



P3 CITY

AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE HELD AT KOTHI BAGH GHSS

An awareness programme on Menstrual Hygiene was conducted by JK Women's Welfare Foundation at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Kothi Bagh. The event was held with the

THINK

P7 THE ULTIMATE MONKEYPOX FAQ

The latest outbreak of monkeypox has, at the time of writing, reached 17 countries with 110 confirmed cases and a further 205 suspected cases. It's a fast-moving story, so if you need to catch up on the latest, here are answers to some of the most pressing questions.



P5 STATE

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS IN GOVT SCHOOLS TRIGGERS 'CRISIS-LIKE' SITUATION IN RAMBAN

The acute shortage of teaching staff in government-run schools has triggered a "crisis-like" situation in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, a senior government official said



Quote!
A friend is a second self
- Aristotle

Won't Rest Till We Root-Out Militancy From J&K: LG

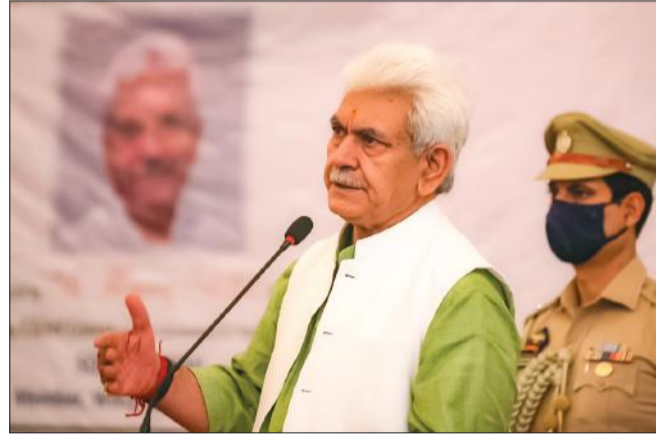
Urges Protesting KPs Not To Fall Prey To 'Petty Politics'

Agencies

Budgam: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Monday reached out to protesting Kashmiri Pandits in Budgam district and stated that in the past few years security forces were having upper hand 'but' even shadows are suspects in Kashmir.

He, however, was quick that the roots of militancy have been strong in the Valley and besides that the eco-system that provided oxygen to it remained ticking but his government is committed to root-out militancy from Kashmir soil.

Addressing agitating Kashmiri Pandits at Sheikhpora migrant colony, Sinha said security forces in Kashmir have been having an upper hand in the



File Photo

Valley. "But we can't even trust shadows as for us, even shadows are suspects..." he said.

"Who knows someone among you may be informing others

about what I am telling you..." He said the administration was fully aware of the sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) and is committed | [More on P10](#)

ENOUGH BLOOD HAS FLOWN IN KASHMIR. Roots of militancy have remained stronger here in Jammu and Kashmir and there was a time when even the case was not being registered.

Govt Not To Disengage 'Rehbar-E-Khel', Other Employees

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday said it has no plans to disengage employees working under its 'Rehbar-e-Khel', 'Rehbar-e-Janglat' and Nehru Yuva Club schemes.

The clarification comes amidst protests by people employed under these schemes and criticism by political parties over the purported government order to re-advertise the posts through | [More on P10](#)

National Emblem Replaces Sheikh Abdullah On JKP Medal

Agencies

Srinagar: The J&K administration on Monday ordered replacing Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah embossed on one side of the police medal for Gallantry and Meritorious Service with 'The National Emblem of Government of India'.

"It is hereby ordered that in modification to the Para 4 of the Jammu & Kashmir Police Medal Scheme, the

Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah embossed on one side of the medal shall be replaced with "The National Emblem of Government of India" and the other side inscribed with the J&K State Emblem shall be inscribed as "Jammu and Kashmir Police Medal for Gallantry" and "Jammu and Kashmir Police Medal for Meritorious Service" in case of Gallantry/Meritorious Medal, as the case may | [More on P10](#)

Govt Removes Civil Judge From Services

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday terminated the services of a civil judge with immediate effect, an official order said.

The order, issued by the department of law, justice and parliamentary affairs (judicial administration section), informed the removal of the Civil Judge (Junior Division)/Munsiff Naveen Jamwal.

No reason was specified for Jamwal's termination.

In his order, secretary to government Achal Sethi said the judge was removed on the recommendations of the full court of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

"Lieutenant Governor is pleased to order the removal of Jamwal from | [More on P10](#)

Police To Identify Fake Media Groups In Ramban

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Taking serious note of mushrooming of illegal web news channels, authorities in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban on Monday asked police to identify all such fake media groups which are operating without any proper registration in the district.

The decision of the District Magistrate, Ramban, Mussarat Islam to verify the antecedents and source of funding of all so-called journalists through local police was welcomed by the working journalist association of the district.

In a letter addressed to the Senior Superintendent of Police, | [More on P10](#)

More Govt Employees Under Lens Of Security Agencies



File Photo

Agencies

New Delhi: More government employees are on the radar of the security agencies for militant links in Jammu and Kashmir and it is expected that the government will sack them soon, the sources in the security network on Monday said.

The sources further said that the people who are on the radar of the agencies are teaching and non-teaching staff of the Kashmir University, while some of them are working in the J&K government.

The government has asked the intelligence agencies to prepare a list of those employees of university, school and government offices who are sympathizers of militant outfits or spreading the separatism among the students and the local people.

The intelligence agencies in J&K have prepared three categories of such government employees and teachers who are involved in spreading the ideology of

the militant organisations. Among the University teachers, it was learnt that 15 professors or lecturers are on the radar of the security forces and three of them need immediate action while 15 are on the watch list, the sources said.

Those who are under the first category will be sacked immediately after a Committee's recommendation which has been constituted under Article 311(2) (C) of the Constitution while those kept under second category are on the watch of the security agencies and the third category, the misguided government employees will be taken for counselling to get them back in the mainstream, they added.

The officials in the security grid in J&K said that the majority of university teachers are against militancy and have no anti-India sentiments.

Recently, the J&K government had dismissed one professor Altaf Hussain Pandit of the Kashmir | [More on P10](#)

BANIHAL SHOCKER!

Newborn Comes Back To Life After Doctors Declare Her Dead

Press Trust Of India

Banihal: A baby girl who was declared dead in a hospital here soon after her birth on Monday was found to be alive when her family was forced to dig up her grave nearly an hour after she was buried, officials said.

Locals in the area objected to her burial in their graveyard and insisted she be buried at her ancestral graveyard. The miraculous survival



File Photo

of the just-born girl triggered protests by her relatives against the government, prompting the administration to suspend

two employees posted at the labour room, and order a probe, the officials said.

Local sarpanch Manzoor Alyas Wani said the baby belonged to Basharat Ahmad Gujjar and Shameema Begum, who had a normal delivery Monday morning at the sub-district hospital. They hail from Bankoot village, 3 kms from Banihal town of Ramban district. Wani alleged the baby was declared | [More on P10](#)

Replacement Work Halts Evening Flights At Srinagar Airport

No Flights After Sunset Till Approach Lights Are Installed: Director AAI

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar: The recently undertaken work for up-gradation of Srinagar International Airport's runway has disrupted the schedule of post sunset flights leading to cancellation of several evening flights in the past few days.

Taking to the microblogging site, Twitter, Director Airports Authority of India (Srinagar) Kuldeep Singh on Sunday wrote that the IAF is installing a new Instrument Landing System at our airport. "As a part of this change the Approach Lights are also being replaced. The removal of old lights began on May 15th. The installation of new lights is likely to be completed by Jul 15th." Director



File Photo

Srinagar Airport, Kuldeep Singh said in his tweet.

As per the aviation regulator of India, Singh noted, no flights can operate post sunset till the new lighting system on the runway is in place. "The DGCA has directed that in the absence of these lights, the night flying operations after

sunset cannot be permitted. Therefore, four flights were cancelled by various airlines yesterday," Singh Tweeted.

In his tweet, the Airport Director further said that "As flights are not permitted after sunset, such cancellations may continue till the Approach Lights installation is | [More on P10](#)



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In association with: Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums, J&K District Administration Baramulla School/Higher Education Departments



Can sniffer dogs really detect Covid almost as well as a PCR test? Turns out they can

Dogs have an exceptional sense of smell. We take advantage of this ability in many ways, including by training them to find illicit drugs, dangerous goods and even people.



In recent years, a dog's sense of smell has also been used in the medical field. These remarkable animals can be trained to sniff out cancer, diabetes, and extraordinarily, epileptic seizures before they occur.

Early in the pandemic the possibility of using dogs to sniff out Covid was explored in a few countries. And although the results of these early trials surpassed most people's expectations, many questions remained. These included how well these findings would stand up to more rigorous scientific scrutiny and how well dogs would perform outside the artificial environment of the research laboratory.

In the past week we have moved closer to answering these questions, with an article published in BMJ Global Health, which found dogs could detect Covid almost as well as PCR tests, in some circumstances.

What did the researchers test?

This article reported the results of two studies. In both studies, four dogs were tested to see how well they detected Covid from skin swabs taken from people with or without Covid (according to the gold-standard test, PCR). These dogs didn't just come off the streets; they had already had a significant amount of training

in sniffing out drugs, dangerous goods or cancer. The first study in the first study, the researchers looked at whether the dogs could identify Covid in the skin swabs of 420 volunteers, 114 of whom had tested positive to Covid by PCR. The study was rigorous, with various precautions against the results being compromised. This included an elaborate study protocol that involved a number of separate assistants and a dog handler. None of them knew whether the sample was from someone with Covid, so they could not influence the outcome, intentionally or unintentionally. The dogs detected Covid with a sensitivity of 92% (which refers

to their ability to correctly identify those with infection) and a specificity of 91% (their ability to correctly identify those without infection). Although there was some variation between dogs, they all performed exceptionally well. There are no significant disclaimers here, this was a great result. The second study The second study was important as its goal was to see how well the dogs could do in the messiness of the real world. This real-life trial involved the dogs sniffing 303 incoming passengers at Helsinki-Vantaa International Airport in Finland. Each passenger also took a PCR test.

