'Amrit



Sarovar', it said.

Modi is scheduled to attend the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Awards Ceremony in Mumbai later in the evening where he will receive the first Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award, the statement said.

The award has been instituted in the memory of Lata Mangeshkar and will be given every year to a person for exemplary contribution towards nation building, it noted.

In the statement on Modi's visit to Jammu and Kashmir,

the PMO said the government has been focussed on bringing about wide ranging reforms to substantially improve governance and enhance ease of living for the people of the region at an unprecedented pace following the "constitutional reforms" of August 2019, a reference to the abrogation of Article 370 and making the erstwhile state into a union territory.

The projects being inaugurated or whose foundation stones will be laid in this visit will go a long way in facilitating basic amenities, ensuring ease of mobility and development of infrastructure in the region, it said.

Modi will inaugurate the Banihal-Qazigund road tunnel, built at a cost of over Rs 3,100 crore. The 8.45-km-long tunnel will reduce the road distance between Banihal and Qazigund by 16 km, and reduce **More on P6**

Pak Militant, Aide Killed In Kulgam Encounter

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A Pakistani militant and his associate were killed in an ongoing encounter with government forces in Kulgam district of South Kashmir, police said.

Police and army launched a cordon and search operation in the Mirhama area of Kulgam in south Kashmir following inputs about the presence of militants there, a police official said.

He said the search operation turned into an encounter after the hiding militants fired at the security forces.

In the ensuing exchange of fire, two militants were killed,



the official added.

"#KulgamEncounterUpdate: 01 more #terrorist killed (Total 02). #Operation in progress. Further details shall follow," police posted on **More on P6**

Railway Cop Injured In Militant Attack Dies

An assistant sub-inspector of the Railway Protection Force (RPF), who was injured in an attack by militants, died at a hospital here on Saturday, officials said. On April 18, a pistol-borne militant opened fire on two RPF personnel at Kakpora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, killing head constable Surinder Kumar and critically injuring ASI Devraj. **More on P6**

Will Cross Border If Militants Attack India: DM

Press Trust Of India

GUWAHATI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday asserted that India would not hesitate to act against militants who target the country from across the border.

Speaking at a programme, where Assam-based veterans of 1971 India-Pakistan War were felicitated, Singh said the government was working to wipe out terrorism from the country.

"India has been successful in giving out the message that terrorism will be strongly dealt with. We will not hesitate to cross borders if the country is targeted from outside," he maintained. **More on P6**

LG Okays Rs. 22,126.93 Cr District Capex Budget 2022-23

'Our Aim Is To Make Development A Powerful People's Movement'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday approved Rs. 22,126.93 Cr District Capex Budget 2022-23, for the equitable development of the Union Territory.

The unprecedented district capex budget for all 20 districts, 75% higher than that of the last year, was approved



during a high-level meeting, chaired by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at the Civil

Secretariat, an official spokesperson said. Highlighting the key features of the budget, he said, the LG observed that the Plan has been finalized by adopting a Bottom-up approach with active involvement of Panchayats, BDCs, and DDCs.

"The key objective of District Plan is the empowerment of Panchayati Raj System and to strengthen grass **More on P6**

Daily Wagers To Get To Rs 300 Per Day

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday approved a hike in minimum wages of the daily wagers, including casual labourers, in all government departments from Rs 225 per day to Rs 300 per day. The announcement was made by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha as an interim measure till the minimum wage rates are revised by the Labour and Employment Department. **More on P6**

Inside Kashmir's Comedy Circus Where Cringe Content Is New Fame

Zaid Bin Shabir

It took countless laughs and a flurry of videos for Fayaz Rather aka Fayaz Scorpio's father to break his silence: "Please leave my son alone, he's mentally confused."

But despite this poignant public-appeal, Fayaz's cringe-content remains a dark-and-dank humour in Kashmir's virtual space.

Lately, when Fayaz showed up in Tulip Garden, his social media image became his real life ordeal. Surrounded by the jeering public for Selfies and scorns, the simpleton was seen struggling to maintain his normal stance.

"The pseudo celebrity hood created by social media is only compelling these people to add insult to their injuries," says Shakir Bashir, a tech-savvy teacher from Budgam.

"They willy-nilly become the part of Kashmir's cringe comedy circus where clowns are multiplying with each passing day."

The comic character, Fayaz Scorpio, suddenly surfaced online during the pandemic when he started introducing himself as a "deputy sarpanch" of Rafiabad.

His virtual rise was also catalyzed by his uncanny demand of Scorpio vehicle.

"His awkward mannerism and slurry speech instantly became the living room laughter in Kashmir," says Darakhshan Shah, a Sociology scholar currently researching on the new social trends and their impact on the society.

"While these clowns calling themselves as politicians have become a telling comment on us as a society, it also highlights our choice of content consumption



today." Like the scholar, the commoners today express anguish over the social media comedy having no precedence in politics as well

as satire of Kashmir. "Despite being nonsensical in letter and spirit, you still feel compelled to watch these clowns perform," says Imran

Shah, a young entrepreneur from Srinagar. "Among other things, their naive political posturing is sidesplitting."

However, unaffected by the growing flak, Fayaz continues to amuse people with his uncanny style. He even dismisses his virtual followers as some political agents tasked to hound him.

In the same vein, he bashes the unionist camp for "everything wrong" in Kashmir.

"When there's a gap and silence in the mainstream political arena, then such people naturally crop up in the political field," opines Mushtaq Sidiqi, a political analyst.

"Kashmir may not be new to these clowns, but post 2019, their tribe is only growing."

Fayaz Scorpio's contemporary, Mohammed Shafi aka Babbar-Sher, is another example of what

the amalgam of uncanny satire and delusional politics looks like.

Donning pantsuits, Shafi's satirical statements are probably everywhere on the internet—on Facebook reels, in Whatsapp forwarded videos, atop Instagram stories and inside the quick world of Twitter.

More than his decadal affiliation with Congress, it's his roaring avatar that has now become Shafi's new identity.

"His spontaneous sit-in protests, loud-mouthing and political stunts remind one of Er. Rasheed who wooed masses with his hothead politics," says a senior scribe.

"But unlike the erstwhile Langate lawmaker currently languishing in Tihar Jail, the current class of clowns lack tactic and treatment. They thrive on the cringe content."

Shafi's pro-people outbursts have also become a 'pain in the neck' for the established camp.

"While Kashmir's public representatives have been silenced, these clowns are freely boasting about their buffoon politics," says a senior Peoples Democratic Party leader.

"This is a big tragedy of our times!"

Apart from the 'twin paradox' seen on the Kashmir's virtual space, social media is getting diversified with a motley group of characters creating a new place of amusement in the valley.

"One can't always blame people for these comical characters," says Zubair Khan, a banker.

"Since Kashmiri social media users don't have much choice, so they consume this cringe content to divert their mind from the distressing situation."

Martyrdom Anniversary of Imam Ali (A.S) Observed

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Thousands of Muslims thronged shrines and Imambargahs on Saturday to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), one of the most revered icons of Islam.

In Srinagar, major functions on the occasion were held at Hazratbal, Zadihal, Hassanabad and Bemina.

Large number of devout Muslims prayed at Hazratbal shrine and had glimpse of holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh).

Large number of people attended a gathering at Zadihal Imambargah. President Shia Association Molvi Imran Raza Ansari addressed the mourners and threw light on the martyrdom of Imam

Ali (A.S).

Later mourners took out a procession from Imambargah which later culminated at the Gulistan-e-Baba Mazar.

Similar commemorative functions were held at Imambargah Hassanabad and Bemina by two factions of Anjuman-e-Sharie Shiayan.

Every year, on the 21st day of Ramadan, mourners gather in mosques and religious centers to attend ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali (A.S).

It was on the 19th of Ramadan 40 AH (27 January AD 661), Imam Ali was struck on the head with a poison-coated sword during the morning prayers in the Great Mosque of Kufa. He passed away two days later on 21th Ramadan.



6 Residential Houses Damaged In Midnight Blaze At Namchabal

Agencies

Srinagar: At least six residential houses were damaged in a fire incident in a congested Namchabal area of Srinagar.

Official sources said the fire erupted at midnight at around 12:00 a.m., apparently due to a short-circuit in one of the houses. Soon, fire spread and engulfed five other houses in the vicinity. The fire was controlled with the help of fire tenders, locals and police, they said.

In the incident, residential houses belonging to Mohd Rafiq Mir and Owais Ahmad Mir, Mohammed Ashraf Mir, Jalal-ud-din Dar, Mohd

Rafiq Trambo, Parveena Bano and Waseem Ahmad Dar were damaged in the fire incident.

The houses of Mohammad Ashraf Mir, Mohammad Shafi Mir, Owais Ahmad Mir and Mohammad Rafiq Mir, Arslan Ahmad Kar and Parveena, Tauseef Ahmad Kumar, Waseem Ahmad and Rameez Ahmad were completely destroyed.

The fire also partially damaged the houses of Jalal ud Din Dar and Mohammad Amin Dar.

Residents said they could not save anything as fire spread within minutes to the entire area.

However, no one was injured, sources said, adding the cause of fire

was being ascertained.

A team of District Administration, Srinagar today visited Namchabal Fateh Kadal to provide immediate assistance and relief to the affected families whose houses were gutted in a fire incident on Friday.

The District Administration provided immediate assistance out of the Red Cross in the form of 85 blankets, 51 mattresses, 51 bed sheets and 17 kitchen sets, besides Rs 85000 to all 17 affected families 5000 each as an interim relief under Red Cross.

Meanwhile local police have taken cognizance of the incident. (KNO)

World Book Day-2022

Exhibitions Held To Promote Book Reading

Srinagar: A series of events were organised by the Department of Libraries & Research in its Public Libraries today to commemorate the World Book Day-2022.

April 23 has been declared the World Book and Copyright Day by UNESCO.

The main event of the day was organised by the Department of Libraries & Research at SPS Central Library Srinagar. It was a day-long exhibition of historic Manuscripts, Rare Books and Miniature Paintings jointly organized by the SPS Library and Oriental Research Library at SPS Library Complex here.

The main attractions of the exhibition included the oldest manuscripts like Qarabai-Din, Sadh Pand

Luqman and Shahnama Ferdous. Some of the rare books including Rajtarangani by Kahlanna, Tareekh-e-Rasheed, Gazetteer of India and Kashur - a history of Kash-



mir were also displayed at the exhibition. The Oriental Research Library (ORL) Srinagar established in 1904, is a repository of around 6000 centuries old rare manuscripts in 17 languages encompassing varied fields.

3 SKIMS Employees Suspended, Enquiry Ordered

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Additional Director SKIMS, Gulzar Ahmad Shabnum suspended three technicians Mohammad Amin, Mohammad Yaseen Wani and Parminder Kour of Gastroenterology department of SKIMS for remaining unauthorisedly absent from duties.

The suspended technicians have been attached with the office of Ad-

ditional Director, SKIMS till pending enquiry. HOD Gastroenterology department, Prof. Mohammad Altaf Shah has been asked to investigate the matter and submit the report within a week's time.

Additional Director SKIMS, holding the Additional charge of Administrator Associated Hospitals, also suspended six employees Fayaz Ahmad Wani, Syed Abdul Wahid, Ir-

shad Ahmad Khan, Shazia Showket, Mehboob Hassan Khan and Gh.Nabi Shiekh posted in Associated Hospitals for dereliction of duties and violating the official orders. The employees have been attached with the office of the Administrator Associated Hospitals till further orders. An enquiry has also been ordered into the matter by the Administrator and sought the report in a week's time.

