



P3 CITY

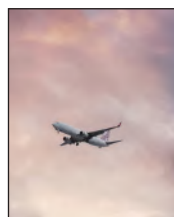
10 RESIDENTIAL HOUSES DAMAGED IN NAWA KADAL BLAZE

At least ten residential houses were damaged in a fire incident which broke out in Kanimazar locality of Nawa Kadal area in central Kashmir's Srinagar on Tuesday evening.

P5

THE LAST MILE, LIFT YOUR RAMADAN SLUMP

In the many years I've been lucky enough to spend fasting, I've had the same approach to Ramadan. I tend to set myself huge goals for the month ahead, sometimes without realising. It's the month I love most and actively look forward to each year. A



P7 STATE

HAJJ 2022: GOI MOOTS PROPOSAL, URGES SAUDI TO ACCOMMODATE ASPIRANTS ABOVE 65 YEARS

The Government of India has mooted a proposal that has been forwarded to the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia



26 th RAMAZAN		
	Iftar TODAY	Sehri TOMMOROW
FIQAH HANAFIYA	7:15	4:17
FIQAH JAFARIYA	7:22	4:14

Widom Quote!

Life without liberty is like a body without spirit
- Khalil Gibran

NEWS DIGEST

J&K Logs Eight New Covid Cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported eight new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the infection tally to 4,54,021, officials said. Of the new cases, three were from Jammu district and two each from Srinagar and Budgam, they said. There are 58 active cases of COVID-19 in the Union Territory. **More on P6**

2 Civilians Injured In Bank Guard's Misfire

SRINAGAR: Two civilians' sustained injuries on Wednesday after the rifle of a bank security guard went off in Shopian district of South Kashmir. According to reports, the incident occurred at the J&K Branch in main town Shopian on Wednesday when the rifle of the **More on P6**

3 Gamblers Held In Baramulla: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested three alleged gamblers in a raid in Fatehpura area of Baramulla district. Acting on specific information, a team from police station Baramulla carried out a raid in Fatehpura area of the North Kashmir district and arrested three **More on P6**

Minor Drowns To Death In Bandipora

SRINAGAR: A minor boy died of drowning in Saderkoot Bala village of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Wednesday. 3-year-old Ravaan Younis of SK Bala accidentally slipped into Nallah Hybal on Wednesday afternoon causing his death, reports said. His body was later retrieved and handed over to the family for last rites.

Mughal Road Reopens After 4 Months

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The historic Mughal road, connecting the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch in the Jammu region with south Kashmir's Shopian district, was reopened for one-way vehicular traffic on Wednesday after remaining closed for over four months due to heavy snowfall during the winter, officials said.

A traffic department official said the traffic on the road was allowed from Poonch towards Shopian around 9 am, marking the reopening of the alternate link between Kashmir and the rest of the country.

The traffic will be restricted to one-way and will play alternatively from Poonch and Shopian for the time being as a precautionary **More on P6**

Kashmir Residents See No Relief From Power Outages



Protest against power shortage continued for the third consecutive day in Srinagar's Basant Bagh on Wednesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: There seems to be no relief in sight for the residents of Kashmir facing electricity outages for the past several days, with the authorities citing the early onset of summer and sub-optimal hydro power generation as reasons for unscheduled power cuts.

Kashmir is going through one of

its worst power crisis as unscheduled and prolonged cuts in supply in the holy month of Ramadan have left the people distraught.

Officials in the electricity department said the supply in April was around 900 to 1100 MW while the demand was 1600 MW, thereby, creating a deficit which has forced them to go for unscheduled power cuts.

People in the valley complain

that power supply often gets disrupted at the time of sehri (when pre-dawn meals to begin the day's fast are taken) and iftar (when the fast is broken).

"There has been hardly a day when we have had electricity at the time of sehri or iftar. During the day, the situation gets worse. We have never faced such a situation before," Javid Ahmad, **More on P6**

KASHMIR POWER DISCOM IS TRYING TO COPE UP with this unprecedented situation by making all efforts to keep supply at critical times of sehri and iftar by rationalisation of allocation skewed in favour of domestic consumer base."

Militant Killed, In Ongoing Pulwama Encounter

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: An unidentified militant was killed and a soldier injured on Wednesday in an ongoing encounter in Mitragam area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Special Operations Group (SOG) of police and army launched a search operation in the Mitragam area of the district on Wednesday afternoon following information about the presence of militants there, a police official said.

When the search team started advancing towards the suspected spot, the hiding militants, he said, opened fire upon them in a bid to escape from their dragnet. The joint team returned the fire, setting off an encounter.

In the initial **More on P6**

JAMMU ENCOUNTER FALLOUT

BSF Launches Drive To Detect Cross-Border Tunnels

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Following the recent detection and killings of two Jaish-e-Mohammed's suicide bombers, who infiltrated the country from Pakistan, the Border Security Force has launched a massive drive to detect cross-border tunnels along the International Border in the Jammu sector.

The BSF said it is alive to the threat posed by the enemy forces and anti-national elements and is maintaining robust domination and surveillance to keep the borders and the people of the country safe.

Two heavily-armed JeM militants, wearing suicide vests, were eliminated in a fierce gunfight by security forces



File Photo

after they attacked a bus carrying Central Industrial Security Force personnel in the Sunjwan area on the outskirts of Jammu on April 22 and killed an assistant sub-inspector.

Nine security personnel, including two policemen, were

also injured in the gunfight which ensued amid the heightened security two days ahead of the scheduled visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The subsequent investigation led to the arrest of three conspirators, including **More on P6**

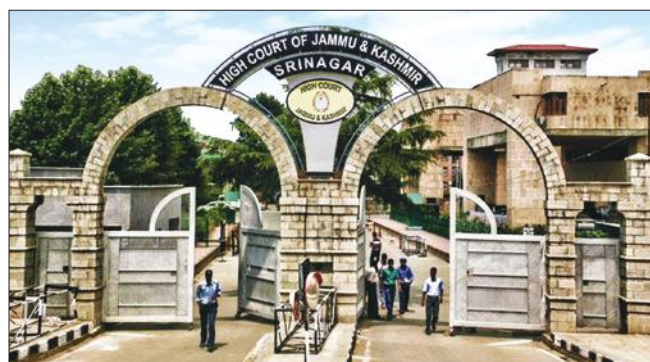
FREEDOM OF SPEECH & EXPRESSION

Calling Kashmir 'Occupied' Does Not Enjoy Protection: J&K HC

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court ruled on Wednesday that calling Kashmir "occupied Kashmir" and its residents as "slaves" does not enjoy protection under the Constitution's Article 19 (A), on right to freedom of speech and expression.

A bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar, hearing a petition filed by advocate Muzamil Butt seeking quashing of an FIR against him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, remarked: "It is one thing to criticise the government for its negligence and express outrage on the violation of human rights of the



people, but it is quite another to advocate that the people of a particular part of the country are slaves of the government of India or that they are under the occupation of armed forces of

the country," online portal Bar and Bench reported.

Police had registered an FIR against Butt for his Facebook post in which he criticised the killing of seven **More on P6**

Omar Welcomes SC Decision To List Art-370 Petitions

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Wednesday welcomed the Supreme Court's announcement that petitions regarding the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution would be listed after the summer vacation and appealed to the Chief Justice of India to hold the hearings on a fast-track basis.

"We welcome the decision of the Supreme Court to constitute a bench after the summer vacation. We understand that due to COVID-19, the petitions could not be listed earlier but we would now request the CJI that the hearings be held on a fast-track basis."

"Since August 2019, many changes have taken place,

which should not have happened. Any further delay would mean that it would be difficult to reverse the changes," Abdullah told reporters here.

The Centre abrogated the provisions of Article 370 on August 5, 2019 and bifurcated the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Abdullah was interacting with the youth leaders of the NC at the party headquarters here.

Asked if the meetings were related to elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the NC vice-president said there was no connection.

"I am meeting youngsters to understand what they think and what problems they face," he said. **More on P6**

Army-Run School Tweaks Hijab Order After Outrage

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: An Army-run school in Baramulla district on Wednesday amended its earlier order asking its staff to avoid wearing hijab during school hours after facing massive outrage and criticism in Kashmir Valley.

In a circular dated April 25, the principal of the Dagger Parivar School Baramulla, a school set up under the aegis of the Army and the Indrani Balan Foundation,

asked the teachers to avoid wearing hijab during school hours "so that students can feel comfortable and are forthcoming to interact with teachers and staff".

However, on Wednesday, the school issued an amended version of the circular, replacing the word hijab (head cover) with niqab (face veil).

The April 25-dated circular has been widely shared on social media.

Efforts to seek comments from the **More on P6**

Govt Transfers 10 JKAS Officers

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Territory government on Wednesday ordered transfer of ten Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) officer in the interest of administration with immediate effect.

According to an order issued by government, Akhtar Hussain Qazi, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kishtwar, has been transferred and posted as Deputy District Election Officer, Doda, relieving Mohammad Ashfaq, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Doda of the additional charge of the post.

