

# KASHMIR OBSERVER<sup>TM</sup>

Thursday 19 May 2022 | 17 Shawwal | 1443 Hijri | Srinagar | Vol:25 | Issue: 113 | Pages:08 | Price: ₹ 3

www.kashmirobserver.net • twitter.com / kashmirobserver • facebook.com/kashmirobserver • Postal Regn: L/159/KO/SK/2014-2016



P3 CITY

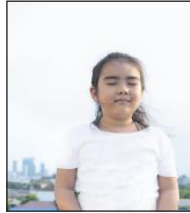
## TRAFFIC POLICE HQ PARTIALLY DAMAGED IN FIRE MISHAP

Traffic police headquarters and police station Kothibagh was partially damaged in a fire incident in Srinagar on Wednesday. An official said a massive fire broke out on the top floor of the

THINK

## HOW FOUR DEEP BREATHS CAN HELP KIDS CALM DOWN

It's one of the first things parents and teachers tell a child who gets upset: "Take a deep breath." But research into the effect of deep breathing on the body's stress response has overwhelmingly ignored young children—and studies done with adults



P7 STATE

## GOVT CLAIMS CONTRARY TO GROUND REALITIES: OMAR

National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the claims of the government with regards to development and employment generation is contrary to



It is difficult to free people from the chains they revere

- Voltaire

## NEWS DIGEST

### Six More Test Corona Positive In J&K

Srinagar: Four more people tested positive for Coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday while no fresh fatality due to the virus was reported from the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. According to officials, four new cases of **More on P6**

### Rockslide Blocks Srinagar-Leh Highway

Srinagar: The strategic Srinagar-Leh Highway was blocked on Wednesday due to a massive rockslide near Rezan area in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. Six families had a close shave due to the occurrence of the rock slide, a local news agency KNT **More on P6**

### Gujarati Tourist Dies In Srinagar Hospital

Srinagar: A tourist from India's Western State of Gujarat died after developing health issues in a Srinagar hospital, reports said Wednesday. 62-year-old Rashid Mansuri, a resident of Gujarat, experienced some health issues at a hotel in Tangmarg, reports said. He was taken to hospital, however, doctors **More on P6**

### 2 Held With Cannabis, Rs 4.49L Cash

Jammu: The police here have arrested two people, including a woman, and recovered 4 kgs cannabis and Rs 4,49,000 in cash from them, officials said on Wednesday. The two suspects were rounded up by a police team which was on a routine checking duty at Rajeev Nagar-Narwal area, they said. **More on P6**

Do You Get Your Copy of  
**KASHMIR OBSERVER**  
Regularly?



**If Not**

Contact Circulation Incharge:  
**9797818919**

## CHADOORA KILLING FALLOUT

# KP Employees To Be Posted In 'Less Vulnerable' Areas

Kin Of Civilians Killed In Shopian 'Cross-firing' To Get All Benefits, Says Div Com

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** The divisional administration in Kashmir directed all the heads of departments on Wednesday to ensure that the Kashmiri Pandit employees serving in the Kashmir valley are posted only in less vulnerable areas such as towns and district headquarters to ensure their safety and security.

"We had a meeting with all heads of departments and chief engineers. I have told them to ensure that the Kashmiri Pandit employees are posted in less vulnerable areas like towns and district headquarters," Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir P K Pole told reporters here.

The move comes in the wake of the killing of a Kashmiri Pandit employee, Rahul



KO Photo / Abid Bhat

Bhat, inside his office in the Chadoora area of Budgam district by militants on May 12.

Kashmiri Pandit employees, who were employed under the prime minister's employment package for migrants, have been protesting for six days

now, demanding transfers to safer places like Jammu.

Pole evaded a direct reply when asked if the government is willing to consider the demands of the protesting employees such as shifting them to Jammu. **More on P6**

## KP Employees' Protest Enters 7th Day

## Army Commander Reviews LOC Situation

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi on Wednesday visited forward areas in twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch to review the security situation and operational preparedness in the region, officials said.

Lt Gen Dwivedi, accompanied by 16th Corps Commander Lt Gen Manjinder Singh, visited the forward areas in Rajouri and Poonch today, Jammu-based PRO (Defence) said.

He reviewed the operational preparedness and the prevailing security situation in the region, the PRO said.

The Indian Army's Northern Command chief was briefed in detail on the actions being taken to maintain a robust posture to thwart the nefarious designs of anti-national elements.

He complimented all ranks for their untiring efforts and reiterated the continued need to remain vigilant and alert while operating in the area, the PRO said.

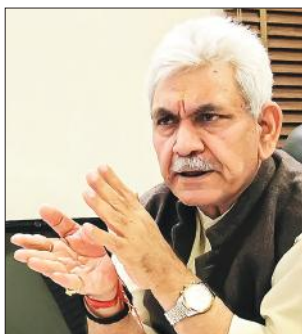
## LG Vows To Punish Those Behind Wine Shop Attack

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** The killing of a wine shop employee on Tuesday in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir has widely been condemned, with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha vowing to punish the perpetrators of the attack.

A burqa-clad militant dropped a grenade inside the newly opened wine shop at Dewan Bagh in Baramulla town on Tuesday night, resulting in injuries to four employees of the liquor vendor. One of them, Ranjit Singh, later succumbed to injuries.

"I strongly condemn the terror attack at Dewan Bagh, Baramulla. My deepest and heartfelt condolences to the family of Ranjit Singh. I pray for the speedy recovery of injured. Perpetrators of this heinous terror attack shall be punished, Sinha tweeted on



Tuesday night," the office of LG Tweeted

The PDP also condoled the loss of life in the attack.

Our condolences go out to the family of Ranjit Singh who lost his life in the grenade attack at Baramulla. Thoughts and prayers are with those injured and we wish them a speedy recovery, a spokesman of the PDP tweeted.

Peoples Conference spokesman Adnan **More on P6**

## Grenade Attack Victim Cremated In Rajouri

Jammu: Amid protests, Ranjit Singh, who was killed in a grenade attack on a liquor shop in Kashmir's Baramulla district, was cremated on Wednesday in his native place in Rajouri. **More on P6**

## Forest Fire Sparks Landmine Blasts In Poonch

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** A forest fire triggered several landmine explosions along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Wednesday.

The fire that started in a forest across the LoC on Monday spread to the Indian side in the Mendhar sector, they said.

The fire triggered the explosion of nearly half a dozen landmines that were part of the anti-infiltration obstacle system, officials said.

"The forest fire has been raging for the past three days. We along with the Army are dousing the fire.

"The fire was brought under control but this morning it started in Daramshal block and spread fast due to powerful winds", Forester Kanar Hussain Shah said.

He added that the blaze was later brought under control with the help of the Army as it reached near the border hamlet, he said.

In Rajouri district, another huge fire broke out in the Sunderbandi **More on P6**

## LAC STALEMATE

# China Building New Bridge Near Ladakh Lake: Report



Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** China is constructing a second bridge in an area held by it around the strategically key Pangong Tso lake in eastern Ladakh and it could help the Chinese military to quickly mobilise its troops in the region, according to satellite imagery and people familiar with the development on Wednesday.

The bridge is being built amid the lingering stand-off between the Indian and Chinese militaries at several friction points in eastern Ladakh for over two years.

There is no official reaction or comment by the Indian defence establishment on the new construction.

China has been focusing on strengthening its military infrastructure after Indian troops captured several strategic peaks on the southern bank of the Pangong lake in August 2020 after the Chinese PLA attempted to intimidate them in the area.

India too has been constructing bridges, roads and tunnels in the border regions as part of overall efforts to enhance military preparedness.

It is learnt that China has recently completed the construction of the first bridge in the area.

The people cited above said the new bridge is being built in an area that is over 20 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Damien Symon, a geospatial intelligence researcher, who keeps track of Chinese activities along the LAC, posted satellite images of the new construction on Twitter.

Symon, who uses the handle @detresfa, said a "larger bridge" is being developed parallel to the first one, adding the likely aim of the construction is to "support larger/heavier movement" (of the military) over the lake.

The satellite image posted by Symon noted that the bridge is being built from both sides simultaneously.

The bridge is likely to cut the distance **More on P6**

## CBI Files Case In Multi-Crore Scam At J&K Grameen Bank



Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The anti-corruption branch of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Srinagar has registered a case over the alleged embezzlement of public money at J&K Grameen Bank, Mirgund branch.

An official said that Ishtiyak Ahmad Parray, then the branch

head of the bank had sanctioned number of car loans worth crores in favour of non-existing borrowers on the basis of fake vehicle registration documents in league with other private parties. He further said these loans were sanctioned between 2014 to 2018.

While confirming the registration of FIR, official said that subsequent **More on P6**

## HCI Worried Over Raids, Fines On Hotels In J&K

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** Hotel Association of India on Wednesday said it has raised its "deep concern" with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha over raids and imposition of fines and alleged threat of legal action on member hotels in Jammu and Kashmir.

In its representation, the association (HAI) pointed out that these impromptu actions by the administration were motivated by complaints of exorbitant prices and service deficiencies from tourists, it stated.

The association said it

supports the government's role in curbing unfair business practices but recommends that it be process driven.

"The hospitality industry is well-recognised for its significant contribution to employment creation and promotion of inclusive growth. The government could have followed the path of consultation on their concerns instead," the HAI argued.

The HAI emphasised that its member hotels in J&K are well established, reputed, have invested heavily and have been engaging with local communities in taking **More on P6**

## Couples Prefer Sons Over Daughters In J&K: Survey

Agencies

**Srinagar:** More than half of the population considers two or fewer children to be the ideal size of the family in J&K, according to the National Health and Family Survey (NHFS).

The survey said that there is strong preference for sons in J&K and just seven percent of couples prefer more daughters than sons.

"Fifty-four percent of currently married women and forty-four percent of men in the 15-49 group want no more children, are already sterilized, or have a spouse who is sterilized," it adds. "Among those who want another child, 42 percent of women and 46 percent of men would like to wait at least two years before the next birth. Almost three-fifths



of the women (59%) and half of the men (49%) consider the ideal family size to be two or fewer children."

In Jammu & Kashmir, according to the survey, there is

a strong preference for sons as 23 percent women and 25 percent men want more sons than daughters, but only 7 percent of women and men want more daughters than sons.

"However, over four-fifths of women (84-87%) and men (87-89%) would like to have at least one son and at least one daughter," it added. "Women desire for more children is strongly affected by their current number of sons. For example, among women with two children, about 65 percent with 1 son want no more children, compared with 38 percent with two daughters who want no more children," it said.

The proportion of currently married women and men with two children who want no more children irrespective of their number of sons has been decreased to 60 percent in NFHS-5 from 69 percent in NFHS-4, and for men it has decreased to 51 percent in NFHS-5 from 65 percent in NFHS-4, it added—(KNO)

## Cyber Criminals Misusing Identity Of Senior Officials: Govt Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Government on Wednesday issued advisory over misuse of identities of senior level government functionaries through emails, telephone numbers on platforms like WhatsApp and other messaging applications for conveying instructions and directions by cyber criminals.

"Instances of cyber crimes like hacking, phishing, identity theft etc are being reported on a daily basis from every nook and corner of the country. The number of these crimes have proliferated due to the extensive and unrestricted availability of data and access to technical know-how available on the internet," reads a circular **More on P6**

**THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IS WELL-RECOGNISED** for its significant contribution to employment creation and promotion of inclusive growth. The government could have followed the path of consultation on their concerns instead."





To place an advertisement

**CALL +91-194 2502327**

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

# Robotic Surgery Improves Patient Recovery Time, Reduces Complications'

Robotic surgery may reduce the chance of hospital re-admission by over 50 per cent, and prevalence of blood clots by 77 per cent, when compared to patients who undergo an open surgery, according to a study conducted in the UK. The research, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), also found that patients' physical activity—assessed by daily steps tracked on a wearable smart sensor—stamina and quality of life also increased after a robotic surgery. The findings provide the strongest evidence so far of the patient benefit of robot-assisted surgery and researchers are now urging National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) to make it available as a clinical option across the UK for all major abdominal surgeries including colorectal, gastro-intestinal, and gynaecological. "This is an important finding. Time in hospital is reduced and recovery is faster when using this advanced surgery," said study co-chief investigator James Catto, a professor at the University of Sheffield in the UK. "Ultimately, this will reduce bed pressures and allow patients to return home more quickly. We see fewer complications from the improved mobility and less time spent in bed," Catto said in a statement. Despite robot-assisted surgery becoming more widely available, there has been no significant clinical evaluation of its overall benefit



to patients' recovery. "In this study we wanted to establish if robot-assisted surgery, when compared to open surgery reduced time spent in hospital, reduced readmissions, and led to better levels of fitness and a quality of life; on all counts this was shown," said study co-chief investigator, John Kelly, a professor at the University College London (UCL). "An unexpected finding was the striking reduction in blood clots in patients receiving robotic surgery; this indicates a safe surgery with patients benefiting from far less complications, early mobilisation and a quicker return to normal

**An unexpected finding was the striking reduction in blood clots in patients receiving robotic surgery; this indicates a safe surgery with patients benefiting from far less complications, early mobilisation and a quicker return to normal life,"**

life," Kelly said. Unlike open surgery, where a surgeon works directly on a patient and involves large incisions in the skin and muscle, robot-assisted surgery allows surgeons to guide minimally invasive instruments remotely using a console and aided by three dimensional (3D) view. However, it is currently only available in a small number of UK hospitals. Across nine UK hospitals, 338 patients with non-metastatic bladder cancer were randomised into two groups: 169 patients had robot-assisted bladder removal with intracorporeal reconstruction (process of taking section of bowel to make

new bladder), and 169 patients had open radical cystectomy. On average, the robot-assisted group stayed eight days in hospital, compared to 10 days for the open surgery group, a 20 per cent reduction, the researchers said. Readmittance to hospital within 90 days of surgery was also significantly reduced -- 21 per cent for the robot-assisted group vs 32 per cent for open, they said. A further 20 secondary outcomes were assessed at 90 days, six- and 12-months post-surgery. These included blood clot prevalence, wound complications, quality of life, disability, stamina, activity levels, and survival. All secondary outcomes were improved by robot-assisted surgery or, if not improved, almost equal to open surgery, according to the researchers. This study, and previous studies, show both robot-assisted and open surgery are equally as effective in regards cancer recurrence and length of survival. Open surgery remains the "gold standard" recommendation for highly complex surgeries, though the research team hopes this could change. "In light of the positive findings, the perception of open surgery as the gold standard for major surgeries is now being challenged for the first time," Kelly said. "We hope that all eligible patients needing major abdominal operations can now be offered the option of having robotic surgery," he added.