Public Notice

I, Mohammad Saleem S/o Qaisar Ahmad Qundji R/o: Nalimar Road, Nawakadal, Srinagar-190002, changed my name to Mohammad Kayzee for all purposes. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. pd

GOVERNMENT DENTAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL SHIREEN BAGH, SRINAGAR

EMAIL ADDRESS: gdcsrinagar@gmail.com
PHONE NO: 0194 - 2504701, 0194 - 2504702.
FAX NO: 0194 - 2504703.

Jameel Ahmad,
Junior Assistant
Govt. Dental College & Hospital, Srinagar.
R/o Bilal Colony, Near Alfarooqi Masjid,
Bemina, Srinagar

No:- GDC/Estt/ P.file-74/2984-92

Dated:21-04-2022

Subject:- De-notification of Health Institutions. Joining thereof.

NOTICE

Whereas, you were deputed for Covid-19 related mitigation duties to SKIMS Soura by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir vide Order No. 465DIVCOM(K) of 2021 dated: 23-11-2021 and submit the departure report on 24-11-2021 duly forwarded by the Medical Superintendent, Govt. Dental College & Hospital, Srinagar under No. Md. Supdt/GDC&H/1280 dated: 24-11-2021;

Whereas; in response to the communication received from Deputy Director(Planning), Health & Medical Education Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu vide No. HD/Plan/30/2022-02 dated: 14-02-2022 whereunder the Hospitals shall now function as general hospitals to cater the daily health care needs of the general public.

Whereas; in response to the said communication, the matter was brought into the notice of the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir vide letter No. GDC/Estt/P.F-74/1268 dated: 24-02-2022 requesting him to relieve you as there is dearth of staff in this Institution. But no response have been received;

Whereas; vide this Office Order No. 165-GDC of 2022 dated: 11-03-2022, you were directed to report in the Office of Principal/Dean, Govt. Dental College & Hospital, Srinagar with immediate effect for further duties, but you did not report for duties;

Whereas; in response to this, you have submitted an application dated 17-03-2022 which was examined as per the directions of the Administrative Department mentioned above and has not been found to have any merit and is hereby turndown and you are once again directed to join back your duties in your parent department immediately without further delay as you are borne on the establishment of this Institution vide this Office letter No. GDC/Estt/P.File-74/2262-67 dated: 25-03-2022 and the same was sent to you on your home address, but you did not respond and you return the letter back mentioning on the envelop "not traced".

Now, therefore in light of the above position, you are directed through print media to report in this Institution within a period of three (3) days from the date of publication / issuance of this Notice failing which action under rules shall be initiated against you.

Sd/-
DIPK-923/22

(Mr. Arshid Hussain Ashai)
Administrative Officer,
Govt. Dental College & Hospital, Srinagar

Commercial/ Showroom on Good will / Rent Basis

An Urgent Deal



A commercial Space/Show room /shop on good will/ Rent Basis Situated at famous tourist Hub New road Kohna Khan few meters away from hotel Mamta Towards Dal Lake Interested Persons May Contact 8082222828,8803841774

Indian Institute of Carpet Technology Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardhan-Khan, Nowshera, Srinagar
Email: contact@iictsrinagar.org. Ph: 0194-2411143, Fax: 2428636

Advertisement Notification

Application form on the prescribed format, which can be had from the Institute against cash payment of Rs. 20/-, are invited from the eligible candidates possessing Domicile Certificate of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, for engagement as Driver, purely on need based contract, initially for a period of 06 months only, as per the details given below :

Position/ Max Age Limit	No. of Posts	Minimum Qualification	Essential Experience	Consolidated Monthly Wages
Driver 40 Years	01	Matriculation	Heavy Vehicle Driving License with a driving experience of more than 5 years and knowledge of repair and maintenance of the vehicle.	Rs. 11,323/-

The duly filled application forms, along with all the relevant documents, must reach the Institute by or before 14-05-2022. The date of interview/driving test for the eligible/ shortlisted candidates shall be notified separately.

Sd/-
DIPK-NB-462/22

Director

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

SHIEKH 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 - (Open)



HIJRI
CALENDAR
22 Ramazan
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR 4: 21
ZUHR 12:29
ASR 5:14
Magrib 7:12
ISHA 8: 39

This Day In History

- 1479 BC - Thutmose III ascends to the throne of Egypt, although power effectively shifts to Hatshepsut (according to the Low Chronology of the 18th Dynasty)
- 1066 - Halley's Comet sparks English monk to predict country will be destroyed
- 1185 - Battle at Danoura: Yoshitsune Minamoto's fleet beats the Taira during Japan's Genpei War
- 1793 - French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat is acquitted by the Revolutionary Tribunal of charges brought by the Girondin in Paris
- 1800 - US Library of Congress establishes with \$5,000 allocation
- 1872 - Volcano Mt Vesuvius erupts in Italy
- 1877 - Russo-Turkish War, 1877-78: Russia declares war on the Ottoman Empire
- 1898 - Spanish-American War: Spain declares war after rejecting US ultimatum to withdraw from Cuba
- men of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition launch a lifeboat from uninhabited Elephant Island in the Southern Ocean to organise a rescue for ice-trapped ship Endurance
- 1920 - British Mandate over Palestine goes into effect (lasts 28 years)
- 1920 - Polish troops attack Ukraine
- 1921 - 1st municipal elections for men & women in Belgium
- 1921 - Under Allies supervision, a plebiscite in the Tyrol favors merging with Germany; unhappy with the outcome, Allies give the area to Italy
- 1928 - Fathometer, which measures underwater depth, patented
- 1941 - British army begins evacuation of Greece
- 1950 - Independent republic of South Molukkas declared
- 1950 - US President Harry Truman denies there are communists in the US government

From KO Archives

Sayed, Mangat Clash At Cabinet Meeting

Observer News Service

JAMMU - Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma snubbed Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed at a cabinet meeting here Tuesday, telling him he was not a "headmaster" who could dictate terms to his seniors in politics. Sharma walked out of the cabinet meeting in a huff, the second time he has done so in the past 16 months. He later flew to New Delhi, telling reporters he would apprise the Congress party leadership about Sayeed's "dictatorial behaviour".

Cabinet meeting was later postponed to April 22. On Jan 24, almost in similar circumstances, Sharma walked out of a cabinet meeting on being overruled on the appointment of Kashmir's senior most Indian Administrative Service officer KB. Pillni as chairman of the State Public Service Commission.

Ultimately, Sharma had to relent and reconcile to the choice of the chief minister. Tuesday's walkout followed a verbal duel between the two over the use of 'improper' language by Sharma while conversing with Chief Secretary Sudhir S Belloria.

The meeting was to discuss a major administrative and police reshuffle in the state.

Sayed termed Sharma's conversation with the chief secretary as 'improper.'

"You should not use such language with the chief secretary," Sayeed told Sharma in the presence of the entire cabinet and some top officials. Sharma allegedly told Belloria 'kar do Ji' (do it) instead of 'kar deejlye' while marking the agenda for the day.

Sayed corrected him in front of the cabinet after which the deputy chief minister replied that he did not have to be (taught how to deal with the bureaucracy.

Sharma told Sayeed: "I am senior to you in politics by 11 years. You cannot treat me like a headmaster, and I am leaving."

Sharma then burst out of the meeting Sayeed, the sources said, rubbed salt into Sharma's wounds by saying: "If you want to go, no one is going to stop you." He suggested that Congress President Sonia Gandhi should be informed about this incident. Chief Minister was quoted as saying, "How can the govt run amid this indiscipline?"

(Kashmir Observer, 24 April, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Twitter Talks

#JammuAndKashmir Govt hikes wages for daily
wagers & casual labourers from 225 to 300 per day
(means \$120/month). Simple nun chai & bread for
4-member family costs 300 & 300 for 2 meals daily.
What a hike! #lifestyle"

@riyaz_masroor

" Let the babus report to duty at 8.30 am instead.
Why to bother school kids?"

@jameelyusuf

" What a sorry state of affairs our Biji Department has
become .Its sad that in this holy month they are not
able to provide basic supply around Sehri and Iftiyar
and then the power cuts all thought the day . Smart
meters will be like " Hamaray sath Dokha hua hai"

@rjnaskashmir

ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Cluttered Academy

The cultural academy's unseemly haste to shoo prominent Kashmiris into their graves shows how keen the undertakers of this region's art culture and languages are to preside over the funeral of its heritage.

Even in this ghoulish enterprise, the academy cannot avoid the overarching element of farce which many believe has become its hallmark.

One could take a charitable view of the whole unsavoury episode and attribute the academy's death notice of the editor-in-chief of the Srinagar Times, Sofi Ghulam Muhammad, to a genuine mistake, but to compound it by seeking to make amends by announcing the demise of another well known Sofi when that gentleman, too, was still with this world is incomprehensible. The academy did not even have the grace to go red in the face at this dual faux pas, but resorted to the stock official response of "inconvenience is regretted," as if it had erred in notifying the price of mutton and poultry.

The academy seemed to have no appreciation of what it means to lose the founding chief editor of one of the oldest surviving newspapers of Kashmir, or a musical legend like Ghulam Hassan Sofi, both of whom have had deep associations with the institution. Apparently, the academy is so overloaded with literary and cultural geniuses that it can't tell one from the other. One Sofi can do as well as another. The learned bosses of the academy could not even manage a decent biographical sketch of either of the victims of its necro-predilection, leave alone a graceful obituary worthy of the contributions of the supposedly departed subjects. What it eventually coaxed out of itself after a disingenuous condolence meeting of its babus in Jammu after Ghulam Hassan Sofi actually passed away was an atrocity on the soul of that gentle singer. Shot through with grammatical errors bordering on the obscene, the grudging press release was a rehash of news reports of the previous day. Evidently, the pillars of erudition in charge of the academy have such a low opinion of others that they deem it beneath themselves to monitor what the institution brings out about people who have made some mark in public life. Or else, the academy has become a den of incompetence and mediocrity exemplified by its atrociously drafted handouts, which, by the way, the press has been generously silent about.

That such travesty finds its way out of the academy unchecked is a scandal by itself for which big heads should roll, as the picture presented of the guardians of the state's art, culture and languages is one of unconscionable ineptitude. And greater still is the scandal of such undeserving elements finding a place in an institution requiring at least a nodding acquaintance with the nuances of language.

The fiasco does nothing to instill confidence that the institution as currently run is qualified to do justice to the creative and literary talents in Kashmir or be a genuine platform for genuine talent to surface and flower. Rather, the cosmetic theatrics the academy sponsors in the name of native culture are a death knell for whatever survives of Kashmir's unique ethos. Successive governments have done pitiful little in making the academy a true repository of native genius, often foisting people with dubious qualifications and credentials on this highly sensitive institution. More often than not, the academy and its exalted positions have become a means of dispensing favours to politically convenient elements or rewarding people useful in advancing some nefarious agenda. One such strand in this sneaky design is the pathetic state of the Kashmiri language, spoken in most of the state. The academy could have been a patron for the promotion of this language, if only it could disentangle itself from the shackles of bias and sycophancy.

