



P3 CITY

DOZENS OF VILLAGES FALLING ALONG SRINAGAR RING ROAD DECLARED NO CONSTRUCTION ZONES

Dozens of villages falling along under construction Srinagar Ring Road from Galandhar (Pampore) to Ganderbal have been declared as no construction zone within 500 meters on both sides.

P5 THINK

KASHMIRI ARTISTS WHOSE CANVAS BECAME ANTIDOTE TO NEWS

If there's anyone who can turn an excruciating pain into a beautiful yet wrenching thing, then it has to be an artist. It takes immense dedication and commitment to carve a beauty especially from a place known for distressing events.



P7 STATE

MET PREDICTS WIDESPREAD RAINS WITH GUSTY WINDS TODAY

The meteorological department on Saturday forecast widespread rains accompanied with gusty winds in Kashmir Valley on Sunday. "Currently weather is generally cloudy



Quote!
Widom
Fears are nothing more than a state of mind
- Napoleon Hill

NEWS DIGEST

Patwari Caught With Rs 1.65L Bribe

Srinagar: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday arrested a Patwari for demanding and accepting a bribe for issuing revenue extracts to a man in Central Kashmir's Budgam district. According to an ACB spokesperson, **More on P6**

Two Teachers Suspended For Absence

Srinagar: Chief Education Officer, Kishtwar Sudershan Sharma on Saturday conducted a maiden virtual inspection of schools in the district and suspended two teachers found absent without leave. The CEO conducted the virtual inspection of GHS Sangram Bhatta, **More on P6**

J&K Logs 15 New Covid Cases

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir reported 15 new covid-19 cases while there was no death due to the pathogen in the last 24 hours, officials said on Saturday. They said that the ten of the cases were reported from Jammu, two each from Srinagar and Baramulla districts besides one from Reasi, **More on P6**

Auto Rickshaw Crushes Woman To Death

Srinagar: A woman was killed on Saturday after being run over by an auto rickshaw in North Kashmir's Baramulla district. Saleema Banoo was hit by a running auto rickshaw in her native Jalshere village of the district on Saturday, reports said. She sustained serious injuries in the accident and **More on P6**

No Survivors In Collapsed Ramban Tunnel

Nine More Bodies Retrieved, Death Toll Reaches 10; Rescue Operation Ends



Press Trust Of India

Banihal: Nine bodies were pulled out from the rubble of a landslide which hit one end of an under-construction tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway two days ago, taking the death toll in the incident to 10 on Saturday, officials said.

With the bodies of all the missing workers recovered, the two-day rescue operation ended late on Saturday evening. Three persons who survived were taken to hospital by the rescuers shortly after the incident on the intervening of Thursday and Friday. Earlier, the officials had said that a portion of the

under-construction tunnel at Khooni Nallah in Ramban district collapsed soon after the work on the project started.

But on Saturday, the deputy commissioner of Ramban Mussarat Islam quoted the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to say that a landslide had hit the mouth of the adit tunnel to T4.

"As clarified by NHAI, it is informed that there is no tunnel collapse near Khooni Nallah. A slide occurred on the mouth of the adit tunnel to T4 on Thursday night under which a labourer component of concessionaire company was working. Operation continues," Islam tweeted. The body of **More on P6**

Families To Get Rs 16L Compensation

A compensation of Rs 16 lakh will be provided to the family of each of the 10 labourers who died in the adit tunnel landslide on Jammu-Srinagar national highway in Ramban district, a senior government official said on Saturday. Ten workers five from West Bengal, two each from J&K and Nepal and one from **More on P6**

Azad Takes Dig At Govt's Normalcy Claims

'Tourism Boom In J&K Due To Scorching Heat, Not Any Better Situation Here'

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Veteran Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday said the current tourism boom in Jammu and Kashmir is due to the rising temperature in the rest of the country and not because of any improved situation in the Union territory.

Azad made the assertion, reiterating his stand on the Delimitation Commission report, saying that the

tailor-made report is in contradiction with the ground realities.

Azad, the J&K former chief minister, called for united efforts to finish militancy and also urged the government to accept the genuine demands of vulnerable sections of the society to ensure that they are not put in harm's way.

The government should not be happy over the increase in tourist arrivals (in Kashmir) and **More on P6**

Petrol Price Cut By Rs 9.5, Diesel By Rs 7

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Buckling under pressure, the government on Saturday cut excise duty on petrol by a record Rs 8 per litre and that on diesel by Rs 6 per litre to give relief to consumers battering under high fuel prices that have also pushed inflation to a record high.

The excise duty cut will translate into a reduction of Rs 9.5 a litre on petrol in Delhi and Rs 7 a litre in diesel after taking into account its impact on other levies.

Petrol price in Delhi from Sunday, when the excise cuts become effective, will cost Rs 95.91 a litre as against Rs 105.41 a litre currently while diesel will cost Rs 89.67 a litre as opposed to Rs 96.67 now.

Announcing the duty cut through tweets, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also said the government will give Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy to poor who got cooking gas connection under the Ujjwala scheme, for 12 cylinders in a year to help ease some of the burden arising from cooking gas rates rising to record levels.

A 14.2-kg LPG cylinder costs Rs 1,003 in the national capital. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries will get Rs 200 subsidy directly in their bank accounts and the effective price for them would be Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. **More on P6**

Will Contest J&K Polls With Seriousness: AAP

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Senior AAP leader and Punjab minister Harjot Singh Bains on Saturday said his party is going to fight the next assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir with all seriousness to ensure good governance in the Union Territory.

Bains, who is J&K election incharge of his party, said winds of change are sweeping the region as people from all walks of life are joining the party.

We are assigned the responsibility to build a robust organization. The work has already started with the joining of many prominent faces. We will work to strengthen the organization and will fight the assembly elections seriously, Bains told reporters here.

He said the party will identify good candidates and will not disappoint the people.

We want to replicate the good governance of Delhi and Punjab in Jammu and Kashmir. We are bound to provide a corruption free **More on P6**

No One Will Be Allowed To Create Disturbances In J&K: LG



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Terming terrorism as the gravest threat to peace and prosperity, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Saturday that no one will be allowed to create disturbances in Jammu Kashmir

"Terrorism is the gravest threat to peace and prosperity. On Anti Terrorism Day, let us resolve to eliminate terrorism and its ecosystem. I reaffirm our strong commitment to uphold peace & harmony and to defeat the forces of disruption threatening

human lives," Sinha said.

He made these remarks after administering Anti-Terrorism Pledge to the senior officials, DCs and SSPs here at Raj Bhawan to mark the observance of Anti-Terrorism Day, an official spokesperson said.

"No one will be allowed to create disturbances in Jammu Kashmir. We must join our efforts to demolish the terror activities and motivated propaganda being conducted from across the border. Society, especially the youth should work actively to

isolate organizations and individuals giving shelter and support to the enemy of humanity," the LG added.

Sinha, he said, also paid homage to the soldiers who laid down their lives to uphold country's unity and territorial integrity.

"The Day is observed to generate awareness in the country among all sections of people, about the danger of terrorism and violence and its effect on the people, society and the country as a whole," the spokesperson added. **More on P6**

Reviews Amarnath Yatra Preparations

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Saturday that his administration's priority is to ensure best facilities for the pilgrims participating in the annual Amarnath Yatra which is scheduled to begin next month. Sinha made these remarks while reviewing the preparations for the annual pilgrimage, at a high-level meeting in Raj Bhawan on Saturday, **More on P6**

56 KP Teachers Shifted To Safer Zones In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As Kashmiri Pandit employees continue to stage demonstrations seeking relocation from the Valley, the department of education on Saturday shifted at least 56 KP teachers from vulnerable parts of this capital city to the safer zones.

"In the interest of administration, the transfer and adjustment of teachers (PM's Package) figuring in the list forming Annexure to this order is ordered with immediate effect," reads an order issued by the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Srinagar.

It further stated that the teachers shall draw salary at their new place of posting on

the post held by them which is shifted from present place to the place where adjusted by virtue of this order.

"Before implementing the order, it shall be strictly ensured that the transferees are holding genuine appointment on substantive basis in school Education Department and do not belong to Fake/Fraud/Long-Leave/or any other category which may be an impediment in implementation of the order," it added.

The transfer of the teachers appointed under the Prime Minister's Special Package comes ten days after a KP employee Rahul Bhat was shot dead by unknown militants inside his office in Chadoora area of Central **More on P6**

Safety Audit Of All Govt Buildings Ordered



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday ordered a fire safety audit of all the government buildings "immediately".

"It is hereby ordered that the Director General, Fire and Emergency Service shall carry out fire safety audit of all government buildings in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir immediately," reads a government order.

"All the concerned Administrative Secretaries shall take immediate corrective action in light of the Fire Safety Audit Reports so furnished to **More on P6**

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Govt Ends Physical Verification For New Appointees

To Be Done Online From Next Month

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has done away with the physical verification on the first appointment to any position in the government which shall now be processed digitally through a specially designed web portal and shall be completed within a month's time.

"A web-based application "Employee Verification System" (EVS) has been developed by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir for undertaking the process of verification of employees' character and antecedents to make the system transparent

and minimize the procedural delays that hamper the efficient and speedy processing of verification," reads a circular issued by government.

"The EVS portal has been developed and made operational through a web-based online system. The web application is available on the URL: <https://evs.jk.gov.in>."

Various training sessions regarding the web application have been imparted to the appointing authorities, it underlined. Besides, it said, a number of training sessions have already been imparted to all the concerned on the process of Vigilance Verification, which is fundamentally similar to Employee Verification System.

Accordingly, the **More on P6**

J&K Has 13th Highest Number Of Rich People In India

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar: When it comes to settling for a comfortable life, people from Jammu and Kashmir definitely know what suits them and this is exactly what the latest edition of National Family Health Survey for 2019-21 reveals.

A significant analysis of the data reveals that despite years of lockdowns and unrest, J&K has managed to attain 25.2 percent which is the 13th largest & highest number of wealthy people across India.

25.2 percent of the population in J&K falls in the highest wealth quintiles, followed by Gujarat (27.4%) and Maharashtra (27.9%). Seventy nine percent of the population



in Chandigarh falls in the top wealth quintiles making Chandigarh having the largest number of wealthy people in India, followed by Delhi (68%)

and Punjab (61%).

However, the National average of India is 20 percent, where the wealthiest households are concentrated in urban

areas, with 74% of the urban population in the two highest wealth quintiles, as opposed to 54 percent rural population which falls in the two lowest

wealth quintiles.

As per NFHS, there are five wealth quintiles in India varying from lowest, second, middle, fourth and highest. Among the lowest quintile, NFHS noted, 10.2 percent of the population in J&K falls in this category, while 16.5 percent were recorded in the second category. "20.8 percent of the population falls in the middle quintile and 27.2 percent falls in the fourth wealth quintile. However, 25.2 percent of the population in J&K falls in the highest wealth quintile," the report noted.

In terms of having a population with lowest quintile, J&K has only 10.2 percent of the population falling in this category which remains much better than larger **More on P6**



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2

MONKEYPOX: What Is It And How Can We Prevent The Spread?

The Conversation

The World Health Organization has confirmed about 80 cases of monkeypox with recent outbreaks reported in 11 countries, according to a statement Friday from the global health agency. Health authorities have said the cases are not a cause for panic, but to remain vigilant for symptoms if you have just returned from overseas.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is caused by an orthopoxvirus that is closely related to the virus that caused smallpox, variola. Smallpox only infected humans, but monkeypox is an animal virus that occasionally infects humans after they are bitten or scratched by a monkey or other animal. It is a respiratory virus and can also spread to humans without contact, probably through aerosols.

However, it does not usually spread easily between humans, and typically only in close contacts. Studies have found about 3% of contacts of a monkeypox case will be infected.

A week or two after exposure, infection starts with fever, headache, swelling of the lymph nodes and muscle ache. Skin eruptions usually appear within one

to three days of the fever commencing, and in most cases affect the face, hands and feet.

There are two types of the virus, one which has a fatality rate of about 1% and one with a fatality rate of about 10%. The UK outbreak appears to be the less severe type, but 1% is similar to the fatality rate for COVID, so it is still a concern. It is more severe in children.

Why is it emerging now?