از عدالت ایگزیکٹو ججسریٹ درجاول (تحصیلدارانت ناگ) با اجلاس عمرگزار صاحب درخواست مخائب: جنکبل احمد بٹ ولد غلام محمد بٹ ساکن پشاور وکٹیل ایل ناگ بغض اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹفیکٹ نام: قمر آملین دختر جنکبل احمد بٹ اشتہار برادر ادائی بر خاص وعام

معاملہ مندر عنوان الصدر میں ساکن اسالیبہ مذکورہ ملانے عدالت ہذا میں ایک درخواست حلفی بیان پیش کیا ہے سائل کی دختر کا تاریخ پیدائش 2017-08-12 ہے۔ اس ضمن میں سرٹفیکٹ پیدائش نکالنے کا جواہ یہ لہذا سرٹفیکٹ مذکورہ کا اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دوران دفتر کی اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

ایگزیکٹو ججسریٹ درجاول (تحصیلدارانت ناگ) rna

از عدالت ایگزیکٹو ججسریٹ درجاول (تحصیلدارانت ناگ) با اجلاس عمرگزار صاحب درخواست مخائب: جنابید احمد بارو ولد غلام احمد بارو ساکن پشاور وکٹیل ایل ناگ بغض اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹفیکٹ نام: محمد حماد بارو ولد جنابید احمد بارو اشتہار برادر ادائی بر خاص وعام

معاملہ مندر عنوان الصدر میں ساکن اسالیبہ مذکورہ ملانے عدالت ہذا میں ایک درخواست حلفی بیان پیش کیا ہے سائل کا تاریخ پیدائش 2018-04-18 ہے۔ اس ضمن میں سرٹفیکٹ پیدائش نکالنے کا جواہ یہ لہذا سرٹفیکٹ مذکورہ کا اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دوران دفتر کی اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

ایگزیکٹو ججسریٹ درجاول (تحصیلدارانت ناگ) rna

**فاتح خوانی**

وفات حسرت ٹوٹ حسین بٹ ولد عبدالغنی بٹ ساکن شہید گنج سربگڑی تکی

فاتح خوانی بروز جمعہ 20 مئی 2022ء بوقت صبح 6:15 مقبرہ منگھاہ

ندیک: منڈاٹھ بعد انجام دی جائیگی اسکے بعد فاتح خوانی دن بھر درخانہ

ولی محمد بٹ شہید گنج ندیک گٹو دین دفتر انجم دی جائے گی۔

سوگواران:

ولی محمد بٹ، مومن عباس بٹ

فون نمبر: 7006909424.9682173566

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

**Office of the Assistant Director**

**Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs**

Anantnag.

Email:Capdang121@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 01932-222951

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General public of District Anantnag is hereby informed that the PDS, Kerosene Oil for the month of April 2022 will be distributed to all AAY Ration Cards & only those PHH ration cards belonging to winter dumping areas as per the conditions laid down in S.O -108 of 2022 dated 23/03/2022.

In case of any complaint regarding Kerosene Oil distribution and to know the Quantum of Kerosene oil supplied to the dealer of your area please contact office of the Assistant Director Anantnag personally or call on 01932222951,7006463655, 7889949219.

Assistant Director  
FCS&CA Anantnag

rna

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Licence Number 1200 issued in my name by Agricultural Produce Market Committee Pulwama has been lost. Now I have to reapply to the said office for the issuance of the duplicate licence in my favour. In case anybody has any kind of objections in this regard, the same may be brought in the notice of Secretary, Agricultural Produce Market Committee within seven (07) days from the issuance of this notice. Any objection after the expiry of the stipulated time shall not be accepted/entertained.

Dated: 17.05.2022

Gh Mohammad Para

S/o Ab Rehman Para R/o Naira Pulwama

inf

**CONDOLENCE MESSAGE**

The principal and the staff council of Govt Degree College Sopore extend our deepest sympathies for the loss of the maternal grandfather of Dr.Syed Arshid Shabir Asst.Professor in Botany. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this sorrowful time and pray to Almighty Allah to grant Janatul Firdous to the departed soul and give patience to you and your family at this incredible time.

Wishing you the courage to face the day's ahead and loving memories to hold in your heart forever.

Staff Secretary  
Govt Degree College Sopore.

**CLOTHING & HOME APPLIANCES**

**YARDIMCI MULTI-VENTURE**

*Deals with clothing and home appliances at whole sale rates.*

Contact:-0194-3550112

G-mail: yardimciconique92@gmail.com

I.G: yardimci\_multi\_venture

F.B: yardimci multiVenture

**ELECTRONICS**

**10X MOBILE STORE**

*All types of Mobile and Mobile Accessories*

Main Market Sannat Nagar Srinagar

Contact:-7889657769

**TECH WORLD**

*All Mobile and Electronic Accessories Xerox also available.*

Sannat Nagar Srinagar

Contact:-9149965005/ 9682370979

**CONDOLENCE MEETING**

A condolence meeting has been convened in the office complex of Department of Ecology, Environment & Remote Sensing, J&K on 18th of May, 2022, to express deep sorrow over the sad demise of Mr. Riyaz Ahmad Qazi (Ex-Mass Media Officer/DCF). His sincere and dedicated efforts towards the overall functioning of the department was remembered by all officers/officials of the department and prayed almighty to rest the departed soul in peace. Sympathies were also expressed with bereaved family and prayed almighty to give them strength to bear this irreparable loss.

inf

**NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC**

It is information for the general public that My son Amaan Iqbal Anim's passport Bearing No. N3598936 his Mothers name was wrongly entered as Rehana Akhtar Bulla where her actual name is Rehana Akhtar. Now I want its correction. If any body having any objection in this regard may contact Passport Office Srinagar. Within a period of 7 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Iqbal Muzaffar Anim  
F/o Amaan Iqbal Anim  
R/o Shah Anwar Colony Hyderpora Bye pass Srinagar.

mcb

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE**

Where a application for transfer of ownership has been recieved from one. Shri : Abdul Hamid Ahanger S/o: Abdul Salam Ahanger R/o: Buna Zanigam Kandooro Beerwah Budgam (Transferee) of LMV (V. Breeze . Vehicle bearing registration number JK046 - 0999. Chasis number 753877 Engine no. 20849 Model 2021. in favour of Shri.. Mudasir Rasool Baba S/o. Gh Rasool Baba R/o Yaga Bugh Budgam (Transferee) as well as HPA cancellation with J&K Bank Ltd B/u Ompora

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.889

Dated 18/05/2022

Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

mcb

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE**

Where as a joint application has been recieved from owner. Shri : Gull Hassan Khan S/o: Gh Ahmad Khan R/o: Ganai Pora Beerwah Budgam as Transferor) & Shri. Naseer Ahmad Sofi S/o Gh Mohammad Sofi R/o Nuner Ganderbal. as Transferee) for transfer of Tipper Carriage route permit No.1533/GC/ Budgam vehicle No. JK04C -0099. As well as HPA cancellation with J & K Bank Ltd B/u Beerwah Budgam

Now It is therefore notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed transfer of the said route permit/vehicle shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM. 796

Dated 09/05/2022

Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

mcb

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir  
Government of Jammu & Kashmir

**Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar**

**TENDER NOTICE**

**NIT NO.E-08/2022-23/LSD/SRINAGAR/JAMMU**

**DATED:- 17/05/2022**

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPW D, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/D/cor (Amt in Rs.)	Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Amt in Rs.)	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of tender	Class of Contractor	Head of Account
1	Beautification of central verge by way of painting, tree guards and allied repairs from Eidgah to Hawal (Sazgaripora Raod)	Rs.4.79 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	20 days	24-05-2022 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
2	Balance work of view point and other allied works at Eidgah park at Darbagh.	Rs.4.99 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	25 days	24-05-2022 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
3	Beautification for Central Verge of Northern Foreshore Road near SKICC b.w.o earth filling, turfing and allied items of work and renovation of Central Verge at different spots on Northern foreshore road.	Rs.6.50 Lacs	Rs. 300/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	30 days	24-05-2022 at 11.00AM	"CEE" & "DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
4	Maintenance of Pantha chowk parks b.w.o Devri Stone pillars /upgradation of distribution system and other allied items.	Rs.3.00 Lacs	Rs. 200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	20 days	24-05-2022 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)
5	Supply of labour for maintenance of Plantation on central verge / Islands from time to time for sub div. 1st. landscape Division.	Rs.3.00 Lacs	Rs.200/-	Bid Declaration Certificate	Financial year 2022-23	24-05-2022 at 11.00AM	"DEE"	MH 3054 M&R (Srinagar)

Position of Funds:- Available.  
Administrative approval:- Accorded.  
Note:- The above mentioned work shall be mandatorily completed during the current financial year 2022-23.  
The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	17.05.2022
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	17.05.2022 4.30 PM
3.	Bid submission Start Date	17.05.2022 from 4.30 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	23.05.2022 up to 04.00 PM
5.	Deadline for receiving the Hard copy (Original e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt and EMD)	Hard copy to be submitted by the successful bidder (L1) only within seven days after Financial evaluation.
6.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	24.05.2022 at 11.00AM in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt (Non-refundable) along with bid security declaration certificate as per format (Annexure A), failure to do so shall be render the bidder as Non-Responsive.
- First lowest bidder has to submit Performance security Deposit 3% of allotted cost in shape of CDR/FDR/BG (BG validity should be 45days more than bid validity days i.e 120+45=165Days) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender receiving authority).
- Bidder have to submit an Affidavit from 1st class magistrate that he will complete the work on time, otherwise necessary action will be taken against the contractor under rules.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address.
- The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar (Tender receiving authority)
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-  
a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.  
b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.  
c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 07 days after fixation of contract.  
d) 50% of the normal deposits (deducted at 10% from running bills) to be released after virtual completion of the work and balance 50% after completion of DLP.
- Additional performance security required as per NIT conditions shall be released after virtual completion of the work.
- Earnest money in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG shall be released after DLP is over successfully.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- 10.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "BiddersManual Kit" on website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.
- 10.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendor.
- 10.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- 10.4 Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- 10.5 Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid. Besides, Original/Photocopies of documents related to bid be submitted physically /by registered post / through courier before date specified in Para - 1.
- Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
- Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt and Earnest Money/Bid Security in shape of CDR/FDR if applicable pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar must be uploaded with the bid. The original e-challan or Treasury challan/receipt (cost of tender document Non-Refundable), CDR/FDR (earnest money/ bid security) and relevant documents to be submitted to the Executive Engineer R&B Landscaping Division, Rajbagh, Srinagar by registered post/Courier /by hand, by the successful bidder (L1) only within seven days after financial evaluation.
- Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
14. Price escalation and Taxes:- The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include Price escalation and all taxes up to completion of the work, unless, otherwise specified. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
- In case of CRF and any other specified project. The relevant guidelines/standard bidding document shall be followed.
- Instruction to Bidder (ITB)
- All bidders shall include the following information and documents with their bids:-  
a. Copies of original documents defining constitution/legal status, place of registration and principal place of Business.  
i. Scanned Copy of Valid Registration Card along with latest Renewal.  
ii. Valid Pan Card.  
iii. GST Registration Certificate (GST REG-25) along with latest GST clearance certificate (GSTR-3B) (Either last Month in case of monthly filling or last Quarter in case of quarterly filling).
17. All bidders shall upload verification certificate from concerned Chief Engineer/ Superintending Engineer of Enlistment Registration Card.
18. All bidders who have verification or Renewal of Registration pending shall upload affidavit duly certified by 1st Class Executive Magistrate.
- The bidder at his own responsibility and risk should visit and examine the site of the work and its surroundings before submission of bid.
- All documents relating to the bid shall be in the English Language.
- If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the rate list/quantity schedule, cost of such item/items shall be deemed to be part of the overall/total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item/items in the allotment of contract.
- 1% Labor Cess shall be deducted at the time of payment.
- The Service Tax will be deducted from the gross amount as per the rates in vogue at the time of payment.
21. Price escalation and Taxes:- The rate quoted by the bidder shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
- No:- LD/
- Dated:-17-05-2022

**DIPK-2146/22**

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
R&B Landscaping Division,  
Rajbagh, Srinagar





Kidnapping, Sexual Assault Case Aftermath

# Srinagar Police Asks Property Owners To Get Tenants Verification Done

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: In a bid to discourage landlords from renting out their properties to unknown criminals, Police on Wednesday appealed to property owners not to rent out their properties and houses without obtaining details of the tenants.

It is Pertinent to mention, three criminals including a juvenile from Ra-

fiabad Sopore sexually assaulted a minor girl at a rented house after kidnapping her in Malabagh area of Srinagar outskirts.

The Police advisory comes a day after the incident sent shockwaves across the Kashmir valley.

“In view of yesterday’s kidnapping and sexual assault case, all are requested again to get tenant verification done. Here 3 criminal-minded persons from Rafiabad, Sopore were

staying on rent in Malbagh area and the landlord didn’t do any tenant verification. He will also face legal action,” police tweeted.

Earlier also, after the murder of an 85-year old woman by a non-local domestic help in Behrar Lal Bazar some months back, police had requested landlords to get the tenants’ verification done.

A senior police officer said that in order to curb the criminals, it is

the responsibility of the landlords to furnish all the details about the occupants.

“People often ignore the importance of tenant verification which could prove dangerous for the property owners and the general public,” he said.

“Police verification of tenants not only helps in tracking the absconding culprit but also enhances the security of the premises and is helpful in curbing heinous crimes”.

## Traffic Police HQ Partially Damaged In Fire Mishap

Agencies

Srinagar: Traffic police headquarters and police station Kothibagh was partially damaged in a fire incident in Srinagar on Wednesday.

An official said a massive fire broke out on the top floor of the Traffic Police Headquarters building at around 04:30 am.

In the incident, the top floor of the Traffic Police Headquarters and Kothibagh Police station got damaged and all the high end

equipment of the Traffic Control room was burnt to ashes.