The article is an editorial from KO's archives and was originally published on 12 June, 2010

National Education Policy 2020

Call for Inclusive Education

M Ahmad

Inclusive education generates and provides acceptance and understanding towards the needs of students and also identifies the differences, diversity and cultural background of the students. Simply placing the student with disabilities in the common class room is not enough; they need to be truly included and provided with opportunities to work alongside their peers

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 defines inclusive education as a 'system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities'. In an equitable and inclusive classroom every student has equal access to learning, is treated equitably by the learning community, and feels valued and supported by their instructor and peers. These learning environments emphasize the importance of cultural awareness, value all social identities, and consider the impact of systemic inequities. Identifying these important factors shapes the classroom experiences and impacts student learning. Equity and inclusion are an important part of designing educational spaces that address the needs of all students; it does not matter whether a student has a visible or invisible disability, English Language Learner, or an at-risk learner. This inclusive system recognises all student's entitlement to a learning experience that respects diversity, enables participation, removes barriers and anticipates and considers a variety of learning needs and preferences. According to UNESCO, inclusive education is seen as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education." Countries across the globe are making efforts to develop inclusive education in their unique contexts. At the same time, the collaborative efforts by international agencies such as the World Bank, UNICEF, IIEP, UNESCO, donors and others in addition to the local and international DPOs focus on building a common understanding of the need for systemic change at the global and local levels.

Inclusive and equitable education, while indeed an essential goal in its own right, is also critical to achieve an inclusive and equitable society in which every citizen has the opportunity to dream, thrive, and contribute to the nation. The education system must aim to benefit all children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and



Group of normal and deaf & mute children studying together

excel because of circumstances of birth or background. This Policy reaffirms that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in school education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector development programmes. Equitable and inclusive teaching practices help create educational environments in which all individuals are welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate in the learning process.

It is important to utilize formative assessments where students can monitor their progress throughout the course, before, during and after learning. Provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in different modes and modalities. Doing so enhances the learning experience for all students and may increase their likelihood of success. There should be variability in activities to support all students. Design activities that encourage autonomy where students can contribute freely. Help students feel that their perspectives are valued and respected. Authentic activities may increase engagement and help students deepen their understanding. An inclusive classroom also encourages students to become more engaged in authentic experiences that are relevant to their lives and interests.

Classroom observations and reflective coaching conversations are essential components to building equitable, inclusive, and excellent schools. Teachers may set out with the best intentions to support all students, but nothing is predictable in school. Reflecting on our practices helps us understand

what works well and what doesn't work so well. Inclusive education involves transforming the whole education system - legislation and policy, systems for financing, administration, design, delivery and monitoring of education, and the way schools are organized. It takes time and money to change systems. Teachers need training and guidance, and students need to be provided with services to overcome barriers to learning. Action is needed to challenge negative attitudes and prejudice against children with disabilities.

Inclusive education will benefit from the widest possible experience and knowledge. It will be an end to discrimination, an end to excluding children with disabilities. Inclusive education generates and provides acceptance and understanding towards the needs of students and also identifies the differences, diversity and cultural background of the students. Simply placing the student with disabilities in the common class room is not enough; they need to be truly included and provided with opportunities to work alongside their peers. Teachers should also consider sharing with students that they all have diverse needs, which means that each student is unique to you.

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

Writer M Ahmad has been associated with an Inclusive Institution at Srinagar for last 20 years and can be reached at: specialchivers78@gmail.com

Resurrection by Reading

Belen Fernandez

It has by now become platitudinous to remark that people hardly read books any more - and physical ones even less - absorbed as we are by the demands of the digital age: scrolling, clicking, obsessively checking likes, and converting emotions into sequences of little yellow faces.

As a child, I read books constantly - along with everything else: the magazine that arrived with the Austin American-Statesman every Sunday to my parents' house in Texas, appliance warranty papers, the text on the cereal box at breakfast. Decades later as I travelled the world in my twenties and thirties, resurrecting the ravenous reading habit was always on my to-do list - and yet it was inevitably easier to just continue scrolling and clicking.

Prior to spending the month of February 2022 in Cuba, I had not read a book for leisure in nearly a year - and I had not even finished that one. Then, one afternoon in Havana, I was overcome with spontaneous determination and dispatched myself in search of a used bookstore.

Perhaps it was because I already associated Havana with used books, having visited the city in 2006 and acquired a massive biography of Cuban revolutionary hero Camilo Cienfuegos, which I then had carted around to various countries while my intention of reading it remained unfulfilled. Or perhaps it was because Havana - with its effusive nostalgia and much-fettersed old-world charm - simply made me feel like I should be engaged in some romantic, pre-technological activity like reading a book.

Whatever the reason for my sudden decision to be the person that actually goes to the bookstore rather than just fantasising about it, I set out from my flat by the port in Habana Vieja - Old Havana, the city's colonial quarter - passing elegantly crumbling and not-so-crumbling architecture and former haunts of the likes of Garcia Lorca and Hemingway.

When I reached Calle Obispo, site of the Hotel Ambos Mundos where Hemingway once lived and the sort of street that looked like it would host a used bookstore, I turned left - and, sure enough, there was Libreria Victoria, the

name rendered in art deco stained glass above the shop entrance. The interior was intoxicatingly crammed with heaps of books and only a faint hint of organisation beyond the obligatory prominent display of offerings from Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Obviously, I could not proceed with my bookshop experience without first taking a photograph of the scene for placement on Facebook.

Thoughts of Facebook began to fade, however, as I rummaged through stacks of Borges and Neruda, Lenin and Garcia Marquez, piles of children's books and a shelf devoted to the Afro-Cuban struggle. In the end, I set aside two books by Uruguayan author Mario Benedetti, of whose existence I had been previously unaware, plus a book of poems by Neruda, and, finally, a Cuban atlas from 1978, the frayed blue cover of which had been invaded by a rust-coloured stain that had overtaken the "B" and "A" in "Cuba".

The last addition caused some hesitation, as I weighed such issues as luggage weight and what exactly one does with a Cuban atlas from 1978. But whim won out over reason, and I presented my four items to the shopkeeper. Assuming that the prices pencilled in on the first page of each book were merely a jumping-off point for negotiations - particularly given the present financial situation in Cuba, where, for example, the 1,000 Cuban pesos pencilled in on the first page of the atlas corresponded to 40 dollars at the official exchange rate and 10 dollars on the black market - I offered some sum off the top of my head.

The man agreed and began packing up the books. I handed over the pesos, whereupon he reddid the math and found my offer retroactively to be insufficient. I attempted a gringo capitalist customer-is-always-right approach, according to which he could not renege on his initial acceptance; he countered by bellowing that I was crazy and launching into an impassioned recounting of all the times customers had accidentally overpaid and he had chased them down Calle

Obispo to rectify matters. We shouted back and forth for several minutes - an exchange that was somehow not stressful in the least but rather, I felt, an ode to life. Then we were friends, and he gave me the books with a revised discount.

I lugged the treasures back to my flat, where I set them out on the table and reacquainted myself with the intimate thrill of inspecting used books and the sensation of holding history, as it were, in one's hands. One of the Benedetti books had apparently been acquired by a B Valiño on April 2, 1970, while the other had belonged to a Rebeca with an indecipherable surname and included a page torn from a 1986 datebook: Thursday, February 6, through Wednesday, February 12.

By coincidence, the date of my visit to Libreria Victoria was February 9 - albeit 36 years after the February 9 of the datebook page in question, which also bore the contact information of a certain Maria de los Angeles at the Psychology Department of the National University of Costa Rica in Heredia. By further coincidence, the book itself - titled, La Tregua (The Truce, published in 1960) - began with a diary entry on February 11. Before I had even started reading, then, I felt some sort of captivating personal connection to the texts - a connection that was tied up with B Valiño, Rebeca, and Maria de los Angeles of the Psychology Department.

There were no clues as to the provenance of the Neruda book, but inside I found dried rose petals in the fold preceding a 1953 poem inspired by Neruda's then-lover Matilde Urrutia and the Italian island of Capri, evoking nostalgia for his native Chile. The upper right corner of page 141 was also folded over, and the title of that page's poem, Con Ella (With Her), was underlined along with the poem's first line: "Como es duro este tiempo; espérame" - "This time is difficult. Wait for me".

On to the atlas, thanks to which I would spend countless hours poring over colourful maps depicting the mechanisa-

tion of Cuban sugar cane agriculture by province in 1978 and the average temperatures of regional surface waters in summer and winter. This was at least as good as reading the cereal box, I figured, and was certainly time better spent than on the wasteland of humanity known as social media. On pages 102 and 103, another map featured key landmarks of the Cuban Revolution as well as assorted imperial aggressions, including "counter-revolutionary infiltrations" and the inauguration of the US economic blockade of Cuba, illustrated by purple dashes surrounding the island. Officially enacted in 1962, the embargo continues to devastate the country as punishment for the felony of refusing to capitulate to capitalist domination.

Armed with my acquisitions from Libreria Victoria in Havana, I was quickly reminded of how invigoratingly edifying reading can be - and felt I was pretty solidly exercising my "right to rest and leisure" as enshrined in Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Capitalism, of course, has different ideas about human rights, and prefers "leisure" activities that can be monetised - like staring at your mobile phone screen, where advertising saturation and limitless consumer opportunities mean you can still be contributing to corporate tyranny even under the illusion of downtime.

To be sure, reading books has been shown to improve mental health, reduce anxiety, and provide a necessary respite from real and digital worlds that are perhaps equally depressing. But it remains a luxury for many of the world's inhabitants, who are often too busy trying to survive in a context of gross global inequality to think about the number of tractors in Cuba's Ciego de Avila province in 1978.

As Neruda wrote, "This time is difficult". And as we plunge into ever more difficult ones - with less and less time to dream - here's to more rose petals.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Al Jazeera

Fasting and Health in Ramazan



Aejaz Iqbal

“Islamic fasting is different from these diet plans because in Ramadan fasting, there is no malnutrition or inadequate calorie intake. The calorie intake of Muslims during Ramadan is typically at or slightly below the nutritional requirement guidelines. In addition, the fasting in Ramadan is voluntarily taken and is not a prescribed imposition from the physician

RAMAZAN is a month of self-regulation and self-training. Muslims fast in accordance with our religious requirements, but there are medical benefits as well. Generally, fasting has been used by patients for weight management, to rest the digestive tract, and for lowering lipids. There can be adverse effects of both total fasting and crash diets.