It was first identified in humans in 1970, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is a re-emerging disease that's been causing large outbreaks in Nigeria and DRC since 2017. Scientists have puzzled over why a previously rare infection is now becoming more common.

The vaccine against smallpox also protects against monkeypox, so in the past, mass vaccination against smallpox protected people from monkeypox too.

It is 40 years since smallpox was declared eradicated, and most mass vaccination programmes ceased in the 1970s, so few people aged under 50 have been vaccinated.

There are even fewer in Australia, where mass smallpox vaccination was never used, and an estimated 10% of Australians have been vaccinated.



The vaccine gives immunity for anything from five to 20 years or more, but may wane at a rate of about 1-2% a year. Our research shows waning of immunity from smallpox vaccination may explain the increasing outbreaks of monkeypox it is more than 40-50 years since mass vaccination ceased.

Current outbreak

In September 2018, a case of monkeypox occurred at a naval base in Cornwall, UK, in a person who had travelled from Nigeria.

Simultaneously, a second case occurred in Blackpool in an unrelated person returning from Nigeria, and a nurse also became infected in the hospital.

In the current outbreak, the first case in the UK had travelled from Nigeria, where there have been over 500 cases and 8 deaths since 2017.

The current outbreak in the UK is the largest outside of Africa and has spread to many countries in Europe, North America and now Australia.

Clusters have occurred among men who have sex with men, a pattern not seen be-

fore.

The initial importation could have spread at a venue or within a community that resulted in more spread in the same group. This is an unusual outbreak, with unrelated cases in different locations in the UK. This could be explained by substantial numbers of asymptomatic infection, but asymptomatic infection is uncommon and usually in people who have had the smallpox vaccine.

In a well-studied outbreak in the US linked to imported animals, only three in 20 cases were asymptomatic, and they had been vaccinated. The other 17 cases all had the rash.

Most people infected in the current epidemic are too young to have been vaccinated, so substantial asymptomatic infection is unlikely.

Further, smallpox does not transmit in asymptomatic people, so it is unlikely monkeypox will be very different.

Serological studies to measure asymptomatic infection are being done in the UK and should shed more light on this hypothesis.

Hopefully further investigations can help us understand the epidemiologic links between cases in the UK and elsewhere.

This is the first time there has been travel-related spread from outside of the African continent, where the virus is endemic in animals.

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: International Day of Yoga Jingle Contest 2022

Description: International Day of Yoga Jingle Contest 2022 is a contest for Indian students above 18 years of age. The contest is being organized by the Ministry of Ayush (MoA), Government of India to drive awareness and adoption of yoga by people of all ages.

Eligibility: Open for candidates who are at least 18 years of age.
Prizes & Rewards: Cash prize

and specialisation in Civil Engineering, Civil Engineering (Construction Technology with relevant skills and interests.

Prizes & Rewards: INR 10,000 per month
Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2022
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/AIC7

Scholarship Name 3: Nursing Scholarship, Sasakawa India Leprosy Foundation 2022-23



of INR 25,000
Last Date to Apply: 21-06-2022
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/IDJ7

Scholarship Name 2: AICTE Internships for Civil Infrastructure 2022

Description: AICTE Internships for Civil Infrastructure 2022 is an initiative by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for B.E./B.Tech. degree holders to work in Civil Infrastructure at Varanasi Smart City under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Govt of India.

Eligibility: Open for candidates having a B.E./B.Tech. degree

Description: Nursing Scholarship, Sasakawa India Leprosy Foundation 2022-23 is an initiative by the Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF) for students residing in self-settled leprosy colonies who want to pursue higher studies.

Eligibility: Open for candidates below 17 years of age residing in a self-settled leprosy colony and who want to pursue a B.Sc. Nursing (Basic) & GNM degree. At least one parent of the candidate or the candidate have had leprosy.

Prizes & Rewards: Variable awards
Last Date to Apply: 05-06-2022
Application mode: Online applications only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/FNS7

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MUFFASIL (R&B) DIVISION BUDGAM

ENGINEERING COMPLEX BUDGAM PIN NO.191111

E-MAIL:- XENRNBDIVBUD@GMAIL.COM, PHONE-FAX:- 01951-255208

TENDER NOTICE

E-TENDERING NIT NO.43-MDB OF 2022-23/3126-46 DATED:-20/05/2022

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

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (Rs.)	Earned Money Rs.	Time of	Class of	M.H
1	Construction of Walking tracks for public Park at Housing Colony near Sumo Stand Budgam	Rs.9.66 Lacs	Rs.600/-	Rs.	25 Days	"CEE" "DEE"	FC Grants
2	Development of Public Park Near Graveyard at Ompore Budgam	Rs.6.02 Lacs	Rs.300/-	Rs.	15 Days	"CEE" "DEE"	FC Grants
3	Development of Public Park at Housing Colony Ompore Near Sumo Stand Budgam	Rs.0.63 Lacs	Rs.200/-	Rs. 1260/-	10 Days	"DEE"	FC Grants
4	Development of Public Park near Astan Sharief at Ompore Budgam.	Rs.0.22 Lacs	Rs.200/-	Rs. 440/-	08 Days	"DEE"	FC Grants

Position of AAA = Accorded vide No. MC/BUD/21-22/264 of 2022 dtd:-30/3/2022

Position of TS = Accorded

Position of funds: Available/Committed

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, 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 as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	20-05-2022
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 20-05-2022 01.00 PM
3.	Bid submission Start Date	20-05-2022 from 03.00 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	27-05-2022 upto 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids	28-05-2022 at 11.00A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam
6	Submission of Performance Security (PS)	Within 7 days of receipt of LOA. (The bidder has to provide 3% of allotted Cost as Performance Security within 7 days after opening of Financial Bid) in shape of CDR/FDR/BG

No: EE/MDB/3126-46
DATED:-20/05/2022

DIPK-2383/22

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Muffasil (R&B) Division
Budgam,

Srinagar Municipal Corporation OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RIGHT RIVER WORKS DIVISION

CORRIGENDUM

Kindly read name of work as Repairs to 2nd Toilet at Nehru Park near Police Station(near CT/PT) instead of Repairs to toilet a Nehru Park near police station advertised vide this office NIET No.01 of 2022-2023 dated:17-05-2022 reflected at serial No.01 for an advertised cost of Rs.3.92 lacs.

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the Niet.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Right River Works
Division Sgr. Municipal
Corporation
DIPK-NB-1021/22

No.SMC/EERRWD/434-40.
Dated: 18/05/2022.

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education

BRANCH OFFICE MAGAM

The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original marks certificate of 12th under Below mentioned particulars
Name : Hafeezulla Ganie S/o Assdulla Ganie
R/o Pinjoora

Details of Marks Certificate lost
Higher Secondary School Examination (class 12th)
Roll No 2430264 Session /Year Annual . Regular 2018



Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Marks Card. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the same before undersigned with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original marks card is teated as cancelled.

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2 Petrol Pumps Seized For Short Delivery

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Legal Metrology department on Saturday seized and registered cases against two petrol pumps for delivering a shorter quantity of fuel to the consumers.

In one of the cases, it was observed that 6 Nozzles of a Petrol Pump located on National Highway at Srinagar were delivering short fuel by about 30 ml against every 5 Liters. All the Nozzles of the outlet were seized on spot and the case was registered under section 30 of Legal Metrology Act, 2009.

The department has earlier received a complaint from the consumers in which it was alleged that few Petrol Pumps across Srinagar were indulging in unfair trade practices and were looting Consumers by using various tricks against them. The LMD soon inspected various Outlets during which two Petrol Pumps were found violating the Law and were subsequently seized.

In another similar case, a Petrol Pump was inspected which was found delivering short fuel to the consumers and seven Nozzles of the Outlet were seized for similar violations.

At present, two such Petrol Pumps are under seizure and on the basis of the charge sheet, action as warranted under law will be initiated against them. The inspection drive will be continued in the coming days.

The department has informed consumers to check the quantity on their own by using the certified 5 Litre measure which is available with every Petrol Pump and in case a Petrol Pump refuses to do that, a complaint can be lodged with the Legal Metrology Department.

Conference On Contemporary Business Trends Begins At NIT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A two-day international conference on contemporary business trends in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)'s Young Indians (YI) began at National Institute of Technology (NIT) on Saturday.

The conference is being organized by the Department of Humanities, Social Science and Management, and its inaugural session was presided over by Amit Sharma, Secretary, Administrative Reforms Inspections (ARI) Training and Grievances Department Government of J&K.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Amit Sharma said the past two years were challenging for the business community at regional, national and international levels.

"The impact of the COVID-19 is being felt by all businesses across the globe and it also helped us to overhaul our system," Sharma said. He exhorted students to become job creators rather than job seekers. There is a need for determination, not money, to become successful game changers in society," Sharma said.



A Two Day Flower show was organized by the Department of Floriculture at the Botanical Garden to provide a platform for flower growers to showcase their flowers. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Dozens Of Villages Falling Along Srinagar Ring Road Declared No Construction Zones

Srinagar: Dozens of villages falling along under construction Srinagar Ring Road from Galandhar (Pampore) to Ganderbal have been declared as no construction zone within 500 metres on both sides.

A Govt notice has informed general public and the agencies intending to erect any building or structure within 500 metres of the under-construction Ring Road from Gallandhar to Ganderbal in Phase I and Phase-II to desist from the activity.

"Whereas; J&K has a limited land resource available for urbanization and development activities warranting a new growth strategy driven by its social, economic, geographical and climatic factors. Since the new developments in suburbs are happening in areas having higher vulnerability to floods, earthquakes, etc and the unabated urban sprawl is constantly devouring limited prime agricultural lands, ecological resources, wetlands and water bodies leading to socio-economic, environmental and livelihood challenges. As such, there is a need for restructuring the existing urban planning and development process by introducing the planning tools which will usher into a new era of planned and sustainable

development of the city," the order reads. "Whereas; there is a growing consciousness that urban planning should be self-financing with minimum burden on local authorities or the Government in terms of land acquisition. In this direction, land pooling and plot re-adjustment schemes are a very effective tool which has been successfully used by the progressive states in India. Land pooling is emerging as a long-term urban development strategy to ensure the availability of serviced urban land for controlled target-oriented outcome based urban growth. The scheme is a "win-win" proposition in which landowners receive serviced land with incremented value and the development agency controls haphazard fringe development and promotes planned urban growth."

The order reads that, "Whereas; the Government of Jammu & Kashmir having realized the importance of this planning tool, has decided to prepare TP schemes for the areas within 500 metres around the upcoming Srinagar Ring Road from Galandhar to Ganderbal. In this connection, a Divisional Level Steering Committee headed by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir has been constituted by the

Government vide Government Order No: 328-JK(GAD) of 2022 Dated: 28 03-2022 mandated to prepare and implement the Town Planning Schemes (TPS) on both sides of the upcoming Ring Road or in greenfield areas or listed TPS areas envisaged in the Master Plan Srinagar-2035."

It states that "Whereas; for efficient community driven land management along both sides of the Ring Road, the formulation of Town Planning Schemes is a viable way forward for planned and sustainable development of transitional areas which will undergo rapid and extensive transformation after the completion of this corridor. With an average size of 200 Ha, about 30 TP Schemes are proposed to be prepared on both sides of the Ring Road for a distance of 500 meters from its edge."

The order reads that now, in the interest of planned development, harnessing the potential of the upcoming Ring Road for creating better infrastructure and job opportunities, I, Pandurang K. Pole (IAS), Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir as Chairman of the Committee constituted vide Government Order: 328-JK(GAD) of 2022 dated 28.03.2022 issues a notification under section 5 of the J&K Town Planning Act 1963 which

reads as under:

"That in respect of areas falling within 500 metres from the boundary of under construction Ring Road from Gallandhar to Ganderbal, the Government of J&K intends to prepare the Town Planning Schemes (TPS) u/s (7) of the o J&K Town Planning Act 1963 on its both sides for its orderly and planned development," the order states.