He said the cause of fire was not known immediately,



adding that the case has been registered in this regard. (KNO)

## Business Leaders From Across India Attend Entrepreneurship Conclave at KU

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir University’s Department of Management Studies (DMS) organized a business-cum-entrepreneurship conclave in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) on Wednesday.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad chaired the Conclave titled ‘Kashmir @75: Challenges and Road Ahead’ that aimed to create an interface between leading entrepreneurs and family business owners from across the country with budding entrepreneurs from the Kashmir Valley.

The Conclave highlighted the vast opportunity of entrepreneurship and business in J&K.

Dean Academic Affairs Prof

Farooq A Masoodi, Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir, Chairman CII J&K Ehsan Javaid and Head DMS Prof Iqbal Ahmad Hakim joined the Conclave which was attended by a delegation of 60 leading entrepreneurs and family business owners from different parts of the country, as well as students and student entrepreneurs of the DMS.

The visiting delegation was headed by Tulsi Jyakumar, Executive Director, SP Jain Institute of Management and Research.

Addressing the conclave, Prof Talat highlighted the importance of collaboration for promoting business and entrepreneurship in Kashmir.

“Kashmiri is bestowed with plenty of resources having a tremendous potential to grow

into huge businesses,” he said, stressing on creating a conducive environment wherein youth from J&K choose to become job-creators.

Tulsi Jyakumar stressed on the need to professionally train local entrepreneurs so that they can compete at the international level. She also promoted the idea of “buddy system” wherein entrepreneurs from Kashmir Valley could be mentored and groomed by established entrepreneurs from different parts of the country.

Earlier, Prof Hakim highlighted the role of DMS in developing professional managers and entrepreneurs and welcomed the idea of creating linkages for professional development of entrepreneurship in Kashmir.

## To Promote ‘Floriculture Mission’ S.P College Organizes Week-Long Training Programme

Agencies

Srinagar: S.P. College Srinagar kick started a week-long training programme to promote ‘Floriculture Mission’ on Wednesday.

Principal Prof Khurshid Ahmad Khan inaugurated the programme which is aimed at developing the spirit of entrepreneurship in commercial floriculture among the students.

The programme was held in line with the objectives of the ‘Floriculture Mission’ initiated by CSIR Srinagar for “enhancing farmers’ income and entrepreneurship development through high value floriculture utilizing CSIR technologies.”

In his presidential address, Prof Khan said

the college is committed to hold entrepreneurship training programmes for its students to enable them to become job-givers rather than job-seekers.

He appreciated the Botany Department for holding the programme, wherein selected students from Integrated 6th and 7th semester planted gladiolus corms and carnation saplings received from CSI-IIIM Field Station, Pulwama.

Prof Manzoor A Wani from Department of Botany S.P.College, a master trainer in Horticulture Skill Development gave a practical demonstration to the students and guided them during preparation and levelling of soil, sowing and watering in herb-

al garden.

The event was attended by faculty members of Botany Department including HOD Prof Syed Wilayat Rizvi, Prof Sadaf Nazir, Prof Yaseen Maqbool, Dr Shabana Aslam, Dr Faheema Gul, Prof Tabassum Habib, Prof Nighat Jan and Dr Ubaid Yaqoob, besides lab staff of the department.

The college administration thanked Dr Shahid Rasool, Nodal Scientist CSIR Floriculture Mission and Dr Iqra Shah, Project Associate (I), CSIR for providing ample propagation material of gladiolus, carnation, Bulgarian rose, Ginko biloba and other aromatic and medicinal plants for the student participants.

## Protests Against Water Scarcity Erupt In City Areas

Agencies

Srinagar: Scores of residents from several areas of Srinagar here on Wednesday staged a protest against the Jal Shakti department for ‘failing’ to provide adequate water supply to them.

The residents of Tankipora area of Habba Kadal, Pathar Masjid at Maharaj Gunj locality hit the streets today and raised slogans in favour of their demands.

The residents said that the department has miserably failed to ensure adequate water supply to them, which has simultaneously affected the locals.

“Most of the time, our taps are running dry. We are not even able to quench the thirsty due to the inadequate water supply to the locality,” they said.

Demanding immediate redressal of

their grievances, the residents said that the necessary measures must be taken to put an end to the sufferings of inhabitants here.

Moreover, the residents from some other localities including Chattabal area also complained of inadequate water supply to them, saying that they are facing immense hardships in absence of adequate water supply.

Meanwhile, Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti department, Basharat Jeelani said that he has already directed the officials to ensure that the grievances are redressed by Thursday morning.

“There is no issue of rise in temperature and deficient rainfall but whatever the problems are being faced by these consumers, will be addressed till tomorrow,” he said. (KNO)

### BEFORE THE HON’BLE COURT OF PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE BUDGAM

Caveat No...../2022

In the case of:

The Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited  
Through its Chairman,  
Corporate Headquarters, M.A. Road, Srinagar

.....Caveator

V/s  
Public at Large

...Non-Caveators

In the matter of:

CAVEAT APPLICATION.

May it please your Honour,

The application is mostly humbly submitted as under:-

1. That the Caveator Bank has vide notification No JKB/HRD/Rectt/2022-945 dated 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 Issued promotion orders in favor of the Jammu & Kashmir bank officers Scale-II to Scale-III (Executive to Senior Executive)

2. That the Caveator Bank has reasonable belief that the drop out candidates may challenge the said Notification dated 16.04.2022 by filing suit or any other proceeding against thereto. Therefore in the eventuality of any such proceedings being preferred by the Non-Caveators against the Caveator Bank, the Caveator Bank through its counsel, Mr. Zaffar Mehdi may kindly be given an opportunity of being heard for projecting the case of the Caveator Bank. In the premises, it is, therefore, prayed that this caveat application may be accepted and in the eventuality of writ or any other proceeding being preferred by the Non-Caveators challenging the said Notification dated 16.04.2022, the Caveator Bank may kindly be given an opportunity of being heard through its counsel Mr. S. M. Musthseen before passing any order in the case.

Place: Budgam  
Dated: 17.05.2022

Caveator Bank through counsel

DIPK-NB-915/22

#### 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
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

#### HIGHWAY STATUS

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



#### PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 50
ZUHR	12:27
ASR	5:22
Magrib	7:31
ISHA	9: 06

## This Day In History

- 1585 - Spain confiscates English ships
- 1635 - France's First Minister, Cardinal Richelieu declares war on Spain (Franco-Spanish War 1635–59)
- 1643 - Battle at Rocroi/Allersheim: French army destroys Spanish army
- 1643 Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Harbor form the United Colonies of New England
- 1649 - England is declared a Commonwealth by an act of the Rump Parliament making England a republic for the next 11 years
- 1652 - Spanish troops occupy Grevelingen
- 1662 U - niformity Act of England goes into effect
- 1749 - George II grants charter to Ohio Company to settle Ohio Valley
- 1792 - Russian army enters Poland
- 1793 - Netherlands captures French island of St Maarten (held until 1795)
- 1796 - Game protection law restricts encroachment on Indian hunting grounds
- 1863 - Siege of Vicksburg, investment of city complete
- 1864 - Battle of Port Walthall Junction, Virginia (Bermuda Hundred)
- 1864 - Last engagement in series of battles known as Spotsylvania
- 1864 - Skirmish at Cassville, Georgia
- 1885 - German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck takes possession of Cameroon and Togoland
- 1900 - World's longest railroad tunnel (Simplon) linking Italy and Switzerland opens
- 1910 - Passage of Earth through tail of Halley's Comet causes near-panic
- 1919 - Kelud volcano on Java, erupts killing 5,160
- 1919 - Mustafa Kemal Atatürk lands at Samsun on the Black Sea coast, beginning the Turkish War of Independence
- 1926 -- French air force bombs Damascus Syria
- 1929 - Chinese warlord Feng Yuxiang declares war on Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government
- 1939 - Churchill signs British-Russian anti-Nazi pact

## From KO Archives

## Prof Ghani: Shabir Shah a Non-Entity

Observer News Service

Srinagar- The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leadership is not willing to respond to the moves initiated by the Democratic Freedom Party Chief Shabir Ahmed Shah, for bringing about an 'issue based unity' among various separatist groups in the state.

Commenting on the reported unity moves initiated by Shah a senior APHC leader, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat said, "We do not accept any mediation or unity bid initiated by Shah who had years ago quit the APHC. We treat him as a nonentity because he could not hold together his own Peoples League which he had founded."

The APHC leader said, "We all are united as far as the agenda for peaceful and durable settlement of the Kashmir issue is concerned, adding "We may differ on the methodology for finding a solution to the Kashmir issue. We may differ as far as our organisational activities are concerned but the agenda for resolving the Kashmir issue to the satisfaction of people of the valley is the same."

When reminded that some separatists were for accession to Pakistan and other for outright independence, Prof. Ghani said "We are for a solution that fulfils the aspirations of people of the state. We neither support Kashmir's incorporation with Pakistan nor Azadi but a solution that is acceptable to the majority of people of the state."

It is pertinent to mention here that Shabir Shah had 'recently stated that he was trying to bring about an "issue based" unity among various pro-freedom groups. He had said "I am for bringing these groups on one platform so that our claim to represent people of Kashmir looks credible," he was quoted as saying.

However, both the DFP Chief and the APHC leader agree on the reasons for not accepting invitation to the third roundtable conference which was held in Delhi recently under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

Both of them agree on the need for a separate dialogue with separatists so that some viable solution could be debated and once the contours of those solutions were defined the same could be discussed with Islamabad and in the roundtable conferences. (Kashmir Observer, 19 May, 2007)

T: 0194-2311312 (S)  
F: 0194-2311420 (S)  
T/F: 0191-2476079 (J)

E:jkhpmtcd@gmail.com  
W:https://jkhpmtc.jk.gov.in/

**Jammu & Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing & Processing Corporation (JKHPMC) Ltd**  
Horticulture Department, Jammu & Kashmir Government  
Opposite Presentation Convent School, Rajbagh, Srinagar-190008, J&K

No: JKHPMC/e-NIT No. 90 of 2022 Dt: 16-05-2022

**Subject: Date Extension Corrigendum-4 w.r.t Notice 90 of 2022, dated 22-03-2022.**

In view of several requests received from the prospective bidders in respect of the "Tender" for "Empanelment of Agencies for the Finalization of Annual Rate Contracts (for a period of one year) for the supply of Plant Protection (PP) Chemicals, Organic Fertilizers/ Manures and Vermicompost, duly approved by the Agriculture Department, J&K", Last Date of Online Bid Submission is extended by Four (04) days' time and as such the Last Date of Online Bid Submission would be up to 19-05-2022. Subsequently the Bid Opening Date would be 20-05-2022.

Other Terms and Conditions will remain the same unless notified otherwise.

Sd/-  
DIPK-NB-883/22 Managing Director JKHPMC Ltd



KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the  
Kashmir Observer LLP  
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001  
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Budgam.  
RNI Registration No: 69503/98  
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16  
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider  
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja  
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304  
Editorial: (0194) 2502327  
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobsrver.net

K O V I E W

Lingering stand-off

As India-China stand-off in Ladakh enters its third year, the situation looks unlikely to change for the better. China is reportedly building a second bridge over territory held by it in Pangong Tso, which is capable of carrying armoured columns. The first bridge whose construction was started towards the end of the last year is now complete. If anything, it shows that China is in no mood to withdraw from the territory captured by it and may, in fact, be eyeing more misadventure in Ladakh. But New Delhi is already prepared for any eventuality. Over the last two years, India has massed troops along the border to deter any further ingress by the People’s Liberation Army.

Going forward, it is difficult to predict how the Ladakh stand-off would go. In all likelihood, the situation will remain unchanged. For the Army, the northern border, however, remains a major challenge. The two countries have failed to arrive at a breakthrough in successive rounds of Corps Commander-level talks. The two sides have been looking at a possible agreement for disengagement from Hot Springs as part of the comprehensive disengagement and de-escalation efforts in eastern Ladakh. Last year, the two countries had disengaged from the friction point at Pangong Tso lake but ever since they have struggled to replicate the agreement at the other friction points: Hot Springs, Demchok and Depsang. Meanwhile, the People’s Liberation Army has enhanced its military profile on the border by deploying thousands of its soldiers and equipment.

Thankfully, the Line of Control with Pakistan has calmed down since February last year after the two countries reinstated 2003 ceasefire. The agreement has since held. It doesn’t look like things will change much this year. This, however, has not paved the way for a restoration of the dialogue between the neighbors. Pakistan, going by the statements of its leadership, has given up on any engagement with New Delhi as the latter wouldn’t reverse the withdrawal of Article 370. China, on the other hand, wants to cement the new status quo along the LAC.

This has created a spectre of LOC-ization of the LAC, although the LoC has been now peaceful. China’s ingress in Ladakh has brought the two countries eyeball to eyeball on border. But there are huge geo-political stakes for both the countries that can’t be ignored. A lingering state of confrontation between the two will not be in the interest of either. More so for India which would not want a 3800 km border with China become an extension of LOC with Pakistan. India has to also do a tough balancing act between its thickening relationship with the US and that with China. Here is hoping that China eventually sees the reason and rationale of having India as a partner in the economic advancement of the region than an enemy.

OTHER OPINON

Reforming WHO

The long delay and the reluctance of China to readily and quickly share vital information regarding the novel coronavirus, including the viral outbreak in Wuhan, and its stubborn refusal to allow the global agency to investigate, freely and fairly, the origin of the virus have highlighted the need to strengthen WHO. But any attempt to build a stronger WHO must first begin with increased mandatory funding by member states. For several years, the mandatory contribution has accounted for less than a fourth of the total budget, thus reducing the level of predictability in WHO’s responses; the bulk of the funding is through voluntary contribution. Importantly, it is time to provide the agency with more powers to demand that member states comply with the norms and to alert WHO in case of disease outbreaks that could cause global harm. Under the legally binding international health regulations, member states are expected to have in place core capacities to identify, report and respond to public health emergencies. Ironically, member states do not face penalties for non-compliance. This has to change for any meaningful protection from future disease outbreaks.