The dogs matched the PCR results in 296 out of 303 (98%) of the samples and they correctly identified the swabs as negative in 296 out of 300 (99%) samples. The important consideration in interpreting this result is this happened during airport screening, a situation where you wouldn't expect many people to test positive. In this type of low-prevalence environment, you want dogs to be able to screen passengers with a high negative predictive value. That is, you want the dogs to be able to identify people who are not carrying the virus to differentiate them from those who may be carrying it. Then you would carry out confirmatory PCR test-

ing on that last group. In an environment where the prevalence of Covid is around 1%, such as an airport, the researchers estimated the negative predictive value for dogs screening for Covid to be 99.9%. That is, the dogs would be expected to correctly exclude 99.9% of passengers as having Covid. This is another fantastic result.

Low tech and instant In a world where we rely on expensive technological solutions, there is something reassuring about finding a low-tech option for screening Covid. Importantly, however, the study highlights dogs are quick to train for this task and are ideal for screening in high-throughput settings, such as airports, given how accurate they are and the fact they give instant results.

Although nothing should surprise us about our closest friend, another incredible outcome from this study was the suggestion the dogs may have been able to distinguish between the variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid. While other possible explanations cannot be excluded, the performance of the dogs seemed to drop with the emergence of the Alpha variant. This was attributed to the dogs being able to identify a difference between this variant and the wild-type virus on which they were originally trained. These studies confirm nothing could be further from the truth when we say you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

بجلی کنکشن کی تبدیلی

بجلی کنکشن زیر کٹریز یو آر آئی ڈی نمبر 020602000586 اور زیر انسٹالیشن نمبر 104736 جو کہ علی محمد ڈار ولد غلام محمد ڈار ساکنہ آرم محلہ

چاڈورہ کے نام پر درج ہے اور Shafaat Pharmacy

Chadura نامی دکان میں لگا ہوا ہے کو میں اپنے نام پر درج کرانا

چاہتا ہوں۔ اس سلسلے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ

سات یوم کے اندر اندر اپنے اعتراضات محکمہ ڈی ڈی کے سب

ڈویژن چاڈورہ کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ معیاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی

عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

شہید اختر زوجہ شہیم احمد ڈار

ساکنہ آرم محلہ چاڈورہ نزد یک سب ڈسٹرکٹ ہسپتال چاڈورہ

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Where as a joint application has been received from owner. Shri : Abdul Hamid Dar S/o Haji Abdul Ahad Dar R/o Shahpora

Budgam as (Transfer) & Shri. Arshad Hussain Mir S/o Gh Mohammad Mir R/o Sheikhzoo Ganderbal as (Transferee) for transfer of Tipper Carriage route permit No 1228/GC/Bud vehicle No. JK04 B-4355 . As well as HPA Cancellation with J&K Ltd B/u Ompora Now it is therefore notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed transfer of the said route permit/vehicle shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper . Seller and purchaser identified by the authorized representative of M/s STWCO Namely Mr. Noor Mohd

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM. 930
 Dated 23-05-2022

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

RASM-E-CHAHNUM

Your memories are still fresh and we always feel your gardous presence around us & teaching us the lesson of honesty & obedience towards our duties.



With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved Mohd Ishaq Ganai S/o Mohd Ramzan Ganai. R/o Gund Hassi Bhat Srinagar Charum will be on Wednesday 25 May 2022 .

BEREAVED
 BASHIR AHMED
 SAJAD HUSSAIN
 ZAHID FIRDOUS
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Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT

Office of the Executive Engineer FBI Division Tangmarg

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Fresh e-NIT No.18 OF 2022-23 Dated:-21-05-2022

JJM

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (FBI) Division Tangmarg invites e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Bidders/ Firms/Companies/ of all classes registered in JKPWD/CPWD/Railways or any other state Government for below mentioned works at various Water Supply schemes of FBI Division Tangmarg of Kashmir Province of UT of J&K, under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd consisting of Financial Bid on overall percentage rate basis, in the prescribed BOQ.

Sr.No	Particulars of the work	Estimated cost in lacs	Tender Fee (in Rs)	Earnest Money Deposit	Bid Validity Period	Time of completion of work (in days)
1	Laying & Fitting of Delivery and Distribution Mains consisting of GMS Tubes and Ductile Iron Pipes of different Nominal Bores along with pipe fittings and control valves. Construction of Ground Service Reservoirs (GSRs), Slow Sand Filtration Plants. Execution of ancillary civil works like Spring Covers, Boundary walls, Protection Works etc. at various Water Supply schemes of FBI Division Tangmarg of Kashmir Province of UT of J&K, under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).	As per ANNEXURE-I to this bid document.	500/-	02% of the estimated cost	90 days	As per ANNEXURE-I to this bid document.

Position of funds: Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)
 The tender inviting authority is Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (FBI) Division Tangmarg.
 The awarding authority is District Jal Jeevan Mission (DJJM)

Critical Dates

i	Publish Date	21-05-2022
ii	Document Download Start Date	21-05-2022
iii	Clarification Start date	22-05-2022 from 10:AM
iv	Clarification End date	22-05-2022 up to 6:PM
v	Bid submission Start date	23-05-2022 from 10:AM
v	Bid submission End date	28-05-2022 at 4:00 P.M.
vi	Date of Bid opening	30-05-2022 at 3:00 P.M.

- Biddocuments can be accessed and downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in
- The whole bidding process shall be completed online on tender portal www.jktenders.gov.in. The intending bidders can download the bid document from the tender portal and can submit their bids by uploading them on the tender portal.
- The E-Challan /Treasury Challan of provisions E-Nits will be accepted in the fresh Nit.
- The valid bids received shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer FBI Division Tangmarg. Bids must be accompanied by bid security and cost of Tender Document as specified in column 4 & 5 of the table.
- The cost of tender documents should be in form of DD/TR/e challan in favour of Executive Engineer FBI Division Tangmarg.
- The hard copies of cost of tender document in shape of TR/e-challan, Earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR/BG and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as L1 after opening of financial cover.
- The bid shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the last date of submission of bids. If any bidder withdraws his bid before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the same shall be considered to be in violation of bid security declaration and shall be dealt with accordingly and the bid shall be declared non-responsive.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.
- Queries by email if any should be made at kmphebla@gmail.com.

DIPK-2451/22

No.FBID/CC/1305-1315
 Date:-21-05-2022

ANNEXURE I

SCHEME WISE LIST OF WORKS

S.No	Name of Water Supply Scheme	Description of work	Jal Shakti (FBI) Division	Estimated cost (in Lacs)	Time of completion (Days)	Class of Contractor
1.	WSS Chandil Wanigam	Retrofitting of WSS Chandil Wanigam by way of laying Raw Water Main Supply Main Sub main and distribution system at various spots including Construction of chain link fencing around various structures construction of Sluice Chamber revamping of SSFP, Construction of Saddle Blocks/Anchor Blocks/supporting pillars to RWM, repair/renovation to existing Chowikdar Quarter under JJM	Tangmarg	128.45	90 days	AAY
2.	WSS Branner Khaipora	Retrofitting of WSS Branner Khaipora by way of laying Raw Water Main Supply Main Sub main and distribution system at various spots including Construction of chain link fencing around various structures construction of Sluice Chamber revamping of SSFP, Construction of Saddle Blocks/supporting pillars to RWM, repair/renovation to existing Chowikdar Quarter under JJM	Tangmarg	119.68	90 days	AAY
3.	WSS Wailoo Kralpora	Retrofitting of WSS Wailoo Kralpora by way of laying Raw Water Main Supply Main Sub main and distribution system at various spots including Construction of chain link fencing around various structures construction of Sluice Chamber revamping of SSFP, Construction of Saddle Blocks/supporting pillars to RWM, repair/renovation to existing Chowikdar Quarter under JJM	Tangmarg	101.78	90 days	AAY
4.	WSS Kungamdar-Nawlari	Retrofitting of WSS Kungamdar Nawlari by way of laying Raw Water Main Supply Main Sub main and distribution system at various spots including Construction of chain link fencing around Structure, construction RCC Jacketing to existing SR & Construction of Saddle Block for RWM (For providing 100% FHTC) under JJM	Tangmarg	81.63	70 days	AAY
5.	WSS RaremBoni Bani	Retrofitting of WSS RaremBoni Bani by way of laying Raw Water Main Supply Main Sub main and distribution system at various spots including Construction RCC jacketing to existing PST/SSFP & Construction of Head Works at head site & construction of catch water drain/wash put drain under & Construction of saddle blocks/crate protection work at spots for RWM For Providing 100% (FHTC) under JJM	Tangmarg	81.07	60 days	AAY

ULB Initiates Cleanliness Drive Of Telbal Nallah

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Director Urban Local Bodies (ULB) Mithora Masoom on Monday started a cleanliness drive at Telbal Nallah. The cleanliness drive of the Dal Lake is going on since a month under the ATH-WAAS initiative of the government.

Students from Legends Public School Nas-

em Bagh also participated in the said event.

The Director ULB said that it is the need of the hour for all to clean the crown of our Srinagar and all should come forward for these drives.

She also congratulated the efforts taken by LCMA for initiating these steps by which Dal is comparatively cleaner and maintaining its cleanliness is the duty of all.