It says, that accordingly, a notice u/s (10) of the J&K Town Planning Act 1963 is given that no person shall, within the area of 500 metres from the boundary of Ring Road, erect or proceed with any building or work on, or enter into or carry out a contract in respect of land within the area so notified for the TP Schemes for a period of two years or till the formulation of TP Schemes for the area whichever is earlier. Accordingly, moratorium is placed on the sale and purchase of the land within the area of 500 metres from the boundary of Ring Road and where the erection of any building or structure is carried out by any person or an agency both private and government, the building or structure so raised or under construction shall be liable for demolition under Section 13 of the J&K Town Planning Act 1963

DGP Takes Stock Of Damages By Fire Incidents

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Director General of Police J&K Dilbag Singh on Saturday visited Traffic Police Headquarters and Kothibagh Police Station to take stock of damages caused by the fire incidents that took place on 18th and 20th May 2022. The DGP was apprised by officers about the cause of the fire and the details of the damages to property, equipment and records.

He directed the officers to take all necessary steps to update the records of these

establishments. He directed for starting the work of renovating the blazed part of these buildings urgently and also emphasized that office work of the department and services provided to the people at these places should not get affected.

He impressed upon all the officers to take necessary measures so that such incidents do not occur in future. He also directed the officers to revisit the security plans and check the drills and standard operating procedures regularly

with regard to manmade and natural disasters of all the police establishments.

He impressed upon officers to fill the gaps if any on urgent basis and address the issues if found during the review of the drills and gadgets of the police establishments.

The DGP was accompanied by ADGP Traffic J&K Shri T Namgyal, SP East Shri Sahil Sangral and other concerned and jurisdictional officers of traffic headquarters and Srinagar East.

It is pertinent to men-

Dr Farooq Visits Fire Affected At Lati Mohalla, Mir Behri

Agencies

Srinagar: National Conference (NC) President and MP from Srinagar Dr Farooq Abdullah on Saturday visited Lati Mohallah, Mir Behri Dal Rainawari to express solidarity with those whose houses were gutted in a massive fire a few days ago.

Dr Farooq promised all possible help to fire victims. He was accompanied by senior leader Aga Syed Mehmood and other leaders.

He assured all possible help to the victims and implored upon divisional administration to reach out to the affected with rescue and relief.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the Number Plate of my vehicle Bering Regd no jk05d7126 in between kunzar to dobiwaan . Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the Police Station Kunzar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd amin ganie
S/o ghulam qadir ganie
Ro khaminderpora tangmarg

x,r

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT AYUSH OFFICER SRINAGAR

e-mail – sgradmo@gmail.com

TENDER NOTICE

On behalf of Hon'ble Lt. Governor J & K, sealed tenders affixed with Ten Rupees Revenue Stamps affixed are invited from authorized Registered Firms/ Dealers / Suppliers /Establishments of J & K UT for below mentioned items for use during Shri Amar Nath Ji Yatra-2022 via Sonamarg to be supplied to the office of undersigned . The quotations should reach to the office of undersigned by or before 1st June -2022 up to 4:00pm

- 01 Supply of Water proof tents and allied Material on hire basis .
- 02 Supply of Bedding and furniture and allied material on hire basis
- 03 Supply of Edibles viz, Rice, Sugar , Milk , Tea & Condiments etc.
- 04 Pony packs and riding pony (Holy Cave)
- 05 Hiring of Vehicle for Loading unloading of Ayush Medicine/ equipment's/Furniture etc

The detail of camps, articles and terms and conditions can be collected from the office of the undersigned upto 26th of May 2022. The tenders should be submitted separately for each of the items mentioned above.

The tenders will be opened on 03rd of June 2022 at 2:00pm.The tenderer can remain present on the opening of the tenders if they desire so. The tenders should be accompanied by a CDR of Rs. 5000/=only from any branch of Jammu & Kashmir Bank pledged to the undersigned. The successful tenderer will have to execute the supply order well before the onset of Yatra-2022 & will be wholly and solely responsible for any loss to the state exchequer.

No.-:Est/AYUSH/DAO/sgr/Kmr/295-97
Dated:-21 / 05 / 2022.

District AYUSH Officer
Srinagar
Nodal officer Yatra -2022
Via Sonanamarg-GBL

DIPK-2427/22

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



HIGHWAY STATUS

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



**HIJRI
CALENDAR**
20 Shawwal
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 47
ZUHR	12:27
ASR	5:24
Magrib	7:33
ISHA	9: 09

This Day In History

- 334 BC - The Macedonian army of Alexander the Great defeats Darius III of Persia in the Battle of the Granicus
- 1849 - Abraham Lincoln receives a patent (only US President to do so) for a device to lift a boat over shoals and obstructions
- 1902 - US President Theodore Roosevelt signs a treaty with Mexico under which both countries agree to submit a long-standing dispute over interest payments to the Court of Arbitration at The Hague
- 1906 - Wright Brothers are granted a patent for their "flying machine," having applied for one 3 years earlier (patent no. 821,393)
- 1919 - A. E. Douglass establishes the relative dates of two archaeological sites using ancient wood samples, marking a major step forward in the dating of archaeological sites.
- 1926 - Chiang Kai-shek replaces communists in Guomindang China
- 1939 - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini sign "Pact of Steel"
- 1940 - UK Premier Winston Churchill flies to Paris to decide with General Maxime Weygand a strategy to save the city
- 1941 - British troops attack Baghdad
- 1942 - Mexico declares war on Nazi-Germany & Japan
- 1943 - Stalin disbands Komintern
- 1947 - 1st US ballistic missile fired
- 1950 - Celal Bayar elected President of Turkey
- 1955 - Oldest man to drive in the Grand Prix (aged 55) finishes 6th
- 1957 - South Africa's government approves race separation in universities
- 1967 - Egyptian president Nassar closes Straits of Tiran to Israel
- 1972 - Ceylon becomes Republic of Sri Lanka as its constitution is ratified
- 1972 - US President Nixon begins visit to Moscow

From KO Archives

Major Among 3 Soldiers Killed

Observer News Service—

JAMMU - An Army Major was among three soldiers killed and an equal number injured when militants ambushed their patrol party in Rajouri district Friday afternoon.

Brigadier General Staff (bgs) 16 corps, Brig. Dhruv Katoch, told reporters the militants ambushed a patrol at Mouhla area in Rajouri district, 160 km north of Jammu, at 11 a.m. "The attack left Major Satyajet Shinde and three soldiers dead," Katoch said.

The attack took place when an army patrol party of 14 Maratha Light Infantry was on its way for an operation in Dharamshal area of the district following a tip off that militants were present in the area, the sources said.

Militants had set-up ambushes at Bandri area in Kalarara forests in the belt and as the troops led by Major Shinday reached the place militants hurled the grenades and opened indiscriminate fire around 1300 hours, they said

Troops took positions and fired back, they said adding that in the subsequent fire fight four army personnel were killed and four others injured.

The bodies of dead and injured were ferried in a helicopter to military hospital in Rajouri, reports said. The condition of two injured jawans is reported to be serious, they said. Hizbul Mujahedin has claimed responsibility for the attack. Brig Katoch was quoted by reports Friday evening saying that additional troops have been sent to the area and a fierce gunbattle was going on.

Meanwhile in a separate incident in the same district an army jawan was critically injured in a landmine blast near the Line of Control (LoC) to-day. Army sources said Sepoy Ajay Kumar inadvertently stepped over a landmine near LoC in Rajouri while he was on routine patrol in the area. In the explosion, Ajay sustained critical injuries. He was airlifted to army command hospital in Udhampur

Another soldier was injured when militants triggered a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at Komoh Kulgam in south Kashmir today.

(Kashmir Observer, 22 May, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Twitter Talks



“Problem of US with Russia & China is that it refuses to accept that unipolar world led by it is long over!”
@PravinSawhney

“Appreciating people's efforts and successes is good but claiming to be the first in any field is exaggeration and dismissive of people who have been doing sth for years but never got lucky to feature in media. Why are K's getting so obsessed with the firsts lately?”
@ArshieQureshi

ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Ghani And Kashmir

The Persian language came to Kashmir with the great Sufi saint, Mir Syed Ali Hamadani in the thirteenth century. The great saint’s arrival was epoch-making in that it changed the entire spectrum of this Elysian land, transformed the society, and ushered in a new social milieu. Besides teaching Islam, the Persian language and literature played an important role in shaping the Kashmiri personality. In fact the Iranian and Central Asian influences were so deeply assimilated by the Kashmir society that they became a part its ethos. This alien language as a matter of fact found a second home in Kashmir. Many great works in literature, theology and social sciences were produced by Kashmiri scholars in this language. More than a thousand Persian poets were born and cradled in this land.

One of the greatest Persian poets produced by Kashmir was Mulla Muhammad Tahir Ghani Kashmiri. Whether or not this great Kashmiri poet has been accorded a high position in the realm of literature in Iran is not point of discussion here, but there can be no denying that he is the greatest Kashmiri Persian poet. Born in 1630 A.D., three years after the accession of Shah Jahan to the Mughal throne, he dominated the literary scene in Kashmir during his period. Unlike his contemporaries Sheikh Yaqoob Sarfi and Mulla Mohsin Fani, he did not move out to complete his education and had his education in his own city. It is stated that he wrote about one lakh verses, but not one in praise of any nobleman or king. This great son of the soil over a period of time had emerged as an icon of the Kashmiri identity and it was in recognition of his contributions that a library and reading room was established at his birth place in Razver Kadal in a house supposed to belong to his progeny. And it was also in recognition of his contribution that a sports stadium was developed near his birth place but the condition of this reading room and stadium tells a horrifying tale of government’s apathy towards the great poet. After repeated protests by scholars and intellectuals over a decade ago, the state government had demolished the old structure housing the Ghani Memorial Library and Reading Room and laid foundation of a new building at the site.

One does not honour such an illustrious son of the soil by mere promises. More self-respecting people enshrine the memory of their great ones with lofty memorials and magnificent gestures. In a land where political leaders of even modest contributions are remembered by naming hospitals, roads and gardens after them, it is a pity that such a towering literary and intellectual figure as Mulla Ghani has no fitting landmark to remind him to posterity.

The contempt of our leadership to intellectual pursuits and attainments, and its penchant either for self-aggrandizement or sycophancy, is littered all over Kashmir. This is a pity for a nation that prides itself for its scintillating cultural past. Kashmiris can make amends for this pathetic trend by forcing the government of the day to give Ghani his rightful place in the intellectual life of the state.

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



Feature Image Credits: The Economist

Global Security Initiative, A
New Middle Kingdom?

ANURAAG KHAUND

History and tradition have always played an influential role in defining the domestic and foreign politics of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This was particularly evident in the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which was based upon the legacy of the silk routes (both overland and maritime) which connected the Chinese empire with kingdoms of Europe as well as the African continent. In addition, the invocation of two historical figures by president Xi Jinping while launching the BRI Zhang Qian, the discoverer of the overland Silk Route in the late second century BCE and Zheng He, the leader of the Ming maritime voyages of exploration during the first half of the fifteenth century only underline the linkage between China's past and its current foreign policy initiative. Such a connection between the past and the present can also be gleaned in the Global Security Initiative (GSI) recently announced by Xi Jinping in the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference on 21 April, 2022.

As per Xi Jinping, the Global Security Initiative is a framework aimed at developing the 'vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and work together to maintain world peace and security; stay committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, uphold non-interference in internal affairs....reject the Cold War mentality....and say no to group politics and bloc confrontation; stay committed to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously, uphold the principle of indivisible security....and oppose the pursuit of one's own security at the cost of others' security. Similar iterations about the GSI have been made by Foreign Minister Wang Yi as well as Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng. Since much has been written about the GSI as a counter to Indo-Pacific grouping such as QUAD and AUKUS, hence the aim of the article is not to repeat the same arguments. Rather the focus is on the oft-repeated concept of 'indivisible security' of the GSI and its possible linkage to the Chinese concepts of tianxia and zhongguo.

One might notice that in the speeches introducing the GSI by both Xi as well as Yucheng, the focus has been on shared challenges especially COVID 19 pandemic as well as climate change, terrorism and cyber security which cannot be tackled by any country alone but needs to be addressed through united and coordinated efforts of the entire international community. As per Xi 'Countries around the world are like passengers aboard the same ship who share the same destiny. For the ship to navigate the storm and sail toward a bright future, all passengers must pull together'. Even the usage of Chinese or 'Asian' proverbs such as 'climb the hill together and go down the ravine together' gives indication of the GSI's ambition to include, if not the entire world, but the Asian continent as a single, united security community. This overarching and all-encompassing focus is characteristic of the tianxia model of political thought. Tianxia (all under Heaven) is a concept which can be traced to the Zhou dynasty of 11th century BCE which stresses on the importance of harmony and peaceful co-existence within society as well as among neighbouring states.