While Mr. Modi has been right in calling for reforms in WHO, the demand for a review of the health agency’s processes on vaccine approvals is far removed from reality. Covaxin is not the first vaccine from India to be approved by WHO, and the manufacturer of this vaccine has in the past successfully traversed the approval processes without any glitch. The demand for a review of the vaccine approval process is based on the assumption that the emergency use listing (EUL) of Covaxin was intentionally delayed by the health agency, which has no basis. That the technical advisory group had regularly asked for additional data from the company only underscores the incompleteness of the data presented by the company. As a senior WHO official said, the timeline for granting an EUL for a vaccine depends “99% on manufacturers, the speed, the completeness” of the data. To believe that the agency was influenced more by media reports than the data submitted by the company is naive; the media were only critical of the Indian regulator approving the vaccine even in the absence of efficacy data. Also, the rolling submission began in July 2021 after the company had completed the final analysis of the phase-3 data. Any reform in WHO should not dilute the vaccine approval process already in place.

The Hindu

Fadilah Ali

As a young girl growing up in a small Muslim-majority town in South Nigeria, I never found reason to explain my hijab. It felt as natural as a shirt or a sock. The thought to question it did not occur to me until I got to university and encountered harsh opposition.

Fellow students wanted to know why I wore something that made the heat unbearable. Others had offensive, albeit creative, names for me. One yanked it off my head and apologised the next minute with a smirk. A lecturer wanted me to take it off; he thought that the reason I asked him so many questions was that I couldn’t hear him properly through the fabric. The IT unit regularly clicked pictures of me for the school website to showcase the “diverse and inclusive” student body. An admin official wanted to know if I would be wearing “that” to the matriculation ceremony.

My response to each of these encounters was a single line of thought expressed in a variety of phrases: why does what I wear bother you so much? Why can you not accept that I wear what I want? Why won’t you leave me alone? It doesn’t affect you in anyway. It’s my choice.

Today, I realise that I had no actual explanation at the time for why I wore it. All I could respond with was strong-willed, monotonous defence.

Linguistically, the hijab refers to a wall, curtain, veil or anything that serves as a barrier. In the Qur’an, it is the whole system of prescribed modesty and decorum in dress, behaviour and speech. For the context of this article, the hijab will refer to the headscarf.

Obsession and Orientalism

The political atmosphere of the world surrounding the hijab has been nothing short of stifling. The much-needed discourse on nuance of cultural and religious intersections is plagued with sweeping indictments, deliberate obfuscation of inconvenient truths, and strawman arguments. As is now universally acknowledged, the hijab, for most purposes and intents, is the symbol of Islam.

Bans and mandates are passed regarding it. Conferences and seminars are held to contemplate its relevance in the dynamic socio-political climate. Activists build careers around it. Popular opinion swings from active celebration, to blatant opposition, to resigned indifference. Its symbolism, significance, or absence all depend on who one talks to and where.

Today, mainstream orientalist tropes of women in hijab as victims have become the touchstone for discussions on anything vaguely Islamic. Stereotypes peddled by White Feminism, hand in hand with imperialist foreign policy, demand immediate emancipation of Muslim women from this oppressive style of dressing supposedly imposed on them by their (male) family members. Accordingly, these women do not possess the intellectual capacity to ascertain whether they wear it by themselves, or have been “socially conditioned” into believing it should be worn.

Therefore, in order to determine what is best for her, one must consult the opposition. In order to offer her the choice and freedom to wear what she wants, one must look to white saviourism, which gives her the merry options of either taking it off or taking it off.

A great start in (rightly) protesting this lose-lose situation is to simply declare that the hijab is worn out of choice and not coercion. Freedom is, after all, the fundamental right of every human, Muslim or not. Even the most rabid of islamophobes who reject the hijab on grounds of perceived loss of autonomy would acknowledge that they would have to step back at this point, because if it is true that Muslim women really want to wear hijab, then who is to say they cannot?

To insist that the hijab should not be worn, even out of choice, is to betray the liberal West’s own prized freedom of self-expression. Insistence on the inherent offensiveness of the hijab, even after a declaration of choice, makes it evident that disdain for the hijab does not come from a place of kindness or concern for the loss of rights of Muslim women.

As Anne Norton remarks in her book, *On the Muslim Question*:

*The rights of women become the justification for military adventures and foreign occupation. No woman in her right mind could defend veiling or polygamy, we are told: thus, any woman who does so must be deluded or compelled. Protests from the women who are promised liberation are thus read as signs of their oppression, more evidence that intervention is called for. This logic permits no appeal, least of all from those it silences.[1]*

Besides its status as a politically lucrative endeavour, the insistence on the inherent oppressiveness of hijab, and Islam in general, is not unrelated to the world’s tradition of assessing religious principles based on palatability to Western sensibilities. A decried clash of civilisations between the East and West culminates in the need to elevate the norms and practices of the West over every other. If the West affirms the goodness of a religious or cultural practice (e.g. yoga), then its adoption automatically lends respectability to the practice. However, if the West deems it regressive (e.g. hijab), then the rest of the world follows suit.

On both sides, the voices of actual practitioners do not matter — not in the face of white exceptionalism. Thus, covering the whole body is not the only thing that oppresses Muslim women. The presence of a hijab also marks a subtle cry for freedom to wear crop tops and mini skirts like the western women these Muslim women aspire to be. The throes of white supremacy manifest yet again.

Choice as a Safety Net

It is important to note that in and of itself, choice is not a fundamentally incorrect motivation in Islam, a Muslim being one who submits to the Will of God. By being Muslim, we agree to abide by God’s rules and instructions. An individual can decide to not fast the month of Ramadan. Yet it would be incorrect to state that, rather than its being explicitly instructed, fasting has been made optional for Muslims by God.

Similarly, to say “I chose to wear hijab” would

not be completely wrong. It is a choice because humans have freewill. However, compulsively invoking freedom of choice anytime the hijab is discussed implies, among many other things, that covering the whole body is such an anomaly that no one would actually sign up for except out of thoroughly rationalised, conscientious agreement. So, the mantra of “anything is okay if by choice, but not if forced” applies here. No one would say they “choose to wear jeans”, or it is their “choice to carry a backpack”. They just say they wear jeans or carry backpacks.

Emphasis on choice implies either one of two things. The first is that Islam is silent on dress code and, in its stead, Muslims have created the concept of hijab from scratch. Saying “what I wear on my head is entirely my own choice” is almost like saying “I’m eating a burger instead of chicken nuggets out of my choice.” It may get rid of liberal opposition but it then becomes devoid of any divine significance. Which is, of course, nonsensical, because hijab is a religious mandate. On the other hand, to invoke “choice” could mean that while Islam does have a prescribed dress code, it is also completely voluntary. This is also inaccurate.

If an act is an obligatory function of being religious, then there is simply no option of choice as far as one believes in the religion. Human shortcomings exist and should be acknowledged and handled with mercy. But to modify the particulars of a set religious rule to accommodate and decorate these shortcomings is detrimental. Religion exists to serve a purpose and fill a void. If it becomes a buffet of feel-good platitudes, it becomes meaningless.

He said: “I know what ye know not.”

The question of why Muslim women wear hijab has generated countless answers. Some Muslims have flimsy analogies on standby about wrapped and unwrapped lollipops. Others draw up a more sophisticated reasoning, complete with all the buzzwords: empowerment through modesty, reclamation of marginalised Muslim identity, and liberation from unrealistic beauty standards. Some say it is a powerful fashion statement, and sing the praises of hijabi trailblazers on the runway. Some say it is meant to reduce a woman’s risk of experiencing sexual harassment. Others say it is meant to make Muslim women stand out as representatives of the faith. Yet others say it is simply a tool of oppression.

Because the fundamental answer is that Allah has instructed us to, the question should therefore be not of why Muslim women wear the hijab, but why Allah has instructed us to do so. The answer to that is also the answer to why Allah instructed Muslims to fast from dawn till sunset, eschewing food and drink. The answer to that is why Muslims are commanded to pray five times daily. The answer to that is what Allah told the angels when they pointed out that humans on earth will cause so much bloodshed, violence and corruption.

*Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: “I will create a vicegerent on earth.” They said: “Wilt Thou place there in one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?” He said: “I know what ye know not.”*

Al-Qur’an 2:30

In this verse, the angels seem to not understand why Allah plans to create man who is surely going to cause much mischief in the land. But they are content when they are reminded of their limited knowledge and wisdom, and that Allah knows all things.

This allusion to the infinite knowledge and awareness of Allah is observed again when the prophet Nuh (AS) asks about his unrighteous son and is told:

*... So ask not of Me that of which thou hast no knowledge! I give thee counsel, lest thou act like the ignorant!*

Al-Qur’an 11:46

For every religious practice, we can extrapolate a host of benefits. Maybe fasting is actually good for the health and encouraged by doctors. Maybe taking time to pray and connect with the Creator is spiritually fulfilling. Maybe the hijab empowers women, and sets them apart from the crowd in a society. These experiences are as numerous as there are Muslims on earth. But no one actually argues that Muslims pray and fast solely for physical and mental health. A woman living in a perverted society may find great solace and empowerment in wearing the hijab and defying beauty standards. Yet that does not mean that the hijab is meant to be worn just to make a political statement. When we rationalise hijab to this extent and provide new, politically correct reasons for it, we run the risk of stripping its fundamental intent.

Admittedly, it is empowering to do something out of your own choice and have your religion back you up. In this fast-paced world with rapidly changing ideals, where the Self is the most important thing to fulfill and gratify, religion is no longer a tool for spiritual fulfillment and connection with the Divine but merely a way to empower the Self. Thus, it is more acceptable to say “I choose to wear the hijab” than “I wear the hijab because, as a Muslim, this is what God wants me to do.”

Regardless, the hijab is worn primarily because Allah has instructed us to, and Allah knows all things.

Is The Hijab Inherently Oppressive?

A common counterargument to freedom of choice to wear the hijab is that the hijab is inherently sexist and oppressive because only women (and not men) are required to wear it, and thus, whether it is worn by choice is inconsequential.

We have to ask each other why it is necessary to problematise and deem inferior, frivolous or un-serious anything that is specific to or dominated by women. From cooking and cleaning to careers like nursing and tailoring, there has always been the notion that these endeavours are inherently inferior because of their traditional connection to women.

Those who claim that the hijab is problematic because men are not required to wear it is itself sexist. It feeds into the narrative that for anything to be respectable and worth doing, a man must be involved. We know this all too well from the culinary industry. For centuries, women cooked and so cooking was regarded as unworthy of the noble. However, all it took was for men to start studying

at culinary academies, and cooking became recognised as art and a legitimate professional career. Sadly, this sentiment is popular with many people who believe that STEM-inclined careers are somehow less misogynistic than nursing or teaching or tailoring. Proximity to maleness becomes the yardstick for which misogyny and/or feminism must be measured. Female engineers are therefore more feminist than female nurses.

But no level of proximity to maleness will ever insulate the Muslim woman from liberalism’s insistent hypocrisy. The self-righteous liberal demands absolute equality (translated as sameness) of dress only for Muslim men and women. Western women wearing short dresses while men wear t-shirts and jeans are overlooked. In this case, the difference in dress does not imply inherent sexism but an expression of liberty. This hypocrisy even deliberately obscures the fact that the West’s standard of dress is significantly more gendered than any Muslim culture. From my country Nigeria to Pakistan, Morocco to Palestine, Kenya to Afghanistan, men’s traditional attire is just as modest, constituting some form of long robe and head covering. It almost seems like the issue is not that Muslim men should be required to cover as much as women, but that Muslim women should be required to bare as much as men or their non-Muslim counterparts.

There are those that argue that even if it is not inherently misogynistic, it becomes so when women are forced or shamed into it. Thus, wearing the hijab cannot possibly be out of choice because the women’s families and/or communities will throw them off a mountain range or drown them at sea if they do not wear it. Whatever truth, exaggeration or falsehood there is to this sentiment, it is not a good enough counterargument. The use of force by some does not prove that the hijab itself is bad, but that the use of force is bad. This logic could very well apply to anything else. In Nigeria for example, it is not uncommon for parents to pressure and force their children to become doctors. Yet it does not prove that medicine is bad.

Conversely, the existence of choice behind any action does not translate to the inherent goodness of the action. This is contrary to liberal logic which posits that actions do not have inherent value; it only matters whether they are performed out of choice or not. Therefore, choosing to consume heroin would be okay, but coercion into consumption of heroin would be wrong. If enough people “choose” to perform a previously-frowned upon action, then it becomes good. This logic does not present a good enough determinant of what is good or bad, since both lack inherent meaning and become completely arbitrary.

It’s Not About The Hijab

In the end, it’s not about the hijab, and the sooner the islamophobia industry admits this fact to itself, the better. Opposition to the hijab in various parts of the world justifies the stance with humanitarian objections. Women’s rights. Freedom and choice. Clash of civilisations. It stands firmly rooted in its professed lack of bias.

But the opposition has yet to clarify exactly what aspect of the hijab it finds unpalatable. Is it the mere act of covering the hair? Is there a particular type and colour of fabric that is anti-women? Is all clothing meant for the head inherently oppressive? Does that characteristic of oppression disappear if the hair is covered for decorative purposes or in the winter? Does a non-Muslim become oppressed if she throws a scarf over her head for any reason? Is oppression as basic as taking off or putting on a piece of clothing? Is it only problematic if worn for religious reasons? If so, then why are veiling customs from other religions (Catholic nuns) not also deemed unacceptable?

Simplifying these questions makes it abundantly clear that anti-hijab rhetoric is not about the hijab itself, but a manifestation of (gendered) islamophobia. As Frantz Fanon famously wrote on France’s colonialism of Algeria: “This woman who sees without being seen frustrates the coloniser.”[2] It is not the item of clothing itself that frustrates the coloniser, but the belief system motivating it.

The recent upheaval in Karnataka, India where state authorities seek to ban Muslim women from wearing the hijab to their colleges is one of many. Just as Europe’s colonisation of many Muslim-majority countries instated European culture as the guiding star that every other culture must follow, the state-backed treatment of Muslims in India points to the fact that the existence of a Muslim minority is enough of an annoyance to the majority. Supremacist efforts are working to remake all religious minorities in India — Muslims, Sikhs and Jains, and even lower caste Hindus — in the image of mainstream Hinduism. This pattern of islamophobia reveals a deeper animosity towards Islam, and manifests itself through obsessive opposition to Islam’s most visible symbol. A smoke-screen of infringement of women’s rights emerges in order to bestow legitimacy on acts of plain bigotry. Otherwise, it is hard to believe that a Hindu-majority government would make moves to ban the hijab on claims of concern for Muslim women’s (loss of) freedom, seeing as Hindu women’s traditional dress is quite similar.