Rishi Kumar Sharma, JKAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Assar, Doda, has been transferred and posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Padder, Kishtwar. "He shall **More on P6**



D&FCO Seals 13 food Business Operators In Last 7 Days

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Food Safety wing of Drugs and Food Control Organization has intensified market checking on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr and during the last seven days 13 food business operators who mainly include the bakers have been sealed and the bakery items which were found unfit for human use worth thousands of rupees were destroyed on the spot.

Moreover, a fine of Rupees 1, 76,500 has been imposed by the Adjudicating Officer, Additional District Commissioner Srinagar to 15 food business operators for not complying with the various provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act.

The food business operators especially the bakers and confectionery manufacturers, nanwaies, poultry sellers and butchers have been directed to maintain high standards of hygiene failing which stern action under relevant laws of the Food safety and Standards Act shall be taken against the offenders.

It is pertinent to mention that kneading of dough at maximum places by bakers is being carried out by machines and not manually.

The department is in the process of allotting hygiene ratings to all food manufacturers especially the bakery and the confectionery units and the process shall be completed soon.

Meeting For Registration And Renewal Of Houseboats Held

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the policy and guidelines on Dal Lake for registration, renewal and operation of houseboats in Dal and Nigeen Lakes besides discussing legal framework for enforcing the policy.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, General Administration Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi; Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez; Vice-Chairperson, J&K Lakes Conservation and Management Authority and Director Tourism, Kashmir.

Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Dheeraj Gupta participated virtually.

While emphasizing coordination among various line departments, Chief Secretary directed for the constitution of a committee at senior level for registration, renewal and operation of house boats in Dal and Nigeen Lakes besides legal framework for enforcing the policy.

The committee shall be responsible for inspection of the houseboats to ensure compliance to all laid down norms and procedures including structural safety, fire hazard, sewage and waste disposal. It will also be mandated with scrutinizing all documents of the houseboat for registrations/renewal of the registration.



10 Residential Houses Damaged In Nawa Kadal Blaze

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: At least ten residential houses were damaged in a fire incident which broke out in Kanimazar locality of Nawa Kadal area in central Kashmir's Srinagar on Tuesday evening.

An official said that a fire broke out in a residential house at around 7:35 PM and soon after spread to other structures

in the vicinity. Despite timely efforts launched by the Fire and Emergency Department alongside locals, at least ten houses received substantial damage in the inferno, the official said.

"The area is highly congested which hindered the rescue operations", he said.

Farooq Ahmad Dar is one of the victims who lost his house in the blaze. A businessman

dealing with handicrafts, he says he has lost all his goods.

"All the handicrafts that I had in my house are lost. It has rendered me a loss of at least 9 lakh rupees", Farooq says.

He also said that around thirty families have been rendered homeless by the blaze.

Meanwhile, a Fire and Emergency Department official said that three of their employ-

ees received minor burn injuries and were given first-aid at the site", the official said.

It has been independently learnt that few civilians have also received burn injuries in the incident, though the veracity of such reports could not be immediately ascertained. Meanwhile, the families have appealed to the administration to provide them with assistance.

CS Visits Jamia Masjid, Other Shrines in Srinagar, Reviews arrangements

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta on Wednesday visited Jamia Masjid Dargah Hazratbal, Khanqah-e-Moula and Nowhatta in Srinagar city to review arrangements put in place for the visiting devotees there.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz, Commissioner, SMC Athar Aamir Khan, Director Tourism Kashmir, Dr GN Itoo, SSP Sri-

nagar, Rakesh Balwal and other senior officers.

He exhorted upon the concerned departments to ensure all their respective tasks are accomplished with highest degree of responsibility so that devotees visiting the shrines don't face any hardship on this account. He interacted with Augaf members at the shrines and enquired from them about the arrangements that have been put in place for convenience of the devotees.

During his visit to Dargah, Chief Secretary directed for upgradation of facilities there

saying that all services should be put in place for convenience of devotees thronging the shrine during Laylat-ul-Qadr, Eid ul Fitr. He directed for completion of boundary wall and construction of gates in the premises.

Maintaining that collective approach is the way forward for better upkeep of shrines, Chief Secretary directed the officers to take feedback from Augaf and locals regarding the upgradation of facilities. He asked the officers to keep the stray dogs at bay by engaging dog catchers at the shrines to prevent any mishap.

'No Jumat-ul-Vida, Shab-e-Qadr To Be Allowed At Jamia Masjid'

Srinagar: Authorities have decided not to allow Jumat-ul-Vida as well as Shab-e-Qadr prayers at historic Jamia Masjid heer, Anjuman Augaf Jamia Masjid said on Wednesday.

"Government and Police officials headed by a magistrate visited the Jama Masjid premises today after iftar and conveyed to the Augaf members that authorities have decided not to allow Jumat-ul-vida congregational prayers to be held in Jamia Masjid on the last Friday of Ramzan as well as no prayers or shab to be allowed on shab-e-Qadr at the historic Jamia Masjid," Anjuman said in a statement.

Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mechanical Irrigation Division Anantnag HQ Awantipora

GIST

GIST for E-NIT S. No. 10 /MIDA of 2022-23

For & on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir e-tenders in single cover system are invited from reputed and experienced Registered Electrical/Mechanical contractors/ Workshop holders /Firms whose registration are valid in terms of standing rules with sufficient experience and financial resources dealing with below mentioned works and other similar works of the same capacity or higher for the following work: -

S. No	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Cost of Tender Documents	Earnest Money	Time for completion	Major Head
1	2	3	4	5	6	
1.	Complete repairs to voltage stabiliser 60 Hp starter and 200 Amp OCB at Awneera LIS	1.04 lacs	100=	3120=	05 days	M&R
2.	Complete rewinding of 60 HP induction motor at Awneera LIS	0.455 lacs	50=	1365=	05 days	M&R
3.	various electro mechanical works at LIS Naninar	0.60 lacs	50=	1800=	05 days	M&R
4.	Emergent nature of works at LIS Sirhama.	1.036 lacs	100=	3105=	05 days	M&R
5.	Emergent nature of works at LIS Khurnantoor	0.45 lacs	50=	1350 =	05 days	M&R

The NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ), terms and conditions of contract can be seen/downloaded from the departmental web site (jktenders.gov.in) as per the dates shown below:-

S. No.	Description	Date			Time
		DD	MM	YYYY	
A	Publishing date of NIT	25	04	2022	04:30 PM
2	Download start date	25	04	2022	04:30 PM
3	Bid submission start date	25	04	2022	04:30 PM
4	Bid submission end date	02	05	2022	04:00 PM
5	Bid opening date	03	05	2022	11:00 PM11:00 AM or any date convenient to Deptt

All the terms and conditions will remain same as laid down in e-Nit & PWD form No.25-double.

No. MIDA/450-56
Dated:-25.04.2022

Sd /=

Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division Anantnag
HQ Awantipora

DIPK-1148/22



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR
NAAC Accredited Grade "A+" | HAZRATBAL, SRINAGAR

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

For and on behalf of the University of Kashmir, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Govt. of J&K/ other union territories and CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc in shape of E-Challan (in Rs.)	Time of comp	Time and Date for Submission of E-Tender.	Date & Time of Opening of Bid	Class of Contr
1.	Providing of Supplementary Water Supply to overhead Storage Tank No. II at Main Campus.	2.14 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	01-Month	26-04 -2022 to 05-05-2022 (6.00 PM)	06-05-2022 (11.30 AM)	"DEE"

The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the web site www.kashmiruniversity.net / www.jktenders.gov.in.