As per IR scholar, Amitav Acharya, tianxia as a system of international order sees the 'world' as a single unit instead of using the 'nation-state' as the basic unit of the international system. However, instead of the Westphalian IR notion of equal states existing in a state of anarchy, tianxia sees harmony as possible only in a world of hierarchy with China or the Middle Kingdom at the top. In addition, tianxia also entails as per Chinese scholars 'the establishment of a world system based upon the ontology of peaceful co-existence based on relational rationality as opposed to rationality'.

Here, relational rationality is the belief in

the Confucian notion of 'self-existence and self-interest are related to the other existence and other-interest'. Or in other words, as opposed to the Western Realist idea of rationality which prioritises self-interest and existence over peace, relational rationality holds that one's interest and existence is dependent on the well-being of the interest and existence of others. The presence of relational rationality can be seen in the GSI's concept of 'indivisible security' as its opposition to 'pursuit of individual security at the cost of others'. In addition, the assumption of the world or Asian continent as a single unit can be made out from the terms such as 'common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security' describing the GSI as well as Xi's idiom of countries being fellow travellers on the same ship. However, at the same time, as pointed out by others, the actions of China in the South China Sea as well as the Taiwan Straits and the militarisation of the western border with India in Ladakh since 2020 point to the contradictions in the actions of China and in the avowed aims of the GSI.

Another noteworthy feature of the GSI or the speeches associated with it is the mention of the apparent centrality of China. The references to China-centric or Chinese led initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as well as the China-Laos railway part of the BRI in fostering peace, cooperation and development especially in the Asian continent might be seen as attempts to indirectly highlight the pivotal role played by China in the Asian region and world at large.

This assumption of centrality of China can be

might and coercion; this is similar to the Middle kingdom's cultural and moral dominance over the neighbouring polities of Korea, Japan and Indo-China. Another prominent expression of the Middle Kingdom is the idea of 'indivisible security'. As mentioned earlier, while 'indivisible security' refers to respect for the security concerns of every country, it also includes the notion that security issues are intertwined as well as that the security of one depends on the security of others. While it is not mentioned explicitly that China would be the centre-point of the indivisible security web, yet given the preponderance of the Middle Kingdom notion in Chinese politics and world-view, it cannot be ruled out. An instance of 'indivisible security' from history is the China centred Confucian world order in East Asia whereby smaller kingdoms like Korea depended on China not only for cultural and political guidance but also for military support should the occasion arise. The latter came in the form of the Imjin War of 1592-1598 whereby the Ming dynasty sent military aid to Choson Korea to repel the invasion by Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi in order to maintain harmony and morality in the Confucian world order.

Finally, the mention and attack on 'countries wantonly imposing unilateral sanctions, exercising long-arms jurisdiction' as well as the formation of 'exclusive groups' and 'attempts to divide the region (Asia) and wage a 'new Cold War' which are apparent references to the US led Indo Pacific groups such as QUAD can be seen as an attempt to establish the moral superiority of China and the GSI over the American strategies. Thus, by attempting to highlight the 'aggressive

Even the usage of Chinese or 'Asian' proverbs such as 'climb the hill together and go down the ravine together' gives indication of the GSI's ambition to include, if not the entire world, but the Asian continent as a single, united security community

traced to the idea of the Middle Kingdom or as per Martin Jacques 'the Middle Kingdom' mentality. The term broadly refers to the notion China had of itself being the Zhongguo (Middle Kingdom) meaning the centre of political, cultural and economic activity of the entire world or the Confucian world order comprising the neighbouring kingdoms of Korea, Japan, Indo-China and Mongols. In other words, by virtue of its cultural, moral and political superiority China saw itself as the centre of civilisation while those outside its borders were deemed as barbarians with different degrees of civilizational semblance. As per Acharya, in the current modern world although China sees itself as a sovereign nation existing in an international system made up of nation-states of equal status, yet in its political psyche it still holds on to the notion of 'Middle Kingdom' or itself being a 'civilization state' predating the 'nation-state'. The 'Middle Kingdom' mentality can also be said to have been expressed in the idea of GSI. A glaring example of it is the mention of GSI as being 'inspired by the diplomatic tradition and wisdom with unique Chinese characteristics' or in other words a reference to the traditional Chinese diplomatic methods and protocol which was assumed to be practised by all neighbouring kingdoms and the world at large given its origin from the Middle Kingdom itself. Similarly, the GSI as an initiative should be emulated or accepted by other countries as it is put forward by China which is 'a responsible major country' that has 'held high the banner of peace, development and cooperation'. This is also underlined by Xi's statement that 'countries should lead by the power of their example, and not by the example of their power' thereby highlighting current China's central position as based on the power and superiority of its own example of domestic and foreign policy instead of military

nature' of US strategies through descriptions such as 'flexing its muscle on China's doorstep', it was hoped to bring out the contrast with the 'peaceful and inclusive' nature of the GSI with its respect for security concerns for other countries and its three principles of 'shared perception, shared principle and shared path' which sees the entire world as single community and the GSI as brining 'win-win' results for all. This notion of superiority of the Chinese tradition of security can again be traced back to the Confucian values of the Middle Kingdom whereby China saw itself as a defensive power for whom 'peace is precious' (he wei gui) and did not resort immediately to violent methods without first trying out peaceful means (xianli houbing). Hence, this insistence on peace and harmony allowed China to see itself as morally superior to barbarian cultures like the Mongols who engaged in incessant warfare as well as, in contemporary times against the US which as per China and explained by scholar Andrew Scobell, was marked by 'maritime culture' which 'tended to view wars in an adventurous and romantic manner' as opposed to the Chinese warfare marked by 'ethical thinking' and 'moral principles'.

Thus, only time will tell whether the GSI is truly a 'global' initiative with every country having an equal stakeholder or a manifestation of the Confucian world order of peace and harmony but marked by hierarchy with China at the top.

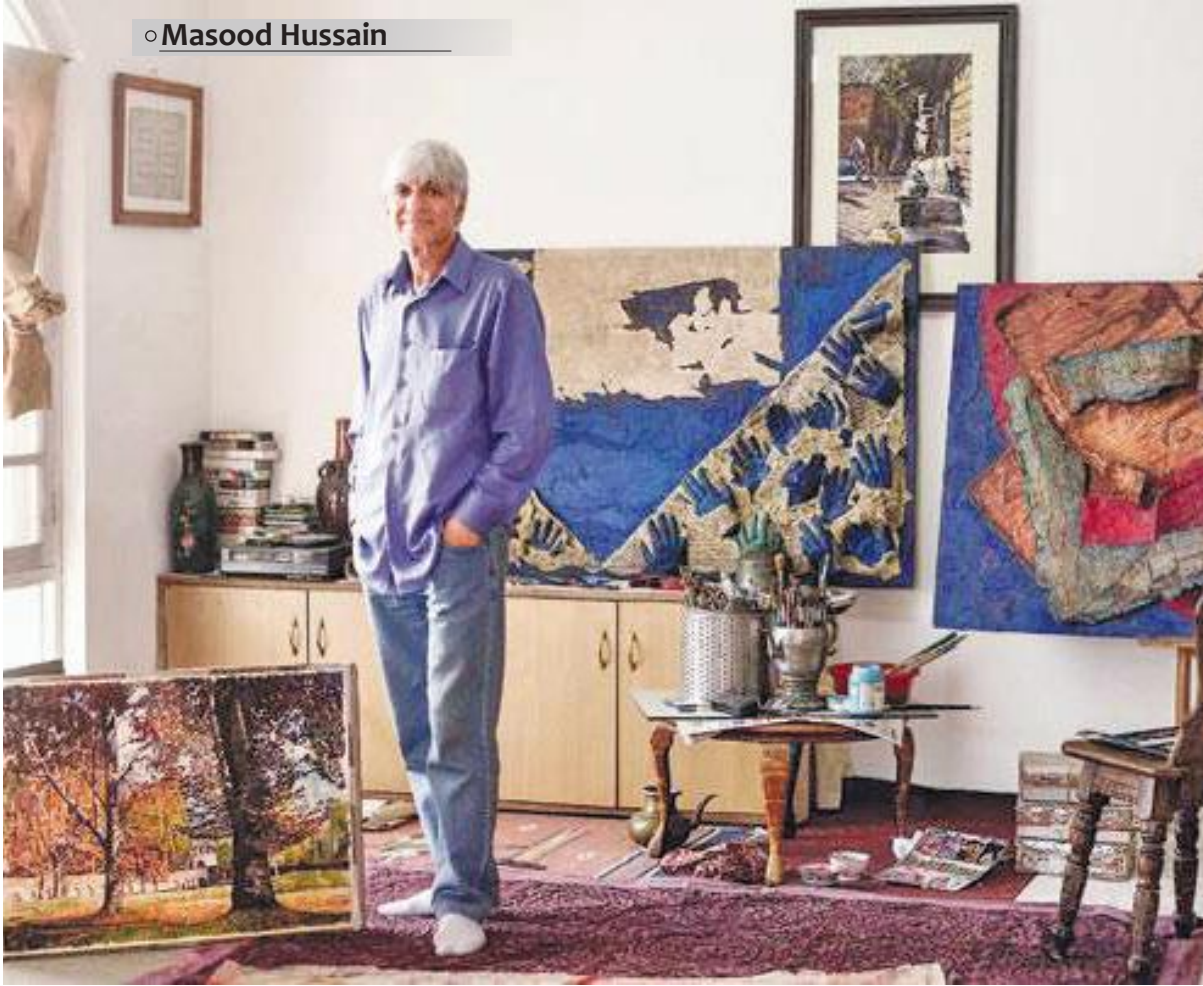
Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The author is pursuing MA Politics and International Relations (PIR), Central University of Gujarat (CUG)

Kashmiri Artists Whose Canvas Became Antidote to News



◦Jasia Iqbal Nowshahri



◦Masood Hussain



◦Ansab Jehan



◦Veer Munshi

Jyotsna Bharti

If there's anyone who can turn an excruciating pain into a beautiful yet wrenching thing, then it has to be an artist. It takes immense dedication and commitment to carve a beauty especially from a place known for distressing events.

Canvassing Kashmir's different shades and shadows, the five artists including veterans and greenhorns have already created their own space in the creative-colourful valley.

As ode to their homeland, these creative men and women are keeping the native taste for designs and aesthetics intact when the wild-geese chase for the make-believe modernity is undoing Kashmir's rich art legacy.

MASOOD HUSSAIN

A celebrated artist who rendered legendary poet Agha Shahid Ali's couplets on canvas, Masood Hussain is known to paint gore and gorgeousness.

His paintings showcase his dreadful experience which ended up driving him to paint a series of portraits representing his homeland's harrowing hues.

The veteran's favourite colour is blue because it has infinite spiritual depth. He usually works on themes from Kashmir in its various essences.

"An artist's life experience is an integral part of his work," the painter believes. "And Kashmir

being very close to my heart has always been a part of my work, its beauty, its tragedy, and my feelings for it all come together in my work."

VEER MUNSHI

Born and brought up in the pre-90's Kashmir, Veer Munshi migrated to Delhi three decades ago and lived most of his life as an art pilgrim since then. But this never came in between his love for his roots.

"I'm an outsider insider," he once said. "When I visit Kashmir, I stay in hotels which is a very different experience for me. If anyone visits a place after years they will feel lost. But if you keep engaging with the place you might find your foothold. After all, it's your roots. The urge of being there is always present. Whenever I get an excuse to visit I always go."

Munshi's exile inspired him to showcase his journey and his agony through his artform reflecting the changes that have taken place in Kashmir over the years.

JASIA IQBAL NOWSHAHRI

A self-taught artist, Jasia Iqbal Nowshahri has become an inspiration for the youngsters in the valley because of her creative genius.

But for the young artist herself, the inspiration can be found in the simplest of places. "A routine mundane scene can extract enough inspiration to put something on a canvas," she says.