The West and Western-influenced world sees Islam as its contender, laments a clash of civilisations and thus seeks to marginalise Muslims with every chance it gets. It places an obsessive amount of scrutiny on Islam and Muslims around the world. Keeping the activities of Muslims under a microscope disproportionately magnifies the irregularities and dysfunction present in Muslim societies to divert attention from the injustices faced by women in other societies. It is high time to alert ourselves to this reality and cease diluting our faith in order to appeal to orientalist, islamophobic and white supremacist reasoning.

*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 Qarawiyyin Project The author is currently studying for her MSc in Food Microbiology. Her flash fiction and poetry have appeared in Alternate Route, Briefly Write Magazine, and Overtly Lit. She also has a number of essays touching on Islam and women at The Muslim Women Times where she is an editor and in-house writer*



# How Four Deep Breaths Can Help Kids Calm Down

CARRIE SPECTOR

It's one of the first things parents and teachers tell a child who gets upset: "Take a deep breath." But research into the effect of deep breathing on the body's stress response has overwhelmingly ignored young children—and studies done with adults typically take place in a university lab, making them even less applicable to children's actual lives.

A new study by Stanford researchers is the first to show that taking just a few slow, deep breaths significantly reduces young children's physiological arousal. By measuring the effects in naturalistic settings such as day camps and playgrounds, the study is also groundbreaking for its design, which more closely reflects a child's experience than a study in a lab would.

What's more, the short, animated video developed for the study is now freely available online, providing a proven tool that can be used in the classroom to introduce children to deep breathing as a way to self-regulate. It can also help parents prepare kids for a potentially stressful situation—a vaccine appointment, say, or a family gathering.

"This study is the first to show that taking a few slow, deep breaths in an everyday setting can have a significant effect on a child's stress physiology," said the study's lead author, Jelena Obradović, an associate professor at Stanford Graduate School of Education and director of the Stanford Project on Adaptation and Resilience in Kids Lab. "But just telling children to take a deep breath may not be enough—children need scaffolding. So we're excited that we can also offer an easy-to-use tool to help kids learn this technique."

The study, which was coauthored by Stanford Graduate School of Education research associate Michael J. Sulik and doctoral student Emma Armstrong-Carter, was published in November in the



6 Mindfulness practices that incorporate deep breathing, such as yoga and meditation, have found their way into the classroom at many schools. But prior to this study, research had not clearly shown whether slow-paced breathing itself could significantly alter a young child's physiological stress response

journal Developmental Psychobiology.

Designing a realistic field experiment Mindfulness practices that incorporate deep breathing, such as yoga and meditation, have found their way into the classroom at many schools. But prior to this study, research had not clearly shown whether slow-paced breathing itself could significantly alter a young child's physiological stress response, the

researchers said.

They set out to isolate the activity of breathing and investigate its impact—taking practical considerations into account, including the likelihood that young children might not have the capacity for even a couple of minutes of deep breathing, and that they would need help learning how to do it.

"When you ask young children to take

a deep breath, many don't really know how to slowly pace their inhale and exhale, if they haven't had any training," Obradović said. "It's not intuitive for young kids. They are more successful in taking several deep breaths if they have a visual guide."

To help elementary schoolers learn the technique, the researchers worked with a team of artists at RogueMark Studios,

based in Berkeley, California, to produce a one-minute video. The animated video shows young children how to slowly inhale by pretending to smell a flower and to exhale by pretending to blow out a candle.

"From a pragmatic point of view," Obradović said, "we thought a very short sequence, four breaths, seemed doable for this age group."

For their randomized field experiment, the Stanford researchers recruited 342 young children—seven years old, on average—with their parents' permission, at a children's museum, a public playground, and three full-day summer camps in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Roughly half of the children were assigned to a group to watch the animated video with the deep breathing guidance. The rest watched an informational video that featured similar animated images but did not involve the breathing exercise.

All of the children were shown their assigned video in small groups, at tables set up adjacent to the site from where they were recruited, to maintain a natural setting for the study. Also in keeping with the real-life approach to the study design, the researchers did not monitor children or provide extra encouragement to implement the deep breathing instruction.

This "intention-to-treat" approach—analyzing all subjects, whether or not they engaged with the intervention—is widely considered to provide more insight into the potential effectiveness of the intervention once it is applied in everyday group settings, like classrooms, where not everyone is likely to take part, Obradović said.

Measuring the body's response to everyday challenges

Researchers measured two biomarkers in all of their recruits: heart rate and respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA), which refers to the changing pace of the heart-

beat when a person inhales and exhales.

RSA plays an important role in influencing heart rate, Obradović said, and it has been linked to children's ability to regulate their emotions, focus their attention, and engage in tasks.

"When it comes to measuring the effects of deep breathing on stress physiology, RSA seems to be the most appropriate biomarker," said Obradović. "RSA is the only pure measure of the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system, the system we've evolved to help us deal with everyday challenges—the kinds of challenges that don't require a fight-or-flight response."

The change in the measures was profound: RSA increased and heart rate decreased only in response to the deep-breathing video, and the effects were greater during the second half of the video, which included most of the deep breathing practice. The children in the control group showed no change in either measure.

"Our findings showed that guiding a group of children through one minute of a slow-paced breathing exercise in an everyday setting can, in the moment, significantly lower the average level of physiological arousal," Obradović said.

Further research should examine the effect of deep breathing in this age group after a stressful or challenging experience, she said. "But the fact that children of this age can downregulate their stress physiology even when they're relatively calm offers promise that the technique will be even more effective when they're frustrated or upset."

Access the full version of the video, with an introduction to deep breathing, or a shorter video with the deep breathing practice only.

*This article was originally published on the Stanford Graduate School of Education*

## 3 ways to make 'belonging' more than a buzzword in higher ed

“Will this emphasis on belonging actually enhance students' well-being and ultimately help them succeed? Or is it just being used as a feel-good buzzword that is meant to appease recent demands for greater inclusion?”



Michelle Samura

"Belonging" is trending.

You can see it in evolving executive titles, such as "vice president of global diversity, inclusion and belonging."

You can find it in reports about how to make employees feel they're a more essential part of the workplace. For instance, a 2021 report about trends in the workplace found that belonging is a key factor for how companies keep employees engaged. And it can be seen in new "belonging" initiatives and strategies to create an "environment of belonging" and develop more inclusive environments across organizations of all sorts.

But what about on a college campus? Does the recent increased interest in belonging help students? Might it carry unintended consequences?

As a researcher who concentrates on factors that influence belonging among college students, I have decided to probe more deeply into the recent focus on belonging and its relationship to how college students fare. In my research, I define belonging as a concept of people's connectedness and mattering at the organizations or institutions where they work, study or are otherwise involved.

Will this emphasis on belonging

actually enhance students' well-being and ultimately help them succeed? Or is it just being used as a feel-good buzzword that is meant to appease recent demands for greater inclusion?

### A CRUCIAL NEED

There's no shortage of research that has identified belonging as a critical need for human beings, especially for college students.

Studies have found that belonging is a key to college student success. Belonging is associated with students not dropping out of school, psychologically adjusting to college, and academic achievement. Belonging is especially important for students of color who attend institutions that were not designed with them in mind.

While most research about belonging on campus has focused on how students interact with other people, my own research has examined how campus spaces — such as residence halls and classrooms — can enhance student belonging. I've found that the design of campus spaces can increase the frequency of interactions among students. If those interactions are positive, they can then lead to belonging. I've also found that where students go on campus — or don't

go, for that matter — says a lot about when and with whom they experience belonging.

I don't question that belonging on campus is an important consideration. Rather, I'm suggesting that people question generally accepted ways of talking about belonging. Here are three alternative ways to think about the matter.

### 1. BELONGING IS AN ONGOING PROCESS

Phrases such as "sense of belonging" are commonly used in discussions about belonging. This language suggests that belonging is a feeling or a state of being, but it's actually more than that.

Even how belonging is measured can perpetuate a view that one's belonging remains constant and consistent, overlooking the fact that "belonging" can actually fluctuate over time. Belonging among college students often is measured through surveys, but surveys are only snapshots.

Beyond shifts in belonging at different times, students may also experience belonging differently in different places and with different people. For example, I found that students at one university identified the dining hall as a key site to connect with their friends. It was a space that repre-

sented their belonging. However, for other students, the same dining hall was a stressful place. For these students, it was a space that made them feel isolated.

Instead of viewing belonging as a feeling or a sense, consider how belonging is an ongoing process. In my 2016 study of college student belonging, I found that when students' expectations for their academic and social lives did not match what they encountered during college, they indicated lower belonging academically and socially. To change that, students would seek out different places on campus and rethink their own views of themselves. They would also form new student groups and seek places on campus for those groups and people with similar interests to meet.

The takeaway is that even if someone doesn't belong at first, it doesn't mean they won't belong in the future.

### 2. BELONGING TAKES EFFORT

When belonging is seen as fitting in, it's easy for people to assume that individuals can fit or even want to fit. It's also easy to make assumptions about who belongs where or with whom. This view can lead to expectations about what conditions promote

belonging, such as being around people who are alike.

However, being around people who are seen as being alike isn't always associated with belonging.

In a study on belonging at a multicampus university system, I found that Asian American students at a university where they were relatively few in number reported higher levels of belonging than did Asian American students at campuses with much larger Asian American student populations. Findings indicated that student belonging may not require being around people from the same racial or ethnic group. Belonging can occur among difference. So it's useful for colleges to question people's thinking about who belongs with whom.

The study's findings also revealed that Asian American students actively sought out spaces and groups with whom they shared similar interests or felt like they could relate, such as a speech and debate club, cultural organizations, and the recreation center for pickup basketball.

In these cases, belonging didn't just occur by itself. Students had to deliberately seek it out.

### 3. BELONGING IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

People may view belonging as a personal matter — something experienced at an individual level that is an individual's responsibility. But it also requires ongoing effort by organizations and institutions.

Colleges and universities can change their structures and systems to support belonging and inclusion. This can include giving attention to differences between what colleges display in marketing materials and the reality of what students experience on campus.

In my experience, belonging is often thought of as condition that does not change and depends on the actions of an individual student. What I've found through my research, however, is belonging on campus takes ongoing effort — not only by students, but the colleges they attend as well. By thinking about belonging in these different ways, the kinds of change needed for greater student belonging may actually happen.

*The author is Associate Professor of Education and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education & External Affairs, Chapman University. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation*



# Pentagon Says India May Deploy Russian S-400 Missile System By Next Month To Defend Itself From Pak, China

Washington: India intends to deploy the Russian-made S-400 missile defence system by next month to defend itself from Pakistani and Chinese threats as it is pursuing an extensive military modernisation effort encompassing air, ground, naval and strategic nuclear forces, Pentagon's top intelligence official has said during a Congressional hearing.

India started receiving the delivery of the S-400 missile defence system from Russia in December last year, Lieutenant General Scott Berrier, Director of Defence Intelligence Agency, told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee during a recent Congressional hearing.

As of October 2021, India's military was seeking to procure advanced surveillance systems to strengthen its land and sea borders and boost its offensive and defensive cyber capabilities.

In December, India received its initial delivery of the Russian S-400 air defence system, and it intends to operate the system to defend against Pakistani and Chinese threats by June 2022, Berrier said.

India continued to develop its own hypersonic, ballistic, cruise and air defence missile



capabilities, conducting multiple tests in 2021. India has a growing number of satellites in orbit, and is expanding its use of space assets, likely pursuing offensive space capabilities, he said.

Berrier told the lawmakers that New Delhi is pursuing an extensive military modernisation effort encompassing air, ground, naval and strategic nuclear forces with an emphasis on domestic defence production.

India is taking steps to establish Integrated Theatre Commands that will improve its joint capability among its three

military services.

Since 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given priority to strengthen India's economy by expanding its domestic defence industry and establishing a negative import list to curtail defence purchases from foreign suppliers.

India's long-standing defence relationship with Russia remains strong, holding their first 2+2 format talks in December a joint foreign and defence ministerial that India previously only held with the United States, Japan and Australia.

India has maintained a

neutral stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and continues to call for peace, Berrier told the lawmakers.

According to Berrier, throughout 2021, New Delhi continued to implement a foreign policy aimed at demonstrating India's role as a leading power and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region.

India seeks to promote prosperity and ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region by seeking strategic partnerships to build influence through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), he said.

New Delhi seeks to deepen intelligence and operational cooperation on cybersecurity, protect critical information infrastructure, prevent adversary manipulation of public opinion, and to create standards and norms that protect and secure data governance, Berrier said.

Following the collapse of the Afghan government, New Delhi is increasingly concerned about potential attacks against India by Pakistan-based terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed - empowered by a Taliban-controlled

Afghanistan, he said.

The evacuation of Indian personnel from Afghanistan degraded its resources to monitor potential threats and cultivate influence over regional stability, he said.

Despite recommitting to the 2003 ceasefire, India remains postured to respond to perceived militant threats, and has continued counterterrorism operations in Kashmir, Berrier said.

Occasional skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani troops will continue, and a high-profile attack in India by Pakistan-based terrorists risks an Indian military response, he said.

Berrier said that Chinese-Indian relations remain strained following the fatal clashes in summer 2020 between their respective forces along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

During 2021, both sides held multiple rounds of high-level diplomatic and military talks that resulted in a mutual pull-back of forces from several standoff points.

However, both sides maintain close to 50,000 troops along with artillery, tanks and multiple rocket launchers, and both are building infrastructure along the LAC, Berrier added.

## Hearing In Gyanvapi Case Not Held Due To Lawyers' Strike

### Agenceis

Varanasi: Hearing in the Gyanvapi mosque case could not take place in a court here on Wednesday as lawyers in the district were on a strike in protest against the remarks of a government official.

The Banaras Bar Association and the Central Bar Association, Varanasi had decided to boycott work as they were upset over the remarks of a Special Secretary against lawyers, according to advocate Abhay Yadav, representing the Muslim side in the case.

The court was scheduled to hear two petitions related to the case Wednesday.

One of them filed by the Hindu side to remove a wall and debris around a Shivaling which was claimed to have been found during a court-mandated videography survey, and the other moved by District Government Advocate Mahendra Pandey on shifting fish from a pond located on the premises.