'Hangul Week' Celebrations Commence At Dachigam

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Celebrations of Hangul week commenced at Dachigam National Park on Monday.

Various DDC members, PRI members, members of Phaaak Forum, students from various Schools and civil society members from various areas around Dachigam attended the function.

"The last viable population of Hangul (Cervus hanglu) in the Indian sub-continent exists only in the protected Dachigam National Park", said Altaf Hussain, Wildlife Warden, Central Kashmir presided over the function.

Dachigam, is a vast mountainous 141 sq. km sanctuary on the outskirts of Srinagar, where

Hangul was grazed in hordes before the start of militancy in 1989. Lately, there have been a few sightings in connected areas outside the park in south Kashmir but their number is believed to be negligible.

He said the Hangul (Cervus Elaphus Hanglu) is mostly found in Dachigam National Park and wildlife sanctuary. It is known for its majestic red coat and two shiny antlers. Recently it was also found that the stag population is on the rise in the valley.

DDC members Ali Mohd Rather, Dr GM Rather and Peer Bilal of Phaaak Forum also spoke on the occasion. They assured full support and co-operation from the people for making the 'Save Hangul Campaign' a success.



Awareness Programme On Menstrual Hygiene Held at Kothi Bagh GHSS

"Need To Break Stigma Associated With Menstrual Hygiene"

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An awareness programme on Menstrual Hygiene was conducted by JK Women's Welfare Foundation at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Kothi Bagh. The event was held with the support of the Indian Army.

Hundreds of Students attended the Awareness programme which focused primarily on awareness and the need to break the stigma associated with the Menstrual Hy-

giene in society and especially in girls and women.

The NGO raised awareness and talked about challenges in our society associated with the Menstrual Hygiene Education in Schools and emphasized upon the essential period-friendly initiatives and sanitation facilities required in the schools and colleges.

The Seminar commenced with the Welcome address and introductory speech by Sufi Snober, Chairperson JK Women's Welfare Foundation NGO working on is-

issues of Women Empowerment, Menstrual Hygiene and Gender equality issues.

It was followed by a lecture on medical & health aspects by Maj Kalpana, Nursing Officer of Indian Army.

Later a talk was held on Psychological aspects associated with Menstrual Hygiene.

Nusrat Bukhari Principal, GGHS Kothibagh, Raja Anjum, Dy CEO and Hina Amin, Nodal Officer and Chief Coordinator were present during the seminar.

Hundreds of Students attended the Awareness programme which focused primarily on awareness and the need to break the stigma associated with the Menstrual Hygiene in society and especially in girls and women.

Training Program On 'Utilizing the Scientific & Technological Infrastructure' Kicks Off At KU

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Inaugural session of week-long Synergistic Training program Utilizing the Scientific and Technological Infrastructure (STUTI) kicked off at University of Kashmir on Monday.

The week-long program is being organised by the Department of Physics, University of Kashmir in collaboration with the Shivaji University, Kolhapur with support from the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India.

Addressing the gathering, Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar remarked that NEP-2020 has created a suitable platform in universities and other educational institutions for translation of research, ideas and innovations into actions for betterment of

society.

He highlighted that the collaborations between different universities and institutions with sharing of infrastructure, ideas and research as well as movement of scholars and researchers is of utmost importance as it gives impetus to research efforts. He added that these collaborations create a platform for interactions where some of the unique brains and minds of various institutions meet and integrate, thereby producing something significant for our nation as well as the world.

The Advisor further said that the present age is the age of Science and Technology and the technology has changed the way of our life. He added that Science and Technology has created ample solutions to problems faced by our present civilization.

Talking about the progress

made by the University in recent years, Advisor Bhatnagar remarked that this university is one of the premier institutes across the country and is known for its academic excellence. He added that the Brain Gain scheme of this University has brought good results and is significantly contributing towards the excellence of this premier institute.

Highlighting about the significance of NEP-2020, Advisor Bhatnagar said that the NEP-2020 is addressing some of the shortcomings and drawbacks in our educational system and with its help, the government is broadly basing it and making it more research and innovation oriented. He added that mentoring and exchanging of ideas forms one of the core competencies of the NEP-2020 and this program will contribute remarkably in that aspect.

Hospital Employee Found Dead In Rented Room

Agencies

Srinagar: Senior Laboratory Technician at SMHS hospital Srinagar whom police shifted to the hospital after finding him unconscious at his rented room in Sonwar area of Srinagar was declared brought dead by doctors.

Sources said Moti Lal Danak, a resident of Dachan Kistwar at present Kashmir Nursing Home Gupkar reported in police station RM Bagh, Srinagar that his 46-year old brother-in-law namely Bodh Raj Thakor also a resident of Dachan Kistwar working as senior Laboratory Technician at SMHS hospital, Srinagar is not in communication with his family.

Accordingly, a police party from RM Bagh along with his relatives rushed to his rented room at Sonwar Srinagar and found him unconscious.

Police shifted Bodh Raj Thakor to SMHS hospital where doctors declared him dead.

After the completion of medico, and legal formalities the dead body was handed over to the family and proceeding under section 174 Cr.PC has been initiated by the police in this regard. (KNT)

Pencak Silat Student Contingent Leaves For All-India Championship

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir University Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofar Khan on Monday flagged-off a Pencak Silat student contingent for their participation in the all-India inter-university championship to be held in University of Jammu from May 24.

Eighteen students, including boys and girls from KU and its affiliated colleges are participating in the championship under the supervision of varsity's Directorate of Physical Education and Sports (DPES).

Addressing the participants, Prof Nilofar said the University of Kashmir has a robust sports infrastructure and shall endeavour to ensure maximum participation of students in its various sports activities.

She said she was glad to see girl students joining the Pencak Silat championship to demonstrate their unwavering commitment and passion for extracurricular activities.

"It will be our unrelenting effort to provide the best possible sports facilities to our students to facilitate their overall personality develop-

It will be our unrelenting effort to provide the best possible sports facilities to our students to facilitate their overall personality development

ment," the Vice-Chancellor said.

Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir underlined the initiatives taken by the University for Development of sports infrastructure and facilities.

Director DPES Prof Showket Shah gave a brief overview of the upcoming Pencak Silat Championship. He said the University students in 2019 bagged 11 medals in the Pencak Silat Championship held in GNDJU Amritsar.

On the occasion, the DPES felicitated the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Chief Proctor Dr Imtiyaz, apart from officials and staff of the DPES.

انتقال پر مملال

مرزا جاوید علی انتقال کر گئے

انتہائی دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ یہ خبر دی جاتی ہے کہ مرزا جاوید علی ابن مرحوم مرزا احمد اسماعیل صاحب کو حادثہ قمر واری منتظر عیالات کے بعد مورخہ 23 مئی 2022 عیدوی بروز سوموار اس دارالفانی سے دارالبتی جانب رحلت کر گئے۔ مرحوم شریف النفس، دیندار اور مجتہد اہلسنت تھے۔ اللہ تبارک و تعالیٰ العظیم! محمد و آل محمد مرحوم کو جو ارادہ میں جگہ عنایت فرمائے۔ مرحوم کے ایصالِ ثواب کے لئے اجتماعی فاتحہ خواں مورخہ 25 مئی 2022 بروز بدھوار متبرہ حکیم محلہ باغوان پورہ پر انجام دی جائے گی۔ بعد ازاں تعزیتی مجلس دولت نازد واقع قمر واری ہر دن بھر جاری رہے گی۔

سوگواران

الحاج مرزا ناصر علی (قمر واری)

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBERA: 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

22 Shawwal 1443

PRAYERS	
FAJR	3: 45
ZUHR	12:28
ASR	5:24
Magrib	7:35
ISHA	9: 11

This Day In History

- 1153- Malcolm IV becomes King of Scots
- 1218 -The Fifth Crusade leaves Acre for Egypt.
- 1370-Hanzesteden signs peace treaty with Danish king Waldemar IV
- 1595- Nomenclator of Leiden University Library appears, the first printed catalog of an institutional library.
- 1621- The Protestant Union is formally dissolved.
- 1658-Battle of Dunes (Spanish-French War) fought
- 1667- French troops attack into Southern Netherlands
- 1689 - English Parliament guarantees freedom of religion for Protestants
- 1697 - English King William III travels through northern Europe
- 1738 - John Wesley is converted, launching the Methodist movement; celebrated annually by Methodists as Aldersgate Day
- 1775 - John Hancock is unanimously elected President of the Continental Congress
- 1798 - Irish Rebellion of 1798 led by the United Irishmen against British rule begins
- 1809 - Dartmoor Prison opens to house French prisoners of war
- 1815- George Evans discovers Lachlan River, Australia
- 1818- General Andrew Jackson captures Pensacola Florida
- 1822- Battle of Pichincha, Bolivar secures independence of Quito from Spain
- 1832-The First Kingdom of Greece is declared in the London Conference.
- 1846- General Zachary Taylor captures Monterey in Mexican War

From KO Archives

Police Hunting For Ex-MLA

SRINAGAR - A National Conference leader and former legislator allegedly involved in facilitating a militant commander in crossing the international border to Pakistan, is absconding. The police have conducted raids at several places to seek the ex-MLA, Gul Rafiqi, who represented the Hom-Shalibug constituency, but have failed to trace him.

The raids were conducted at Rafiqi's residence as well as at the homes of some of his relatives, the KNS said.

Policemen in plain clothes scoured the MLA hostels in Jammu as well as Srinagar, but failed to turn up any clues about the ex-legislators whereabouts. Rafiqi's mobile phone, too is not functioning for the past three days.

According to sources Rafiqi may be trying to obtain anticipatory bail.