Before being noticed for her art acumen, she used the social media platform to showcase her talent. It turned out to be an effective engagement. People in the virtual world not only showed interest in her creative expression, but also placed orders to grace their living rooms with the young artist's captivating canvas.

ANSAB JEHAN

Born in North Kashmir, Ansab Jehan has been painting from a young age. Apart from her brush brilliance, she's known for her community canvas cause. As a visual artist, her artworks became talk of town when she sold her artworks in the form of Eid cards to help rebuild homes of Kashmiris rendered roofless by the conflagrating conflict.

She says she likes to preserve memories and incidents happening and happened around her through her art.

SYED MUJTABA RIZVI

Artist Syed Mujtaba Rizvi believes that the creative process of art thrives in an uncertain place.

His painting of a woman holding a dead child is a continuation of a series that Rizvi started in recent years. It is called Redundant Conversations. It's a painting of one of the minarets of the historic Jamia Masjid in Srinagar.

"These works will languish as they have always," he says. "But they are an antidote to the news that usually portrays Kashmir."



◦Syed Mujtaba Rizvi

DU associate professor gets bail in case of objectionable FB post on Shivling

New Delhi: A city court on Saturday granted bail to Delhi University Associate Professor Ratan Lal, arrested for alleged objectionable remarks on social media related to claims of a 'Shivling' at Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque, saying his post, though reprehensible, does not indicate an attempt to promote hatred between communities.

The court directed Lal to

strictly refrain from posting any social media posts or interviews regarding the controversy which resulted in the present FIR, while allowing his release on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 50,000 and one surety of the like amount.

Lal was arrested on Friday night by the Delhi Police under Indian Penal Code sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of

religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) and 295A (deliberate act to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion).

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Siddhartha Malik said that the feeling of hurt felt by an individual cannot represent the entire group or community and any such complaint regarding hurt

feeling has to be seen in its context, considering the entire spectrum of facts and circumstances.

The court said that the Indian civilisation is one of the oldest in the world and is known to be tolerant and accepting of all religions, adding that the presence or absence of intention to create animosity by words was subjective in nature as was the perception of the recipient who

reads or hears a statement.

India is a country of more than 130 crore people and any subject can have 130 crore different views and perceptions, it said.

The court noted that the social media post of Lal, who teaches History at the Hindu College, may appear to be a failed attempt at satire regarding a controversial subject that has backfired, resulting in the FIR.

Provision of UAPA More Dangerous Than Sedition: Retired SC Judge Lokur

Agenceis

New Delhi: Former Supreme Court judge M B Lokur Saturday said that the May 11 order of the top court on sedition is "important" even as he voiced his concern over misuse of a provision in Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act saying it will be like "jumping from frying pan to fire".

Speaking at a function 'Sedition Se Azadi', he sought to explain the meaning of the interim order passed by the top court which had put on hold the colonial-era sedition law till an "appropriate" government forum re-examines it and directed the Centre and states to not register any fresh FIR invoking the offence.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

No Survivors

one person was recovered on Friday, while three others, including two locals, were rescued and are stable.

Officials said that on Saturday, another body was pulled out after several hours of intense search. It took the rescuers over two hours to pull out the body from under the rocks.

Eight more bodies were later pulled out and shifted to hospital, the officials said, adding the labourers were crushed to death by the falling boulders.

"Bodies of all the missing workers were recovered from the scene of the landslide outside the mouth of adit tunnel during the day-long hectic search by the rescuers. While one body was recovered on Friday and three rescued, nine more bodies were found on Saturday," the deputy commissioner told PTI.

Islam said all the bodies have been sent to a government hospital for identification and other legal formalities.

He said an immediate ex gratia of Rs 25,000 from the Red Cross fund and Rs 25,000 from the company is being given to kin of two local labourers, who are among the dead. The rest of the dead include workers from West Bengal, Nepal and Assam.

The operation to rescue the trapped workers was launched soon after the incident but had to be suspended on Friday evening due to a fresh landslide and inclement weather.

Over 15 rescuers, including the Station House Officer of Ramsu police station, Nayeem-UI-Haq, had a narrow escape during this time, officials said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Ramban, Mohita Sharma said an FIR was registered in the local police station in connection with the incident.

Police have registered a case under IPC Sections 287 (negligent conduct with respect to machinery), 304-A (causing death by negligence), 336 (endangering life or personal safety of others) and 337 (causing hurt by an act of endangering life or personal safety of others) of the IPC, officials said.

However, no one was arrested.

Senior CPI(M) leader and former MLA M Y Tarigami demanded a judicial probe into the incident and Rs 40 lakh compensation for the kin of the deceased

"This is not an ordinary incident. There seems to be criminal negligence. A judicial inquiry should be ordered to probe the horrific incident so that the guilty are identified and brought to justice," he said in a statement.

Tarigami, who is the Jammu and Kashmir unit president of CITU, said, "Reportedly NHAI had handed over the execution of the work of this patch to SIGAL company which in turn handed it over to a little-known sublet SARLA, which is reportedly a software company and not technical."

Jammu and Kashmir Congress president G A Mir also demanded an inquiry into the incident and adequate compensation for the kin of the deceased.

Petrol Price

There was no subsidy paid on cooking gas since June 2020 and all users including Ujjwala beneficiaries bought cylinders at market rate, which currently is Rs 1,003 in Delhi.

The Rs 200 subsidy will cost the government Rs 6,100 crore, she said.

Alongside, she also said import duty on raw material for plastics and steel is being reduced to ease inflationary pressure.

The move came after the government's inflation management was criticised by opposition parties and economists. A rise in price across all items from fuel to vegetables and cooking oil pushed WPI or wholesale price inflation to a record high of 15.08 per cent in April and retail inflation to a near eight-year high of 7.79 per cent.

High inflation prompted the Reserve Bank, which had been making a case with the government for excise duty cuts and easing import taxes on certain commodities to ease inflationary pressure, to hold an unscheduled meeting to raise the benchmark interest rate by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent earlier this month.

State-owned fuel retailers will pass on the excise duty cut to consumers despite losing Rs 13.08 a litre on petrol and Rs 24.09 per litre on diesel because of holding rates despite surge in cost of raw material (crude oil).

The excise duty cuts along with Rs 5 cut on petrol and Rs 10 reduction on diesel effected from November 4, 2021, rolls back the Rs 13 per litre and Rs 16 per litre increase in taxes on petrol and diesel, respectively, effected between March 2020 and May 2020 to avoid passing on to consumers the sharp fall in international oil prices.

The excise duty hikes of 2020 had taken central taxes on petrol to their highest level of Rs 32.9 per litre and that on diesel to Rs 31.8 a litre.

After the latest excise cut, the incidence of central tax on petrol will come down to Rs 19.9 a litre and that on diesel to Rs 15.8 per litre.

"We are reducing the central excise duty on petrol by Rs 8 per litre and on diesel by Rs 6 per litre. This will reduce the price of petrol by Rs 9.5 per litre and of diesel by Rs 7 per litre," Sitharaman tweeted. "It will have a revenue implication of around Rs 1 lakh crore/year for the government."

She exhorted all state governments to also cut local sales tax or VAT.

"I wish to exhort all state governments, especially the states where reduction wasn't done during the last round (November 2021), to also implement a similar cut and give relief to the common man," she said.

Post November 2021 reduction in excise duty on petrol by Rs 5 per litre and that on diesel by Rs 10 a litre, 25 states and UTs had cut VAT to give further reprieve to consumers battered by record-high retail prices. However, states ruled by non-NDA parties like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu had not reduced VAT.

Post that reduction, state-owned oil firms held petrol and diesel prices for a record 137-day period during which international oil prices rose from USD 84 per barrel to near 14-year high of USD 140. They finally broke the hiatus with a Rs 10 per litre increase on both petrol and diesel in 16 days starting March 22 but again hit a freeze button after the last revision on April 6 despite not covering all of the cost.

Holding of prices despite rise in cost had led to lower earnings of fuel retailers in the January-March quarter.

"Today, the world is passing through difficult times. Even as the world is recovering from Covid-19 pandemic, the Ukraine conflict has brought in supply chain problems and shortages of various goods. This is resulting in inflation & economic distress in a lot of countries," Sitharaman said.

Welcoming the move, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said, "I want to highlight the fact despite this 2nd reduction in central excise, price of petrol & diesel in states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand & Kerala remain around Rs 10-15 higher than in BJP-ruled states."

Rates differ from state to state depending on incidence of local taxes such as VAT. Andhra Pradesh has the highest VAT on petrol and diesel in the country, followed by Rajasthan and BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh.

"This (high prices in non-BJP ruled states) is due to the refusal of their respective state governments to reduce VAT. It is time for these states to wake up & reduce VAT to provide relief to their consumers," Puri said.

The Congress government in Rajasthan had cut VAT following the November 2021 decision. Punjab, which ruled by the party, had seen the biggest reduction then due to a cut in VAT rates.

"Even during the pandemic, our government set a paradigm of welfare, especially with PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. This is now acknowledged and appreciated the world over," Sitharaman said, referring to a scheme to provide free foodgrains to poor to help them tide over difficulties caused by a nationwide pandemic related lockdown.

"Despite the challenging international situation, we've ensured that there are no shortages/scarcity of essential goods. Even a few developed countries couldn't escape some shortages/disruptions. We are committed to ensure that prices of essential items are kept under control," she said.

The Finance Minister said despite rising fertilizer prices globally, the government has protected farmers from such price hikes.

"In addition to the fertilizer subsidy of Rs 1.05 lakh crore in the budget (for current fiscal), an additional amount of Rs 1.10 lakh crore is being provided to further cushion our farmers."

She said the Prime Minister "has specifically asked all arms of the government to work with sensitivity and give relief to the common man," she said adding the steps announced on Saturday were in line with that.

"We are also reducing the customs duty on raw materials & intermediaries for plastic products where our import dependence is high. This will result in reduction of cost of final products," she said.

"Similarly we are calibrating customs duty on raw materials & intermediaries for iron & steel to reduce their prices. Import duty on some raw materials of steel will be reduced. Export duty on some steel products will be levied."

"Measures are being taken up to improve the availability of #Cement and through better logistics to reduce the cost of cement," she added.

Central excise duty makes up for 26 per cent of petrol and diesel price now. After considering local sales tax or VAT, the total tax incidence in the price is as high as 42 per cent.

The excise tax on petrol was Rs 9.48 per litre when the Modi government took office in 2014 and that on diesel was Rs 3.56 a litre.

The government had between November 2014 and January 2016 raised excise duty on petrol and diesel on nine occasions to take away gains arising from plummeting global oil prices.

In all, duty on petrol rate was hiked by Rs 11.77 per litre and that on diesel by 13.47 a litre in those 15 months that helped government's excise mop up more than double to Rs 2,42,000 crore in 2016-17 from Rs 99,000 crore in 2014-15.

It cut excise duty by Rs 2 in October 2017 and by Rs 1.50 a year later. But it raised excise duty by Rs 2 per litre in July 2019.

It again raised excise duty on March 14, 2020 by Rs 3 per litre each. The government on May 6, 2020, again raised excise duties by Rs 10 per

litre on petrol and Rs 13 per litre on diesel.

Families To Get

Assam died in the landslide which struck the mouth of the adit tunnel to T4 at Khooni Nallah on Thursday night.

While the body of one labourer was recovered on Friday, nine more bodies were recovered from the scene of the landslide on Saturday. Three other labourers escaped with injuries and were evacuated to hospital.

Following directions received from Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, Rs 15 lakh compensation each shall be given by the construction company to those who died in the adit tunnel landslide, deputy commission, Mussarat Islam said.

He said Lt Governor has also announced Rs 1 lakh exgratia from relief fund to each family of the deceased labourers. (PTI)

Azad Takes Dig

link it with the (improved) situation, he said. I give full credit for the tourism boom to the almighty as the rising temperatures in Delhi and the rest of the country prompted people to look for cooler environs in Kashmir, Shimla and elsewhere, Azad told reporters here.

Azad reached Jammu on a two-day visit and presided over a function at the party headquarters to pay tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary. He is scheduled to return to Srinagar on Sunday.

Flanked by senior leaders including J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president G A Mir and working president Raman Bhalla, Azad said the mercury in Delhi touched 49.9 degrees Celsius and it was hovering between 47 and 48 degrees C in most parts of the country.