Islamic fasting is different from these diet plans because in Ramadan fasting, there is no malnutrition or inadequate calorie intake. The calorie intake of Muslims during Ramadan is typically at or slightly below the nutritional requirement guidelines. In addition, the fasting in Ramadan is voluntarily taken and is not a prescribed imposition from the physician. And there is hope that this training will

last beyond the end of Ramazan. The difference between Ramazan and total fasting is the timing of the food; during Ramazan, we take an early pre-dawn breakfast and do not eat until dusk. The fast is from both food and liquid intake. Abstinence from water for eight to 10 hours is not necessarily bad for health. In fact, it causes concentration of all fluids within the body, producing slight dehydration. The body has its own water conservation mechanism. It has even been shown that slight dehydration and water conservation, at least in plant life, improve their longevity. The physiological effect of fasting includes lowering of blood sugar, lowering of cholesterol, and lowering of the systolic blood pressure. In fact, Ramazan fasting could be an ideal recommendation for the treatment of mild to moderate, stable, non-insulin diabetes,

obesity, and essential hypertension. It is important to note that patients who are suffering from severe diseases, such as Diabetes or coronary artery disease, kidney stones are exempt from fasting and should not be allowed to fast. There are psychological effects of fasting as well. There is a peace and tranquility for those who fast during the month of Ramazan. Personal hostility is at a minimum, and in areas of the world where Muslims are living in large numbers, the crime rate decreases. This psychological improvement could be related to better stabilization of blood glucose while fasting; hypoglycemia after eating can aggravate behavior changes. There is a spiritual beneficial effect of extra prayer at night. This not only helps with better utilization of food, but also helps in energy output. It has been

calculated that there are 10 extra calories output for each unit of the prayer. This would particularly be connected to the extra prayers that are performed during the last 10 nights of Ramazan, when the believer is seeking the night of power, when worship during this night is said to be worth a thousand months. It is important to emphasize that Muslims are not performing prayers for exercise, but a mild movement of the joints with extra calorie utilization can be a better form of exercise. Similarly, recitation of the Quran not only produces a tranquility of heart and mind, but it has also been shown to improve memory. Fasting is a special act of worship which is ultimately between the believer and the Creator Himself, as no one else knows for sure if this person is actually fasting. In a

hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Allah says, "Fasting is for Me and I only will reward it." In another hadith, the Prophet reminds us, "If one does not give up falsehoods in words and actions, Allah has no need of him giving up food and drink. Fasting not only purifies a Muslim's soul but also his body. Fasting helps reduce weight and rejuvenate the body as food consumption is modified and the body gets a chance to cleanse itself of unwanted impurities and toxins. Ramazan brings with itself countless blessings and benefits. Observe fasting in Ramazan to be rewarded in this world and the Hereafter. The author is a Microbiologist and can be reached at ajazsmile@gmail.com

The Menstruating Woman's Guide To The Last 10 Nights Of Ramazan



Zainab bint Younus

While everyone else is gearing up for an epic last ten nights of Ramazan, those of us on our periods might feel rather deflated, and wonder how we can cash in on these nights -any of which could be Laylatul Qadr (the Night of Decree). Just because we are menstruating, doesn't mean that we need to miss out on the barakah of these days and nights! Fear not! Here's a handy-dandy Menstruating Woman's Guide to Hacking the Last 10 Nights of Ramazan (iced coffee in hand is optional)! Check out the end of this post for a surprise for all menstruating women in Ramazan that you can use as an easy resource AND share with all of your friends!

- Qur'an: Keep up with your khatmah! You may take the opinion that you can hold the mus'haf without a barrier even while menstruating, or you can use a copy with English trans-

lation, or the Qur'an app on your phone/tablet. If you take the opinion that it is prohibited to recite Qur'an at all while menstruating, make a plan to read a translation or tafseer during the days of your period, or listen to tafseer talks at that time. The priority is that you maintain a strong connection to the Qur'an.

- Du'a: Refine your du'a list! Include du'as from the Qur'an & Sunnah, recommended du'as for Ramazan, and of course, your own personal list of priorities for yourself, your family, and this Ummah. Here's an excellent resource on a special du'a: the best of both worlds.
- Dhikr & Istighfaar: Amp up your dhikr and istighfaar -while you're cooking, doing chores, puttering about, driving, literally doing anything! There are so many beautiful forms of adhkaar that will reap you more ajr than you can imagine. Spend time reflecting on your sins

and seek sincere forgiveness: Al-lahumma innaka 'afuwun, tuhibb al-'afwa, fa'fu 'annee.

- Sadaqah: Sadaqah can come in almost any form, whether it is financially giving in charity, helping friends or strangers with kindness and a smile, donating your time and lending your voice to the Ramazan Activism Campaign, or even serving your family with love. Preparing iftaar alone will give you the reward of the fasting person you have fed (without anything being taken from them)! Sadaqah in the last ten nights is something that has no limits for any believer.
- Whoever helps break the fast of a fasting person, he will have the same reward as him without decreasing anything from the reward of the fasting person. [Tirmidhi]
- Tadabbur: Spend time reflecting on the Qur'an and your relationship with Allah subhānahu wa ta'āla

(glorified and exalted be He), your spiritual journey and progress this Ramazan, and what you have left to accomplish this Ramazan. Make sure to reference and study scholarly tafaseer along the way. Qur'an journaling is a great way to do this!

- Seeking Knowledge: Keep up with reading tafseer/spiritual books or listening to Islamic lectures and reminders. There are so many amazing scholars (including women!) who are tirelessly producing content on these topics daily, mashaAllah! Some excellent female scholars to turn to, who provide regular Islamic talks and classes, are Shaykha Dr. Haifaa Younis, Anse Dr. Tamara Gray, Shaykha Aysha Wazwaz, Shaykha Dr. Rania Awaad, Shaykha Maryam Amir, and others.
- Renew Your Intentions: Allah subhānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) knows exactly what worship you would do if you weren't

“The last ten nights of Ramadan are blessed and special for all believers, not just those who are fasting. Menstruating women (or those in nifaas) during this time are not excluded from the many, many acts of worship and amazing opportunities for forgiveness and reward. Don't lose hope -or lose steam- in your Ramazan efforts during this time just because you cannot fast or pray

menstruating -He is the Most Generous and will reward you for it all anyway inshaAllah! Know that abstaining from fasting and salah during haydh is in itself an act of obedience and worship. Serving your family, facilitating 'ibaadah for others, preparing iftaar, and helping others are all actions that will result in great reward, with the right intentions.

- "Indeed, actions are by their intentions; indeed, every person will have only what they intended." [Sahih Bukhari]
- Shukr: Be thankful to Allah subhānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He). Slow down and recognize all the blessings around you, yes—even your menses. In His Mercy and Wisdom, we are permitted to eat and drink during the daytime of Ramazan. We are given the space to care for our bodies as well as our souls, to nourish ourselves physically as well as spiritually (so enjoy

that iced coffee and taste-testing the samosas before anyone else can!). Fulfill your body's rights by taking care of yourself: eat well, take your vitamins, and rest as you need to. The last ten nights of Ramazan are blessed and special for all believers, not just those who are fasting. Menstruating women (or those in nifaas) during this time are not excluded from the many, many acts of worship and amazing opportunities for forgiveness and reward. Don't lose hope -or lose steam- in your Ramazan efforts during this time just because you cannot fast or pray. Instead, be focused on creating a Ramazan plan of action for the last ten nights, especially if you are menstruating. May Allah subhānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) make us of those who benefit the most from the last ten nights of Ramazan, ameen! - Muslim Matters

'Unprecedented Times' Pole Urges People To Save Power

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole on Saturday reviewed the arrangements for forthcoming auspicious occasions of Shab e Qadir, Jummah ul Vida and Eid ul Fitr in a meeting with officers of different line departments.

The meeting was attended by the officers of civil administration and police of all districts besides representatives of line departments including PHE, PDD, Health,

ULB, SMC, Fire & Emergency, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, FCS&CA, Food & Drug organization, Legal Metrology and other departments.

On the occasion, Div Com reviewed availability of drinking water, power, meat, poultry, ration and LPG in the valley besides other essential items in markets.

The meeting was informed that a sufficient quantity of essential items including ration, meat and chicken besides LPG gas is available for public consumption.

Meanwhile, Div Com directed

officers to ensure uninterrupted supply of drinking water and electricity at peak hours. Besides exhorted concerned officers of FCS&CA to distribute ration for the month of May before 2nd May.

He directed PDD to divert commercial and industrial power for domestic use during peak hours and auspicious days owing to unprecedented shortage of power supply.

Besides, he appealed to the general public not to use crude electric gadgets to save power during these unprecedented times.

He directed concerned to conduct sanitation and cleaning drives at Mosques and Shrines.

Regarding transport facility to the devotees who throng to Hazratbal Dargah for congregational prayers, Div Com directed SRTC to ensure that devotees don't face any inconvenience on those days.

Further, he emphasized on intensive market checking drives to check illegal profiteering, overcharging and hoarding by traders. He directed to lodge FIR against shopkeepers and traders who indulge in illegal activities.

Mercury Breaches 40-degree Mark In Parts Of Delhi

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 39.5 degrees Celsius on Saturday and it is predicted to breach the 40-degree mark on Sunday amid clear skies.

The national capital is bracing for another searing heatwave with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicting the maximum temperature to touch the 44-degree mark next week.

The Safdarjung Observatory -- Delhi's base station

-- recorded a maximum temperature of 39.5 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal for this time of the year.

The weather stations at Ridge, Jafarpur, Mungeshpur, Najafgarh, Pitampura, and Sports Complex recorded a maximum temperature of 41.4 degrees Celsius, 40.1 degrees Celsius, 41.1 degrees Celsius, 41.2 degrees Celsius, 41.4 degrees Celsius and 41.8 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The IMD predicted that the maximum temperature may

increase by three to five degrees Celsius in most parts of northwest India during the next five days.

The mercury is likely to touch the 44-degree mark in Delhi by Thursday, it said.

The city has recorded eight heatwave days in April this year, the maximum since 11 such days witnessed in the month in 2010.

For the plains, a heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature is over 40 degrees Celsius and at least 4.5 notches above normal.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Red Alert

militants after they attacked a bus carrying the paramilitary personnel in the early hours of Friday.

Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh had said the two militants were part of a suicide squad of Pakistan-based JeM and their infiltration could be a "big conspiracy" to sabotage the prime minister's visit to Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj day on Sunday.

Palli panchayat, 17 kms from Jammu city, was virtually sealed with local police and paramilitary personnel including Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) deployed in strength to keep a strict vigil, the officials said.

They said the venue, which is just three kilometres from the Jammu-Pathankot highway, has been made out of bounds for the general public as part of the security arrangements for the Prime Minister's public rally his first after the abrogation of special status to J&K under Article 370 and the bifurcation of the erstwhile state in August 2019.

Arrangements for over one lakh people including over 30,000 panchayat members have been made at the venue of the public meeting, the officials said.

"The encounter took place two days ahead of the prime minister's visit. It is part of a big conspiracy to disturb the peaceful atmosphere of Jammu and it could be a big conspiracy to sabotage the visit," the DGP had said at the end of the gunfight, adding "it is good that we got timely inputs and the operation was concluded successfully."

On Saturday, the joint security parties were seen patrolling the entire stretch from Bari Brahmana along the highway to Palli chowk which was also decorated with large hoarding to welcome the Prime Minister and also announce various projects and industrial investments to be inaugurated by him.

Additional joint security check points with reinforcements have come up at various places leading to the venue of the function besides other places including district headquarters and vital installations to scuttle any attempt by the militants to carry out any attack, the officials said.

The commuters on highways and peripheral roads are also being thoroughly checked and frisked, the officials said, adding the border security grid and highway grid have also been strengthened in the wake of Friday's encounter in Jammu city.

In addition to the multi-tier security arrangements, the officials said some high-end surveillance equipment have been inducted into security setup to ensure fool proof security.

Traffic police Jammu has already issued an advisory in connection with the prime minister's visit, announcing certain restrictions and route plans for the public to reach the venue.

Heavy load carriers including wheat cutting machines and load carriers were asked not to play on April 24 on the national highway (Jammu-Pathankot) as well as ring roads and adjoining areas of the venue, the advisory said.

The traffic police also declared no parking zones' a certain stretch of the highway near Bari Brahmana and Palli to Ratnal Chowk.

The prime minister is expected to launch industrial investments worth Rs 70,000 crore and inaugurate and lay foundation of some developmental projects including two power projects during his first public meeting in Jammu region after August 2019 development.

However, Modi had earlier celebrated Diwali with Army jawans on October 27, 2019 in Rajouri and on November 3, 2021 in Nowshera sector in Jammu division.

NIA Chief Reviews

evening, was accompanied by Inspector General of CRPF, Jammu sector, P S Ranpise.