He has disappeared despite being informed that he should present himself before the police, which is now raiding his habitual haunts and using its network of informers to track him down. A senior police officer told the KNS that a high level investigation was on in the matter of the escape of a divisional commander of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen from the valley.

Three persons, including the Ex-MLA's then secretary, Farooq Ahmad Bhat, personal Security Officer Kewal Singh and driver Shyam are already in custody.

Rafiqi allegedly, helped the Hizb divisional commander, MhhammadAmin Baba, escape from the Valley by taking him, to Amritsar in his own official vehicle accompanied by two personal security officers.

Baba, who had reportedly managed to get a passport on fictitious Srinagar address, was allegedly escorted to Wagah border on May 2 this year where from he crossed over to Pakistan. Sources said the case came to light when the police were investigating a mine-blast in Anantnag and arrested a suspect Javid Ahmad. Hizb commander Baba was also a suspect and when the police questioned Javid about him they learnt that Baba had recently crossed over to Pakistan via Amritsar. When asked about the allegations against Rafiqi, National Conference President Omar Abdullah was quoted by news agencies as having said "if there is anything against him (Rafiqi), the law will take its course. We want an impartial probe in the matter." He however said that the Mufti Saaved government had done nothing when militants were arrested from a minister's house. "He still remains minister. Where is the justice," he questioned

(Kashmir Observer, 24 May, 2005)

Will Avenge Killing Of Revolutionary Guard: Iran President

Agenceis

Tehran: Iran will avenge the killing of a Revolutionary Guards colonel who was shot dead in Tehran, President Ebrahim Raisi warned on Monday.

Assaults on motorcycles on Sunday hit Colonel Sayyad Khodai with five bullets as he sat in his car outside his home.

Iran blamed "elements linked to the global arrogance" -- the Islamic republic's term for its arch enemy the United States and US allies including Israel.

It was the most high-profile killing inside Iran since the November 2020 murder of top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Raisi said: "I insist on the serious pursuit (of the killers) by security officials, and I have no doubt that the blood of this great martyr will be avenged."

"There is no doubt that the hand of global arrogance can be seen in this crime," he added, echoing the Guards' assertion, before he travelled to Oman where he was to meet Sultan Haitham bin Tariq.

A memorial service for Khodai was scheduled in Tehran at 5:00 pm local time (12:30 GMT) on Monday.

The funeral will take place at 8:00 am (03:30 GMT) on Tuesday in Imam Hossein Square in central Tehran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp said in a statement.

The ideological arm of Iran's military, the Guards described Khodai as a "defender of the sanctuary", a term used for those who work on behalf of Iran in Syria or Iraq.

Iran maintains significant political influence in both countries and has backed President Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria's grinding civil war.

State television noted that Khodai was "known" in Syria, where Iran has acknowledged deploying "military advisers".

The official news agency IRNA said Khodai was killed by five bullets as he returned home Sunday at around 4:00 pm.

The agency published pictures showing a man slumped over in the driver's seat of a white car, with blood around the collar of his blue shirt and on his right arm. He was strapped in with his seat belt, and the front window on the passenger side had been shot out.

The Fars news agency reported that the state prosecutor had visited the scene of the killing and ordered the "quick identification and arrest of the authors of this criminal act".

The Guards said they had arrested several "thugs linked to the intelligence agency of the Zionist regime," as Iran calls its enemy Israel.

A statement said the suspects had been involved in a series of crimes, including "robberies, kidnappings and vandalism".

"The dimensions of this assassination are being investigated," said the spokesman for the joint chiefs of staff of the Iranian armed forces, General Abolfazl Shakarji.

Khodai's killing came as negotiations between Iran and world powers to restore a frayed 2015 nuclear deal have stalled since March.

One of the main sticking points is Tehran's demand to remove the Guards from a US terrorism list -- a request rejected by Washington.

The 2015 agreement gave Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme to prevent Tehran from developing an atomic bomb -- something it has always denied wanting to do.

But the nuclear agreement was left hanging by a thread after then US president Donald Trump pulled out of it unilaterally in 2018 and reimposed biting economic sanctions on Tehran, prompting Iran to begin rolling back on its own commitments.

Number Of Displaced Tops 100 Million, Says UN Refugee Agency



Refugees waiting for transfer after fleeing the ongoing Russian invasion, at the main train station in Lviv, Ukraine.

Agenceis

Berlin: The number of people forced to flee conflict, violence, human rights violations and persecution has crossed the milestone of 100 million for the first time on record, propelled by the war in Ukraine and other deadly conflicts, the UN refugee agency said Monday.

"One hundred million is a stark figure -- sobering and alarming in equal measure," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. "It's a record that should never have been set."

"This must serve as a wake-up call to resolve and prevent destructive conflicts, end persecution and address the underlying causes that force

innocent people to flee their homes," Grandi added.

UNHCR said that the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide approached 90 million by the end of 2021, propelled by new waves of violence or protracted conflict in countries including Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Congo.

Since then, the war in Ukraine has forced more than 6 million people to flee the country and a further 8 million are displaced within Ukraine.

The 100 million figure represents more than 1% of the global population and comprises refugees and asylum-seekers as well as people displaced inside their own

countries by conflict -- a figure that the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre recently put at 53.2 million -- the UNCHR said in a statement.

"The international response to people fleeing war in Ukraine has been overwhelmingly positive," Grandi said. "Compassion is alive and we need a similar mobilization for all crises around the world." However, Grandi pointed out that ultimately "humanitarian aid is a palliative, not a cure."

"To reverse this trend, the only answer is peace and stability so that innocent people are not forced to gamble between acute danger at home or precarious flight and exile," Grandi said.

Pak Govt Considers Reducing Working Days To Save Fuel: Report

Agenceis

Islamabad: The cash-strapped Pakistan government is examining the possibility of conserving fuel by reducing the number of working days, a move by which it is hoping to save an estimated \$2.7 billion in foreign exchange, a media report said today.

The estimates are based on three different scenarios in terms of working days and fuel conservation prepared by the State Bank of Pakistan for foreign exchange savings of \$1.5 billion to \$2.7 billion, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Pakistan's total oil imports for the first 10 months (July-April) of the current fiscal year (FY22) has surged beyond \$17 billion, displaying a massive 96 per cent growth compared to the same period in the last fiscal year, the report said.

This includes imports of petroleum products worth \$8.5 billion and petroleum crude worth \$4.2 billion, showing a 121 per cent and 75 per cent jump, respectively, it said.

A senior government official said the relevant authorities, power and petroleum divisions have been advised to come up with their estimates, including electricity conservation to take up the matter in a holistic manner with cost benefit analysis of various sectors before reaching a conclusion.

He said the central bank's estimates mostly covered petroleum products consumption in normal working days a week, including retail business and government offices and educational institutions, which in any case would be on summer holidays.

It, however, did not take into account LNG imports, which mostly go into the power sector.

During the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, LNG imports amounted to \$3.7 billion, showing an increase of 83 per

cent, though import quantities were on the lower side.

These estimates suggest that additional petroleum related consumption for one more working day a week would cost the nation about \$642 million in terms of commuting, which does not include freight and transportation.

Conversely, reduced consumption with one less working day a week provides an annual savings of about \$2.1 billion.

All saving numbers are taken for net reduction in oil import but subsidy on petroleum products could also come down by PKR 3.5 billion per day.

In the first case, based on four working days and three holidays in which retail is open like a weekend, the average petroleum saving is estimated at \$122 million a month or \$1.5 billion a year.

It may be noted that 90 per cent of oil consumption is assumed for working days and the remaining 10 per cent for holiday in a month.

In the second scenario, based on four working days, two holidays and one day of lockdown (retail to remain closed for one day), the savings in the form of reduced oil imports is estimated at \$175 million a month or \$2.1 billion a year.

In the third scenario, based on four working days, one holiday and two days of lockdown (commercial activities to remain off for two days), the petroleum linked saving in import bill could be around \$230 million or about \$2.7 billion, it said. This case, however, is considered too harsh as it could negatively affect public confidence.

Officials said the Power Division had advised the new government soon after it came to office to go for reduced working days and limit commercial activities to daylight and launch a national energy conservation drive across the energy consumption sectors with electricity saving of more than 5000MW.

Centre Relaxes Family Pension Rules For Missing Govt Employees



Agenceis

New Delhi: Union Minister Jitendra Singh today said family pension rules for missing central government employees have been relaxed, in a major relief for families of those serving in terrorist-affected areas such as Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast as well as Maoist-hit regions.

According to an order, in all cases where a government servant covered by the National Pension System (NPS) goes missing during service, the benefits of family pension will be immediately paid to the family and in case he reappears and resumes service, the amount paid as family pension during the intervening time of his missing period can be accordingly deducted from his salary.

Earlier, the family pension would not be paid till the missing government employee was declared dead in accordance with the law or till seven years had passed since he went missing, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

Referring to the order of the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare, the minister said this is going to provide a huge relief, particularly in those regions where instances of government employees going missing are reported more frequently.

Mr Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, said cases of abduction of central government employees working in violence-prone areas have come to the fore and therefore to instill confidence and to protect them and their family interests, the changes in the pension rules were brought about.

The minister informed that if a government servant covered by the CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 goes missing, the benefits of arrears of salary, family pension, retirement gratuity, leave encashment, etc. are paid to the families of the missing employees

in accordance with the instructions issued dated 25.06.2013.

He said the matter has been examined in consultation with Department of Personnel and Training, Department of Financial Services and Department of Expenditure and considering the hardship faced by the family of such government servants, it has been decided to extend the same benefits (as applicable to those under the CCS (Pension) Rules) to the families of government servants covered by NPS.