The people started fleeing to hill stations even ready to spend their time in tents or on roads to beat the heat, he added.

There is no role of the state in the increased tourist footfall (in Kashmir), he said.

The veteran Congress leader expressed concern over the growing militant activities in Kashmir and said we all need to join hands to finish militancy (in Jammu and Kashmir).

The genuine demands of the vulnerable sections of the society, whether they are Kashmiri pandits, Sikhs or Muslims who are on the hit list (of militants) should be accepted. We should not put them in harm's way, he said.

Asked about the Delimitation Commission report which took effect in Jammu and Kashmir with the issuance of a notification by the Union law ministry on Friday, Azad said he and other Congress leaders have made it clear that they are not satisfied with the report which contradicts the ground realities.

It is a tailor-made report and prepared in such a way to benefit some and cause loss to whom they intend to, the Congress leader said.

The panel's two orders -- one of March 14 dealing with the number of constituencies reserved for various categories and the second one of May 5 dealing with the size of each constituency -- came into effect together from May 20.

The Commission's report will form the basis for future assembly polls in the Union territory. The delimitation panel had given six additional assembly seats to the Jammu region and one to Kashmir Valley and brought areas of Rajouri and Poonch under the Anantnag parliamentary seat.

Jammu division will now have 43 assembly seats and Kashmir 47 in the 90-member house.

In response to a question on the row over the use of speakers at religious places, Azad said the aim behind the campaign was to weaken the "ideology of tolerance to create a rift in society.

In the 1500-year-old history of our country, Hindus and Muslims have lived together and they will remain so till the end of this world. The temple bells, azan' (call for prayer) from mosques and the prayer meetings at churches and gurudwaras is all about Bharat and if it stops, Bharat is not going to remain the same, he said.

He said the beautiful recitation of bhajans' from temples and azans' from mosques in the early hours makes one proud of the pluralistic country.

The controversy was meant to weaken this ideology of tolerance. The idea of love and respect for each other needs to be strengthened. All of us - Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others accept each other and that is what India is, Azad said.

Will Contest

administration, quality education, health services and job opportunities for the unemployed youth, he said.

Expressing happiness over the warm welcome accorded to him from Kathua to Jammu, he said the people are waiting impatiently for the elections to happen.

We have a development driven agenda and we are going to replicate the Delhi model in Punjab and J&K as well. In Punjab, which is also a border state like Jammu and Kashmir and face threats of militancy and drone incursions from across the border, has started witnessing a positive development, he said.

He said he sees winds of change blowing in favour of AAP in Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and also in Jammu and Kashmir.a positive development, he said.

Reviews Amarnath

an official spokesperson said. The meeting was attended by DCS, SSPs and officials of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB).

According to the spokesperson, the LG said that it is the priority of the administration to ensure best facilities for the pilgrims. Sinha, he said, fixed June 15 as the timeline for completing all works pertaining to Amarnath Yatra.

"He further directed for regular monitoring of specific works at Anantnag and Ganderbal. The Lt Governor directed that adequate field staff of the Departments like Jal Shakti and Power should remain available for providing continuous services during the Yatra," he said.

The spokesperson said that the LG stressed on publicizing the measures and efforts to be employed for ensuring plastic-free environment to protect the ecology.

He said that detailed discussions were also held on ensuring various arrangements including drinking water, pilgrims' movement, RFID tracking on all routes, Langar stalls, pony movement, and helicopter service.

"The Lt Governor also directed for augmentation of health infrastructure and implementation of a meticulous traffic plan," he added.

During the meeting, the spokesperson said, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary impressed on all officers for ensuring impeccable Yatra arrangements.

Mehta, he said, maintained that the annual pilgrimage has a significant impact on the economy of Jammu Kashmir.

"He asked the concerned Deputy Commissioners to check the functionality of public utilities along the Highways and install Welcome Boards and signs for pilgrims coming for the holy yatra of Shri Amarnathji while putting special focus on cleanliness," he said.

The Chief Secretary, he said, also asked the concerned officers to take the PRI members onboard for making Yatra arrangements in their respective Districts.

"He also said that feedback should also be taken from the visiting pilgrims," he added.

Pertinently, the Yatra will commence from June 30 this year from both Pahalgam and Baltal routes.

56 KP Teachers

Kashmir's Budgam district on May 12.

Bhat's killing set off protests by KP employees seeking relocation outside the Valley. Due to mounting pressure, the government announced to post the employees in towns and district headquarters for their safety.

KPs Take Out

the Jammu and Kashmir administration for "turning a deaf ear" to their demands.

Bhat (35), who had got the job of a clerk under the special employment package for migrants in 2012-11, according to police was shot dead by Lashkar-e-Taiba militants at his office in the Chadoora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on May 12.

According to Kashmiri Pandit rituals, the 10th day signifies the end of the mourning period.

The protestors, men and women, carried placards asking "Aakhri Kab Tak?" (till when) and demanding "relocation/ deputation of all Valley-posted migrant employees to any other place in India to stop our bloodshed".

Raising slogans against the administration, the Pandit employees said their protest would continue till this "deaf administration" listens.

Before leaving the Lal Chowk area, the protesters en mass chanted "Om" and then marched to the BJP's state office in the Jawahar Nagar area of the city where they raised slogans against the party.

The protestors dispersed peacefully afterwards.

In the Mattan area of South Kashmir, similar processions were held against the union territory administration.

Braving unseasonal rainfall, the Kashmiri pandit employees marched towards the famous Martand temple where some of the youths tonsured their heads as per ritual followed on the 10th day after death.

They raised slogans like "Rahul Bhai amar rahe" and demanded their relocation to safer places.

Protests have been held at several places in Jammu and Kashmir over the killing of Bhat as well as the "failure" of the administration in providing security to Kashmiri Pandit employees.

Safety Audit

them for preventing occurrence of fire incidents in all buildings of their Departments," the order added.

Govt Ends Physical

government impressed upon all concerned that "Personnel Verification Rolls (PVR) of all candidates shall be submitted only through the online mode to the Criminal Investigation Department headquarters for verification."

Manual submission of Personnel Verification Rolls (PVR), the government said, shall not be entertained under any circumstances after 1 June 2022. "The departmental code (User Name and Password) shall be shared on the e-mail addresses provided by the appointing authorities on EVS."

All the Administrative Secretaries, the government said, shall implement the instructions in letter and spirit, and CID verification shall in

no case be delayed beyond one month as stipulated in the instructions conveyed from time to time.

J&K Has 13th

states like Bihar(42.8%), Jharkhand(45.9%), Madhya Pradesh(31.5%), Chhattisgarh(29.9%), UP(23.9%), Odisha(35.1%), West Bengal(32.7%), Arunachal Pradesh(23.3%), Assam(38.1 %) and Meghalaya(31%).

Since, NFHS-4 many aspects of J&K have changed significantly, while others remain much the same in the latest round(NFHS-5) which was recently released by Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in Vadodara, Gujarat, on May 5.

The latest survey--NFHS-5--which provides data by socio-economic and other background characteristics that remains useful for policy formulation and effective programme implementation.

Meanwhile, a brief look at another data--which substantiates J&K highest wealth quintile-- provided by NFHS brings forth that J&K has 23.7 percent of the population which owns a car. With this percentage, J&K ranks third across India in having the highest population with a car. Goa tops this list with 45.2 percent followed by Kerala at 24.2 percent, according to NFHS.

However, a survey by the NITI Aayog--a public policy think tank of the Government of India--in 2021 had revealed that 12.58 percent of the total population in Jammu and Kashmir was 'poor'.

Pertinently, as per a survey by Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index 2021, at least 10.35 percent population in Jammu and Kashmir was living below the national poverty line with the rural areas holding more poverty than the urban areas.

Patwari Caught

the anti-graft body received a complaint from a man alleging that Bashir Ahmad Dar, Patwari, Halqa Wahabpora, Budgam was demanding a bribe of Rs 1.65 lakh from him for issuance of revenue extracts.

He said that the complainant claimed that he wanted to sell 15 marlas of land situated at Wahabpora, Budgam for which he was in need of revenue extracts.

The Patwari, as per the complainant, demanded a huge bribe from him for issuance of the documents and compelled him to pay Rs one lakh in advance and demanded Rs 65,000 more for the same, the Bureau spokesperson said.

In these circumstances, he said, the complainant approached ACB for taking legal action against the revenue official.

"As the contents of the complaint prima facie disclose commission of offence as defined under section 7 of the PC Act 1988 accordingly a case FIR No 19/2022 was registered at PS ACB Srinagar and investigations were started," he added.

The spokesperson said that immediately after registration of the case, a team was constituted that laid a trap and caught Patwari red handed while demanding and accepting bribe from the complainant at Berwah.

"The accused Patwari has been immediately arrested on the spot. Searches were also conducted in the office and residence of the accused. Further investigations in case is going on," he added.

Two Teachers

GMS Mori Drabshalla and UPS Naidgam Chatroo and checked the attendance of staff, an official spokesperson said.

He said two teachers--Reena Kumari and Shanoo Rani were placed under suspension and attached to GHS Nagh Bhatna, for not marking their regular attendance since 01-05-2022.

Meanwhile, Principal HSS Badhat and ZEO Drabshalla were appointed as enquiry officers, to conduct in-depth enquiry into the matter and submit the report to the CEO's office within a week of time positively to proceed further into the matter.

"Besides this two female teachers of UPS Naidgam zone Inderwal were found on child care leave. The ZEO Inderwal was directed to furnish the factual report to the CEO Office along with the service book of the officials in question," the spokesperson said.

J&K Logs 15 New

taking the overall tally to 454191--166426 in Jammu and 287765 in Kashmir.

There was also no death due to the pathogen reported in the last 24 hours, they said. So far 4752 persons have succumbed to the virus--2328 in Jammu and 2424 in Kashmir.

Besides, they said, seven Covid-19 patients recovered during the last 24 hours and include four from Jammu division and three from Kashmir. So far 449384 people have recovered, leaving the active case tally at 55-- 39 in Jammu and 16 in Kashmir.

Auto Rickshaw

was removed to the Government Medical College (GMC) Baramulla for treatment.

However, the doctors there declared her dead, reports said.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident and set the investigation into motion.

J&K, Punjab Officials Inspect Progress On Shahpur Kandi Dam Project



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Senior officials of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab governments on Saturday jointly inspected progress on the prestigious Shahpur Kandi Dam Project, an official spokesman said.

Principal Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Ashok Kumar Parmar, along with his counterpart from Punjab, Principal Secretary, Department of Water Resources, Krishan Kumar, convened a high-level meeting at project site on Punjab-Jammu and Kashmir border, the spokesman said.

The spokesman said it was decided that there will be a monthly review of progress on the project so as to ensure that work is done expeditiously towards project completion.

Parmar was appraised by the Deputy Commissioner Kathua that felling of trees, removal of structures and utility shifting is in full swing which will be completed within two days.

He assured that there shall be no hurdle on account of construction activities and execution of works will be done simultaneously, the spokesman said.

He directed the officers to keep provision of security check at the confluence point from Basantpur side. Besides, the issue of staff crunch was also discussed during the meeting in response to which both sides agreed to station the required manpower, the spokesman said.

He said the meeting was informed that the work for shifting of Noor bridge coming under the submergence has been allotted and soil investigation has also been conducted.

The Rs 2,715.70 crore Shahpur kandi Dam Project once completed would provide assured irrigation water of 1150 cusecs which will irrigate 32,173 hectares of agricultural land falling in Kathua and Samba districts of J&K.

J&K Cong To Hold Its Own 'Chintan Shivir' In Patnitop On June 1 & 2

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president G A Mir on Saturday said a two-day meet will be held next month to discuss the strategy to strengthen the party in the Union Territory.

Mir made the announcement at a meeting held at the party headquarters here to pay tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 31st death anniversary, a party spokesperson said.

Senior AICC leader and former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad also attended the meeting amid reports that he would get a key role ahead of the next assembly polls likely to be held later this year.

Azad's supporters including many former ministers and legislators have, in the past, voiced resentments against Mir, seeking his removal besides making Azad the party chief ministerial candidate in J&K.