Singh, who is also the director general of the Central Reserve Police Force, was briefed about the gun battle by CRPF officers, including Commandant of 38th Battalion Dharendra Verma, the officials said.

The NIA director general also visited the venue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public rally at Palli panchayat in Samba district and reviewed the

security situation, they said.

Besides the two militants, a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer died in the gunfight that took place near an Army camp in Sunjwan on Friday. Nine security personnel were also injured as forces engaged the militants after they attacked a bus carrying CISF personnel.

"Yes, a major attack was thwarted (by security forces)," Singh said after receiving the briefing about the encounter.

Asked whether the NIA will take over the case, he said, "It will depend... we will see, nothing can be said at the moment."

On the security arrangements for the prime minister's visit, he said all the necessary arrangements will be made.

Later, the officials said, Singh visited Palli panchayat and was briefed by senior officers about the security arrangements there.

Special teams of the NIA and the State Investigation Agency (SIA) had visited the encounter site on Friday evening.

Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh had said the two slain militants were part of a suicide squad of Pakistan-based JeM and their infiltration could be a "big conspiracy" to sabotage the prime minister's visit to Jammu and Kashmir.

The prime minister will visit Palli village, 17 km from here, on National Panchayati Raj Day on April 24. He is also scheduled to address a gathering there.

According to officials, a multi-tier security setup has been put in place for Modi's visit.

An alert has been sounded along the border and a high degree of vigilance is being maintained at vital installations in Jammu and Kashmir in view of the visit, officials said on Friday.

Two South Kashmir

officer said on Saturday.

Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Mukesh Singh said the force is looking for two more conspirators involved in the planning and transportation of the two heavily-armed militants from Sapwal near the International Border in Samba district to Jammu.

As per one of the arrested persons, the slain militants were Pashto-speaking either from a village in Pakistan bordering Afghanistan or from Afghanistan itself, the Jammu police chief told reporters here in the evening.

An Assistant Sub-Inspector of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) was killed when the militants equipped with suicide vests and sophisticated weapons attacked a bus before being engaged and killed by the security forces in Jallalabad locality of Sunjwan on Friday. Nine security personnel, including two policemen, were also injured in the incident.

The ADGP said a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Arms Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was registered at police station Bahu Fort in connection with the encounter.

During investigation, police on the basis of technical analysis succeeded in effecting the arrest of a person - Shafiq Ahmed Sheikh of Mir Mohalla village in south Kashmir's Tral, who had facilitated the stay of militants in Jallalabad area of Jammu, Singh said.

On the disclosure of Sheikh, he said, one more person, Mohammad Iqbal Rather of Malwan village in south Kashmir's Kulgam, in whose residence at Jallalabad the militants had hidden themselves, was also detained.

The analysis of the mobile tower as well as the internet data usage of the general area led to suspicion on a person named Bilal Ahmed Beig of south Kashmir's Kokarnag who had received the militants on the border at Sapwal in Samba district and brought them to Jallalabad area before handing them to Sheikh, Singh said.

He said Sheikh also revealed that his brother, Asif, helped in finding a place for the accommodation of militants as well as provided mobile phones to the militants.

The technical analysis of the CCTVs in the Jallalabad area as well as highway corroborates the disclosure of the arrested person, the ADGP said, adding a search is on for Beig and Asif who are absconding.

He said Sheikh also disclosed that

the two militants were not speaking Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi or Urdu.

When he was made to hear Pashto, he immediately recognised the language of the militants which indicate that they were either from an area of Pakistan border near Afghanistan or Afghanistan itself, he said.

Responding to a question about the route taken by the militants to infiltrate into this side from Pakistan the officer said whether they came through an underground tunnel or crossed the border fence is part of the investigation, which is underway.

After the encounter, police teams worked tirelessly day and night to establish the identity of the conspirators who were behind this plan to carry out a suicide attack in Jammu, he said.

On the basis of technical analysis and evidence, the police first zeroed in on Sheikh, who works at a walnut factory at Narwal, which is not far away from the scene of the encounter, Singh said.

The ADGP said Sheikh and his brother Asif are deeply involved with militants of JeM.

Asif created a telegram ID called Pagal Jamaat' (Mad group) for Shafeeq and also provided him a mobile phone with a SIM card. He also contacted a JeM commander in Pakistan by the name of Veer', his telegram identity, Singh said.

He said the commander of JeM instructed him to go to Jammu to receive a group of suicide attackers who will be brought by someone.

Though he did not disclose his name, the person was identified as Sheikh who set out on the instructions of JeM commander from Kashmir's Pulwama at 10 am on April 20 and reached Jammu around evening time.

He stayed at Transport Nagar and at around 12 am (midnight), he set out for Sapwal (border) in Samba and picked up two militants of JeM. They boarded a medium size truck loaded with empty vegetable crates and neatly created cavity among the crates for hiding the militants, the police officer said.

They reached Jallalabad locality of Sunjwan around 2.30 am and Wagay, his co-driver and two militants were found in the truck there.

Sheikh received the militants and took them to his house where they stayed during the day and discussed their plans with their handlers across the border, Singh said.

The plan was to take them to the nearest security location and inflict maximum casualties on the security forces, to discourage the VVIP visit, the ADGP said, referring to the scheduled visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Palli Panchayat in Samba on Sunday.

Before these people could set out for their mission, we received intelligence inputs that there are two militants and a cordon was laid with other security forces. The militants were holed up throughout the night, he said, adding had they moved out, they could have caused huge damage but we managed to keep them there and successfully eliminated them.

He said that they were picked up from Sapwal border in Samba was further collaborated by the CCTV evidence along the way.

We are working on the leads and are hopeful to arrest both the absconding accused person soon. Our counterparts in Kashmir are also actively pursuing the leads and more arrests are likely as the investigation progresses, he said.

Asked about reports suggesting infiltration of some more militants into this side, the officer said this group consisted of only two members, add-

ing further investigation is on.

PM In Jammu

journey time by around one and a half hours.

It is a twin tube tunnel, one for each direction of travel, and the tubes are interconnected by a cross passage every 500 m for maintenance and emergency evacuation. The tunnel will help establish all-weather connection between Jammu and Kashmir, and bring the two regions closer, the PMO said.

He will also lay the foundation stone of three road packages of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, being built at a cost of over Rs. 7,500 crore.

Among other projects, Modi will lay the foundation stone of Ratle and Kwar hydroelectric projects, a 850 MW

facility to be constructed on Chenab river in Kishtwar at a cost of around Rs 5,300 crore, and 540 MW Kwar hydroelectric project to be built in on the same river at a cost of over Rs 4,500 crore.

In order to further expand the network of 'Jan Aushadi Kendras' in Jammu and Kashmir, and to make good quality generic medicines at affordable prices available, 100 centres will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi. These centres are located in remote corners of the union territory.

Modi will also inaugurate a 500 KW solar power plant at Palli, which will make it the country's first panchayat to become carbon neutral, the PMO said.

During his visit, he will also hand over 'SVAMITVA' (survey of villages and mapping with improvised technology in village areas) cards to beneficiaries under the scheme. The cards will give villagers documentary proof of their ownership of properties so that they can use them for financial benefits if required.

He will also transfer award money to panchayats which are winners of awards given across different categories.

The PMO noted that the 'Amrit Sarovar' project is part of the celebration of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

Pak Militant, Aide

its official Twitter handle.

The gunfight in Kulgam comes a day after three militants, including top Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander Muhammad Yusuf Dar aka Kantroo, were killed in an encounter with government forces in Tangmar sub-district of north Kashmir's Baramulla district that ended after 40-hours on Friday. (With PTI inputs)

Railway Cop

Devraj was admitted to the SMHS hospital here, where he succumbed to injuries on Saturday morning, the officials said.

Police has already registered a case and started investigations into the audacious daylight attack on RPF personnel

Kashmiri Youth

Saudi police have taken his body for medico-legal formalities and are also ascertaining the exact cause of death.

In the aftermath of the accident, Saudi police have registered a case and also went to the spot to check the CCTV footage besides finding out the circumstances in which Sheikh had died.

The family has appealed to the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, Ministry of External Affairs for the early return of his body from Saudi Arabia so that they can perform his last rites.

Spokesperson of Jammu and Kashmir Students association Nasir Khuehami said that the association has written to Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha to help the family and pursue this matter with the Ministry of External Affairs in airlifting the mortal remains of deceased back to Kashmir from Saudi Arabia for the last rites at his ancestral village.

Sources in Raj Bhawan told a local news agency KDC that the Lt Governor has taken the matter to the Ministry of External Affairs for the earliest redressal.

Will Cross Border

Praising the valour displayed by Indian soldiers in the recent standoffs with China, he said, "I am of the firm belief that no power in the world can do anything to bow down the head of Bharat Mata' (Mother India)."

Taking a dig at a section of opposition leaders who had questioned the Army's role in the matter, Singh said such criticism demoralised soldiers and hurt the sentiments of people.

"I am regularly in contact with chiefs of our armed forces. I told them what I had to and they did what they had to. They have kept Bharat Mata's head held high," he added.

Singh also said that the eastern boundary of the country was currently experiencing more peace and stability compared to the western frontier, with Bangladesh being a friendly neighbour.

"The tension that India experiences on western frontier does not exist along eastern boundary as Bangladesh is a friendly country," he noted.

"The problem of infiltration has almost ended. There is peace and stability at the border (in the eastern

frontier) now," the minister said.

The defence minister praised the Border Road Organisation (BRO) for its efforts in building strong boundary infrastructure, needed for defence preparedness.

"We have stronger border infrastructure now, but more has to be done and we are working on it, he stated.

On the recent withdrawal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from different parts of northeast, the defence minister stated that the government did so whenever the situation in a place improved.

He said, "When I was the Union home minister, AFSPA was lifted from Arunachal Pradesh (most parts) and Meghalaya. Now under Amit Shah, it has been withdrawn from 23 districts of Assam and areas under 15 police stations each in Manipur and Nagaland.

"Durable peace and stability has ensured that AFSPA gets withdrawn from the northeast and the role of chief ministers in the region has also been commendable, with Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma taking the leading," he noted.

Maintaining that there was a "public misconception" that the Army always wanted AFSPA to remain in force, Singh contended the Army's job is not to look after internal security but to guard the borders.

On continued imposition of AFSPA in Jammu and Kashmir, the minister said, The situation is responsible for it, not the Army.

Lauding the role of serving soldiers and veterans in protecting the country, the defence minister said, The soldiers are our strength and the veterans and veer naris' (widows of martyrs) our inspiration.

"Even when a soldier retires and becomes a veteran, the warrior inside him lives on and it can be seen in his 'tevar' (attitude), body language," he added.

He also called on the general people to ensure that brotherhood is maintained within the country while the soldiers keep peace on the borders.

"We don't notice religion when a person dons the uniform and becomes a soldier for the country.

"People of different religions had worked together in the 1971 War this social harmony of Assam, India should not be broken," he said, felicitating war widows, families of martyrs, prisoners of war and former personnel who had suffered injuries in the 1971 battle.

He also inaugurated an exhibition by Directorate of Sainik Welfare, showcasing the valour and supreme sacrifice of armed forces in the liberation war.

Later in a tweet, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that nine war widows were honoured with Rs 10 lakh each, eight personnel who had suffered injuries with Rs 5 lakh each and two ex-prisoners of War with Rs 2.5 lakh each.

An amount of Rs 2 lakh each was also given to 86 other veterans of the liberation war, he added.