The other provisions of the order states that in all cases where a government servant covered by NPS goes missing during service, the benefits of family pension may be paid to the family if the missing government servant had exercised option for benefits under CCS (Pension) Rules on death or discharge from service on disability/invalidation or the benefits under CCS (Pension) Rules is the default option under the Central Civil Services (Implementation of National Pension System) Rules, 2021.

The benefit of arrears of salary, retirement gratuity and leave encashment shall be paid to the family in all cases where a government employee covered under NPS goes missing during service, irrespective whether the employee had exercised option for benefits under CCS (Pension) Rules or under the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (Exits and Withdrawals under National Pension System) Regulations, 2015, the statement said.

In the case of a government servant covered under NPS goes missing during service and his family is given family pension under CCS (Pension) Rules or CCS (EOP) Rules, the Permanent Retirement Account under National Pension System would remain suspended till the government servant reappears or till he is declared dead in accordance with the rules, it said.

Gyanvapi Mosque: Varanasi Court Reserves Its Order For Tuesday

Agenceis

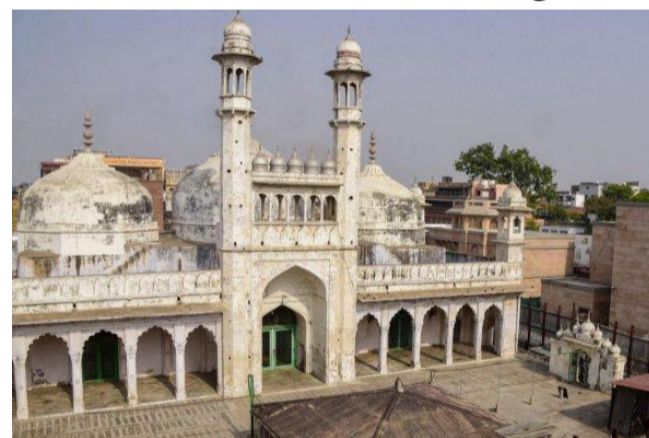
A district court in Varanasi reserved its order for Tuesday on which petition is to be heard first in the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex case transferred to it by the Supreme Court.

The court of District Judge A.K. Vishvesh heard arguments from both the Hindu and Muslim sides.

A fresh plea seeking permission to worship the "Shivling" claimed to have been found on the Gyanvapi mosque premises during a videography survey ordered by a lower court was also filed.

The apex court had on Friday transferred the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex case from a civil judge (senior division) to a district judge, saying looking at the "complexities" and "sensitivity" of the issue, it is better if a senior judicial officer having an experience of over 25-30 years handles this case.

"After hearing arguments of both sides, the court will on



Tuesday give its verdict on which petition is to be heard first," said Madan Mohan Yadav, a lawyer for the Hindu side.

The Hindu side argued that since a court-appointed commission has completed its work, the opponents should present their objections on it. Yadav said they pleaded to make available the commission's report and videography done by it to present

its side on it. Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee's lawyer Mohammad Tauhid Khan argued that the writ is not sustainable, hence, it should be dismissed.

A fresh petition was also moved on Monday by Dr Kulpati Tiwari, Mahant of Kashi Vishwanath temple, for regular "pujan" (worship) of the Shivling, which he said was found in the Gyanvapi mosque complex.

NEWS MAKERS

'Double-Toned Milk, Berries, Papaya': Sidhu Seeks Special Diet In Prison

Agenceis

Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, lodged in Patiala central prison to serve a one-year jail term in a 1988 road rage death case, was taken to Rajindra Hospital in Patiala under heavy security on Monday morning for medical examination, official sources said.

The cricketer-turned-politician's counsel HPS Verma said Sidhu has sought a special diet in jail. He said a board of doctors will carry out a detailed medical examination of Sidhu at the hospital.

"The board of doctors will see what special diet is required and then it will submit its report in a local court (in Patiala)," Verma said over the phone.

food items which do not have fibre and carbohydrates," Verma said.

After the board of doctors carry out a medical examination, a report will be submitted in the court of chief judicial magistrate, he said.

The 58-year-old Congress leader suffers from medical conditions like embolism and has a liver ailment. In 2015, Sidhu also underwent treatment for acute deep vein thrombosis (DVT) at a hospital in Delhi. DVT is caused by a blood clot in a deep vein which hinders the normal blood flow.

Several Congress supporters reached Rajindra Hospital after Sidhu was brought there.

The former Punjab Congress chief on May 20 was sent to Patiala central jail after he surrendered before a local court. He has been sentenced to one-year rigorous imprisonment by the Supreme Court in a 1988 road rage death case.

"Will Have Serious Talk...": Putin Jokes About Being Blamed For All Chaos

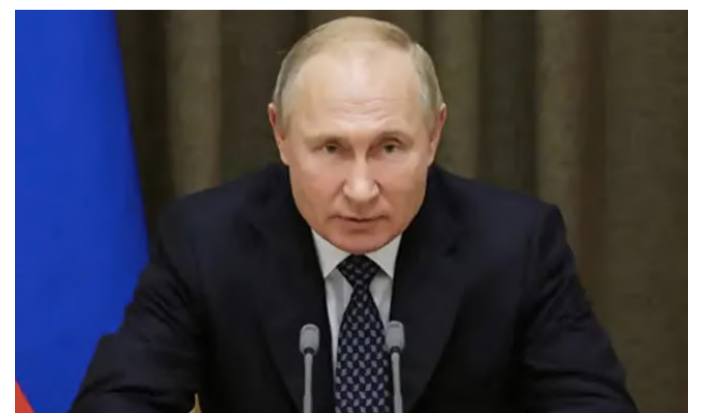
Agenceis

London: Russian President Vladimir Putin quipped on Monday that he would have a serious talk to the West about its assertions that he was to blame for all the economic chaos sown by the conflict in Ukraine and the West's crippling sanctions.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has killed thousands and displaced 14 million people, while the West's attempt to isolate Russia as punishment and Moscow's blockade of grain shipments from Ukraine's Black Sea ports, have sent the price of oil, natural gas, grains, cooking oil and fertilisers soaring.

At a televised meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko that Russia's economy was doing well, despite the Western sanctions.

Lukashenko said the sanctions had given both countries



the impetus to focus on self-development, and that the elites of the West were deluded about the causes of their economic woes.

"On the economy, thanks are really due to them (in the West) as they have given us such a push to our own development," Lukashenko told Putin, who smiled and nodded.

"What is happening over there is that they really underestimated it by reading their own media. They got inflation yet the truth is 'Putin is to blame,' 'Putin is to blame for everything,'" Lukashenko said.

Putin pursed his lips and nodded.

"We will have a serious talk to them," Putin said with a forced smile.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Tourism Boom

Between January and mid-March, Kashmir has witnessed around seven lakh tourist arrivals as against 1,25,000 in the same period last year. But the tourist number is not only disproportionately higher than the last year but a record in the last decade. The numbers are likely to increase further as the Amarnath yatra gets underway in June. Most hotels are booked through the summer with tourist resorts like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Dal lake attracting the most tourists. However, the UT government has now increased the options for tourists by developing more resorts. For example, Aharbal, Yusmarg, Tosamaidan, Gurez, historic old city in Srinagar are finding a prominent place on the tourist map of Kashmir. These places need further development of tourist infrastructure and also wider publicity for people to visit.

A combination of factors has made the tourism boom possible: One, there is this perception across the country that after revocation of Article 370 J&K has been fully integrated into India. Second, Covid-19 fallout which severely reduced the options to go abroad and third the ongoing sweltering summer in the mainland India which has forced people to escape to colder places like Kashmir. The Tourism department has said that an advertising campaign across major Indian cities and the opening of new destinations were also attracting more tourists.

Tourism, one of the mainstays of the Kashmir economy, is one of the sectors that has been hit the hardest. There is a large section of people who have largely been without employment over the last two and a half years. Their savings have already been depleted. This includes also the people associated with tourism. In 2021, many cases of suicides and suicide attempts took place as a result. The major cause of suicide attempts was financial distress in the families caused by the turmoil of the preceding two years and also by the extended successive lockdowns, two of them the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here's hoping that with the abating of the pandemic, the economic situation would return to normal, both in the country as well as in Kashmir. This alone will prevent further misery.

The tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir's GDP and employs 2 million people. The sector has the potential to shore up our beleaguered economy. Here's hoping that things improve from hereon. The waning pandemic wave is once again creating conditions for unhindered tourism in the Valley. This is also the hope of the people associated with the tourist sector. There is reason to believe that there is no fourth Covid wave. The tourists could thus continue visiting Kashmir and help resuscitate the economy and generate jobs.

OTHER OPINION

Boxing days: On Nikhat Zareen

As the fifth World champion Indian woman boxer, who is the only one after Mary to win a gold in the last 16 years, Nikhat has joined an exclusive club of Mary, Sarita Devi, R.L. Jenny and K.C. Lekha. Her gold was the first by an Indian woman after Mary's sixth World title in 2018. For boxing fans, who were disheartened after India's below-par showing in the Tokyo Olympics, where Lovlina landed a lone bronze, Nikhat has provided cheer. Nikhat's journey was packed with challenges and she was determined to break barriers. When, as a teenager, she got to know that girls were not encouraged to take up boxing in her area as the combat sport was considered tailor-made for boys, Nikhat switched from sprinting to boxing to prove a point. Hailing from a Muslim family, she overcame hurdles posed by conservatives in society.