It is time to pay back to the party and strengthen it, which is the need of the nation. The party leaders should rise above

their self-interest and work for strengthening the party as resolved in the Udaipur Chintan Shivar, Mir said, addressing the condolence meeting.

He announced that a similar Shivar of J&K Congress leaders would be held at Patni top in Udhampur district on June 1 and 2 to discuss the strategy for strengthening the party.

Azad, in his address, asked the party cadres to work for peace and harmony and to strengthen the party to fight communal and divisive forces and defeat the politics of hate.

The strength of the nation lies in its unity in diversity and the spread of hate in society is weakening the nation, Azad said, adding the Congress and its leadership always promoted religious brotherhood and harmony in the society as Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity is very vital for the strength of our pluralistic nation.

Azad recalled the contributions of Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister on various fronts, especially in the field of science and technology and the Panchayat Raj system in the country.

Azad Visits Family Of Slain Kashmiri Pandit In Jammu

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday visited the house of slain Kashmiri Pandit Rahul Bhat here and offered condolences to his family, a party leader said.

Bhat (35), who had got the job of a clerk under the special employment package for migrants in 2010-11, was shot

dead by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists at his office in the Chadoora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on May 12.

Accompanied by senior party leaders including several former ministers, Azad visited the bereaved family at Ban Talab in the outskirts of Jammu and expressed his condolences to the father and other members of the deceased, the leader said.



MeT Predicts Widespread Rains With Gusty Winds Today



Agencies

SRINAGAR: The meteorological department on Saturday forecast widespread rains accompanied with gusty winds in Kashmir Valley on Sunday.

"Currently weather is generally cloudy at most places of Kashmir, hilly areas of Jammu and fair to partly cloudy in plains of Jammu," an official of the local meteorological department here said. Heat wave, he said, abated from J&K, although temporarily.

"Widespread rain/thunderstorm accompanied by gusty winds is most likely in Kashmir on May 22nd and on 23rd in Jammu region," he said.

From May 25th till ending May, he said, mainly "dry and hot weather is most likely in J&K, although, a brief spell of rain at isolated to scattered places can't be ruled out, although chances are less." He said gradual rise in temperature was expected from May 25th till the next spell of rain.

Regarding temperature, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 10.9°C against 13.2°C on the previous night. The temperature, he said, is below normal by 0.8°C during this time of the year for the summer capital.

Qazigund recorded a low of 7.9°C against 10.3°C on the previous night. The temperature was 2.4°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir, he said.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum of 5.8°C against 8.0°C on the previous night. The temperature was 0.4°C below normal for the famous resort in south Kashmir during this time of the season, he said.

Kokernag recorded a low of 8.0°C against 10.3°C on the previous night. It was 2.1°C below normal during this time of the season for the place in south Kashmir, the official said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 2.0°C against 6.4°C on the previous night, the official said.

While 6.8°C is normal for the world famous skiing resort during this time of the season, the official said that the temperature was 4.8°C 'below' normal for the place in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a low of 9.8°C against 12.8°C on the previous night. The temperature was 0.6°C below normal for the district, the official said.

Jammu recorded a low of 29.1°C against 28.6°C on the previous night, the official said. The temperature is 4.7°C above normal for J&K's winter capital, he said. Banihal recorded a low of 10.6°C, Batote 12.6°C and Bhadarwah 11.2°C, the official said.

Regarding rain in last 24 hours till 0830 hours today, he said, Srinagar received 10.3mm, Qazigund 33.8mm, Pahalgam 36.3mm, Kupwara 19.2mm, Kokernag 33.0mm, Gulmarg 25.8mm, Banihal 20.2mm, Batote 17.2mm and Bhadarwah 6.2mm. (GNS)

Army Chief Reviews Situation In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Saturday asked the soldiers to remain vigilant and maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir

Pande, who arrived here on his maiden two-day visit to the Valley, proceeded to undertake a first-hand assessment of formations along the Line of Control (LC) in North Kashmir, an official spokesperson said. He was accompanied by Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, Northern Army Commander and Lt Gen ADS Aujla, Chinार Corps Commander.

"The COAS was briefed on the security situation and operational preparedness. The Formation Commanders also briefed the COAS on the existing Cease-fire Agreement on the LC, development works on field fortifications, counter infiltration grid, operational preparedness and Army-citizen connect in border areas," the spokesperson said.

The Army Chief, he said,



while interacting with Formation Commanders, laid special emphasis on being vigilant and maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Control.

During his interaction with the troops, Pande, he said, complimented them for their high morale and professional competence. The spokesperson said that Army Chief was briefed by Aujla on the overall security situations, counter infiltration grid, operational preparedness and Army-citizen connect in border areas," the spokesperson said.

"The COAS highlighted that it was the dawn of a new era of development, peace and prosperity in Kashmir and applauded Chinार Corps for their high level of morale and contribution to peace building in J&K," he said.

He further said that the Army Chief complimented the excellent synergy exhibited by all sections of the Civil administration, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Armed Police Forces and other Security agencies in projecting a 'Whole of Government' approach that has resulted in improvement in the security situation conducive for fostering a new era of development in the UT.

47-Day Summer Break Announced For Schools In Jammu

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir authorities on Saturday announced a 47-day summer vacation for educational institutions, including recognised private schools up to class 12, in the summer zone of the Jammu division.

According to an order issued

by Ravi Shankar Sharma, the director of School Education department, Jammu, the decision on summer vacation was taken in view of the prevailing hot weather conditions.

Government and recognised private schools up to class 8 standard will get summer vacation from May 23 to July 9, while for classes nine to 12 the

vacation will be from May 30 to July 9.

Schools in Kashmir and parts of Jammu under winter zone have a nearly three-month-long winter vacation and a 10-day summer break annually. The summer zone schools in Jammu usually go on a one-and-a-half month summer vacation with a brief winter break.

KCC&I Concerned Over Steep Hike In Airfares

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Saturday expressed concern over the steep hike in the airfares and demanded additional flights to the Union territory to keep prices under control.

In a statement issued here, Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, President of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stated that representations have been received from various stakeholders regarding this issue.

"We failed to understand as there is no apparent reason to justify the abrupt arbitrary hike in the fares on this route when no such hike is at the same time being applied in case of other domestic destinations," he said.

He said that the KCC&I has for a long time repeatedly brought to the notice and had given several suggestions to the Authorities in this regard.

"And we hope that effective action would now be taken. We demand that the air connectivity to the state should be improved in terms of additional flights during peak rush months so that the air fare could be controlled, and infrastructure to be put in place and maximum flight operations be extended from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm," he said

"The worst and most pinch-

ing area while planning a trip that hits the intended Tourist as well as those connected with Tourism in Kashmir is the ever escalating Air Fares by the low cost carriers during the peak season," he added.

The KCC&I President urged the administration as such to put restrictions on the ever increasing fares that deter tourism flow in Kashmir. He said that the cost reaches such heights that people prefer to go to foreign destinations where the air tickets are lower than to Kashmir.

"Hike in fares was not only a tourism issue but was a grave public interest issue. There is a large number of businessmen doing their business in different parts of the country, the students seeking education in different institutes of the country and the seriously ailing patients and their families who have to pay more for air travel than the cost of the medical treatment," Ahmad said.

"KCC&I has already taken the issue to the Authorities regarding restoring Srinagar – Dubai direct international flight as well as Cargo services also. We hope that the matter will receive due consideration," he added

The KCC&I President urged LG Manoj Sinha and the Airport Authority of India to intervene so that the problem gets redressed as soon as possible.

Chief Priest Of Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Dies; LG Expresses Condolences

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Head priest at the revered Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Amir Chand passed away at his residence in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Saturday, officials said.

The 85-year-old 'Pratham Pujari' apparently died of a heart attack at his Katra residence, the officials said, adding his cremation will take place at Balganga later in the day.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), expressed his grief over the priest's death.

In a tweet in Hindi, the Lt Governor said, "The news of the death of Shri Amir Chand Ji, the chief priest of Mata Vaishno Devi Ji, is extremely sad. I pay my humble tributes to him. My deepest condolences to the bereaved family and followers. Om Shanti."

Dulloo Chairs Maiden Review Meeting Of Agriculture Department

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production and Farmer Welfare Department (AP&FWD), Atal Dulloo on Saturday chaired maiden meeting of Agriculture sector to review progress on various centrally sponsored schemes and other flagship programmes being implemented in the division.

"Our prime concern should be to enhance farmers' income, raise them as socially and economically empowered community", said the ACS while asking officers to explore and utilize all possible resources to supplement income of farm operating families.

Saying that present time being the Kharief season, ACS emphasized upon the officers to work in coordination with the district administration particularly with irrigation department so that the farmer's issues and concerns on this account could be redressed on priority.

Dulloo exhorted upon the department to ensure effective implementation of all centrally sponsored schemes

to boost the income of 7.5 lakh small and marginal farm operating families. In this regard, he also underlined the importance of timely and judicious fund utilization.

ACS asked the officers to identify projects under different centrally sponsored schemes so that they could be deliberated upon for necessary approval and thus implementation for larger interest of farming community.

Dulloo highlighted the importance of synergy between the Agriculture University and department saying the research must be in line with the aspirations of farmers. He said the projects identified for GI tagging must be completed in a time bound manner.

During the meeting, Director Agriculture, Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, gave a detailed power point presentation briefing about successful implementation of various central sponsored schemes across the division. He also highlighted status of different flagship programs, major achievements and initiatives of the department.

J&K Witnesses Completion Of 65000 Projects In 3 Years: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Reflecting exponential rise in completion of development works and establishing itself as leader from laggard in the world of progress and prosperity, Jammu and Kashmir has completed over 60,000 development projects in the past three years.

According to official document, 66,724 development projects have been completed in the Union Territory from 2019 to January 2022. The break up details stated that 9229 proj-

ects have been completed during 2018-19, 12637 in 2019-20, 21943 during 2020-21 exhibiting a steep increase as compared to previous years' achievements while 22975 works have been completed during the financial year 2021-22, till January 2022.

The records added that the "financial reforms and interventions" initiated by the Centre have facilitated completion of such a long list of development projects within the set timelines in the Union Territory.

"Authorization of projects and

resources allocation is made through Budget Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System (BEAMS), which is a real-time and paperless system. Through these interventions, the Union Territory has witnessed an unprecedented rise in completion of development works and projects in three years," the document reads further.

Similarly, implementation of transformative reforms such as BEAMS which enables online budgetary process and timely release of funds against ap-

proved works, online submission of bills through J&K PaySys, Mandatory Administrative Approvals, Technical Sanctions and e-Tendering, digital payments, GFR, GeM and related measures have paced up the development works and brought J&K at par with any other progressive state in the country. Apart from prioritizing newly sanctioned works, the administration has also focused on languishing projects.

During a review meeting of Jammu & Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corpora-

tion (JKIDFC), it was revealed that a total of 2357 projects have been approved in HPCs for funding under JKIDFC for an amount of Rs. 7110.78 crore, of which, 1239 projects for an amount of Rs 1748.65 crore have been completed.

It was also informed by the officials of JKIDFC that till date disbursement amounting Rs 2270.08 crore with 4637 payments for 1923 projects has been made out of total 2500 crore loan lifted from different financial Institutions and Nationalized Banks. JKIDFC has achieved tremen-

dous transparency with incorporation of online payment tracking mechanism, tender details/allotment information and geo-tagging of all the projects approved for funding under the languishing scheme of JKIDFC that in itself is a unique model across the country, maintained an official spokesperson.

The J&K administration linked every project approved under JKIDFC with Google Earth for real time monitoring which facilitated public viewing on the official website of JKIDFC.

It was stated that these measures had been taken to ensure the quality and timely completion of all these infrastructural projects languishing in the UT for a long time, he added. The official figures revealed that 1193 projects worth Rs 1984 crore have been completed including five projects which had been lying incomplete for more than past 20 years, 15 projects for more than 15 years, and 165 projects for more than 10 years under the languishing projects programme.

PM Modi Hosts Deaflympics Contingent, Says 'You Brought Pride & Glory For India'



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hosted India's Deaflympics contingent which produced its best-ever performance in the event held in Caxias do Sul, Brazil, from May 1 to 15.

During his interaction with the athletes, Modi said the athletes have brought pride and glory to the nation.