Yadav said the Muslim side also wanted to move an application before District Civil Judge Ravi Kumar Diwakar, seeking two days from the court to file their objection to the petition of the Hindu side.

This application also could not be submitted in the court. The petitions will now be heard when the court opens, he said.

Madan Mohan Yadav, representing the Hindu side, said they had urged the Bar Association to allow the lawyers to participate in the hearing in the case on Wednesday since the eyes of the whole country are on the Gyanvapi Masjid case, but it did not yield any result.

The mosque is adjacent to the iconic Kashi Vishwanath temple and the local court is hearing a plea by a group of five Hindu women -- Rekha Pathak, Manju Vyas, Sita Sahu, Laxmi Devi and Rakhi Singh -- seeking the court's permission for daily prayers before the idols on its outer walls.

On Tuesday, Pathak, Vyas and Sahu had filed a fresh plea in the court claiming that there is a basement to the east of the spot where the "Shivaling" was claimed to have been found. The basement has been sealed with brick, stone and cement, they have said.

Besides, there is also a wall and a basement in front of an idol of Nandi in the Kashi

Vishwanath temple, and this basement has also been blocked with brick, stone, sand and other items, they have said.

They have demanded in the petition the removal of the debris and a survey of the area by the court appointed advocate commissioner. They also said the commission should be directed to file a report on the length, width and height of the claimed Shivaling.

The court had accepted the application and scheduled a hearing for Wednesday.

Along with this, a petition was filed on Tuesday on behalf of District Government Advocate Mahendra Pandey, demanding shifting fishes from the water of a pond located on the premises, as well as shifting the pipeline of wazoo khana (a place for ritual ablation before the namaz). This was also to be heard on Wednesday.

The Varanasi court, which had ordered a videography survey of the Gyanvapi Masjid complex, had on Tuesday removed Advocate Commissioner Ajay Mishra for displaying "irresponsible behaviour towards the discharge of his duties", while it also granted two more days to the commission to file the survey report.

The removal order by District Civil Judge Ravi Kumar Diwakar had come on an application moved by Special Advocate Commissioner Vishal Singh who informed the court that Mishra had "deployed a personal cameraman RP Singh who was giving wrong byte in the media on a regular basis".

The court had said that all the work of the commission after May 12 will be submitted by Vishal Singh.

The lawyers on strike had taken exception to a May 14 letter sent by Uttar Pradesh government Special Secretary to all district magistrates asking them to ensure that any "anarchic action" by advocates in district courts are taken note of and acted against as per the rules.

The letter also asked the DMs to apprise the government authorities concerned about the action taken in such cases from time to time.

A copy of the letter was also sent to all the district judges and the Additional Chief Secretary Home.

## Over 10,000 MBBS aspirants write to NTA demanding postponement of NEET

New Delhi: Over 10,000 MBBS aspirants have written to the National Testing Agency (NTA) demanding that the medical entrance exam NEET be postponed as its scheduled date is too close to other competitive exams.

The crucial exam is scheduled to be held on July 17 this year.

In the letter, the MBBS aspirants said the date for this year's National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) has been announced, even though counselling for last year's exam hasn't finished.

"Many NEET aspirants and droppers from 2021 waited till the mop-up round of NEET 2021 counselling in the hope of getting a medical seat but didn't get one. The mop up round ended in the first week of April... in many states, state counselling is not finished till now.

"This year, many students could not calculate their percentage of getting a seat due to the changed reservation policy in NEET 2021 counselling and suddenly after three days, NTA announced on April 6 that NEET 2022 will be conducted on 17 July 2022," the letter read.

It said umpteen droppers and freshers will not get enough time to prepare for NEET. Last year's exam was initially scheduled for August 1 but was postponed to September 12 due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Also, CUET is scheduled for 1st and 2nd weeks of July and JEE mains second attempt is scheduled from 21 July 2022. In between NEET on 17 July will be a great burden for students.

"Pursuing MBBS is a dream of lakhs of students and the emotions of their parents and teachers are connected therewith. But due to this declaration of premature dates, they are starting to give up on their dreams. Please allocate them an adequate amount of time so that they can prepare well for the exam," the letter stated.

The Supreme Court had last week dismissed petitions seeking postponement of the 2022 NEET-Post Graduate examinations, saying any change to the May 21 date "will create chaos and uncertainty and deficiency of doctors in hospitals".

## Hardik Patel quits Congress, says top leaders more keen on mobile phones, chicken sandwiches

Ahmedabad: Patidar leader Hardik Patel on Wednesday resigned from the Congress, claiming that top leaders of the party were distracted by their mobile phones and Gujarat Congress leaders were more interested in arranging chicken sandwiches for them.

In his resignation letter to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi ahead of this year's Gujarat Assembly poll, Patel (28) accused the party's top leadership of behaving as if they hated Gujarat and Gujaratis, and said he was quitting as the state Congress working president and from the party's primary membership.

Patel wrote of his disappointment when party workers like him travelled 500-600 km a day to attend a party meeting and discuss issues but found the leaders busy trying to ensure that some senior Congress leader from Delhi was served his chicken sandwich on time.

Whenever I tried to draw the attention of party leaders towards pressing issues of Gujarat, it seemed they were more focused on their mobile phone

screens and other things, Patel said, describing lack of seriousness about all issues as a major problem with the Congress' senior leadership.

Some leaders were enjoying abroad when the party and the country needed them, he said.

Patel is the latest Congress leader to leave the party. Those who quit the party recently include former Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar, Amarinder Singh, Ashwani Kumar and RPN Singh, all long-time leaders of the party.

In his resignation letter, Patel claimed the Congress "only played to the role of a roadblock" over certain key issues in the country and was "merely reduced to opposing everything".

Patel claimed that despite several attempts to steer the Congress in the right direction, the party has constantly been working "against the interests of my country and our society".

"Hence, I wish to draw your attention to certain very important issues...Over the last three years, I have found that the Congress and its leadership, both at the central and state levels, have been merely reduced to

opposing everything.

Be it the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, revocation of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir, the implementation of GST, India wanted a solution to these issues for a long time and the Congress only played the role of a roadblock, he said in the letter.

When it came to issues related to India, Gujarat and the Patidar community, the Congress's only stand was to oppose whatever the central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi did, he said, amid speculation in state political circles that he may join BJP ahead of the Gujarat Assembly elections.

"The Congress today has been rejected in almost every state of India, because the party and its leadership have not been able to present a basic road map to the people, Patel said.

The lack of seriousness about all issues is a major problem with the party's senior leadership. Whenever I met senior leaders, I always felt that they were not really interested in hearing about problems concerning the people of Gujarat, he said.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### KP Employees

He said the administration will resolve the service-related matters concerning the Kashmiri Pandit employees within a week.

"Eventually, all government employees have to follow a code of conduct. We are looking into it.... They will not be posted in remote or vulnerable areas, the issue of couples being posted in different areas will also be addressed. They will be posted closer to their colonies so that their commuting time is also less," Pole said.

Asked about the civilians killed in "cross-firing" in Shopian over the last 10 days, Pole said the next of kin of the deceased will get all the benefits, including ex-gratia relief under the relevant SRO.

"There is a set procedure for investigating civilian killings. A magisterial probe has been ordered. The next of kin of the innocent victims will get whatever is due to them under the (relevant) SRO," he said.

Two civilians were killed in alleged cross-firing between security forces and militants in Shopian district in the last 10 days.

#### Rahut Bhat's Wife

Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Avny Lavasa also accompanied the Div Com.

The spokesperson said that the government has sanctioned the compassionate appointment of Bhat's widow Meenakshi Raina under SRO-43 of 1994.

"She has been appointed as Class-IV in the Pay level of SL 1(14800-47100) in the Government Higher Secondary School Nowabad, Jammu (School education department) on compassionate grounds under SRO-43 of 1994, read with SRO-199 of 2008 dated 04.07.2008," he added.

#### China Building

significantly from the depth area of Rudok to the region around the LAC in Pangong Tso.

The eastern Ladakh faceoff began on May 4-5 in 2020. India has been insisting on the restoration of the status quo ante prior to the standoff.

India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the eastern Ladakh row. As a result of the talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year on

the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

India has been consistently maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the LAC were key for the overall development of the bilateral ties.

Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control in the sensitive sector.

#### LG Vows To

Ashraf Mir, while expressing sorrow over Singh's death, said establishments like wine shop can become soft targets for militants.

Unfortunate loss of lives in Baramulla Wine shop attack. Wish those who eagerly pushed opening of wine shops had been wiser. They should have known these shops will become soft targets. Especially when the security atmosphere is so fragile and the administration utterly clueless, Mr tweeted.

#### Grenade Attack

A burqa-clad militant walked up to a newly-opened wine shop in Baramulla on Tuesday night, dropped a grenade inside through the porthole window, causing an explosion which killed Singh and left three other employees injured, police said.

The other injured employees have been identified as Govardhan Singh, Ravi Kumar, both residents of Billawar in Kathua and Govind Singh, a resident of Kangra in Rajouri.

As the mortal remains of Ranjit Singh reached his home in Bakra area this morning hundreds of mourners gathered there.

They kept his body on the highway, thereby blocking it and raised slogans against Pakistan sponsored militants, demanding an "end to killing of Hindus in Kashmir".

However, Singh was later cremated with the intervention of the top officials of the district.

The protesters demanded Rs 25 lakh compensation for the deceased's family and government job to one of the family members.

"We want that there should be an end to killing of Hindus in Kashmir valley. Day in and day out, Hindus are killed. First a Kashmiri Pandit was killed in his office and now a Dogra Hindu of Rajouri was killed. How long will they kill minority Hindus in Kashmir," one of Singh's kin Surjeet Singh said.

Ranjit Singh, who was very poor and falling

in BPL category, had gone there to earn livelihood but they killed him for "being a Hindu", he said.

Former army captain Hem Raj said "Lieutenant governor should announce Rs 25 lakh compensation for his family and a government job to his kin. We will continue to fight for that".

J&K BJP chief Ravinder Raina, who took part in the cremation, said targeted killings are evil designs of Pakistan to wound Kashmir and the neighbouring country has always shed blood of Kashmiri people.

In Jammu, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, Dogra Front and VHP held protests demonstrations against Pakistan and militants blaming them for "selective killings of Hindus in Kashmir".

#### Forest Fire Sparks

area near the border which spread to other forest areas, including Ghambhir, Nikka, Panjgraye, Brahamana, Moghala, officials said on Wednesday.

The fire also erupted in Kalakote's Kalar, Ranthal, Chingi forests.

"The fire came from across the border and also spread to LOC areas of Upper Kangdi and Dok Banyad", the official said.

The forest fires were brought under control, without human loss, they said.

Another massive fire broke out in the agriculture fields along the International Border (IB) in Jammu district, officials said.

The fire spread to several kilometers of area close to Beli Azmat border out post (BoP) of the BSF, they said, adding it was brought under control.

#### CBI Files Case

searches were made by CBI sleuths and incriminating documents, numerous bank account details, and other related documents were seized--(KNO)

#### HCI Worried Over

several initiatives for their welfare.

In response to the complaints raised by tourists in J&K, HAI argued that in an open and free economy like India, the price is determined by the market forces of demand and supply.

"The hospitality industry works on the same

principle and operates on system of dynamic pricing or Best Available Rate (BAR). Several other factors that impact the price of products and services are related costs, seasonality, location, market positioning, market segments, distribution channels among others," the Association stated.

It further said the hotel websites and booking aggregators display the room rates in a transparent manner and the traveller is free to choose from the options based on their budget and requirement.

Stressing that the hospitality industry has barely begun to recover as the pandemic subsided and the situation started to normalise, the Association requested the government to not disturb the recovery process and suggested to jointly work out a solution in the larger interest

#### Cyber Criminals

issued by the government.

Government organizations and authorities have especially been targets of these activities for a variety of reasons, the circular underlines.

"Of late such instances have been reported from various officers/officials of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, wherein, identities of senior level UT functionaries are being used along with emails, telephone numbers on platforms like WhatsApp and other messaging applications for conveying instructions/directions," it reads, adding, "The seriousness of the matter has necessitated issuing circular instructions to all the Departments to ensure that the identities of government functionaries are not misused by the cyber criminals".

Accordingly, the government enjoined upon all Administrative Secretaries, HoDs and Managing Directors of various Government Organizations and Corporations to authenticate any instructions or direction received from any government functionary before processing or acting upon them. "The department shall also sensitize their officers/officials regarding these cyber attacks/frauds," the circular reads, adding, "Onus of any adverse result of acting upon these unverified instructions/directions shall lie with the concerned officer/official. No action should be taken with respect

to such messages that are in violation of rules / instructions / guidelines under any pretext."

#### Six More Test

Covid-19 were detected in Kashmir Valley and the remaining two from Jammu division, taking the total number of people infected since the onset of the pandemic in J&K to 454159.

"Moreover, 03 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals from Jammu division," officials said.

Also, the officials said that the death toll in the pandemic remained unchanged at 4752 in J&K, as no fresh fatality was reported during the last 24 hours.

#### Rockslide Blocks

reported. Quoting local sources, the report said that the rocks, fortunately, didn't strike the houses and stopped on the road, blocking it completely.

The road is impassable, locals said alleging that work during the night on the Z-Morh tunnel has threatened their lives. They appealed to officials to allow the construction work during the day only.

Locals said that construction company officials along with the police from Gund and Gaganger police chowkis rushed to spot and pacified the fear-stricken families.

#### Gujarati Tourist

declared him dead.

After the completion of formalities, the body was handed over to his family members, reports said.

#### 2 Held With

During search, 4 Kgs of cannabis and Rs 4,49,000 in cash was recovered from the two accused -- Poopy and Asha -- residents of Rajeev Nagar, they said.

A case has been registered at the Bahu Fort police station, they said.

The police said Poppy was wanted in a criminal case.

The police said it is working to uproot the chains of drug supply in the region and thorough questioning of the accused is going on to know the origin of the drugs.



## Rotary Camp Achieves Feat Of 2500 Successful Surgeries: Pole

Says free 2nd Mega Health Camp in South Kashmir in September, registration to begin from June



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole flanked by Governor Rotary Club of India, Dr Rajiv Pradhan; Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Rather; Nodal Officers DDRCK, Dr Talat and Tahir Magray on Wednesday held a press conference at Directorate of Information, Kashmir to brief media regarding the milestones achieved during a week long Mega Health Camp held across three districts including Baramulla, Kupwara and Ganderbal.