When Nikhat, a 2011 World junior champion, tried to graduate to the elite level, a career-threatening shoulder injury in 2017 stole a year away from her. Two years later, she was embroiled in a controversy, when she got on to the wrong side of her idol Mary in the run-up to the trials for the Olympics qualifier. She lost the trials and it stirred a debate and left a trail of bad blood. But nothing could dent Nikhat's steely resolve. Her parents remained her pillars of strength through thick and thin. The 25-year-old, who personifies the rise of women's power in sport, worked hard with different coaches and imbibed the best lessons from them to emerge as a polished boxer. Nikhat's new status will boost her confidence and make her a force to reckon with in events such as the upcoming Commonwealth Games, the Asian Games and the 2024 Paris Olympics. An ample supply of talented boxers will only benefit the country in its quest for a better performance in Paris. As a World champion, Nikhat could inspire many Indian girls who suppress their desire to take up boxing, wary as they are about an orthodox society. Nikhat's tale may strike a chord with talented boxers and motivate them to follow in the footsteps of the new poster girl of Indian sport.

The Hindu



Pilgrims en route Amarnath Shrine. Photo for representational purposes only. Credits: PTI

Amarnath Yatra: Between Spiritual And Environmental Duty

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Amarnath Yatra is set to make a comeback after a two year long hiatus. 6 to 8 lakh pilgrims will take part in this year's Amarnath Yatra. The enthusiastic participation of pilgrims this year is because the Yatra is taking place after a break owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2019, the participation was scanty as the government asked pilgrims and tourists to leave Kashmir on 1 August 2019, days before Article 370 was read down. The Jammu and Kashmir government had issued a security advisory citing a "terror threat" in the Valley and asked pilgrims and other tourists to leave the Valley as soon as possible. Nobody knew that New Delhi had other plans.

However, in 2018, more than 7,000 pilgrims would visit the Amarnathji shrine daily and around 2.85 lakh had paid a visit. The yatra was also extended this time and lasted for around two months. Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) took control of the yatra from 2001. The number of pilgrims who visited the holy cave in 2001 were 1.91 lakh during that year. This was followed by 1.10 lakh in 2002, 1.70 lakh in 2003, four lakh in 2004, 3.88 lakh in 2005, 3.47 lakh in 2006, 2.96 lakh in 2007, 5.33 lakh in 2008, 3.81 lakh in 2009, 4.55 lakh in 2010, 6.21 in 2011, 6.35 in 2012 and 3.54 in 2013, 3.72 lakh in 2014, 3.52 in 2015, 2.21 in 2016, 2.60 in 2017 and 2.85 in 2018. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 very less number of pilgrims visited the holy cave as explained above.

This year, the Yatra is all set to commence from June 30 - is the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board ready?

Recently, Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi to review the security preparedness. However, a crucial part of the upcoming Yatra is the ecological sensitivity to be taken into account. At a time when such a huge rush of pilgrims is expected around Baltal and Chandanwari routes enroute holy cave, is Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) ready to face the challenge on account of managing all kinds of solid and liquid waste?

Visitors to Chandanwari base camp in Pahalgam, a location enroute the Amarnath Shrine, can testify that one's expectations of a pristine valley are thwarted when one is welcomed by the unwelcome sight of iron gates and ill installed temporary toilets there. These average arrangements often lead to human waste leaking out during the Yatra period. Garbage is also dumped in the open by local shopkeepers, security personnel and Langarwals.

This has been a regular affair for decades. Even when a few hundred people would come for Amarnath Yatra, the place would turn into a mess. This only worsened when the Yatra period was extended to 60 days in 2017. One can only imagine the impending ecological disaster that awaits us, in case, similar insensitivity is shown on account of the incoming rush of pilgrims.

Chandanwari did not have any mechanism for garbage collection, scientific segregation, or treatment for the most part. Some contrac-

While pilgrims from different parts of the country visit the Amarnath shrine and cave for spiritual reasons, they also engage in anti-nature activities by throwing plastic, food and other wastes in the pristine glaciers, mountains and forests. It is not just the yatris but the local visitors, dhaba-walas, and hoteliers are equally responsible for polluting Pahalgam and Sonmarg on the yatra routes

tors are entrusted with the responsibility to lift mixed (biodegradable and non-biodegradable) waste, which is however thrown into water bodies and forest areas.

Whether the unscientific waste management is being taken care of now, is yet to be seen.

Pertinently, even committees set up by the government have said that the number of yatris needs to be restricted and polythene use prohibited in and around Pahalgam and enroute to the holy cave.

In fact, in 1996, more than 200 Amarnath pilgrims died due to harsh weather conditions. The government constituted a commission of inquiry after that disaster. Headed by Nitesh Sengupta, a 1957 batch IAS officer, it recommended steps for a safe yatra and to protect the environment and ecology. The area is severely threatened during the pilgrimage when, suddenly, massive numbers of pilgrims arrive.

The Sengupta report recommended reducing the number of yatris to the holy cave as well. In 2006, the Jammu and Kashmir State Pollution Control Board also prepared a 37-page report with 25 recommendations. Citing the Municipal Solid Waste Rules, it directed that the dumping of municipal solid waste in forest areas or water bodies be stopped. However, this waste continues to be dumped enroute yatra routes from Baltal Sonmarg and Chandanwari Pahalgam.

While pilgrims from different parts of the country visit the Amarnath shrine and cave for spiritual reasons, they also engage in anti-nature activities by throwing plastic, food and other wastes in the pristine glaciers, mountains and forests. It is not just the yatris but the local visitors, dhaba-walas, and hoteliers are equally responsible for polluting Pahalgam and Sonmarg on the yatra routes.

The sanitation work in Pahalgam and Sonmarg during the yatra must follow the Municipal Solid Waste Rules, 2016. These rules state that waste be treated and not merely lifted from one place to another. Hired volunteers must undertake Information Education and Communi-

cation (IEC) activities during the yatra period.

Each langar must use two bins to segregate the waste generated in langars as biodegradable and non-biodegradable. The automatic waste-composting machines should be available near the dhabas. Biodegradable waste generated at three places—Nunwan, Chandanwari in Pahalgam and Baltal in Sonmarg—should be treated in auto-composters and used as organic fertilizer.

Non-biodegradable waste (plastic/polythene) should be incinerated or processed into pellets and used as fuel in bitumen and cement plants. Small Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and bio-toilets are also needed to treat human waste regularly. Many other technologies are available to treat liquid waste should be considered.

The STP at the Nunwan base camp needs an upgrade. Polythene and PET bottles should be completely banned and biodegradable plates and glasses made of banana or other plant leaves should be introduced in the langars. In 2018, this author and like-minded environmental activists made a presentation before the then Governor, NN Vohra (Chairman of the SASB). He was optimistic about managing waste in the area and banning plastic, but his term ended before the 2019 yatra.

The area needs time to breathe!

Brothers and sisters, especially of the Hindu faith, should approach the Amarnath yatra and surrounding areas optimistically. Let us not pollute this holy and pristine place. The Chandanwari glacier has turned black due to air pollution from diesel gen-sets used in the base camp and on account of carbon footprints. Not just pilgrims, hundreds of pony-walas, security personnel and their movements also pollute the environment.

Contractors hired by the SASB are not doing their job well. They do not work on scientific lines. The tendering process does not follow the MSW Rules 2016. A few years back, my friends and I visited Baltal Sonmarg at the end of October to see how the SASB contractors managed waste. I found tons of plastic waste scattered. A team of two dozen volunteers from Srinagar collected at least 200 metric tons of plastic waste at a designated place, which were then packed in sacks and transported to the Srinagar landfill site.

This season the number will be huge which is a challenging task for the Amarnath Shrine Board. As Govt of India particularly PM Modi is seriously focussed on swachhata (cleanliness), will Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) be able to meet the challenge to manage waste in the area and ensure swachhata when around 8 lakh pilgrims would be visiting the holy cave from June 30th to August 15th this year?

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

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Keep an Eye Out for Monkeypox

The latest outbreak of monkeypox in some areas has sent shockwaves around the world at a time when the entire world is slowly recovering to normalcy following the COVID-19 epidemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 80 cases of monkeypox have been confirmed in at least 12 countries. There have been 110 confirmed and suspected cases of monkeypox outside of the endemic zones, according to the most recent data accessible

on the dashboard. Despite the fact that no instances have been reported, India is taking all precautions and monitoring the current spike in monkeypox cases that spread in Europe, US, Canada and Australia.

Monkeypox is a rare disease that is caused by infection with the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same family as smallpox. Monkeypox is not as serious as smallpox, according to medical specialists. Currently, no treatment is available for monkeypox, but it can be treated with a

vaccination developed for smallpox, as well as many antivirals. Vaccination against smallpox has been proven to be 85% effective in preventing monkeypox. However, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that there is no known, safe treatment for monkeypox virus infection. World Health Organization clearly says swollen lymph nodes are a hallmark of monkeypox. Monkeypox disease is now slowly taking over different countries of the world. Scientists are keeping a close eye on

the virus and its spread. It is possible that the Monkeypox virus will make its way to India, posing significant challenges to the healthcare industry.

Even though there have been no confirmed cases, we must remain vigilant and educate the public about the risks and steps to take if monkeypox is detected.

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The Ultimate Monkeypox FAQ

Ed Feil

The latest outbreak of monkeypox has, at the time of writing, reached 17 countries with 110 confirmed cases and a further 205 suspected cases. It's a fast-moving story, so if you need to catch up on the latest, here are answers to some of the most pressing questions.

HOW IS MONKEYPOX SPREADING?

The first patient in the current outbreak had returned to the UK from travels to Nigeria where monkeypox is endemic. However, cases are now spreading among people who have not travelled to west or central Africa, suggesting local transmission is occurring.