DIPK-NB-533/22

NIT No: - F(UCD)(E.tend)/KU/04/22 | DATED:26/04/22. Sd/- Executive Engineer

DIAL-EMMA

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



AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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



HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
26 Ramazan
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 16
ZUHR	12:28
ASR	5:16
Magrib	7:15
ISHA	8: 43

This Day In History

- 1949 - Former Philippine First Lady Aurora Quezon, 61, assassinated while en route to dedicate a hospital in memory of her late husband; her daughter and 10 others also killed
- 1951 - Mohammad Mosaddegh elected Prime Minister of Iran by the Parliament of Iran (Majlis)
- 1952 - WW II Pacific peace treaty takes effect
- 1956 - Last French troops leave Vietnam
- 1958 - Great Britain performs atmospheric nuclear test at Christmas Island
- 1958 - Vanguard TV-5 launched for Earth orbit (failed)
- 1965 - US marines invade Dominican Republic, stay until October 1966
- 1967 - Muhammad Ali refuses induction into army & stripped of boxing title
- 1969 - Charles de Gaulle resigns as president of France1971 - Samuel Lee Gravely Jr becomes 1st black admiral in US Navy
- 1972 - Courts award 1968 Kentucky Derby prize money to 2nd place winner due to the winner being given drugs before the race
- 1973 - Over 6000 Mk. 82 500 pound bombs detonate over 18 hrs in a railyard in northern California. 5500 structures damaged, town of Antelope destroyed, with every building reduced to foundations. Leads to Transportation Safety Act (1974)
- 1975 - South-Vietnam Gen Duong Van Minh sworn in as president till April 30
- 1977 - Andreas Baader and members of terrorist group the Red Army Faction (Baader-Meinhof Gang) jailed for life after a trial lasting nearly 2 years in Stuttgart, Germany
- 1977 - The Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure is signed.
- 1983 - Argentine government declares all 15-30,000 missing persons dead
- 1983 - NASA launches Geos-F
- 1986 - Soviet TV news program Vremya announces a nuclear accident at Chernobyl nuclear power station, 2 days after the event
- 1987 - NBA announces expansion to Charlotte NC & Miami Fla in 1988 & Minneapolis Minn & Orlando Fla in 1989
- 1988 - Aloha Airlines Boeing 737 roof tears off in flight; kills stewardess.
- 1989 - Argentina, hit by rocketing inflation, runs out of money
- 1989 - Iran protests sale of "Satanic Verses" by Salman Rushdie
- 1991 - Space Shuttle STS 39 (Discovery 12) launched
- 1993 - Carlo Ciampi forms Italian government with ex-communists

From KO Archives

Sumo-borne Men Abduct, Beat Cop

Observer News Service

Srinagar : A traffic police constable was admitted in the hospital in a critical condition after being dropped half dead by some unidentified abductors outside the Batwara gate of the army headquarters in BadamiBagh cantonment here this afternoon.

According to reports, Ghulam Muhammad (belt No1556), a constable in the traffic control department deployed in the Regal chowk to enforce one way movement stopped a white Sumo from proceeding in the wrong direction. At this, the unidentified persons pounced on the constable and beat him.

Watching the scuffle, some shopkeepers tried to rescue the policeman. But, the Sumo-borne men putted him in and fled away. The incident took place in broad day light at 3:45 p.m. At about 6.30 p.m. the army authorities informed the police about the constable lying at the mail gate of the BB Cantt almost half dead. However, the police refused to pick up the injured constable and instead demanded the in-spector general of police or any other senior officer to go to the spot for the purpose. Eventually, it was the superintendent of police traffic, Riyaz Ahmad Bedar, who went to the BB Cantt gate and removed the constable to the SMHS hospital where the doctors attending on him said, late in the evening, that his condition was stable.

Kashmir Observer, April 28, 2000

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Power Crisis

Jammu and Kashmir has been reeling under a severe power crisis over the last two weeks. Power is available only for a few hours in a day. Some places get it for even a lesser time. And this too during the holy month of Ramzan. This has severely inconvenienced the people. What is more, there is no sign that the situation will improve anytime soon. In fact, the situation might get even worse before getting better. Ironically, the power shutdowns are associated with winter in Kashmir, but now we have them in spring also. Not only that, ours is also a state that exports electricity and imports the same at a hefty cost for its own consumption. And for this, successive state governments are squarely to blame. They cannot escape the responsibility for saddling the state with an eternal power crisis. True, Indus Water Treaty has fundamentally hobbled J&K's capacity to exploit its water resources for power generation and there is little that the union territory can do so far as righting the wrongs under IWT are concerned. But the successive governments have shown little imagination to harness the water resources within the restrictions of the treaty. Situation is unlikely to improve on this score in future.

The ongoing power outage in Jammu and Kashmir, however, is not borne out of the local factors. Several states are facing this. And the reason for this is reported to be the continued heat wave, and a coal shortage at over 150 power plants. States such as Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh are witnessing powercuts. The coal stock position at the 173 power plants stands at 21.93 million tonnes, which, according to a report, is less than the regulatory requirement of 66.32 MT. The coal inventories, according to media reports, have dipped to the lowest since 2014 to nine days as against the Centre's mandated 24 days' worth of stocks. The heat wave, on the other hand, has exponentially increased the power demand, widening the demand-supply gap.

Kashmir, this year, has also witnessed an early onset of warmth. March turned out to be the warmest month in decades. Temporarily though, it must have raised discharge in our rivers due to early snowmelt leading to increase in the generation of hydroelectricity. But it doesn't directly benefit J&K. Here's hoping that the power situation improves from hereon. Going forward, as the Valley heads into summer, erratic power supply will not only adversely affect the everyday life but also the economy, and more importantly the tourism.

O T H E R O P I N I O N

Buying free speech: On
Elon Musk's Twitter buy

The world's richest man talking about free speech and humanity's future after buying one of the most influential social media platforms seems to be the most politically correct thing to do. But it is certainly ironic considering that the billionaire buyer had no qualms over the years about using the social media platform to aggressively promote his business interests as well as block and, some may say even bully, critics. But in saying what he has said, Mr. Musk has put the spotlight on what has been a sensitive issue for Twitter in recent years — its inability to convincingly come across as a platform where healthy conversations can take place. Often, those indulging in hate speech and threatening violence have found full play on the platform until authorities put in a request for withholding of the offensive tweets. Whatever it did toward that goal — from creating policies around abuse and disinformation to unleashing technology for spotting problematic content early — did little to change the perception. One need not even consider its move to permanently ban the then U.S. President Donald Trump to make the point that it, at times, has come across as an interested player rather than a disinterested platform — its inconsistencies in labelling content as problematic would alone suffice.

What Mr. Musk does next toward promoting free speech on the platform would be keenly watched. The first challenge to this is the fact that free speech is understood differently by people belonging to different political ideologies. But, Mr. Musk is all for a light touch in moderating content. CNN quoted him as saying in a recent TED conference that, "If in doubt, let the speech exist." He added, "If it's a gray area, I would say, let the tweet exist. But obviously in the case where there's perhaps a lot of controversy, you would not necessarily want to promote the tweet." He is also in favour of increasing trust by making the algorithms open source and using technology to spot spam bots. Would that improve the situation? Perhaps. Would he do away with the safeguards Twitter has built over time? One hopes not. But Mr. Musk may realise in the journey that the issue of free speech is not so black-and-white from the vantage point of a platform owner. For, he is no longer just only a Twitter user with over 80 million followers.

The Hindu



Make Mosques
Inclusive Again

Amir Suhail Wani

THE life and teachings of the Prophet of Islam and the Quran demonstrate the inclusive, merciful and compassionate nature of Islam. Within the holy life of the Prophet himself, we come across incidents where the Prophet embraced not only marginalised and oppressed but his enemies and the enemies of Islam too, with the spirit of extending the canopy of mercy to all. This tradition has lately waned away and what we see is stark and ugly growth of ideology in the guise of Islam that is interested in exclusion more than inclusion - a circle under implosion. When one talks of Islam, one is inadvertently driven to the institution of the mosque and the overt and covert manifestations of exclusion in this Islamic institution of primary social importance. Mosques in Islam, aren't simply sacred spaces devoted to worship, but importantly, they function as indispensable social institutions within Islamic society with diverse social functions attached to them. But what has been tragically happening for quite some time now is that Mosques are turning more and more exclusive, closing their doors, literally as well as symbolically to those who otherwise need these spaces the most. A halo of hollow piety and misplaced religiosity has turned spaces of inclusion into spaces of exclusion, thereby violating the very essence of Mosques and demeaning their role and importance in Muslim societies.

Quran described the Prophet as one who cleanses people's hearts of filth, removing the unwanted substances from their souls and teaching them the book (The Quran). This explicitly translates into the fact that the responsibility of the men of the pulpit (Maulanas) isn't only to dispense, like a machine, the subtleties of religion to people. They are expected and supposed to act as models as well as sculptures of moral sublimity and ethical perfection. But this is possible only when our preachers are ready to accept humans as humans with all their fallacies and shortcomings. It is very much antithetical to the spirit of Islam to engage in "moral profiling" and ignore those who do not fit into these profiles. The need is instead to open hearts for those who stand in need of support and guidance, those who want to turn to their creator, mend their ways and rebuild themselves but are not shown acceptance at the Mosques or by religious clerics. This has had a regressive impact

on how our youth engage with religion and in turn with society and ultimately themselves. The exclusion and rejection they endure stiffens them in their behavioural patterns and having been deprived of their right to mercy, participation and inclusion, they end up messing their lives, the lives of people around them and the society at large. This is not merely a hypothetical construct, but a real life issue which plays out in society now and then. It is not the prerogative of fallible humans to enumerate the criteria for inclusion/exclusion and then classify people into either of these classes. The realistic and only acceptable attitude for a preacher (Da'ee) is to leave open all

dynamism. But a crass misgiving characterising these movements was that like their predecessors, they paid little or no attention to gender inclusion and left out of the religious sentiments and issues of half of the population unaddressed. The fact was glossed over and forgotten that Islam rose to the occasion as an emancipatory and inclusive movement, including within the horizons of its messages all diversities of Cast, Creed, Gender, Geography and Ethnicity. But the passage of time blinded Muslims to these brighter of their religion and Muslim obsession with issues of little importance blinded them to the compassionate and ever embracing aspects of religion.