Addressing media, Div Com stated that the camp was aimed to complete the back log of elective surgeries accrued due to the covid as these medical surgeries were deferred to reduce the pressure during pandemic period on health infrastructure and medical staff.

He informed that over 2500 surgeries were conducted during the Rotary Health Camp and added that although MHC concluded successfully, the camp shall continue to complete the surgeries of all the registered patients till June 02, 2022.

Sharing details about the dedicated operation theatres of the camp, Div Com said that about 14 theaters were continuously working from 8 am in the morning till 8 pm in evening during the week.

Meanwhile, he said that the Rotary surgeons will continue to visit the camp hospitals including District Hospitals of Kupwara, Ganderbal, Baramulla and Sub District Hospital Sopore to complete the pending further surgical procedures of those patients who require it.

While taking to media, Governor Rotary Dr Rajiv Pradhan thanked Div Com and Director HSK and said that the Health Camp was successful due their extensive and continued support.

He informed media that renowned specialists from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and other places of the country rendered their service to help

people of Kashmir. Pradhan said that Rotary has been always working to serve humanity even in difficult situations and terrains.

Recalling work done by Rotary in past, he said that the organization visited African continent 46 times and conducted 1.5 lakh surgeries besides adding that Rotary is spread across 184 countries while it has two clubs in Srinagar.

This Mega Health Camp established a bond between local doctors and Rotary specialists who worked together to achieve the feat of success, Dr Pradhan said.

This Mega Health Camp was attended by 43 renowned International surgeons and volunteers from Rotary Club who were supported by an additional Human Resource of around 450 persons in the form of Surgeons, Anaesthetics, paramedics and support staff deputed by Directorate of Health Services Kashmir & GMC Baramulla for this project.

Div Com said that these surgeries were a great success not only in numbers which we achieved during this Mega Health Camp but there were zero complications which is a proud moment for all of us and described the quality of work performed by the Surgeons of Rotary Club India.

Pertinently, the week long Camp which started on May 11 and concluded today on May 18, was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor of J&K at Sopore Sub District Hospitals on May 13.

On the occasion, Lt Governor had interacted with patients who had availed the benefit of free Health Camp and had also appreciated the medical fraternity, and members of Rotary International for keeping human service paramount to build a healthy society.

It is worth mentioning here that all these surgeries were done free of cost under AB PM-JAY Scheme (Golden Card) and no out of pocket expenditure was spent by the beneficiaries at all.

## Carpet Workshop, House Gutted In Bandipora Blaze

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** A Carpet workshop and a double-storey house were completely gutted in a mysterious fire incident in Sadunara village of Hajin in north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Wednesday late evening, locals said.

News agency GNS reported that that fire broke out in the carpet workshop belonging to Mohammad Ayoub Wagay and in a two-storey house of duo, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan, and Shahbaz Ahmad Khan of Potu Mohalla, in Sadunara village.

They said, soon after getting tip off, locals swung into action, adding later firefighters too reached the spot and were engaged in dousing the flames.

However, locals said carpets worth lakhs were completely destroyed and a house gutted in the mysterious fire incident.

They have appealed to the administration to depute a team of officials to the spot to assess the losses suffered by the owners and provide them early compensation.

Meanwhile, the cause of the mysterious fire is yet to be asserted.

## J&K Govt Creates Rs 500 Cr Film Development Fund For 5 Years

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has created Film Development Fund (FDF) in the Information department for the fiscal year 2022-23, for disbursement of subsidies envisaged in the J&K Film Policy 2021.

To effectively implement the ambitious J&K Film policy, the government last year allocated Rs 500 crore to be payable in the next five years for financially supporting the development of a vibrant film ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir. This policy is valid for 5 years from the date of notification, an official spokesperson said Wednesday.

According to the Film Policy, "starting from fiscal year 2022-

23, a separate head of account shall be created as Film Development Fund, in the Information Department and an annual budgetary allocation of Rs. 100 crore for the remainder term of the Film Policy shall be made by the Finance Department for disbursement of subsidies to the eligible beneficiaries/ film makers who have applied for the same".

Jammu and Kashmir Film Development Council (JKFDC) would be the single point of contact for supporting development of a vibrant film ecosystem in the UT and will exclusively oversee the implementation of the Jammu & Kashmir Film Policy.

To ensure effective implementation of Film policy and make

## Govt Claims Contrary To Ground Realities: Omar

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the claims of the government with regards to development and employment generation is contrary to ground situation.

Addressing a one day public convention at Kotranak, Rajouri, Omar urged the people to maintain communal harmony and brotherhood and reject those who are conspiring to divide people on the basis of religion, region and ethnicity.

"The reality is that all the claims made by them have fallen flat as there was no benefit of its decision on the ground. They talked about development, investment, jobs, peace and end to militancy but none of this happened over the past nearly three years," he said.

JKNC General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar, senior leaders Mian Altaf Ahmed, Javed Rana, Provincial President Rattan Lal Gupta, AG Malik, Pro-



vincial President YNC Aijaz Jan, DDC Chairman Naseem Liaqat, Dy Political Secretary to VP Muddassir Shahmiri were also present on the occasion.

"What we see in the media, hear from the government is not visible on the ground. It was claimed that Articles 370, 35-A and regional parties were halting the region's development prospects. To achieve this end, the incumbent government stripped the region of its status, downgraded it to UT, bifurcated it. The promises which were made by the ruling dispensation in the run up to the decisions aren't visible to any eye," he said.

"I've never seen any government, which is so daunted by a single word of criticism. People cannot seek answers from the government. There is no accountability. Had there been any achievement in the kitty of government, we would have certainly praised it. So far there has been none," he said, adding, "People across Jammu and Kashmir are suffering from the double whammy of inflation, development deficit and unemployment. The irony here is that people aren't even allowed to ask questions."

"Let alone ushering development and bringing investment, the situation with regards to basic facilities and public utility services in J&K, particularly Pir Panjal is deplorable. It is not the rich who are suffering, it is the poor who are at the receiving end of it. Usually people would flock to public representatives to have their issues redressed but these days they are at sea as to where to go to have their issues redressed," he added.

## Slight Respite From Hot Weather From May 20-24: MeT

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The meteorological department on Wednesday forecast light to moderate rain/thunderstorm in Jammu and Kashmir from May 20 to 24.

"Expect slight respite from hot weather, mainly in Jammu from 21st as a spell of light to moderate rain/thunderstorm is likely (60-70% chance) from 21st(Evening)-24th at many places of Jammu during 21-24th and at most places of Kashmir during 20-24th," a meteorological department official said.

"Thereafter, there's no forecast of any major rainfall but temp. (Temperature) will again rise gradually from 25th till next spell of rain."

Also, the night temperature recorded a drop across J&K amid light rains over plains and snowfall at few higher reaches.

A meteorological department official here said that Srinagar received 1.8mm of rain in the last 24 hours till 0830 hours. Srinagar recorded a low of 11.4°C against 12.5°C on the previous night. The temperature, he said, was normal during this time of the year for the summer capital.

Qazigund had 2.2mm of rain and recorded a low of 9.1°C



against 9.4°C on the previous night. The temperature was 1.1°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said.

Pahalgam received 4.7mm of rain and recorded a minimum of 5.8°C same as recorded on previous night. The temperature was 0.1°C below normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir during this time of the season, he said.

Kokernag had 0.2mm of rain and recorded a low of 8.6°C against 10.9°C on the previous night. It was 1.4°C 'below' normal during this time of the season for the place in south Kashmir, the official said.

Gulmarg had highest 10.6mm of rain and recorded a low of 3.2°C against 7.6°C on the previous night, the official said.

## District Election Officer Seeks Disqualification Of BJP Councilor

Agencies

**BANDIPORA:** District Election Officer Bandipora has asked Director Urban Local Bodies (ULB) Kashmir to take action against BJP Councilor in Municipal Council of north Kashmir for holding fair price shops which is against norms.

Sources privy to the development disclosed to a local news agency GNS that councilor of Ward No. 4 of Municipal Council Bandipora Saleema Akhter possesses Fair Price Shop (FPS) license for Ward No. 6 of Bandipora, thereby she kept the election department in the dark for several months.

"However the Incumbent President of MC Bandipora moved a complaint against the councilor before Election department, which was inquired by the Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora," they said.

The enquiry officer submitted his detailed report vide No:-ADDC/BPR./2022-23/482 dated:-10/05/2022, they said.

In this backdrop, they said, the case was deliberated upon and was perused threadbare.

"It came to note that disqualification of any representative falls under section 16 of Jammu & Kashmir Municipal Act 2000. It is further requested that the person in context has been elected and her candidature

has to be decided by sub-section 2 of section 16 of this act, for which Director Urban Local Bodies is empowered enough by virtue of the said Act and has to take a call as laid down in the sacred provisions of the Law," reads a letter of District Election Officer Bandipora addressed to Director Urban Local Bodies (ULB) Kashmir.

"You are as such requested to kindly take the appropriate action as warranted under norms as the elected representative is having FPS license for ward No.6 of Bandipora and is at the same time as an Elected Councillor from Ward No. 4 MC Bandipora," the letter added. (GNS)

## Education Festival Held At Handwara

Observer News Service

**KUPWARA:** In order to provide counselling and guidance to the students of Kupwara and Baramulla districts about various higher education options available in the leading colleges across India, Education department, Indian Army and Emaar Group of Counselling on Wednesday organized an Education Festival at Government Higher Secondary School, Handwara in Kupwara district.

The Chairman, District Development Council (DDC), Irfan Sultan Panditpori was the Chief Guest at the occasion while Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Khalid Jahangir was the Guest of Honour, an official spokesperson said.

He said Sector Commander, 7 Sector, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Handwara, DDC Members, BDC Chairpersons, Heads of various Consultancies, Deputy CEO, concerned officers and a large number of students representing Kupwara and Baramulla districts participated in the festival.

Addressing the gathering, the Chairman DDC Council expressed his gratitude to the organizers for conducting such a huge student counselling programme in the district. He stressed the need for holding more such festivals so that students of this border district get benefitted. He urged upon the student community to take advantage of this programme and get maximum benefits from it.

The Deputy Commissioner in his address advised students to focus on education and exploit the avenues of present day world. He said education is the

only tool, with which one can achieve highest goals of life.

Terming conduct of such education festival as first step towards success, the Deputy Commissioner said that right information at right time is prerequisite for achieving any success. He urged upon the students to take advantage of such avenues and decide their future goals according to their interest and attitude and wished them touch highest levels of success in the subjects they choose. He said counselling and guidance at right time is most important thing, students should take care of. He encouraged the students by reciting the famous couplet "Sitaroon kaagay Jahan Oor B han".

The Deputy Commissioner also stressed upon the Principal of the Higher Secondary School to take education/ school activities most seriously. He asked him to direct teaching staff to attend school with preparation of classes so that students could get due interest and benefits. He directed him to conduct sports and extra curricular activities and focus on performance and learning outcomes.

Other speakers also addressed the gathering.

Earlier, the students were provided counselling and guidance by various subject matter specialists for choosing their subjects according to their merit. Over 17 colleges from Punjab, Chandigarh, and Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, etc Participated in the festival and guided the youth to select the right courses to achieve their dreams.

Later, the certificates and mementos were provided to the students and the best performing counsellors and other dignitaries.

## Dheeraj Gupta Reviews Progress Of Works Under MTMP

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Dheeraj Gupta on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the progress of works taken up during the previous My Town My Pride (MTMP) 1.0 and discuss the detailed Action Plan for Information Education and Communication (IEC) activities for the proposed MTMP 2.0.

The meeting was attended by Mission Director SBM-U, Director, Urban Local Bodies Kashmir, Chief Town Planner, Kashmir and other officers from SMC and allied departments. Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Director, Urban Local Bodies, Jammu and other officers attended the meeting through video conferencing.

At the outset, Principal Secretary was briefed about the abstract of works taken up, works completed and under progress works under MTMP 2020-21. It

was given out that 552 works were approved under MTMP 1.0, out of which 529 were taken up. It was further given out that 444 works have been completed fully while work on the rest is in progress. Principal Secretary directed the concerned to complete the pending works at an earliest and start preparations for the MTMP 2.0 at the same time. My Town My Pride 2.0 is proposed to be held in near future and the meeting was held as a run up to the event.

Regarding the IEC activities to be taken in the run up to MTMP 2.0, Principal Secretary directed the concerned to submit physical and financial plan of IEC activities within one week. He asked them to go through the IEC activities of MTMP 1.0 and see what modifications are intended and the shortcomings that are to be removed. He said that the IEC activities organised should be such that are beneficial to the people and should reflect the expectations of the public.

## 9th International Art Of Giving Day Celebrated



Observer News Service

**BHUBANESWAR:** India along with several countries across the world on May 17 celebrated the 9th anniversary of Art of Giving (AOG), a noble and pious initiative of Prof. Achyuta Samanta to promote an equitable and harmonious relationship in the society.

The theme of this year's celebration was hope- harmony- happiness, with Prof Samanta disclosing moves to propose to the United Nations to proclaim May 17 as the Art of Giving day.

The AOG has transformed into a people's movement, bringing hope and happiness to millions, especially those living on the margins of society. "Our objective is to spread the message of peace and happiness. We want to make it a universally accepted belief through the UN proclamation, the Founder said. He remained optimistic that the 10th anniversary of AOG next year will be celebrated as a UN proclaimed day, much like how the world celebrates

June 21 as UN proclaimed International Yoga Day.

Governor of Odisha, Prof Ganeshi Lal, Chief Guest of the occasion, hailed the pathbreaking initiative of Prof Samanta and said his noble cause transcends all barriers and touches every soul in the society irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

"There is no difference between the commoner and the cosmos and that the quality of AOG," the Governor said at the packed gathering that was attended by well-known faces from different spheres of the State. The Governor drew parallels between AOG and devotion shown towards Lord Jagannath and said AOG is like "pulling down the heaven on earth".

Taking the audience back to 2013 when AOG was conceptualized, Prof Samanta recalled the moment when this idea crossed his mind. He said he was heading to the Bengaluru city from the airport when he felt that the achievements that has come his way were all because of compassion exhibited by way of giving out to the society.