Monkeypox usually spreads by close contact and respiratory droplets. However, sexual transmission (via semen and/or vaginal fluid) has been posited as an additional possible route. The World Health Organization (WHO) says: "Studies are needed to better understand this risk."

Most cases in the current outbreak have been in youngish men, but the virus can spread to anyone.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Early symptoms are flu-like, such as a fever, headaches, aching muscles and swollen lymph nodes.

Once the fever breaks, a rash can develop, often beginning on the face and then spreading to other parts of the body – most commonly the palms of the hands and soles of the feet.

HOW DEADLY IS MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox is mostly a mild, self-limiting disease lasting two-to-three weeks. However, in some cases, it can cause death. According to the WHO, the fatality rate "in recent times" has been around 3% to 6%. The west African monkeypox virus is considered to be milder than the central African one.

Monkeypox tends to cause more serious disease in people who are immunocompromised – such as those undergoing chemotherapy – and children. There have been no deaths from monkeypox in the current worldwide outbreak, but, according to the Daily Telegraph, one



Early symptoms are flu-like, such as a fever, headaches, aching muscles and swollen lymph nodes. Once the fever breaks, a rash can develop, often beginning on the face and then spreading to other parts of the body – most commonly the palms of the hands and soles of the feet

child in the UK is in intensive care with the disease.

WHY IS IT CALLED MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox was first identified in laboratory monkeys (macaques) in Denmark in 1958, hence the name. However, monkeys don't seem to be the natural hosts of the virus. It is more commonly found in rats, mice and squirrels. The first case in humans was seen in the 1970s in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Is monkeypox related to smallpox and chickenpox?

Monkeypox is related to smallpox – they are both orthopoxviruses – but it is not related to chickenpox. Despite the name, chickenpox is a herpes virus, not a poxvirus. (How "chicken" got in the name is not entirely clear. In his dictionary of 1755, Samuel Johnson surmised that it is so named because it is "of no very

great danger".) Nevertheless, the vesicles (little pus-filled blisters) caused by monkeypox are similar in appearance to those of chickenpox.

ARE CASES LIKELY TO CONTINUE RISING?

Cases are likely to continue to rise significantly over the next two-to-three weeks, but this is not another pandemic in the making. Monkeypox doesn't spread anywhere near

as easily as the airborne virus SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19.

HAS MONKEYPOX EVOLVED TO BE MORE VIRULENT?

RNA viruses, such as SARS-CoV-2, don't have the ability to check their genetic code for mistakes each time they replicate, so they tend to evolve faster. Monkeypox is a DNA virus, which does have the ability to check itself for genetic mistakes each time

it replicates, so it tends to mutate a lot slower.

The first genome sequence of the current outbreak (from a patient in Portugal) suggests that the virus is very similar to the monkeypox strain that was circulating in 2018 and 2019 in the UK, Singapore and Israel. So it is unlikely that the current outbreak is the result of a mutated virus that is better at spreading.

HOW IS MONKEYPOX DIAGNOSED?

In the UK, swab samples taken from the patient are sent to a specialist laboratory that handles rare pathogens, where a PCR test is run to confirm monkeypox. The UK Health Security Agency has only one rare and imported pathogens laboratory.

IS THERE A VACCINE FOR IT?

Vaccines for smallpox, which contain the lab-made vaccinia virus, can protect against monkeypox. However, the vaccine that was used to eradicate smallpox can have severe side-effects, killing around one in a million people vaccinated.

The only vaccine specifically approved for monkeypox, Imvanex, is made by a company called Bavarian Nordic. It uses a nonreplicating form of vaccinia, which causes fewer side-effects. It was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and the European Medicines Agency in 2019 – but only for use in people 18 years of age or older.

UK health secretary Sajid Javid said that the UK government will be stocking up on vaccines that are effective against monkeypox. The UK currently has about 5,000 doses of smallpox vaccine, which has an efficacy of around 85% against monkeypox.

ARE THERE DRUGS TO TREAT IT?

There are no specific drugs to treat monkeypox. However, antivirals such as cidofovir and brincidofovir have been proven to be effective against poxviruses in animals and may also be effective against monkeypox infections in humans.

The author is from University of Bath. The article is being reproduced by arrangements with The Conversation

Food and Fertility

Karishma H. Nandkeolyar

Want to improve your chances at conceiving? Look no further than your plate. Cells that are responsible for implantation – egg cells, sperm cells, endometrial cells – are some of the most demanding and highly complex. They depend on the food we consume to thrive, explains Dr Karunakar Marikinti, Consultant In vitro fertilization, obstetrics and Gynecologist with UAE-based Prime Hospital.

Fertility has a Goldilocks window, especially for women. Women are most fertile in their 20s and it follows the law of diminishing reserves. Each month that she tries, a healthy, fertile 30-year-old woman has a 20 per cent chance of getting pregnant, explains Reproductive.org, a website by American Society for Reproductive Medicine. This goes down to 5 per cent by the time she turns 40.

One of the reasons for this dip in fertility, explains Dr Maya Sasikumar, Specialist Obstetrics and Gynecology at Aster Hospital, Qusais, is that the amount of antioxidants in the fluid around the egg decreases with age. Without this, cells surrounding the egg are less able to provide nutrition for the egg. This reduces embryo quality and chances of pregnancy.

"In males, low oxidation production causes poor semen quality, reduction in sperm motility, and fragmentation of the sperm DNA. To decrease the negative effects of oxidation, men and women should increase their intake of antioxidants. All fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants as do dark chocolate and green tea," she adds.

CAUSES OF INFERTILITY

- ▶ A number of things can cause infertility, including, says UAE-based nutritionist Farah Hillou:
 - ▶ Hormonal imbalances,
 - ▶ Polycystic ovarian syndrome,
 - ▶ Endometriosis,
 - ▶ Blocked fallopian tubes,
 - ▶ Poor sperm quality,
 - ▶ Obesity, thyroid issues,
 - ▶ Genetic factors, and
 - ▶ Autoimmunity.

"Furthermore, nutritional deficiencies, stress, exposure to environmental toxins (chemicals, plastics and heavy metals), imbalances in gut microbiome, and mitochondrial dysfunction may all be contributing factors," she adds. "Often, many of these factors are inter-related and can occur simultaneously. For example, diet, stress and toxin exposure



can lead to an imbalance in gut microbiome which in turn can affect hormone balance. Applying principles of functional nutrition [where food is used like medicine] allows us to view the body as a whole, and helps us bring balance to various systems and encourage a healthy internal terrain that will boost chances of fertility."

THE RUNNING CLOCK

Of course the longer you maintain good health, the better the quality of eggs and sperm you will have. "But," says UAE-based nutritionist Farah Hillou, "In order to optimise mitochondrial health, nutrition and other lifestyle measures are best started three to six months in advance of planned pregnancy or fertility treatment."

EAT THIS, NOT THAT

- ▶ Hillou says a fertility-friendly diet is one that promotes intake of whole fresh foods:
 - ▶ Protein like eggs, legumes and fish;
 - ▶ Healthy fats like olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocados and omega-3 rich fish;
 - ▶ A range of colorful, phytonutrient-rich vegetables;
 - ▶ High fibre foods such as quinoa, lentils and beans;
 - ▶ Probiotic-rich foods such as fermented vegetables, onion, garlic, leeks, apples, oats, berries and lentils can also help support a healthy microbiome.

Hilou says: "Certain nutrients are also very important in terms of optimizing fertility and these include:

- ▶ Vitamin D,
- ▶ Methyl folate,
- ▶ Vitamins B6 and B12,
- ▶ Iron,
- ▶ Iodine,
- ▶ Choline, and
- ▶ Zinc."

Meanwhile, sugars must be limited. "Simple sugars affect blood sugar balance and insulin sensitivity which can in turn affect ovulatory function. Foods that cause a spike in blood sugar and insulin levels include cakes, biscuits, white-flour/rice, soft drinks and fruit juice," explains Hilou.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH COOKED FOOD?

Nothing really, but when you overcook something it produces toxic compounds

called advanced glycation products, which accumulate in the body as people age, causing oxidative stress and thus affecting fertility, says Dr Maya Sasikumar, Specialist Obstetrics and Gynecology at Aster Hospital, Qusais.

DO THIS, NOT THAT

Hilou explains that skipping meals and under-eating can negatively impact nutritional status, blood sugar balance and hormones. She calls for a holistic path to fertility. She offers the following tips:

Exercise: Movement helps detoxify the body, boost mitochondria function, and promote hormone balance.

Relaxation techniques can help activate the parasympathetic "rest, digest, heal" state that helps supports mental and emotional wellbeing during this critical time. Deep breathing, meditation, and journaling may be beneficial in this case.

Reduce exposure to toxins coming from food, beauty care products and household cleaners as this can significantly benefit overall health. Often, these items are high in chemicals like phthalates and parabens, plastics, and heavy metals which negatively impact our mitochondria and hormones. Choose organic food, and read product labels to help identify the right products.

CAN CUPPING HELP A COUPLE GOING THROUGH FERTILITY TREATMENT?

Maria Banti, Laboratory Director and Clinical Embryologist at Orchard Fertility Clinic – Dubai, says: "A holistic approach is very important when a couple is undergoing an IVF treatment. Treatments such as acupuncture and cupping, meditation, yoga, psychology counseling, dietary and weight management are complementary treatments that can be used as part of the holistic approach.

"Specifically, acupuncture and cupping are very popular to patients going through IVF. Although the data from the studies are conflicting, there are studies supporting that acupuncture and cupping may increase the pregnancy rates as they help to reduce stress, make the patients feel more relaxed and increase the blood flow which may lead to a better response to fertility medication and a thicker uterine lining."