It is no impossibility that the religion which harbours inclusion, equality, social dynamism and the cultural compatibility will rise and reassert these liberating values again. But this path to liberating praxis is beset with ignorance of the fundamental and essential teachings of religion both on part of scholars and the youth

portals of mercy and all avenues of inclusion. The transformation that the Prophet ushered by embracing those who were otherwise apparently not eligible for the same initiated one of the greatest revolutions in human history. A historian has described the companions of the Prophet as "nursery of heroes", but when one looks at their pre-Islamic career, they appear to be no more than ordinary tribesmen, at perpetual war with one another. Thus Islam is an alchemy of transformation, transforming the baser humans into paragons of humanity. It is not intelligible to Islam to pre-classify people into pious and wicked and prefer former over latter in an attempt of social Reformation and moral upliftment. It is an eye-opener to those religious men of our times who behave otherwise and in so doing tamper the spirit and essence of religion and scripture.

The last century has seen the sprouting of various religious movements in Islam emphasising inclusion and participation of one and all in the marathon of salvation. In the wake of these movements, the Mosques turned more inclusive, participatory and liberating, extending themselves to socially marginalised, religiously oppressed and underprivileged. In this way, the Mosques to some extent restored their social functionalism and cultural

It is no impossibility that the religion which harbours inclusion, equality, social dynamism and the cultural compatibility will rise and reassert these liberating values again. But this path to liberating praxis is beset with ignorance of the fundamental and essential teachings of religion both on part of scholars and the youth. Our scholars, well versed in the traditional sciences as they are, are equally unaware of the challenges that modern world has thrown open at the religion. The young generation, raised up in modern academia as they are, are condescending about religion, despite their poorer understanding of the same. This bilateral ignorance has widened the gulf between the youth and the scholars, bringing them at loggerheads with one another. The way out to bridge this gap lies in revisiting the schemes - both of religious and secular education. The path to reconciliation and inclusion has to pass through the meadows of learning and understanding.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author is a freelancer, R&D Engineer and comparative studies scholar



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Impending Food Shortage

Scientists have recently predicted that by 2050 world population may cross the 10-billion mark and frighteningly enough the world will face severe shortages of food. They have also predicted that in the next 27 years the demand for food will have increased by 70 percent. In such a scary foreboding scenario, The Food Waste Index Report 2021 released by the

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in March last year draws much attention and it needs to be seriously looked into. The report has said that in 2019 around 931 million tonnes of food were wasted at the global level, of which 61 percent came from households.

Food waste has indeed become an issue of great public concern. Governments and other interna-

tional bodies must work in tandem to promote awareness on this critical issue and develop policies to reduce food loss and wastage. There must also be coordination among food supply chain actors - farmers, handlers, processors and traders in collaboration with the public and private sectors and the civil society to prevent food wastage. Educating people in a sustained manner on safe food

handling, proper food storage in households and understanding "best before" dates will be of some help in tackling the issue.

Discarding food is not sustainable for our earth and the environment.

Ranganathan Sivakumar
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The Last Mile, Lift Your Ramadan Slump

Binta Jallow

“
Now that we’re in the final week, I can confidently say I’ve dodged the mid- Ramadan slump. On paper, I’m doing so much less this year, but instead of taking abrupt, giant strides towards making myself the best Muslim I can be, I’m going to focus on the small baby steps I can do regularly

In the many years I’ve been lucky enough to spend fasting, I’ve had the same approach to Ramadan. I tend to set myself huge goals for the month ahead, sometimes without realising. It’s the month I love most and actively look forward to each year. A time to devote myself to my faith, build a stronger relationship with Allah, and gain mental clarity.

When the sacred month nears, my Instagram feed is filled with Ramadan content. In between the Ifar recipes and Eid fits are daily challenges and infographics on how to make the absolute most of every day. I save them all, grab a pen, and scribble my goals for the month.

Ramadan always starts off strong. I plan to read ten surahs of the Qu’ran every morning, and learn a new du’a every day. Not only will I listen to an Islamic podcast on my commute, I’ll pray Tahajjud every night, Taraweeh on weekends. I’ll learn Allah’s beautiful 99 names by heart, recite hadiths to understand their meaning, start a journal with my favourite stories about the Prophet Muhammed (SWT). I’ll find tons of Islamic books to devour every night, and study the tafseer of all my favourite surahs, starting with Al-Fatihah.

In a nutshell, I plan to be the Best Muslim Ever in my sight and thinking about it, my behaviour isn’t surprising.

We live in an age that glorifies never-ending self-improvement, where we chase productivity and encourage ourselves to do more — be better, always. Why not become my best self in Ramadan, the month where good deeds are multiplied by 70?

I glide through the first week, slipping into an easy rhythm, reading the Qu’ran whilst fasting feels like second nature, as does reciting hadiths and listen-



ing to Islamic podcasts.

But what comes next is unofficially known as the “Ramadan slump”, I have a steep drop in enthusiasm and find myself struggling to keep up with the massive goals I set. Suddenly they feel unrealistic and once one goal slips, everything tends to topple with it — fast.

One of the most difficult things is going through the final 10 days is hitting the Ramadan slump means I’m gradually doing less and less when I should be doing much more, especially as Laylatul Qadr nears. I’ve run into this brick wall every Ramadan over the past few years, and whilst I do manage to eventually get out of it, I’ve never managed to avoid it entirely.

This Ramadan, however, I decided to reframe my approach and it started when I found a hadith. Allah’s Messenger said:

“Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant even if it were little.”

To say it hit home is an understatement. It made me realise my Ramadan goals were a series of unrealistic checklists to complete, that just setting myself huge tasks wasn’t the right thing to do. Although I’d understood the importance of each one, my ultimate goal was to tick them all off, and when I couldn’t do that, I stopped.

I was setting myself up to fail by thinking of Ramadan as a sprint.

For the first time, this year’s Ramadan started a little differently — more slowly. Instead of scribbling a million and one things to do and achieve over the next 30 days, I focused on three key ones revolving around my prayers:

Reading the Qu’ran daily, and making the time to remember Allah whenever I can and wherever I am.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, “Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection.”

Because I have fewer goals than ever, my instinct tells me I’m doing something wrong.

Ramadan is such a sacred month, and no one is guaranteed to see the next one — surely, I should be aiming for more. It’s so easy to feel like you aren’t doing as much, or as well, as those around you. But being deliberately slow and precise with my goals feels disruptive.

My Deen, our deen has never been a competition or a race and Islam is never about rushing.

The best thing about having smaller goals is I’m much more likely to continue these habits out of Ramadan, past Eid, and into the year, simply because they’re so much more manageable. Being consistent is incred-

ibly valuable. Gradually, it creates ihsan.

Abu Dharr reported: The Prophet said, “Do not disdain a good deed, (no matter how small it may seem).

Now that we’re in the final week, I can confidently say I’ve dodged the mid- Ramadan slump. On paper, I’m doing so much less this year, but instead of taking abrupt, giant strides towards making myself the best Muslim I can be, I’m going to focus on the small baby steps I can do regularly. I’ve learnt that maintaining the consistency of a good deed is evidence of its sincerity. And for every tiny goal I keep going with, I maintain the love of Allah in my life.

— Amaliah

Did Covid Lockdowns Work?



Adam Kleczkowski

Since the UK first entered lockdown on March 23 2020, little in the pandemic has attracted so much attention and controversy as this decision to grind social and economic life to a halt. Was it the right thing to do?

Properly evaluating the effectiveness of any health-oriented treatment, be it a new medicine, vaccine or lockdown measure, involves comparing its introduction with a counterfactual situation where everything is the same except for what’s being tested. This is why medical trials have a control group, whose members are given a placebo and whose characteristics match the testing group as closely as possible.

Unfortunately, this isn’t possible for lockdowns. There are no directly equivalent parts of a country or the world that can act as true test and control groups, and so no possibility of a controlled trial. Instead, researchers must resort to other methods to try to measure lockdowns’ effects.

Mathematical models can be used to produce “what if” scenarios, where applying various different

Should the world face another new pandemic disease, there are three lessons to keep in mind. Firstly, applying protective measures as early and hard as possible consistently led to better outcomes. Less stringent interventions risked increasing deaths; more severe responses lowered fatalities. Plus, unless it’s possible to eliminate the virus in a region, measures will need to continue.

“

COVID control measures is simulated to estimate what would work best, essentially comparing the value of lockdown to other measures – or doing nothing at all. Such models are very useful and have been used throughout the pandemic.

However, they’ve also been heavily criticised for their pessimistic predictions about the impact of the virus. Their outputs depend on making assumptions and estimates, including about human behaviour, which is notoriously difficult to capture accurately.

An alternative is to use a data-driven method that doesn’t rely so strongly on the assumptions of mod-

els. For example, the “difference-in-difference” method compares outcomes from countries or regions that are similar in all respects except the implemented control measures. A common approach has been to compare data from US states that differed in the stringency, timing and extent of their control measures but otherwise share many characteristics.