LG Okays

root level democracy through participatory management," Sinha said.

"In order to strengthen PRIs, Rs. 1000 Cr has been allocated for Panchayats, Rs. 200 Cr for DDCs and Rs. 71.25 Cr for BDCs," he added.

According to the spokesperson, the LG further said that it was with the active participation of PRIs, we were able to achieve record-breaking milestone of completing 51,891 projects in the last F.Y.

"These achievements are unprecedented and would not have been possible without dedication and teamwork of the PRIs, officials and other stakeholders. Timely completion of target is key to transformation," the LG said, while observing that J&K administration has made 'Jan Bhagidari' the cornerstone of project planning and execution process.

"For the first time, after the detailed deliberations, a plan has been prepared with collective efforts of the PRIs and the administration, aptly reflecting the developmental aspirations of our people," Sinha said.

"Our aim is to make development a powerful people's movement. We are working to ensure people belonging to deprived section enjoy social justice, equality and the last man on the socio-economic ladder receives equal opportunity," he added.

The LG, according to the spokesperson called upon all stakeholders to maintain the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the District plan, besides focusing on key areas of Youth engagement; upgrading the health infrastructure & patient care system; improving quality of Education; strengthening of basic amenities; timely implementation of R&B, RDD projects which will collectively result in raising the socio-economic status of our people.

In the meeting, he said, it was informed that keeping in view the needs in the rural areas, Rs. 10914.08 Crore under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Rs. 3814.42 Crore under MGNREGA, Rs. 1529.59 Crore under PMAY-G, Rs. 2001.12 Crore under Pardhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) and Rs. 47.53 Crore under Border Area Development Programme (BADP), have been earmarked during 2022-23.

"Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department gave details of the district-wise Capex budget via a Powerpoint presentation and explained the components of the budgets for respective districts," the spokesperson added.

Daily Wagers To Get

Daily wagers are playing a significant role in the development of UT with exemplary commitment and dedication to work. The interim measure has been taken to benefit a sizable portion of the workforce. We are firmly committed to ensure the welfare and well-being of all daily wagers and the government will leave no stone unturned to establish principles of equality, welfare, and social justice in the governance, the Lt Governor said.

While we are fast-tracking the process on minimum wages, the interim measure reflects the UT administration's concern to make growth and progress inclusive.

Together we can confront the challenges of the future and there is no doubt that daily wagers and casual labourers will also carry forward the process of social and economic change, he added.

As the process of notifying the minimum wages by the Labour and Employment Department will take at least three months, a decision for interim measures was taken to benefit daily wagers in all government departments and those of municipalities and local bodies, officials said.

Three New Corona

of two cases. Eighteen of the total 20 districts in the union territory did not report any fresh cases.

There are 50 active cases in the union territory, while the number of recovered patients was 4,49,177, the officials said.

The death toll due to the pandemic was 4,751 as no fresh death was reported in the past 24 hours, they said.

Electricity Shock

told a local news agency GNS that duo was brought to district hospital Pulwama.

Medical Superintendent of District Hospital Pulwama Dr B S Tullah said that one of them, Javid Ahmad, has died while another Manzoor Ahmad has been admitted. He said that Manzoor's condition was 'stable'. Further details awaited.

10 Injured By Stray

villages of Lolab. The victims have been identified as Tabiya Jaan, Hamid Hassan, Mehran Lone, Abdul Rashid Lone, Tahira Bano, Abdul Sattar Khan, Rahil Pervaiz, Pervaiz Ahmad Wani, Khushboo Jaan and Gulzar Ahmad Ganie. Most of the victims were taken to Sub-District Hospital Sogam for treatment.

A health department official at SDH Sogam said that they have received several persons with dog bites.

"They are being treated and luckily none of them has suffered any major injury", the official said.

Worker Falls

engaged in his work while he fell into the crusher, leading to his on spot death, sources said.

After the incident police also went to the spot and have registered a case in this regard. (KDC)

Sanitation Workers Call Off Strike From April 24 In Jammu

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: In a major relief to the public, the sanitation workers have called off their province-wide proposed strike from April 24 after a meeting with a senior government official here, an official spokesman said.

Representatives of Safai Karamchhari Union led by their president called off the strike in public interest after holding a lengthy discussion with Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Raghav Langer, he said.

The spokesman said the decision was taken during late night negotiations held in Divisional Commissioner Office Jammu. Director Urban Local Bodies was also present.

All these Safai Karamchharis are working under various urban local bodies of Jammu province, he said.

He said the delegation apprised the divisional commissioner about their long-pending demands in a memorandum which included regularisation of their services, implementation of the Minimum Wages Act and the old pension scheme.

The divisional commissioner gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured them that a meeting will be held within 10 days with higher authorities to review the demands, which are genuine, for their redressal in a time-bound manner, the spokesman said.

8 Lambardars, Chowkidars Dismissed Over Land Grab

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr Piyush Singla on Saturday ordered the immediate dismissal of 7 lumberdars and 1 chowkidar of Tehsils Anantnag and Bijbehara following their involvement in encroachment of State/ Kahchharie land.

Dr Singla said that there had been reports regarding land grabbing by lumberdars/ chowkidars and taking cognizance of these reports action in the matter has been initiated.

Advocating a no non - sense approach, he said that persons who fail to deliver to their assigned tasks and whose actions

are counterproductive to public interest will be taken to task as per law.

As per the order issued, the lumberdars/ chowkidars instead of protecting State/ Kahchharie land were found to be themselves involved in illegal grabbing on land causing loss to state exchequer.

It is in place to mention that the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir had issued directions for dismissal of such lumberdars/ chowkidars who were found involved in land grabbing of State/ kahchharie land.

The concerned Tehsildars have been directed to take necessary action regarding appointment of substitutes.

Disaster Mngament Training Held At GBHSS Soura



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Disaster Preparedness Training was organised by J&K State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), Dept of Disaster Management Relief Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR) in collaboration with Civil Defence Srinagar at Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School (GBHSS), Soura.

The Chief Guest on the occasion was E Amir Ali, Nodal Officer SEOC. Others present were Gulam Hassan Sumji, Dy Controller Civil Defence Srinagar,

Prof. Mohammed Amin Beigh, Principal GBHSS, Soura.

The programme was coordinated by Sheikh Niyaz, Senior Lecturer. Practical training was imparted by experts Shoukat Ahmed and Mudassar Ahmed and facilitated by ASI Tariq Ahmed Shah, from Civil Defence.

More than 100 students, faculty members and non teaching staff participated in the training, which included Basic First Aid methods, Fire Fighting, Search & Rescue techniques. A mock drill was also held, in which the students actively participated.

Prayers, Processions Mark Martyrdom Anniversary Of Imam Ali In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Thousands of fasting Muslims thronged shrines and Imambargahs on Saturday to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS), one of the most revered icons of Islam.

Every year, on the 21st day of Ramadan, mourners gather in mosques and religious centers across many parts of the Muslim world to attend ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom anniversary of first Imam and fourth 'Rightly Guided' Caliph.

The biggest gathering was witnessed in Najaf al Ashraf, in Iraq, the resting place of Imam Ali. Iraqi officials said hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all across the world have assembled in the holy city to pay tributes to great companion of the Prophet of Islam (Pbuh).

It was on the 19th of Ramadan 40 AH (27 January AD 661), Imam Ali was struck on the head with a poison-coated sword during the morning prayers in the Great Mosque of Kufa. He passed away two days later. The night preceding Imam Ali's martyrdom is considered to be one of the three-fold Qadr (Destiny) Nights, when the Holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) more than 14 centuries ago.

Muslims hold night-long vigils on Qadr Nights, reciting the holy Quran and praying until dawn.

In Kashmir major functions on the occasion were held at



Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari delivering sermon on the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali (AS) at Mirgund, Pattan on Saturday

Hazratbal, Zadibal and Has-sanabad in Srinagar, Mirgund in Baramulla and in Budgam town.

Thousands joined the procession at Mirgund, Pattan after Shia leader Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari gave his sermon eulogizing the great personality and highlighting importance of his teachings for the present era. Maulana emphasized on the need for Muslims to study the heroic life of Hazrat Ali (AS) in order to come out of present chaos and confusion.

"We should follow the teachings of Imam Ali in these difficult times. He was not only a brave warrior but a kind ruler as well. He possessed the best qualities in battlefield and outside," Maulana Masoor said.

He said that Imam Ali was guardian of orphans and friends of the poor and needy.

"The need of the hour for our

youth is to follow Imam Ali's footsteps for a successful life," he said.

Peoples Conference leader and President Shia Association Imran Raza Ansari also addressed a gathering at Zadibal Imambargah.

"Imam Ali was the sea of patience and tolerance," Ansari said. He said that towering personality of Hazrat Ali had this honor of being born in the house of Allah Kabba - and also achieving his martyrdom in the house of Allah Masjid Kufa.

Similar commemorative functions were held at Budgam and Bemina by two factions of Anhjumane-e-Sharie Shaiyan. Processions and night long prayer meets were held in villages across length and breadth of Kashmir, reports said.

In Ladakh division massive processions were brought out in Kargil, Zanskar and Leh.

Frequent Power Cuts Hampering Religious Practices During Ramazan, Allege Residents

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Kashmir is going through one of its worst power crisis as unscheduled and prolonged cuts in supply in the holy month of Ramazan have left the people distraught.

People in the Valley said there was disruption in power supply especially at the time of Sehri (when pre-dawn meals to begin the day's fast are taken) and If-tar (when the fast is broken).

The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KP-DCL), for its part, said the entire country, and not just Kashmir, was facing power crisis due to shortage of coal and imbalance in demand and supply.

There has been hardly a day when we have had electricity at the time of Sehri or If-tar. During the day, the situation gets worse. We have never faced such a situation before, Javid Ahmad, a resident of Ganderbal, said.

The scenario is not better in Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar, where many areas are metered.

In winters, we used to get power supply as per the schedule. But as soon as we entered the holy month, we began facing issues in electricity supply. We pay bills on time, but rarely have we had power (supply) at Sehri and If-tar. This has created a lot of inconvenience, Mohammad Yusuf, a local, said.

People complained that the situation was far worse in non-metered areas.



We have more hours of power cut than supply. Most of the evenings, our areas go dark, Umar Ahmad, a resident of downtown Srinagar said.

The locals have been regularly taking to social media to flag their concerns. However, it has not helped, they alleged.

The National Conference (NC) on Saturday said Kashmir was facing a huge power crisis and appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to intervene so that the people did not face any hardships in the remaining days of the holy month.

The ground situation, the feedback we are getting, what we see in the media... this is a huge crisis, something which has never been seen before. Electricity is snapped at Sehri, If-tar and Taraweeh (night prayers), NC general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar said here.

He said the Lieutenant Governor had assured the people to have directed the authorities to look into the issue. However, the problem persisted.

We appeal to the L-G to seek

answers from the authorities about the problems being faced by the people. We have our own power sources. We are also procuring electricity from outside, which the administration says incurs losses to the government. But the electricity is not reaching the people. This raises doubts about the reasons given for the power outage, the NC general secretary said.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) also expressed its concern over the unscheduled power cuts.

We have never seen such worst and frequent cuts in the holy month, especially during Sehri and If-tar, a KCCI spokesman said.

In the past, the governments and administrations tried to help the people during Ramzan, but harrowing experiences are unfolding in the holy month this year, the chamber said.