"I will never forget the interaction with our champions who have brought pride and glory for India at the Deaflympics. The athletes shared their experi-

ences and I could see the passion and determination in them. My best wishes to all of them," Modi tweeted after hosting the athletes at his official residence.

"It is due to our champions that time's Deaflympics have been the best for India!"

The event was also attended by Sports Minister Anurag Thakur.

For the very first time, the Indian Deaflympics team finished amongst the top 10 nations in the event with 16 medals, a huge jump from just five in 2017.

In Brazil, the Indian contingent won in five of the 11 sporting disciplines.

Archery World Cup: India Edge France To Win Gold



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Indian men's compound archery team on Saturday came from behind to prevail over France by two points in an intense finish to win the gold medal in successive World Cup stages in Gwangju, South Korea.

Unheralded Mohan Bhargava also shared the limelight as he stunned reigning World champion Nico Wiener en route to winning a dream World Cup individual silver medal as Indian compound archers outshone their much-fancied recurve teammates.

A day after the Olympic discipline recurve archers ended their campaign with a solitary bronze (in women's team event), India bagged one gold, one silver and one bronze in the compound section on Saturday to end their World Cup Stage 2 campaign with five medals.

That the compound archers

bagged one gold, one silver and two bronze won India's total medal count of five summed up their dominance compared to the TOPS-supported Olympic discipline recurve archers.

India began the day with the men's compound team dishing out a superb fightback to prevail over France 232-230 to win the gold medal.

In a repeat of the Stage 1 final, the fourth-seeded men's team, comprising Abhishek Verma, Aman Saini and Rajat Chauhan, found itself trailing against its sixth-seed rivals in the first two ends.

But riding on an immaculate finish in the third end the trio sealed a 232-230 win over its French counterparts Adrien Gontier, Jean Philippe Boulch and Quentin Baraer to win the World Cup Stage 2 gold.

In the last World Cup final at Antalya in April, the same Indian trio had defeated France by one point.

Chessable Masters: R Praggnanandhaa Stuns World Champion Magnus Carlsen



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Indian Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu notched up his second win of the season over Magnus Carlsen in the fifth round of the Chessable Masters online rapid chess tournament, exactly three months after stunning the world champion for the first time.

The 16-year-old from Chennai capitalised on a late blunder from Carlsen on Friday to pocket three crucial points to keep himself in the hunt for a knockout berth.

"I did not want to win that way," said Praggnanandhaa when asked about his second triumph against the world champion.

The match was headed for a draw before the Norwegian committed a blunder in the 40th

move when he misplaced a black knight during the final seconds and resigned immediately in the next move as Praggnanandhaa emerged winner.

The Indian drew with Harikrishna in the next round, defeated Gawain Jones before losing to David Anton Guijarro to finish the day.

The victory took Praggnanandhaa to 12 points, while Carlsen was at the second spot behind China's Wei Yi on the second day of the USD 150,000 tournament.

Praggnanandhaa is currently sharing the fifth place with Ding Liren.

In February, Praggnanandhaa had stunned Carlsen in the eighth round of the Airtel Chess Masters online rapid chess tournament, becoming only the third Indian to clinch a victory over the Norwegian superstar.

IPL 2022 Table

Team	M	W	L	NRR	Pts	Last 5
1 GT	14	10	4	+0.316	20	●●●●●●●●●●
2 RR	14	9	5	+0.298	18	●●●●●●●●●●
3 LSG	14	9	5	+0.251	18	●●●●●●●●●●
4 RCB	14	8	6	-0.253	16	●●●●●●●●●●
5 DC	13	7	6	+0.255	14	●●●●●●●●●●
6 KKR	14	6	8	+0.146	12	●●●●●●●●●●
7 PBKS	13	6	7	-0.043	12	●●●●●●●●●●
8 SRH	13	6	7	-0.230	12	●●●●●●●●●●
9 CSK	14	4	10	-0.203	8	●●●●●●●●●●
10 MI	13	3	10	-0.577	6	●●●●●●●●●●

SRH, PBKS Look To End Season On A High

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Their play-off hopes dashed, both Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings will be keen to end their IPL season on a winning note when the two teams clash in a dead rubber here on Sunday.

Both teams were knocked out of the play-off race when RCB defeated table-toppers Gujarat Titans on Thursday.

The Sunrisers will be without the services of their skipper Kane Williamson, who has returned to New Zealand for the birth of his second child.

In his absence, either Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who has led the side previously, or Nicholas Pooran are likely to captain the Sunrisers in their last game this season.

While Sunrisers managed to snap their five-match losing streak by eking out a narrow three-run win over Mumbai Indians, Punjab succumbed to a 17-run loss to Delhi Capitals.

The fact that Mayank Agarwal and Co. could not win two games in a row sums up their inconsistent run all season.

High on spirits after thrashing RCB by 54 runs, PBKS suffered



an inexplicable batting collapse in their must-win against Delhi.

The Punjab batting unit has been plagued by inconsistencies and will need to fire in unison to build or defend a huge total.

The Sunrisers, on the other hand, won five back-to-back matches and looked on course for a top 2 finish but injuries to their frontline bowlers Washington Sundar and T Natarajan deflated their campaign as they slumped to a five-match losing streak. Skipper Williamson's wretched form didn't help their cause either.

On the bowling front, pace

sensation Umran Malik, who enjoyed a good outing in the previous game, is likely to keep the speed gun radar busy.

Sunrisers also found star Afghan bowler in the form of medium pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi, who did the tremendous job in the previous game.

Both Bhuvneshwar and Farooqi will be eyeing another good outing, while Natarajan will have to forget the hammering by Tim David and find a way to nail his yorkers again.

Sunrisers batting unit has been spearheaded by Rahul Tripathi this season.

Gerrard Narrative Hangs Over English Premier League Finale

Agencies

LONDON: Steven Gerrard's phone has been red-hot ahead of the finale to the English Premier League and many of the calls and messages will likely have come from people connected to his former club.

One of the greatest midfielders in his generation, Gerrard never got to win the league for Liverpool in 17 years there as a player and team captain. It was the biggest regret in his career, denying him what he has called "the icing on the cake."

On Sunday, though, he could help win the title for Liverpool — as a manager of another team.

Gerrard's Aston Villa stands between Manchester City and another league title, its sixth in 11 seasons. All City needs to do is win at its Etihad Stadium home.

Yet if Gerrard can inspire a win or even a draw for Villa, the title could then go to Liverpool — provided his boyhood club, the team he'll forever hold dear to his heart, beats Wolverhampton in a match taking place simultaneously at Anfield.

It's the dominant narrative heading into Sunday and Gerrard can't deny it.

"I totally understand and respect the external noise and the questions that have been coming my way for some time," he said. "They're involved in a title race and I spent a lot of time there."

So how does Gerrard assess the situation?

"We'll go out at the weekend," he said, "and give it everything we've got to try and get points for Aston Villa and our supporters."

"If that inevitably helps Liverpool, fantastic, but my priority is to try and get points for Aston Villa."

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said he hasn't spoken to Gerrard about the game and won't be doing so before Sunday. "Stevie will take it 100% seriously, I am sure, without me calling him," Klopp said. "I don't have



to. Probably the rest of the club did it already, but I didn't."

Klopp said helping Liverpool win the title would presumably be a motivating factor for Gerrard.

"I can only understand these situations by thinking of myself in that role," Klopp said. "So if I would play a game that would help (his former clubs) Borussia Dortmund or Mainz, that would make for me an extra motivation."

"But I don't play and Stevie doesn't play. So that's a shame. It's more a shame that Stevie doesn't play than I don't play."

Gerrard has taken the repeated questions about his role in Sunday's league finale in good spirits but there was one aspect that irritated him.

Villa played Liverpool last week, losing 2-1 at home. The result kept alive the title hopes of the Reds, and there were suggestions that Gerrard would be happy to do his old club a favor.

"It is disappointing," he said, "when people mention integrity and aim it towards me or Aston Villa or any of my players."

Gerrard won't be the only member of Villa's travelling contingent this weekend with links to Liverpool. Philippe Coutinho and Danny Ings are former Liverpool players and they are likely to return to the team having been left out of Villa's 1-1 draw with Burnley on Thursday.

Umran, Mohsin, Karthik Could Get The Nod For SA T20Is



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Emerging stars like Umran Malik and Mohsin Khan could be rewarded for their superb performances in IPL 2022, while old-horses Shikhar Dhawan and Dinesh Karthik are likely to return to the Indian team for the T20I series against South Africa next month.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya, who has not played for India since the T20 World Cup last year, has shown form and fitness in the IPL and is set to be included in the squad for the five-game series, starting on June 9. He is finally back to bowling regularly, which was critical in his national comeback bid.

After a two-month long IPL and with the Test team due to depart for England on June 15, some of the all-format players including Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah could be rested for the home series.

A similar squad is also expected

to be picked for the two T20Is in Ireland later in June.

If that is the case, the captaincy responsibility could go to either Dhawan, who led in Sri Lanka last year, or Hardik who has impressed as a leader in his debut season for Gujarat Titans.

The IPL continues to unearth future stars and this season has been no different. While Umran impressed with his raw pace for the Sunrisers, left-arm pacer Mohsin, has stood out both for his speed and accuracy.

As his Lucknow Super Giants skipper K L Rahul said left-arm pacers are always in demand at the highest level, Mohsin could get his big break on Sunday.

Another left-arm pacer in the reckoning is Arshdeep Singh, who once again had a good season for Punjab. He had one of the best economy rates in the death overs and displayed the ability of landing yorkers at will, which is always welcome in an unforgiving format like the T20.

Brazil Picks Europe To Prepare For World Cup



Agencies

SAO PAULO: Brazil's national team will prepare in Europe beginning Nov. 14 for the World Cup in Qatar at a location to be decided, Juninho Paulista, the coordinator of the Brazilian soccer body, said Friday.

Juninho also said the team will arrive in Qatar on Nov. 19, five days before its opening match against Serbia. Brazil's other rivals in Group G are Switzerland and Cameroon.

"We will gather in Europe so players based there can arrive more quickly. We only have a week of preparations this time, any time we can save will help," Juninho said in a podcast hosted by his former teammate and 2002 World Cup winner Denilson.

Four years ago, Brazil started preparations at its training center at Teresopolis north of Rio de Janeiro, moved to Tottenham's training ground in London for 10 days and then traveled to Russia. Brazil lost 2-1 to Belgium at Kazan in the quarterfinals in 2018.

Brazil will play two friendlies next month in Asia — against South Korea in Seoul and against Japan in Tokyo.

FIFA still wants Brazil and Argentina to play their World Cup qualifying game that was suspended in September shortly after kickoff when officials entered the field because some of Argentina's players had violated COVID-19 protocols. FIFA wants the game to be held this September but neither team has committed to playing. (AP)

Mbappé To Stay At PSG After Rejecting Real Madrid: Report

Agencies

PARIS: Kylian Mbappé is set to stay at Paris Saint-Germain after again turning down the chance to join Real Madrid.

The France forward has agreed to a three-year contract extension that is close to being signed, a person with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the contract talks publicly.

The 23-year-old Mbappé's contract is expiring in June and he would have been available on a free transfer.

Instead of joining 13-time European champion Madrid, which has chased him for so long, Mbappé is staying to try to deliver PSG its first Champions League title.

Madrid managed to beat PSG in the Champions League this season but not in the transfer market once again.

The Spanish giant's failure to sign Mbappé is a significant blow for its president, Florentino Pérez, who has been trying to get the transfer over the line for a year.

PSG turned down Madrid's official bid of 180 million euros (\$190 million) — the same amount it signed Mbappé for



from Monaco in 2017 — and even another reported amount of 200 million euros (\$211 million) was not enough to sell its star despite him having only a year remaining on his contract. Mbappé said wanted to leave at the end of last season, but only on the right terms for PSG.

The wealth of the club's Qatar sovereign wealth fund ownership linked to the emir allows PSG to resist bids that could prove irresistible to other clubs without state funding.

Signing Mbappé would have provided a statement signing for Pérez from a team that only emerged as a rival in the last decade through its Qatari funding.

But the energy expended in pursuing the transfer, and optimism from Madrid, which is chasing its record-extending 14th European Cup win when it meets Liverpool in next Saturday's Champions League final in Paris, has come to nothing.