But of course, this runs into our initial problem. While often similar, no two states are directly comparable. And for other countries, like the UK, its even more difficult to find good pairings for comparison.

Imperfect assessments, clear results

Despite these difficulties, a lot of researchers have worked to try to analyse the impact of lockdowns. While accepting that no method of assessment is perfect, most published studies have found evidence to support lockdown measures being effective. They also point out that different actions achieved different things in different countries.

Limiting gatherings, closing businesses with high exposure rates, and closing schools and universities effectively reduced the spread and limited deaths. These places are associated with increased transmission rates and superspreader events.

But perhaps surprisingly, stay-at-home orders appear to have had only a modest effect in slowing transmission. This may, though, be down to people already limiting their activities voluntarily before being told to do so. Closing airports somewhat limits the disease impact, but land borders much less.

The danger of delaying

So, were lockdowns appropriate strategy, or should governments in future rely purely on voluntary isolation? Or is the best response to do nothing?

In evaluating the 2020 lockdowns, we need to remember that the decisions were taken with high uncertainty of what the consequences could be. It is easy to criticise the scientists and politicians in hindsight, but under the precautionary principle, the strongest possible measures should have been applied given the unknowns that were being faced.

Despite substantial variability across countries, there’s little doubt that lockdowns successfully slowed COVID’s spread in spring 2020, reducing cases in the first wave. There’s enough evidence to show that countries and regions that quickly introduced substantial and multiple restrictions also had fewer cases and deaths. Compare New Zealand’s and the UK’s responses.

In both cases the introduction of lockdown regulations (first graph above) resulted in a rapid drop in mobility (second graph above). Reported cases peak soon after. Deaths in turn took another week or two to respond.

But New Zealand responded very quickly to its first reported case, with its lockdown introduced well before the first death in the country. Its resulting case numbers and deaths were low. In contrast, the UK delayed its lockdown response until almost two weeks after its first death.

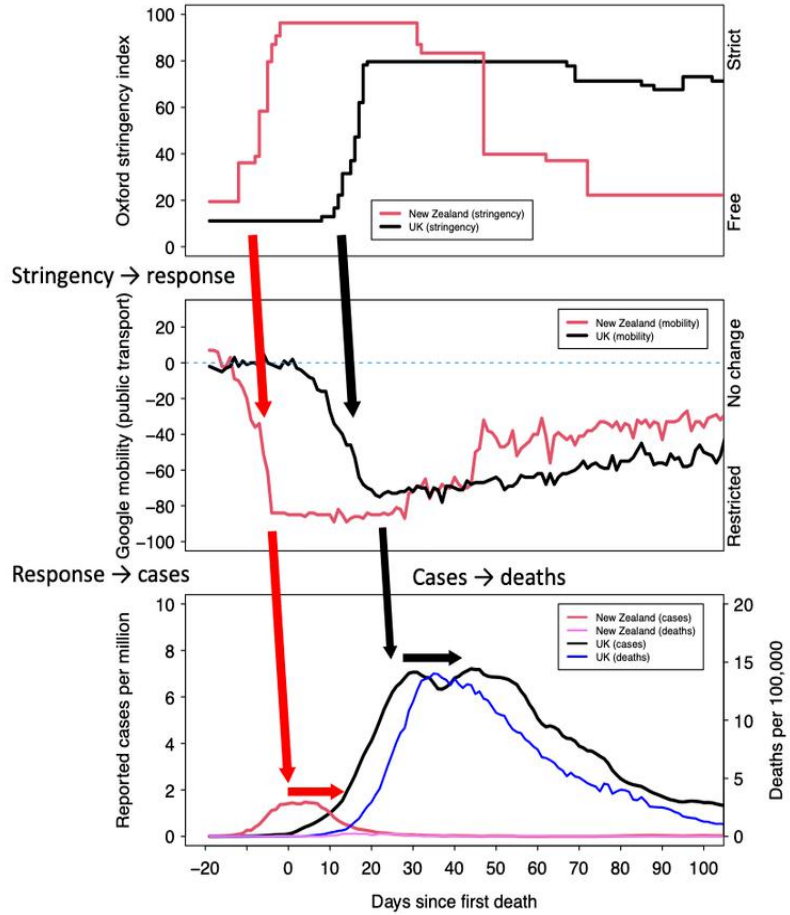
Although British people reduced their mobility before lockdown was officially introduced, the virus had ample time to spread. The fact that delaying lockdown had such a large impact is further proof of its power to control the spread of the virus.

Lessons for the future

Should the world face another new pandemic disease, there are three les-

combined, including voluntary responses – such as social distancing – and test and trace. There’s no single silver bullet. Some measures might need maintaining, even after, for example, introducing vaccines.

The 2020 lockdowns demonstrated that societies are willing and capable of supporting drastic disease-control measures if they see the need. But, full – and particularly repeated –



New Zealand locked down quicker and more forcefully in the spring of 2020 – resulting in fewer cases and deaths. The strength of lockdown restrictions is measured using the COVID response stringency index developed by the University of Oxford; people’s mobility is measured via anonymously collected data from mobile devices. Adam Kleczkowski

sons to keep in mind. Firstly, applying protective measures as early and hard as possible consistently led to better outcomes. Less stringent interventions risked increasing deaths; more severe responses lowered fatalities.

Plus, unless it’s possible to eliminate the virus in a region, measures will need to continue. This requires public acceptance and economic support, particularly in areas of high deprivation. And finally, for the greatest effect, different restrictions must be

lockdowns can be seen as a failure of other, more gradual public health policies. A lockdown should be seen as an efficient but also very blunt public health tool, to be used in necessity but as part of a wider strategy.

The author is a Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Strathclyde. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation

Extreme heat in store for Delhi, temp rises by 2-3 deg C in most parts

New Delhi: Amid a punishing heatwave building up in large parts of India, Delhi saw a jump of two to three degrees Celsius in the maximum temperature at most places on Wednesday.

The Safdarjung Observatory -- Delhi's base station -- recorded a maximum temperature of 41.5 degrees Celsius as against 40.8 degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

Pitampura (43.6 degrees Celsius) and Mungeshpur (44.1 degrees Celsius) reeled under a searing heatwave.

The weather stations at Najafgarh, Ridge, and Sports Complex recorded their maximum temperature at 43.7 degrees Celsius, 43.6 degrees Celsius, and 44.2 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The mercury at the Safdarjung Observatory is expected to breach the 43-degree mark on Thursday and touch 44 degrees Celsius by Friday, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The maximum temperature may even leap to 46 degrees Celsius in parts of Delhi, a Met department official said.

Delhi may also see a partly cloudy sky, light rain, and a dust storm with winds gusting up to 50 kmph on Friday and Sunday, which may provide a temporary respite.

The capital had recorded a maximum temperature of 43.2 degrees Celsius on April 21, 2017. The all-time high maximum temperature for the month was

45.6 degrees Celsius on April 29, 1941.

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

Delhi falls in the Core Heatwave Zone (CHZ) -- the most heatwave-prone areas in India -- along with Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal.

Northwest India has been recording higher than normal temperatures since March last week, with weather experts attributing it to the absence of periodic light rainfall and thunder showers, which typify this

time of the year, due to the lack of active western disturbances.

The region had got some respite last week owing to cloudy weather due to the influence of a western disturbance over Afghanistan. A yellow alert warning has been issued for a heatwave spell in the national capital starting April 28.

The IMD uses four colour codes for weather warnings -- green (no action needed), yellow (watch and stay updated), orange (be prepared) and red (take action).

The IMD said the heatwave could lead to "moderate" health concerns for vulnerable people -- infants, the elderly, people with chronic diseases -- in affected areas.

"Hence, people of these regions should avoid heat exposure, wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose, cotton clothes and cover the head by use of cloth, hat or umbrella etc," it said.

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

A severe heatwave is declared if the departure from normal temperature is more than 6.4 notches, according to the IMD.

Based on absolute recorded temperatures, a heatwave is declared when an area logs a maximum temperature of 45 degrees Celsius. A severe heatwave is declared if the temperature crosses the 47-degree mark.

Amid Row Over Loudspeakers, 5 Pune Mosques Say No To DJ Music During Upcoming Eid Festival

Agenceis

Pune: In the wake of a controversy over the use of loudspeakers at religious places, authorities of five mosques in Pune and some other senior Muslim community members here have decided to shun DJ music during the upcoming Eid celebration and utilise funds collected for it to help the poor and needy people.

They also appealed to youth from the community not to play loud DJ music during the Eid al-Fitr celebration on May 2.

Everyone knows the ill-effects of such loud DJ music, which is not good for sick people and

those with a weak heart, said Maulana Mohsin Raza, the imam of the Bhartiya Anjuman Qadiriya Mosque in Lohiya Nagar area here in Maharashtra.