Patients, who are on oxygen support at their homes, were struggling throughout, it added. KPDC chief engineer Javid Yusuf said there was coal shortage across the country, leading to frequent power cuts.

Also, there is less power supply, but the demand is huge, and then the electricity generation in hydro power projects in the union territory is poor due to less rainfall, he said.

Officials said the demand for electricity in Kashmir is around 1,600 megawatt (MW), while the supply is only of about 900 to 1100 MW.

SAMBA RAPE CASE

SHO Among 3 Cops Suspended For Dereliction Of Duty

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Three policemen have been suspended and a deputy superintendent of police has been removed for alleged delay in registration of a rape case in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, officials said.

On the orders of Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh, they will also face a departmental inquiry for dereliction of duty in the matter related to the rape of a minor girl.

Station House Officer (SHO) Ali Imran, Assistant Sub-Inspector Rattan Lal, Head Constable Sawinder Singh were placed under suspension and Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Vijaypur, Vishal Manhas, was removed from his post and attached with Zonal police headquarter for "poor supervision and control", the officials said.

As per the complaint, a heinous crime was committed with an 11-year-old girl by accused Shammil after entering her house in Bazigar Basti in Vijaypur tehsil on intervening night of April 16 and 17, they said.

The mother of girl approached

the police station Vijaypur but the SHO and other officials caused delay in registration of case and exercised undue influence and changed the nature of the complaint while forcing complainant to enter into compromise with the accused, the officials said.

The minor girl and mother were not treated as per the laid down procedure of POSCO, they said.

As the DGP came to know about the case and role of officials through a report of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), he ordered probe through crime branch, and special team confirmed the commission of offence against the minor girl, prompting the SHO to register a delayed case in this regard, they said.

As per the order issued by DGP, the conduct of some of these officials is unbecoming and warrant action as the duties were not performed in the given manner, which amount to grave dereliction of duty. They connive in avoiding the registration of the case and investigation into the heinous crime, the order said.

DGP also ordered a departmental inquiry against them headed by Commandant Radhmi Wazir.

After Days Of Rains, Weather Starts To Improve In J&K

SRINAGAR: Weather started improving in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday after three days of light to moderate rains in plains and snowfall over higher reaches.

A meteorological department official here said that Srinagar, with 0.3 mm of rain in the last 24 hours till 0830 hours today, recorded a low of 10.3°C against 8.6°C on the previous night. The temperature, he said, was 1.4°C above normal during this time of the year for the summer capital.

Qazigund received 1.2 mm of rain during the time and recorded a low of 9.8°C against 5.2°C on the previous night. The temperature was above normal by 2.3°C for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, had 1.4 mm of rain during the time and recorded a low of 7.8°C against 4.1°C on the previous night. It was 0.2°C above normal during this time of the season for the place, the official said.

Pahalgam, the famous resort in south Kashmir, had 2.1 mm of rain in the 24 hours and recorded a minimum of 2.5°C against 2.0°C last night. The temperature was 1.5°C below normal for the place, he said.

Gulmarg received 17.0 mm of rain during the time and recorded a low of 0.5°C against 0.0°C on the previous night, the official said. While 3.3°C is normal for the world famous skiing resort during this time of the season, the official said that the temperature was 2.8°C below normal for the place in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir received 2.6 mm of rain during the time and recorded a low of 8.6°C against 8.1°C on the previous night. The temperature was 1.0°C above normal for the district, the official told Global News Service.

Jammu recorded a low of 20.5°C against 18.1°C on the previous night, the official said. The temperature was 0.5°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal had 1.2 mm of rain in the 24 hours and recorded a low of 9.2°C while Batote recorded a low of 12.2°C and Bhadrawah 7.4°C, the official said.

"There is no forecast of any major rain during next week but a brief spell of occasional light rain with thunderstorm can't be ruled out at some places," the official added. (GNS)

2 ARTOs 'Attached', KAS Officer Relieved From Transport Dept

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Government has attached two ARTO and relieved a KAS officer from transport department in the interest of administration.

According to an order by Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Transport Department, Mubashir Jan, I/c ARTO BOI, Kashmir, has been transferred and attached in the office of Transport Commissioner, J&K at Srinagar, till further orders.

Jamshed Rasool, I/c ARTO Baramulla, has been transferred and attached in the office of Regional Transport Officer Kash-

mir, till further orders.

Shoab (Suhayb) Ahmad Wani, Jr. KAS, ARTO Pulwama, has been relieved from the Transport Department and has been asked to report to the General Administration Department for further posting, according to the order, a copy of which is with GNS.

Muzamm Ali, Jr. KAS, ARTO Shopian, has been asked to hold the charge of ARTO Pulwama, in addition to his duties, till further orders. Also, Anis Ahmad Wani, Jr. KAS, ARTO Kupwara, has been asked to hold the charge of ARTO Baramulla, in addition to his duties, till further orders.

NATIONAL PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

The Panchayati Raj system as we see it today in Jammu & Kashmir has a history and struggle behind it. It is said that the Panchayati system was first introduced by Maharaja Hari Singh around 1935 for settling local disputes of the people in rural areas. Village Panchayat Regulation Act No. 1 was promulgated by the Maharaja.

The preamble of the said act read as "it is expedient to establish in Jammu and Kashmir State the village panchayats to assist in the administrative, civil and criminal justice and also to manage the sanitation and other common concerns of the village".

The 1935 Panchayati Act was not to promote the Panchayati Raj system of governance in J&K but to use these panchayats in assisting judicial and civil administration.

In 1947 when the Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh's regime ended and all powers were transferred to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the Panchayati Raj Act was again amended in 1951 and 1958. However, the institution was kept confined within village level

affairs only.

The Panchayat means some members and a sarpanch and even the members of the Panchayat were nominated by the government only. This practice continued till late eighties. It was only in 1989 when the Government of Jammu & Kashmir came up with new legislation. The Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act 1989 was enacted.

This Act is still applicable and provides for the three-tier Panchayati Raj system in the state, viz Halqa Panchayat, Block development council (Block Simiti) and District Planning & Development Board also known as Zila parishad in other states. The most important provision in this act was Panchayati Adalat (a judicial role of Panchayats) with powers of settling all non-criminal local disputes. Panchayati Elections

Under the JK Panchayati Raj Act 1989 the first Panchayat election was held in Jammu & Kashmir in 2000, however, most of the seats remained vacant at that time because of militant threats. The term of this panchayat came to end in 2005 and no



elections were held in the state in the following six years. It was only in 2011 when free and fair panchayat elections were held in J&K with unrepresented participation of people.

The then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took an initiative and conducted Panchayat elections in the entire state. These elections by and large were successful and almost all seats were filled.

Although there was a practice of Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir but it was not mandatory. These elections were held in the past

and when the state government wanted.

There was no constitutional binding for the Govt to conduct fresh elections after the expiry of 6 years term of the Panchayats under JK Panchayati Raj Act 1989. Even the elections that were held in 2011 were held for 1st tier called Halqa Panchayat comprising a Sarpanch and some Panches.

For block or district council no elections were held, which indicated non-seriousness of politicians of J&K vis a vis Panchayati Raj. The institution was not let to go up to second or third tier

despite the provision being in place in Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act 1989. The main reason behind this was that the local Govt never wanted to decentralize power.

J&K Panchayat Conference The actual struggle for three tier PRI system in Jammu & Kashmir began in the year 2012 with the group of Sarpanches led by Shafiq Mir a Sarpanch from Poshana village in district Poonch came forward to organise the members of the panchayats in J&K.

He was the first person to organize various Panchayat associations under one umbrella called All J&K Panchayat Conference. Since then there was no looking back for the leaders of this organization. This J&K Panchayat Conference led by Shafiq Mir stood like a rock in all the odd times when several panchayat members were killed by militants in J&K.

On seeing the gravity of the situation, on September 27, 2012 Congress leader Rahul Gandhi invited this group of Sarpanches led by Shafiq Mir to Delhi and held two days long deliberations with them in presence of the then Minister of State for Home Jiten-

dra Singh to find out the ways how to build confidence among the Panchayat leaders of Jammu & Kashmir who were on resigning spree at that point of time.

Finally it was decided that Rahul Gandhi himself will visit Kashmir and meet the Panchayat members. On 4th October 2012 Rahul Gandhi reached Srinagar and met with the Panchayat leaders at SKICC Srinagar to build their confidence and assured them all help in empowerment of Panchayats.

Though Rahul Gandhi wanted to extend 73rd amendment of constitution to Jammu & Kashmir but his government partner in the J & K National Conference was reluctant to implement this constitutional amendment on the pretext of article 370.

In the year 2014 BJP- PDP came into power in Jammu & Kashmir. In the first stroke this government dissolved all Panchayats prematurely two years before its term completion. However, by that time All J&K Panchayat Conference had become a strong voice and it started its struggle again and finally around 40 member

delegation of this organization met with Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi on November 5th 2016 and demanded the fresh Panchayat elections and implementation of 73rd amendment of Indian constitution regarding Panchayati Raj in Jammu & Kashmir.

This was the time when the whole valley was shut after the killing of a prominent militant commander Burhan Wani in July that year. It was a very bold decision of the organization at that time because it was the step seen as against the winds.

This proved a significant meeting with PM Modi and he gave his full support to the organization and assured them to hold fresh elections in the state of Jammu and Kashmir although the PDP lead Govt in Jammu & Kashmir was not ready to conduct the elections fearing bloodshed. Finally, in 2018 after the collapse of PDP -BJP Government Panchayat elections were announced by PM Modi but all the political parties of Jammu & Kashmir Particularly NC and PDP openly boycotted those elections and militants had already given boycott calls.

IPL: Aiming to Arrest Slide, Struggling MI Take On LSG



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Virtually out of the playoff race and struggling on multiple fronts, a horribly out-of-sorts Mumbai Indians will need a special team effort to arrest their slide when they take on Lucknow Super Giants in a return-leg IPL fixture here on Sunday.

With seven defeats in as many matches, MI are winless this season and are languishing at the bottom with nothing going right for the five-time champions, who have failed to win the crunch moments and will need a miracle to make it to the playoffs.

Lucknow, on the other hand, have looked in good touch with four wins from seven matches but they are coming into the match after suffering a 18-run loss to Royal Challengers Bangalore.

However, the fact that LSG beat MI by 18 runs in their first leg will give them confidence.

The defeat also handed MI the dubious record of becoming the first team in IPL history to lose its first seven matches in a season.

One of the reasons for MI's downfall is the poor form of its openers Sharma and Ishant Kishan.

While both were out for a duck against CSK, Kishan has fared

slightly better than his skipper, scoring 191 runs against 114 runs by Sharma.

With just 96 runs, all-rounder Kieron Pollard has failed to live up to the expectations of the franchise, which decided to retain him.

In bowling, MI has mostly relied on Jasprit Bumrah even as the rest cut a sorry figure.

Australia's Riley Meredith and debutant Hritik Shokeen had a decent outing but MI will have to produce a much superior effort to tame LSG's formidable batting at Wankhede Stadium.

Lucknow's batting has been led by skipper KL Rahul (265 runs), who had slammed an unbeaten 60-ball 103 the last time the two teams faced off on April 16.

He is the second highest runs scorer this season. Other opener Quinton de Kock (215 runs) too has been in good rhythm.

In bowling, the pace-spin duo of Avesh Khan and Ravi Bishnoi have served them well with LSG having the luxury of some quality all-rounders such as Jason Holder and Marcus Stoinis.

In the multi-talented duo, the new-entrants have two powerful players who add lot of depth in both bowling and batting.