## U-17 Football Talent Hunt Concludes At Bandipora



Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** An Under-17 Football Talent Hunt tournament organised jointly by District Administration and 3rd battalion CRPF concluded on Wednesday at SK Stadium, Bandipora with Higher Secondary School Hajin lifting the title. The team defeated High School Laharwapora 2-1 in the final.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmad was chief guest on the occasion. Padma Shree awardee Faisal Ali Dar was also present.

An official said eight teams participated in the tournament including a team from remote Gurez valley.

The tournament was part of civil action programme and was kick started on Sunday by Rakesh Sharma, Commandant 3rd Bn CRPF, along with SSP Bandipora Mohammad Zahid.

Earlier 1st semi-final was played between Govt Secondary School Bagh and Govt High

School Laharwapora that was won by Govt High School Laharwapora in penalty shootout. Second semi-final was played between Govt MHSS Kaloosa and Govt ML HSS Hajin that also concluded in penalty shootout and was won by ML HSS Hajin. The tournament attracted a large number of spectators.

While interacting with the sportsperson at the concluding ceremony, DC Bandipora lauded the efforts of the organisers for organizing the tournament and also appreciated the players for taking part in sports activities.

Commandant CRPF also spoke on the occasion and said they dreamed to enhance the capability of sports personal in making Bandipora skillful sports district.

He said the sports activities will help the youth to showcase their talent besides helping them to utilize their energy in positive direction. He said sports activities will help youth to stay away from drug menace and other anti social activities.

## GDC Bandipora Organises Annual Road Race

Infrastructure to be augmented to promote sports: Principal



Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** With a purpose to inspire youth towards sports and games for a healthy life style, the Department of Physical Education and Sports of HKM Degree College Bandipora on Wednesday organised an Annual College Road Race for boys from Aloosa Chowk to Patushai stop.

A total of 60-students participated in the road race. The race was flagged off by the Principal of the College Dr Mohammad Amin Malik at Aloosa chowk at 6:00 am which culminated at Patushai stop at a distance of 7kms.

Javid Ahmad Bhat BA 2nd semester student took the lead by sprinting ahead of the rest of the competitors and finished in 1st position with a comfortable lead. Zubair Shafi Khan, BA 2nd semester student finished at 2nd position and Javid Ahmad Reshi BA 2nd semester ended in 3rd position. Students Mushtaq Ahmad, Showkat Ahmad, Majeed Ahmad Parrey, Ahsan Sultan, Khlaid Ahmad Reshi, Aazim Nazir Mir, Khalid and Zameer Ah-

mad finished 4th to 10th position, respectively.

Later, prize distribution function was held in the Auditorium of the college where principal and staff awarded trophies, medals and cash prizes to winners.

Speaking on the occasion the principal of the college Dr Mohd Amin Malik congratulated all the participants along with the winners. He said that participation in Sports and games is not only to keep physical fitness but it has many other positive effects. He said that sports inculcates discipline, team spirit, togetherness and discourages defacement by drug addiction, stress and other problems.

The Principal informed that more infrastructure is being build to promote sports and games in the campus for the overall development of the students.

The convenor Sports & Physical Education Deptt Dr Sameer Mohiuddin talked about the different activities of sports going on in the college. Prof Abdul Gani highlighted the importance of the event.

## DYSS Anantnag Holds Sporting Events In The District

Says events witnessed participation of 1417 students

Observer News Service

**ANANTNAG:** The Department of Youth Services & Sports on Wednesday conducted various events at different levels including the Zonal and District level for keeping its Activity Calendar on run for both Boys and Girls.

In this series of events Table-Tennis, Chess, Carom and Badminton were organised for district-level under the age group of U-19 at HSS Doru, HSS Kokernag, HSS Mattan, HSS Bijnbehra, HSS Anantnag.

At GHSS Bijnbehra, Principal of the same institution inaugurated the event and while interacting with the students she congratulated the participating students for showing women empowerment by taking part in sports activities.

Similarly, Principal HSS Kokernag inaugurated events at the designated venue along with senior officials of the department and they passed best wishes for being active in sports. At the Zonal level Zone, Qazigund organised a kho-kho event for the age groups of U-14 and U-17 at the Zonal level among various schools at two different venues including YK Pora



Sports Stadium and HS Panzath for Boys, in which 516 students participated from various schools.

In another series of events Zone Verinag organised Kabaddi under the age group of U-14 and U-17 for Boys at GDC Verinag, in which 176 students participated from the whole zone. Zone Valloo organized a Volleyball tournament at the Zonal level for Boys at SS Drawala under the Age Group of U-14 and U-17, in which 128 students participated from various schools.

Zone Mattan witnessed a Zonal level tournament in Tug of war, Rope Skipping, and Jump rope for Girls at GHS Mattan under the Age Group of U-14 & U-17 in which 128 female students participated from various schools.

## Laxman Likely To Coach India On Ireland Tour

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman is likely to coach the Indian team during the two-match series in Ireland next month as it coincides with the Test squad's preparation in England.

Head coach Rahul Dravid will be with the Test squad in England ahead of the series beginning with the one-off Test from July 1.

The four-day practice game against Leicester ahead of the Test will be played from June 24-27 and that coincides with the two T20s in Ireland on June 26 and June 28.

"In all likelihood, Laxman will be with the T20 squad in Ireland as Dravid will be busy in England with the Test team," a BCCI source told PTI.

A similar situation arose last year when then head coach Ravi Shastri was with the Test team in England and Dravid, who was NCA head at that time,



travelled with the limited overs squad to Sri Lanka.

Laxman, who succeeded Dravid at NCA, had travelled with the triumphant India Under-19 side to the World Cup in the Caribbean earlier this year.

There is also a possibility that selectors pick different squads for England and Ireland series.

A full-strength team is ex-

pected to be picked for the England tour comprising one Test, three T20s and as many ODIs.

A week after the IPL final, India host South Africa for five T20 Internationals beginning June 9. The squad is expected to be picked on May 22 and all-format senior players like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah are likely to be rested.

## IPL 2022: RCB Face Gujarat Titans In Must-Win Game

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** Runaway leaders Gujarat Titans would look to continue their winning momentum ahead of the play-offs while Royal Challengers Bangalore need a big victory to keep their last-four stage hopes alive when the two teams face each other in their final IPL league match on Thursday.

Newcomers GT have so far had a dream opening season as they are already assured of a top spot in the standings with 20 points from 13 games.

RCB, on the other hand, have had a mixed bag this season, registering seven wins and six losses to occupy the fifth spot with 14 points from 13 matches.

But what could hurt RCB is their net run rate of -0.323. A win against GT would move them to 16 points but that might not be enough as they also need a few favourable results going their way.

Delhi Capitals, who are currently at fourth spot, can also secure 16 points if they beat Mumbai Indians in their last match and they have a much



better net run rate than RCB at +0.255.

With back-to-back wins, RCB had the momentum going their way but that fizzled out after a big 54-run loss to Punjab Kings in their last match.

Virat Kohli's woeful run continued as he managed just 20 in the last match but the stage is set for the former India captain to play an impact knock to make a turnaround in his form and the fortunes of RCB.

Skipper Faf du Plessis, Mahipal Lomror and Dinesh Karthik would also be looking to play a big knock after their bats re-

mained silent in the last few games.

Glenn Maxwell and Rajat Patidar have been getting starts but failed to convert them into big scores.

On the bowling front, Harshal Patel and Wanindu Hasaranga have been brilliant for RCB.

GT, on the other hand, are the side to beat in this IPL. Even if they lose on Thursday, the Hardik Pandya-led side will finish at the top, which means it will get two chances to reach the final.

For GT, the key to success in their inaugural season has been the team effort.

## US Football Equalises Pay In Milestone With Women, Men

Agencies

**WASHINGTON:** The U.S. Soccer Federation reached milestone agreements to pay its men's and women's teams equally, making the American national governing body the first in the sport to promise both sexes matching money.

The federation announced separate collective bargaining agreements through December 2028 with the unions for both national teams on Wednesday, ending years of often acrimonious negotiations.

The men have been playing under the terms of a CBA that expired in December 2018. The women's CBA expired at the end of March, but talks continued after the federation and the players agreed to settle a gender discrimination lawsuit brought by some of the players in 2019. The settlement was contingent on the federation reaching labour contracts that equalized pay and bonuses between the two teams.

Led by Alex Morgan and Megan Rapinoe, American women long have pressed for gender equity.

"I feel a lot of pride for the girls who are going to see this growing up, and recognize their value rather than having to fight for it. However, my dad always told me that you don't get rewarded for doing what you're supposed to do — and paying men and women equally is what you're supposed to do," U.S. forward Margaret Purce said. "So I'm not giving out any gold stars, but I'm grateful for this accomplishment and for all the people who came together to make it so."

Perhaps the biggest sticking point was World Cup prize money, which is based on how far a team advances in the tournament. While the U.S. women



have been successful on the international stage with back-to-back World Cup titles, differences in FIFA prize money meant they took home far less than the men's winners. American women received a \$110,000 bonus for winning the 2019 World Cup; the U.S. men would have received \$407,000 had they won in 2018.

The unions agreed to pool FIFA's payments for the men's World Cup later this year and next year's Women's World Cup, as well as for the 2026 and 2027 tournaments.

Each player will get matching game appearance fees in what the USSF said makes it the first federation to pool FIFA prize money in this manner.

"We saw it as an opportunity, an opportunity to be leaders in this front and join in with the women's side and U.S. Soccer. So we're just excited that this is how we were able to get the deal done," said Walker Zimmerman, a defender who is part of the U.S. National Team Players Association leadership group.

Women's union projections have compensation for a player who has been under contract to increase 34% from 2018 to this year, from \$245,000 to \$327,000. The 2023-28 average annual pay would be \$450,000 for a player

making all rosters, with the possibility of doubling the figure in World Cup years depending on results.

The federation previously based bonuses on payments from FIFA, which earmarked \$400 million for the 2018 men's tournament, including \$38 million to champion France, and \$30 million for the 2019 women's tournament, including \$4 million to the champion United States.

FIFA has increased the total to \$440 million for the 2022 men's World Cup, and its president, Gianni Infantino, has proposed that FIFA double the women's prize money to \$60 million for the 2023 Women's World Cup, in which FIFA has increased the teams to 32.

For the current World Cup cycles, the USSF will pool the FIFA funds, taking 10% off the top and then splitting the rest equally among 46 players — 23 players on the roster of each team. For the 2026-27 cycle, the USSF cut increases to 20% before the split.

After missing the 2018 World Cup, the men qualified for this year's World Cup in Qatar starting in November. The women's team will seek to qualify this year for the 2023 World Cup, cohosted by Australia and New Zealand. (AP)

## Anderson & Broad Return To England Test Squad Under Stokes



Agencies

**LONDON:** Veteran fast bowlers James Anderson and Stuart Broad were recalled to the England Test squad on Wednesday under new captain Ben Stokes.

Anderson and Broad were dropped for the tour of the West Indies earlier this year, which followed a stinging 4-0 Ashes loss in Australia.

But the 39-year-old Anderson and 35-year-old Broad will return for the three-test series against New Zealand next month as England begins a new era of leadership under Stokes and new coach Brendon McCullum, who is a former New Zealand international.

The first squad under Stokes

and McCullum contains two new faces in Yorkshire batter Harry Brook and Durham seam bowler Matthew Potts, who were called up for the first time. Joe Root was selected after giving up the Test captaincy after the series loss in the West Indies.

English cricket has endured a turbulent few months with Root, coach Chris Silverwood, the director of cricket and, most recently, the CEO, all stepping down, while the team sits at the bottom of the world test championship standings after losing its last four series and nine out of 14 Tests in that run.

The first step in England's "red-ball reset" comes against reigning Test champion New Zealand, with the series-opener at Lord's starting on June 2. (AP)

## Russian Gymnast Gets 1-Year Ban For Wearing Pro-War Symbol



Agencies

**LAUSANNE (Switzerland):** Russian gymnast Ivan Kuliak has been given a one-year ban for displaying a symbol on his uniform supporting the invasion of Ukraine.

Kuliak had taped the "Z" symbol — seen on Russian tanks and military vehicles in Ukraine and embraced by supporters of the war — to his vest for a medal ceremony at a World Cup event in March.

Along with the ban, Kuliak must return the bronze medal he won in parallel bars, the International Gymnastics Federation said.

The 20-year-old Kuliak had stood next to a gold medalist from Ukraine on the podium in Doha, Qatar.

"If the protective measures keeping Russian athletes from

competing are still in place on May 17, 2023, the ban shall continue and expire six months after the removal of said measures," the federation's disciplinary commission said in its ruling.

The commission found that Kuliak breached federation statutes of discipline, ethics, code of conduct and technical regulations "when he wore the letter Z" on his singlet during the competition and the award ceremony."

Kuliak, a former national junior all-around champion who did not compete at the Tokyo Olympics, can appeal within 21 days.

The panel said no violations were established against Russian delegation leader Valentina Rodionenko and coach Igor Kalashnikov. (AP)

## Canada Vs Iran Friendly In Vancouver Ill-Advised: PM Justin Trudeau

Agencies

**VANCOUVER:** Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says next month's soccer exhibition between his nation and Iran is ill-advised.

Preparing for its first World Cup since 1986, Canada hosts Iran on June 5 at B.C. Place Stadium in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"This was a choice by Soccer Canada," Trudeau said Tuesday. "I think it wasn't a very good idea to invite the Iranian soccer team here to Canada. But that's something that the organizers are going to have to explain."

Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 was shot down on Jan. 8, 2020, minutes after taking off from Tehran by an Iranian surface-to-air missile. The Canadian government says 55 Canadian citizens and 30 permanent residents were among the 176 people killed.

Canada Soccer did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The federal government has

said Canada's priority "is to seek answers and pursue justice by holding Iran accountable and pursuing reparations, while continuing to provide the families and loved ones of the victims with the support they need."

Canada also plays Curaçao at



Vancouver on June 9 and is at Honduras on June 13, both in the CONCACAF Nations League. No. 38 Canada opens the World Cup Group F in Qatar against second-ranked Belgium on Nov. 23, plays No. 16 Croatia four days later and No. 24 Morocco on Dec. 1.

No 21 Iran starts Group B against fifth-ranked England on Nov. 21, meets Wales, Scotland or Ukraine four days later and closes the first round against the 15th-ranked United States on Nov. 29. (AP)