"So, we formed a core committee of five mosques in the area and convened a meeting of their imams and functionaries along with other senior members of the community and decided not to have DJ music during the Eid celebration," he told PTI.

The funds usually collected to procure the DJ music system during the celebration will be used to provide aid to the needy and poor people in the area, he said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Residents

a resident of Ganderbal, said.

Meanwhile, leaders of opposition parties have been blaming the administration for failing to provide relief to the residents.

Former J-K chief minister and National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah said seeking electricity was the right of the people and that the situation in the Union Territory was contrary to the tall claims of the administration about development.

"It is our right to get electricity. They (the administration) made tall claims about development in J-K. Let them show where it is," Omar said here.

The NC leader said the power situation was no better in Jammu.

"I was in Jammu a few days ago and right before 'sehri' and 'iftar', the electricity was snapped. The situation is similar here (in the Kashmir valley)," he added.

Abdullah alleged that the power department looks for excuses to snap the electricity.

"When (the director of Meteorological Department) Sonam Lotus forecasts winds in the valley for the next day, the power department happily snaps the electricity right away. There are no winds, but there is no electricity still," he said.

The power scenario is not better even 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 iftar. This has created a lot of inconvenience, Mohammad Yusuf, a local, said.

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 Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) said load served during April has been around 900 to 1,100 MW against a demand of 1600 MW.

"This deficit has forced the corporation to go for unscheduled cuts," it said.

The early onset of summer in the rest part of the country has led to highest ever power demand. Besides, reduced thermal power generation coupled with sub-optimal generation of hydro power due to less rains has resulted in deficient power availability leading to unscheduled and prolonged power cuts, it added.

It said hydro power generation currently is around 50 per cent of the installed capacity and load supplied by the KPDCL is in the range of 900-1,100 MWs against the peak demand of 1,600 MW.

"Attempts have been made to fill the deficit gap through peaking up of hydro power plants to meet peak demand load at sehri and iftar times," it said.

KPDCL said the situation is going to be the same in coming days till availability improves nationally and hydroelectric generation picks up.

"Kashmir power discom is trying to cope up with this unprecedented situation by making all efforts to keep supply at critical times of sehri and iftar by rationalisation of allocation skewed in favour of domestic consumer base," the corporation said, asking consumers to tackle the situation by way of judicious use of electricity especially in peak hours.

Centre Allocates

of Northern Region Pool to Jammu & Kashmir. "The order in this regard will come into the effect from midnight and the UT is expected to receive the additional supply by tomorrow," an official spokesperson said Wednesday.

He said that the J&K's Power Development Department is also making dedicated efforts on all fronts to meet the rising demand for the power supply in the UT, exploring practical and viable solutions to address the needs of the end consumers.

According to the spokesperson, it was informed that, between 1st to 25th April, the Power Development Department allocated additional Rs.52 Crore to purchase power from the open market, also known as Energy Exchange, however, due to increased number of bidding, electricity worth only Rs.10.41 Crore could only be supplied to the Union Territory of J&K.

He said that owing to the early onset of summer and an unprecedented heatwave in the month of March and April, experienced for the first time in the last 122 years and 50 years respectively, the Power Development Department took the decision to place maximum bid at the energy exchange to meet the shortfall amidst the surging power demand. Eventually, the

additional allocation was made in March to ensure maximum power supply.

"The Power Development Department is also ensuring optimal output from available power sources. However, it is pertinent to mention that thermal plants account for 70% of the country's power generation capacity. Thermal and Hydropower contribute 50%-50% to meeting the demand of the Union Territory of J&K. Hydropower plants operate at reduced capacity during the month of March and April due to the accumulation of snow which starts melting only in the month of May," the spokesperson said.

In April 2021, he said, the power demand for Jammu division was 830 MW per day. The demand has increased to 900 MW this year. He said that the Power Development Department is using all its resources including purchases from the Energy Exchange to ensure 770 MW, which is being supplied to the people of Jammu division.

"Between, 1st to 26th April of this year, only 6.17% less power units have been supplied in comparison to the same period in 2021. The PDD officials are bidding at the Energy Exchange on an hourly basis to ensure that even this gap is bridged," he added.

In the light of the increasing power demand in Jammu and Kashmir Division, the spokesperson said that Kumar is reviewing the position of power availability on an hourly basis.

He said that a meeting was also held earlier today in which senior officials of PDD and Engineers were present. It was noted that as compared to April 2021, energy consumption this year for the same period has increased.

"After detailed deliberations in the meeting, Nitishwar Kumar directed the deployment of middle management level officers at grid stations to monitor the power schedule. It was advised that the area-wise curtailment schedule be communicated to the public using all available platforms," the spokesperson added.

Cabinet Approves

units of electricity in a 90 per cent dependable year. It will be commissioned in 54 months. It will provide direct and indirect employment to about 2,700 persons.

The project will come up on river Chenab in the Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir. It will be implemented by Chenab Valley Power Projects Ltd.

Chenab Valley Power Projects Ltd is a Joint Venture Company between NHPC (51 per cent) and JKSPDC (49 per cent), formed at the initiative of the Jammu & Kashmir government and the Centre to harness the vast hydro potential of river Chenab. The company was incorporated on June 13, 2011.

The company has been entrusted with the construction of hydropower projects on a build, own, operate and maintain (BOOM) basis with an aggregate installed capacity of 3,094 MW.

JSW To Set Up

will bring the world-class healthcare infrastructure and facilities to the region, besides providing employment opportunities to the medical and pharma professionals, local pharmacists and vendors, SAC (State Administrative Council) had said.

Jammu and Kashmir is set to become the top investment destination in the country as it races up to various infrastructure projects and is reaching out to foreign and domestic investors through several forums and industrial summits, the officials said.

Investors from foreign countries, particularly the Middle East, are keen to invest in J&K, which Jammu and Kashmir has not received in the last 75 years, they added.

Before arriving in Palli village in Samba to participate in the National Panchayati Raj Day celebrations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met a large delegation from UAE.

The Prime Minister said that a new story of development is being written and many private investors are interested in Jammu and Kashmir.

"For seven decades of independence, private investment of only Rs 17 thousand crore could be made in Jammu and Kashmir. But, this investment is now reaching around Rs 38,000 crore," he said.

The Jammu & Kashmir administration has worked hard to convince Dubai-based investors to explore investment possibilities in the Union Territory.

Militant Killed,

exchange of gunfire, the police official said a soldier received minor injury. The injured army man, he said, was removed to a hospital where his condition is stated to be stable.

Following the outbreak of the encounter, the forces have sealed all the entry and exit points leading to the village, the police official said. He said the cordon has been further tightened to ensure the holed-up militants don't escape from the village under the cover of darkness.

A local news agency GNS quoted an unnamed

police officer as claiming that one militant has been killed in the encounter as his body is visibly lying near the encounter site. However identity is yet to be ascertained as gunfight is in progress in the area.

Earlier, Kashmir Zone Police Tweeted, "2-3 militants including foreign militant of JeM outfit trapped inside cordon. Ops was halted for evacuation of civilians. 01 soldier injured. Precautions being taken to avoid collateral damage. Trapped militants will be neutralised at the earliest".

BSF Launches

a truck driver and his helper, who had transported the Pashtu-speaking militants from the Sapwal border in Samba district to Jammu in the middle of the night a day before the encounter.

According to officials, one of the arrested accused had also disclosed that he had also ferried a group of four militants from the IB to Kashmir earlier this year, sending alarm bells ringing in the security establishments.

A senior BSF officer said no breaches in the border fence were noticed during the stepped up operations which also saw the troops looking for underground cross-border tunnels all along the IB over the past five days.

The BSF is manning about 192 km of IB and Line of Control (LoC) alongside the Army and is keeping a tight vigil to scuttle any attempt of infiltration of militants, smuggling of weapons and narcotics and drone activity from across the border, he said.

Anti-tunnel drives along the IB are a regular feature to frustrate the nefarious designs of the enemy nation. The drive is presently underway within 400 meters of the border fence all along the IB in Jammu sector, the officer said, requesting anonymity.

Last year, the force detected two tunnels across the international border in Kathua district, taking the total number of such structures unearthed by the force in the past decade in Jammu sector to 10.

The BSF is keeping a tight vigil on border in view of the continuous attempts by enemy forces and anti-national elements to push militants and smuggle weapons and narcotics. The threat posed by the use of drones by Pakistan is also being taken care of, the officer said.

Interacting with media persons visiting the International Border amid the ongoing operation, another BSF officer said they are checking the whole area manually and also using sophisticated gadgets to eliminate any threat.

Wherever we have a doubt, the area is being checked minutely and a round-the-clock vigil is maintained. The BSF is also patrolling the area with special equipment which detect even the slightest movement of small animals, he said.

With the mercury in Jammu hovering around 40 degrees Celsius for the past few days, the officer said, it is a routine for us to perform our duties in scorching heat, severe cold conditions and rainy season. We are trained for that and we do it routinely to keep our nation and the countrymen safe.