No Ball Controversy: Pant, Thakur Handed Fines, Amre Suspended



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Captain Rishabh Pant was on Saturday fined 100 per cent of his match fee, while assistant coach Pravin Amre was handed a one-match ban for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during Delhi Capitals' 15-run loss to Rajasthan Royals.

Besides the one match ban, Amre was also fined his entire match fees, while DC pacer Shardul Thakur too has been penalised 50 per cent of his match-fees, IPL said in a release.

The trio were penalised for their conduct during the controversial final over of the match in which Delhi Capitals required 36 runs to win on Friday night.

Needing 36 runs for a win off the final over, DC batter Rovman Powell hit three successive sixes from the first three deliveries, including the third ball which was a hip-high full-toss from Obed McCoy, to bring the equation down to 18 runs from the final three balls.

However, the DC camp demanded that the third ball be called a no ball for height with Pant asking his batters -- Powell and Kuldeep Yadav to walk out and assistant coach Amre stepping on to the playing arena to

speak to the umpire.

Pant admitted to the "Level 2 offence" under Article 2.7 of the IPL Code of Conduct and "accepted the sanction".

Thakur also accepted the sanction for the "Level 2 offence under Article 2.8" of the IPL Code of Conduct and accepted the sanction.

Handed a one-match ban, Amre too "admitted to the Level 2 offence under Article 2.2 of the IPL Code of Conduct and accepted the sanction."

It started with Kuldeep, who was at the non-striker's end, gesturing to the umpires to check for a possible no-ball on height after the third delivery. Powell joined in having a chat with the umpires too. But the umpires stood their ground, saying the delivery was legal.

Pant looked livid and called Kuldeep and Powell back, while assistant coach Shane Watson tried to reason him out.

Amre then went into the playing arena but he was told to go back by the umpires.

RR legspinner Yuzvendra Chahal tried to stop Kuldeep from walking out, while Royals opener Jos Buttler, who hit a match-winning 116, was also seen having words with Pant near the boundary line.

Camp Nou Breaks Record For Women's Game With 91,648 Fans

Agencies

BARCELONA: Camp Nou broke its own world record for a women's football match when more than 91,600 fans revelled in Barcelona's 5-1 rout of Wolfsburg in the first leg of their Women's Champions League semifinal.

The 91,648 spectators counted by club officials surpassed the 91,553 who turned out to see Barcelona beat Real Madrid last month.

Previously, the record for a women's game was 90,185 for the 1999 Women's World Cup final between the United States and China at the Rose Bowl.

Alexia Putellas led Barcelona with a brace. The Ballon d'Or winner was one of four goal-scorers for Barcelona in the first half before she earned and con-

verted a late penalty to give her a competition-leading 10 goals.

The second leg is in Germany on April 30.

Lyon hosts Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday in the first leg of the other semifinal.

Barcelona is seeking to repeat its treble from last season. It has already clinched the Spanish league and is in the Copa de la Reina semifinals. (AP)

SCFA Lifts 'MYMP' Youth League

- ▶ Divisional Commissioner felicitates the players
- ▶ 'My Youth My Pride' events concluding elsewhere

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: An eventful initiative of the J&K Sports Council, Youth League Football Championship 2022 played at TRC Synthetic Turf Srinagar concluded on Friday with Sports Council Football Academy (SCFA) lifting the trophy by maintaining their position atop the points table.

Inclement weather conditions during the past couple of days resulted in the rescheduling of cricket events however, the football matches played on the synthetic turf went ahead as scheduled.

The final match of the league played between J&K Bank and Sports Council Football lived up to all the expectations as both teams took to the field all guns blazing.

While it was a must-win game for the J&K Bank colts to lay their hand on the coveted trophy and all SCFA had to do was deny their opponents any such chance. The SCFA defence guarded their goal post like a rock and shrank all the chances of their opponents taking to earn an extra point from the game.

SCFA stuck to their game plan and settled for a draw which meant that the effort was enough to hand over them the championship badge. It was a second straight championship title for SCFA colts this season who have been training under the watchful eyes of Javed Sofi, Football Coach J&K Sports Council.

Earlier in the evening, the penultimate match of the league between SCFA Bandipora and SCFA Baramulla went into the kitty of the latter, claiming the victory by a solitary goal. Baramulla SCFA colts by this win were placed in third place in the league.

P.K. Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir presided over the function as the Chief Guest. He interacted with the players before the start of the match, stayed there till the end of the final match, and gave away prizes at the end to participants.

While appreciating the efforts



of the Sports Council he said, "Conducting such activities and providing ample opportunities to the youth, enabling them to showcase their talent is a welcome step and need of the hour."

Joint Secretary J&K Sports Council, Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Divisional Sports Officer Kashmir, Nuzhat Farooq besides many other officials from Sports Council along with other government departments were also present on the occasion.

Divulging the details of the League, Bashir Ahmad Bhat Joint Secretary, Sports Council said that 12 top teams across the valley participated in the league which featured more than 300 players and officials as well. He added that the league was played in two venues, with Gani Memorial Stadium downtown hosting 12 matches while 6 matches were played on Synthetic Turf TRC under floodlights. He said, more such football leagues shall be organised in the future.

Meanwhile, the Tennis Ball Cricket matches slated to be held in Khrew and postponed due to wet weather were played on Friday after a delayed start due to showers in the afternoon. More than 40 tennis ball cricketers participated in the event.

The first match played between Jamia Eleven Tennis Ball

Cricket Club and Eidgah Eleven Tennis Ball Cricket Club was won by the latter by 10 wickets. Basit was the top scorer for Eidgah Eleven with 25 runs. He was awarded man of the match for his performance of scoring 25 runs and claiming 1 wicket.

Despite intermittent pouring skies, a large number of spectators had reached the venue.

In the ongoing Spring Shield T20 Tournament played in Nil Anantnag, the second semi-final match was being played between BSM Mattan and GSM Mattan. Earlier BSM Mattan elected to bat after winning the toss. They scored 148 runs for the loss of all 10 wickets in their allotted overs. Gowhar Pathan their consistent performer once again played a vital inning of 47 runs while Ishiyag Rasool contributed 25 runs to the team's total.

Abid with 4 wickets leads the chart of successful bowlers for GSM Mattan in Saturday's game.

The second inning was in progress when the report was being filed. The winner of today's game will face Pahalgam Blues in the final of the Spring Shield T20 Cricket Tournament at the same venue.

These events were part of the special sports initiative conducted by the J&K Sports Council across all the districts of the union territory of J&K.

ISDL Carrom Competition For U-19 Boys Held At Shopian

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The Department of Youth Services and Sports on Saturday organised Inter School District level (ISDL) competition in the discipline of 'Carrom' U-19 years Boys at Mini Secretariat, here.

The tournament was inaugurated by the District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO) Shopian, Gurmukh Singh Dutta.

Activity Incharge, Riyaz Ahmad Wachkoo and other officers and officials of Youth Services and Sports Department were also present.

Earlier, DYSSO Shopian interacted with students and gave a brief



description about the benefits of carrom.

Dutta said that the game helps children to develop social skills such as communication, sharing, waiting, taking turns, and enjoying the company of others in the game by playing Carrom board.

Man United Loses 3-1 At Arsenal, Further Damages Top-4 Hopes



Agencies

LONDON: Despite Cristiano Ronaldo making an emotional scoring return, United was beaten 3-1 at Arsenal in the Premier League on Saturday and dropped six points off its rival in the race for a top-four finish.

Granit Xhaka blew kisses to the home fans -- who have often criticized him -- after his long-range, 70th-minute strike clinched victory for Arsenal in a wild game at Emirates Stadium that saw the hosts lead 2-0 after 32 minutes on goals by Nuno Tavares and Bukayo Saka before withstanding a fight-back from United launched by Ronaldo's 100th Premier League goal.

The Portugal superstar, who missed the 4-0 loss to Liverpool on Tuesday while grieving the death of his newborn son, raised his left arm and pointed to the sky after scoring in the 34th minute. Ronaldo might

have had a chance to score an equaliser when United was awarded a penalty in the 55th after the ball struck the raised hand of Tavares at a corner. But instead of Ronaldo taking the spot kick, compatriot Bruno Fernandes took over and sent a weakly hit effort against the outside of the post following his trademark stuttering run-up.

To make matters worse for Fernandes, it was his miscontrol that gave Xhaka the opportunity to take aim and claim the crucial third goal for Arsenal, which climbed into fourth place above north London rival Tottenham.

Sixth-place United has four games left of a miserable season that will end with no trophies -- for the fifth straight year -- and see Ten Hag take over from Rangnick, the second of two caretaker managers installed by the club since Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was fired in November. (AP)

Abid Ali Cleared To Resume International Career 4 Months After Heart Attack



Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan opener Abid Ali has been given the green light to resume his international career, four months after suffering a heart attack.

The 34-year-old had undergone an angioplasty a day after he was rushed to a hospital for chest pain while playing a match in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy in Karachi last December.

"I am really excited to be back with the prospect of playing for Pakistan again. Doctors cleared me to go back in the field and I can finally return to live a normal life," Abid told 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"I will be on medicines for some time because of the stents implanted but overall, physically, I am feeling great. I am diving, running, jogging, batting and it's really great to be normal again. There were doubts if I could play again with a heart condition but I didn't lose hope.

"I stopped thinking about cricket for some time and focused on regaining a healthy life first. It was tough but the recovery has been great with all the extensive rehabilitation."

Abid had to undergo an extensive rehabilitation programme and wait for months to get clearance from doctors to play again.

Cardiac surgeons, after several tests, diagnosed that Abid was suffering from "acute coronary syndrome", which, in simple terms, means there was blockage of blood flow in his heart.

He was batting on 61 for Central Punjab against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the UBL complex when the team manager rushed him to the hospital after he complained of chest pain and uneasiness in his shoulder.

"I am not sure what is the status of my national selection right now but I am fully set for my comeback," Abid said.

"For now, I started with the shorter format by playing three-four games in the Ramzan tournament in Faisalabad and it went well." Earlier this week, he appeared in a local T20 league match in Faisalabad and scored a half-century.

"These two games have given me confidence to revive my cricketing career. This is just the start and I am working hard on my fitness to stay in contention for selection.

"I need to work very hard to catch up on the lost time and I am quite hopeful that I will be able to achieve that. I still have a lot of cricket left in me and I don't want to sit back. Cricket has been my life."

Stokes Backs Root's Decision To Quit England Captaincy

Reuters

LONDON: Ben Stokes has backed Joe Root to continue his run-scoring spree with the bat, offering his England team mate "nothing but love, respect and support" after his decision to quit test captaincy.

Root stepped down last week, saying the job had taken a heavy toll on him recently, after dispiriting tours of Australia and the Caribbean capped a string of poor results.

The 31-year-old Root is England's second-highest test run-scorer of all time, behind Alastair Cook. His tally of 5,295 runs as skipper is the highest by an England captain. He scored 1,708 test runs in 2021, including six test centuries.

"Now that he has stood down, I fully expect him to continue his brilliance with a bat in hand and show why he is the greatest batsman we've ever produced," all-



rounder Stokes wrote in a column for the Daily Mirror.

"We are lucky to have him and he's still got so much to offer English cricket."

Stokes thanked Root for his support as captain, saying their relationship went "deeper and further" than just team mates and they have been "good friends" for a long time. Stokes said Root called him to inform of his decision.

"As you can imagine it was quite an emotional conversation, but it wasn't a long chat, there will be time for that in the future," he continued.



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