Admitting that the search and vigil along the IB have been intensified after the recent encounter in Jammu, another jawan said, They always perform their duties with full responsibility. Over the past few days, there has been an increase in duty hours due to intensified operations.

The BSF personnel were seen patrolling the area along the border fence and also using iron rods to check wild grass and bushes for the possible underground tunnel.

The anti-tunnel drive is going on up to 400 meters from the border fence. The tunnels have been dug in the past from the Pakistan side to push militants. We are alive to the threat and the anti-tunnelling operation is part of our duty, he said.

He said they are making every effort to keep the borders safe and ensure no infiltration takes place. If the borders are safe, our countrymen are safe as well.

Besides detecting two tunnels, the BSF killed five infiltrators, detained three others and recovered a huge cache of weapons, narcotics and fake currency notes last year.

Army-Run School

school management, including the principal, did not materialise.

Former J&K chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti strongly condemned diktat.

"I condemn this letter issuing diktats on hijab. J&K may be ruled by BJP but it's certainly not like any other state where they bulldoze the houses of minorities & not allow them the freedom to dress as they want. Our girls will not give up their right to choose," Mehbooba tweeted.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said it was an attempt to gain political mileage.

"In this country, everyone has the freedom to follow his or her religion. It is enshrined in our constitution that we are a secular country which means all religions are equal. I don't

think any government should interfere in this.

This is playing with such a danger that can piss problems for the country. We would like that such decisions should not be taken. The people of all faiths should be free to follow their own religion," the former CM said.

"We hope that the effort to bring Karnataka into Jammu and Kashmir is stopped forthwith," he added.

Abdullah said it was wrong on part of the school to issue such a diktat.

"The reason given is just not right. This school did not start yesterday. These teachers (who are wearing hijab) must have been interacting with the students earlier also. What changed overnight?" he asked.

Mughal Road

measure, he said, adding no fresh vehicle will be allowed on the road after 3 pm.

However, he said, the nomadic population moving along with their cattle from the higher reaches in search of greener pastures in Kashmir will be allowed uninterrupted.

The traffic department has deployed adequate number of personnel at Behramgala, Buziaz and Poshana to facilitate smooth movement of the vehicles, the official said.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Raghav Langer ordered the reopening of the road, which was cleared of snow by the Mechanical Engineering Department after a hectic road clearance operation, the officials said.

The department had pressed its men and machines to clear the 84-km stretch from Buziaz in Poonch to Shopian and managed to clear the road about two weeks ago but a decision for its reopening was delayed to ensure that the stretch is safe for the commuters.

The commuters have been asked to follow the traffic advisories issued by the traffic police authorities from time to time for smooth movement and regulation of heavy and light motor vehicles.

There has been a persistent demand from the locals for the early reopening of the Mughal road, an alternate road link between Kashmir and Jammu, which usually remains closed for several months during the winter.

The road was closed for vehicular traffic on December 23 last year after the high-altitude areas including Peer Ki Gali along the stretch received heavy snowfall.

The 270-km Jammu-Srinagar highway is the only all-weather road connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country, while Anantnag in south Kashmir and Kishtwar in the Jammu region is connected through Sinthan top and the road was briefly opened last week.

Calling Kashmir

civilians in an explosion at the encounter site in Larnoo village in October 2018.

Butt had also expressed outrage on social media platforms at other incidents of violence, which, he argued, was within his right to free speech.

"By making these comments, Butt was supporting the claim that Jammu and Kashmir is not a part of India," the court said

Omar Welcomes

Asked about the delimitation commission's report, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said his party has told the panel that its very existence is illegal.

"We have put before the delimitation commission that its existence itself is illegal. We have challenged the reorganisation act, which means that the delimitation commission has also been challenged.

"That is why we want fast-tracked hearings and a judgment by the court," he said.

Abdullah said the NC had put forward various suggestions before the commission, but those were ignored.

"Whatever happened has happened. Let the final report come, then only we will have a detailed chat with you on this," he said.

On reports about a special school in Baramulla asking its teachers not to wear hijab, the former Union minister said it was wrong on the school's part.

"Everyone has the freedom to follow his or her religion in this country. It is enshrined in our Constitution that we are a secular country, which means all religions are equal. I do not think any government should interfere in this.

"This is playing with such a danger that can pose problems for the country. We would like that such decisions should not be taken. People of all faiths should be free to follow their religion," Abdullah said.

"We hope that the effort to bring Karnataka into Jammu and Kashmir will be stopped forthwith," he added, referring to a recent controversy in the southern state over students wearing hijab in educational institutions.

Abdullah said the reason given by the Baramulla school for the diktat was not right.

"The reason given is just not right. This

school did not start yesterday. These teachers (who wear hijab) must have been interacting with the students earlier also. What changed overnight?" he asked.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister described it as an attempt to create an atmosphere for politics.

"We are told not to use loudspeakers for azaan. Why? We do not tell you that you should not use loudspeakers at temples. You are telling us halal meat should not be sold. Why? We are not forcing you to eat. Show me where has a Muslim forced a non-Muslim to eat halal.

"It is just that you have a problem with our way of life. Why?" he asked.

Abdullah said Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to a secular nation.

"This was not the India we had acceded to. We had acceded to a secular India where all religions were equal.

"We were not told that one religion will be treated as superior to others. Had we been told this, may be our decision would have been different," he said.

Asked if the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) will contest the election as an alliance, Abdullah said it was for the leaders involved to decide.

"I am not an office-bearer of the PAGD. But I can give my personal opinion.... I would like that the PAGD contests the election as an alliance. We should not allow the BJP and its B team and C team to divide votes. This will be my suggestion, but the final decision has to be taken by the PAGD," he added.

Govt Transfers

also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Padder in addition to his own duties," reads the order.

Varunjeet Charak, JKAS, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Padder, Kishtwar, holding additional charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Padder, has been transferred and posted as Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Kishtwar.

Mushtaq Ahmad Chowdhary, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Deputy District Election Officer, Jammu against an available vacancy.

Bilal Mukhtar Dar, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Deputy Director, Information (PR), Srinagar against an available vacancy.

Manu Hansa, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Deputy Secretary to the Government, School Education Department.

Nasir Mehmood Khan, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Assistant Commissioner (Nazool), Srinagar, relieving Raeis Ahmad Bhat, JKAS, Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Srinagar of the additional charge of the post.

"He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Srinagar, relieving Javid Naseem Masoodi, JKAS, Sub Registrar, Srinagar (East) of the additional charge of the post."

Chand Singh, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Deputy Secretary to the Government, Transport Department.

Jaffar Hussain Sheikh, JKAS, awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department has been posted as Deputy Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department.

Lekh Raj, JKAS, Tehsildar Kashtigarh, has been transferred and posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Assar, Doda. "He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Assar, Doda in addition to his own duties."

J&K Logs Eight

while the number of recoveries has reached 4,49,212, officials said.

The COVID-19 death toll stands at 4,751 as no fresh fatality was reported in the last 24 hours.

There are 51 confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) in Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

2 Civilians Injured

security guard accidentally went off injuring two customers.

The injured civilians, whose identity could not be ascertained, were removed to the nearby hospital for treatment.

3 Gamblers Held

gamblers from the spot, a police spokesperson said. Besides playing cards, he said, an amount of Rs 20,500 was also seized from the accused.

"They have been shifted to the police station where they remain in custody. Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in Police Station Baramulla and investigation set in motion," the spokesperson said.

Dr. Farooq Ahmad Lone Is Interim Chairman JKPS

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Dr. Farooq Ahmad Lone, IAS (Rtd), Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, was on Wednesday appointed interim Chairman of the Commission till further orders.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 93 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 and S.O. 3937 (E) dated 31st October, 2019, read with Order issued in terms of sub-clause (i) of clause (c) of

the Proclamation issued by the President dated 31st October, 2019 and all other provisions enabling in this behalf, the Lieutenant Governor of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is pleased to direct that Dr. Farooq Ahmad Lone, IAS (Rtd), Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, shall perform the duties of the Chairman, as an interim arrangement, till further orders," reads a government order.

"This notification shall take effect from 28.04.2022," it added.

Demolition Drive Held At Heerpora, Shopian



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The District Administration Shopian carried out a massive anti-encroachment drive at Heerpora Shopian and demolished several illegal structures raised over Kahcharai land, officials said Wednesday.

The drive was held under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmed Simnani and ASP, Tehsildar Shopian, Enforcement team and police accompanied him, an official spokesperson said.

During the drive held on

Tuesday, he said, the team demolished unlawful structures and other encroachments on Kahcharai land which led to the retrieval of many kanals of land from encroachers.

On the occasion, ADC said that such drives shall continue in future also and no such unlawful activity will be allowed and appealed to people against the practice of encroaching state and common lands.

He also instructed field functionaries to report encroachments promptly to the Revenue authorities so that evil practice is controlled at the very early stage.

Driver Dies After Avalanche Hits His Vehicle

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A driver was killed on Wednesday after his vehicle was hit by a snow avalanche at Shaitan Nallah along the Srinagar-Jammu highway.

Sajjad Ahmed Bangroo of Batmaloo Srinagar was driving his Tata mobile vehicle

(JK01Q-5635) along the mountainous highway when an avalanche hit his vehicle and swept it away in a gorge near Shaitan Nallah, reports said.

Bangroo, who was critically injured in the incident, was removed to the Army medical facility Gumri, where doctors declared him dead—(KNO)

Hajj 2022

GoI Moots Proposal, Urges Saudi To Accommodate Aspirants Above 65 Years

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Government of India has mooted a proposal that has been forwarded to the Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia suggesting to consider the Hajj aspirants who have attained the age of 65 years.

The suggestions came to fore in a meeting of Central Hajj Committee of India held in Mumbai. Sources privy to the meeting told a local news agency KNO that in the meeting, members suggested that in year 2020, some Hajj aspirants who had applied for Hajj died and others couldn't take off the journey as pandemic scuttled the Hajj for 2020 and 2021.

"We deliberated on the issue threadbare and suggestions came to fore that the Hajj aspirants who have attained the age of 65 years should be considered for the Hajj 2022," member of the Central Hajj Committee of India, Er Aijaz Hussain said, over

phone from Mumbai.

He said that over 55000 people will perform Hajj in year 2022 from various parts of India and from J&K 5196 Hajj aspirants will perform the sacred journey. "We will see if Saudi government agrees to accommodate the people having attained the age of 65 years," Er Aijaz said. From J&K alone, some 10,000 applications were received by the Hajj committee. There will be draws now to select the aspirants, which is expected in a few days from now.

Pertinently, Hajj Ministry of India recently announced a Hajj quota for countries. This year, one million people will perform Hajj. "We are hopeful that the Saudi government will accommodate the Hajj aspirants having attained the age of 65 years," he said.

Interestingly, the Saudi government recently announced that Hajj aspirants up to the age of 64 years are entitled for Hajj 2022.

National Education Policy-2020

KU To Issue Advance Date-Sheets For UG Exams

'Examination Process To Be Streamlined, Time Bound'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a major step towards streamlining the academic and examination calendar and bringing the COVID ravaged academic system back on track, the University of Kashmir, has decided to issue advance date-sheets henceforth for various undergraduate programmes being offered at the University's affiliated colleges.

This new initiative has been conceived to bring the examination calendar back on track in the minimum possible time, and ensure timely completion of UG programmes and consequent award of degrees to the students without any delays.

The Controller of Examinations, University of Kashmir issued circular instructions to this effect. The advance prepa-

ration of the calendar would enable the holding the respective examinations within the time frames prescribed and timely completion of various courses. It may be recalled that the delay in holding examinations in the past often led to courses being stretched beyond the prescribed timelines leading to loss of valuable academic time.

The present move comes days after the government decided to fully implement the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 from the current academic session and shift to a uniform academic calendar which will be synchronised with the national academic calendar.

The Higher Education Department (HED) has already constituted a committee comprising Director Colleges, Dean

Academic Affairs (DAA) of Jammu University, Kashmir University and Cluster University of Srinagar and Jammu to prepare a uniform calendar for J&K. The recommendations of the committee are expected this week.

The new academic calendar would ensure that no student is at disadvantage and is able to apply to any college across the country or overseas for graduate and post graduate studies seamlessly.

It may also be recalled that the University Grants Commission (UGC) has already issued draft guidelines for introduction of the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) in accordance with NEP 2020 guidelines from the current academic session onwards. The final guidelines are expected within 2 weeks.

Terminated NHM Workers Protest In Jammu, Several Detained

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Several workers engaged under the National Health Mission (NHM) were detained here on Wednesday after they staged a protest against their termination and demanded the continuation of their services, officials said.

The police acted against the health workers shortly after they staged a sit-in in front of the statue of Maharaja Hari Singh near Tawi bridge in the heart of the city, the officials said.

They said several workers, both men and women, were detained and whisked away in a police bus.



The health workers have threatened to intensify their agitation in support of the demand for revocation of their termination orders issued early this month.

Various political and social groups have extended their support to the health workers and termed their demand as genuine while urging the Lieutenant Gov-

ernor administration to ensure the continuation of their services in view of their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The protesters said the administration is exercising a use and throw policy with them.

They said on the intervention of the Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, they were given a six months extension last year with a promise to give them priority in regular services.

The extended period ended on April 7 but no decision has yet been taken by the authorities on the continuation of our services or providing jobs to us through recruitment board, a protester said.

AMARNATH YATRA

Over 20,000 Devotees Register Through J&K Bank Counters

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Over 20,000 devotees have registered for the annual Amarnath Yatra through J and K Bank counters in less than two weeks since the registration began, indicating a growing response to the pilgrimage to the south Kashmir cave shrine, an official said on Wednesday.

The yatra, which will take place from June 30 to August 11, is being held after a gap of two years.

J-K Bank has registered 20,599 devotees from across the country in just 13 working days since registrations opened on April 11, MD and CEO, J-K Bank, Baldev Prakash said.

This is indicative of a growing re-

sponse to the yatra, he said.

Since the yatra is resuming two years after the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect good spike this year in the number of pilgrims visiting the Shri Amarnathji Cave. I am happy to see that we are facilitating their easy and smooth registration through dedicated counters set up for their assistance at our designated business units across the country," Prakash said.

The bank has put in place two special counters, four ATMs and two micro-ATMs along the yatra route to provide basic banking facilities to the pilgrims during the pilgrimage, he said.

The bank has 90 designated business units for registration which will remain open till August 3, he said.

Army Brings Under Control Major Forest Fire In Udhampur

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A major widespread forest fire, which was posing a grave threat to a mountainous hamlet, was brought under control by the timely action of the Army thereby saving a major tragedy in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, officials said.

A fire broke out in the forest area of Charrat panchayat on Tuesday night and was rapidly approaching Bainth village, they said.

On the request of the civil administration, the Udhampur Military Garrison rushed fire tenders and

firefighters of Defence Fire Services (DFS), along with a quick action team, and brought the blaze under control, a defence spokesman of the Northern Command said.

"The fire is now under control. A close liaison and coordination between the civil administration and the military, complemented by undaunted and valiant efforts of the troops on the ground, averted a major disaster for the villagers," he said.

The Northern Command is always committed to the wellbeing of awam' (people) of Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesman said.

Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani: From Opaqueness To Transparency

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Correctly maintained up-to-date land records are basic tools of convenience, clarity and ownership with wider socio-economic ramifications, an official spokesperson said Wednesday.

He said that up-to-date land records not only help in formulation of policies, but also reduce land related litigations thereby maintaining the calm in social fabric.

"Post 5th August 2019, Jammu & Kashmir has embarked on an unprecedented developmental trajectory wherein transformational initiatives in all sectors have been launched. Transparency in maintenance and upkeep of Land records was an area which required an urgent intervention. "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" (AZAN) is a landmark intervention in this direction," he said.

Earlier, the spokesperson said there was no mechanism available for citizens to view or monitor the status of their revenue records online.

"They had to move from pillar-to-post for obtaining even a copy of land records (Jamabandi or Khasra Girdwari). The opacity in the system encouraged and bred favouritism, redtapism and corruption putting citizens at the mercy of the system and the scenario warranted an immediate intervention which could usher in transparency and accountability and this yearning gave birth to "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" (AZAN)," he said.

"Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" (AZAN)

Land Records Information System was launched on October 22, 2021 by Lt Governor Shri Manoj Sinha. Under this system, the Public users can now search and view copies of the Scanned data online on CIS Portal- <http://landrecords.jk.gov.in/>. In the words of Lt Governor, the initiative will facilitate easy online access to the Land Records System, thereby re-

ducing manipulation of the Land Records and improving the efficiency of Revenue offices substantially.

This initiative is a part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP). The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) was formally launched in the UT in April-2016 for improving online accessibility to the Land Records System and stopping manipulation of the Land Records thereby making quality of services in Sub Registrar offices/ Tehsils more efficient and transparent. The programme aims to modernize management of land records, enhance transparency in the land records maintenance system, thus reducing scope of land/property disputes, and facilitate conclusive titles to immovable properties in the country.

The major components of the programme include computerization and digitization of land records, Survey/resurvey and updation of all survey and settlement records, Integration of property registration with land records and cadastral maps for enhancing authenticity and security of data, bringing utmost transparency in the system, Capacity building, and development of Land Records Information System.

As part of the program implementation in UT, 7.70 Crore pages of Revenue record and 55216 Musavi (maps) have been scanned, besides 3895 Ground Control Points have been established, and Web-based Enterprise Geo-Information System (GIS) has been developed.

This mammoth task was accomplished in a systematic manner wherein, as per the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) guidelines, Department of Revenue, Government of J&K created a Project Management Unit (PMU) under the guidance of Financial Commissioner, Revenue, J&K.

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