Fertility – or the ability to conceive a child – is not just about eating healthy; medical issues may crop up and need interventions, but staying fit certainly helps your odds.

Study: Remote Work Doesn't Have Negative Effect On Productivity

ANI

Employee and company resiliency can be enhanced through the opportunity for employees to work remotely during natural disasters and other events that cause workplace displacement, suggests a research team from the Texas A&M University School of Public Health.

The findings were published in the journal *Work*.

The team, which was comprised of Kamrie Sarnosky, Mark Benden, Garrett Sansom, Leslie Cizmas and Annette Regan, worked with a large oil and gas company in Houston, Texas, to analyze ergonomic software data from 264 employees. During the study period, the company was forced to close its offices because of flooding from Hurricane Harvey, which required employees to work remotely for an extended period.

The researchers looked at employee technology data before, during and after Hurricane Harvey. They found that although total computer use declined during the hurricane, employees' work behaviors during the seven-month period of working remotely returned to pre-hurricane levels. This finding suggests that remote work does not negatively impact workplace productivity.

This study, which was published in *IOS Press* in February, offers important insights into information workers who have become increasingly used to and interested in working remotely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In the future, there will be a greater percentage of the workforce who is involved in some sort of office-style technology work activities," said Benden, who is director of



the school's Ergonomics Center. "Almost all of the study's employees were right back up to the same level of output as they were doing before Hurricane Harvey. This is a huge message right now for employers because we're having national debates about whether or not employees should be able to work remotely or in a hybrid schedule."

This study is part of a large effort by the Ergonomics Center that is looking at the

health of information workers. Although seemingly less taxing than blue-collar work, information workers are prone to injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. "The research says that if you work a certain way at a certain pace over a certain duration, you're more likely to become injured from that work," Benden said. "But if you work a little less or a little less often or break up the duration or have certain other

character traits -- like posture -- then you're less likely to develop a problem from doing your office work."

The Texas A&M researchers believe this information can be used to promote healthy behaviors for employees, including those working remotely, and to inform corporate policies. They also will be looking at tracking the ergonomic environment in employees' home offices. The team believes

But if you work a little less or a little less often or break up the duration or have certain other character traits -- like posture -- then you're less likely to develop a problem from doing your office work

that tracking this type of data can help companies address remote employee health issues, including stress, depression and substance abuse.

"The question was whether we could track people and rather than letting them stay in a bad place, a bad habit or bad behavior, could we give them a healthful nudge over the computer to remind them that it was time to take a walk or a break," Benden said. "We as humans are not very good at keeping track of time, especially when we're in the zone. In order to keep us from physically hurting our bodies, we need to have nudges and reminders, which people respond to, and which work really well."

Benden noted that taking breaks does not hinder employees' quality of work.

"The people who took the recommended breaks were more productive overall. They got more done," he said. "We need to learn this about people, we need to teach people about it, and then we need to help people actually do it."

New survey reveals GCC residents' travel intentions as world opens up post-pandemic

DUBAI: As Joni Mitchell observed: "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." That has certainly proved true for travel since the onset of the COVID-pandemic saw worldwide restrictions on movement cause the industry to grind to a halt in early 2020.

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Many feared airlines and hotels would be struggling for years to come, but at this month's Arabian

used to be much (more popular). It was never as big as the 'Beach Holidays,' category, but 'Shopping' was always number two," Kelly said. "It's now the lowest. Beach destinations are still number one -- for instance, since the pandemic, visitor numbers to the Maldives from the GCC are higher than ever. But the 'Nature and Mountains' category -- so, lakes, for example; think Switzerland more than the Maldives -- has become much more popular. And cultural tourism -- say, music festivals, art

GCC travelers were all in the Gulf: The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. This is a recent development, according to Kelly. "The Gulf countries were never really factors before -- apart from the obvious, Dubai, which has always been a beacon for the Middle East. But what's been interesting is the rise of Qatar, because of the World Cup, and then Saudi as well," he said.

"Khaleejijs like going for short breaks -- five days or something. And a lot of people, for those breaks, are now staying within the GCC. Saudi hasn't overtaken the UAE yet, but it's really come up as a tourism destination," he continued. "The whole concept of staycation within the region has really come up -- people are staying for longer periods too. Shorter stays are much more valued now."

TURKISH DELIGHT

Turkey is one of the most desirable international locations for GCC travelers, according to D/A's research. It's always been popular, but what the social-media chatter suggests is that people aren't just heading to the big cities anymore -- instead it's the country's mixture of "beach and mountains" that is attracting attention, with its Mediterranean areas proving especially in demand.

FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTENT

While GCC travelers are eager for new experiences, they're also looking for the reassurance of the familiar. So destinations like the UK, the US and Thailand remain extremely desirable, but, Kelly said, they are now looking for new experiences in places where they may have been several times before.

"What we found across most of the countries is that there's a big movement towards new experiences, even in really familiar settings," Kelly said. "So they like to go to the same places -- London, for example, is a big destination. But while they're in London, they want to do something different, maybe be there a bit longer and go out into the countryside. There's also an eagerness to fill out itineraries a bit more, do more things."

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

"People really wanted to go to the countries that closed their borders early because of COVID," Kelly said. "You want to do what you can't do, I guess." China and Japan were the main beneficiaries of this particular quirk of our brains, with both featuring prominently on the wishlist of destinations in the Far East for GCC travelers. China, in particular, is a desirable place for studying for GCC residents, D/A found.

Arab News

Apple Likely To Launch New Homepod By Early 2023

IANS

Tech giant Apple is likely planning to launch a new version of its HomePod smart speaker in late 2022 or by early 2023.

According to reliable supply chain analyst Ming-Chi Kuo, the tech giant is targeting the fourth quarter of this year or the first quarter of next year for launching the next HomePod model, 9T05mac reported.

Presumably, this will be a larger model than the HomePod mini, but one with features that help bring the cost down from \$300 like its

predecessor.

Apple currently sells the \$99 HomePod mini as the only model. The original HomePod with much more impressive sound was discontinued last year after a price cut from \$349 to \$299.

Kuo went on to say that while he views smart speakers as "undoubtedly one of the essential elements of the home ecosystem", he doesn't think Apple has realised how to be successful in the smart speaker domain.

The analyst, recently, predicted that the tech giant is developing a new version of the Apple TV set-top box with the goal of lowering the cost structure



Travel Market in Dubai, experts were bullish about the near future, with recovery looking extremely healthy. The ability to hop across borders for a long weekend or a summer vacation, or even a work trip -- has now become something precious; the chance to escape everyday routine has become more alluring than ever.

"Travel has moved from something that we took for granted to something that, now, we really need," Paul Kelly, managing partner of Dubai-based consumer-insight company D/A, told Arab News. "That's something that came through in this analysis: This huge pent-up demand -- the emotional side of traveling has changed a lot."

Residents of the GCC are eager to get travelling again, as research that D/A presented at the travel market proved. The company assessed millions of social media and online posts with its AI-driven "Sila" tool to discover the travel intentions and desires of more than 2.2 million Arab speakers across the GCC. What D/A found was that while many of the favored destinations remain the same (with one major exception -- more on that later), the reasons for visiting them have changed significantly. It seems people are longing for relaxation in natural surroundings, along with cultural experiences, more than they are looking for shopping destinations and material acquisition.

"Visiting cities for shopping

events, and general cultural experiences -- has also become far more important, especially among younger people."

Here are some of the main findings from D/A's research.

SAUDI RISING

One country has seen a major increase in interest over the past three years: Saudi Arabia. While the glitz of the UAE -- and particularly Dubai -- remains in high demand, the Kingdom is now the second-most desirable destination for travelers from the GCC, according to D/A's research. "Saudi has become a really big destination. That was never the case previously, except for pilgrims, but this research discounts religious travel," Kelly explained. Clearly, the Saudi authorities' efforts over the past few years to position the country as an attractive tourism destination have been a huge success. More and more Saudis are looking to take short breaks in their own country, and travelers from the Emirates, Oman and other GCC countries are taking the opportunity to explore the rich culture and stunning landscapes that had previously been all-but-impossible to access.

"This has all been driven by what's currently open -- festivals like MDLBEAST, the Riyadh and Jeddah seasons, AIUla, the sporting events," Kelly said. "That stuff works."

THINK LOCAL

The top three destinations for

Edition-II

Poems & Articles

मेरी छोटी सी कविता की प्रस्तुति....

" धरती का दिल "

- एक सोच है जागी, कि हम स्वस्थ और सम्पन्न धरती बनाएंगे ...। जहाँ फूल-पौधे, बाग - बगीचे, खेत-खतिहान, झील- झरने, जीव-जन्तु, सारे मौज मनाएंगे ...।।
- सारे ब्रह्मांड में बस एक अकेला धरती ने हमें जीवन दान दिया। हमारे कुकर्मों को सहते धरती ने अपना बलिदान दिया।।
- तुम सोच लो, तुम जिस धरती पर रहते हो उस धरती का दिल भी धड़कता है। धरती भी हमसे बहुत कुछ मांगती है पर हम न कभी कुछ दे पाते हैं।।
- जिस दिन हम कुछ दे पाएंगे धरती पर बौझ न रह जाएंगे। धरती हमारी माँ है माँ का दिल भी धड़कता है।।
- इस धड़कते दिल में, हम बच्चों के लिए प्यार भरा है, विश्वास भरा है। हमें अब इस दिल की परवाह करनी है जिसकी गोद में हम सब समाये हैं।।
- अब चाहे कितनी भी मुश्किलें आ जाएंगे हमें न कोई रोक पाएंगे। बस अब हमने कसम खाई है अपने दिल की गहराई से।।
- कि जिस धरती पर हम सब रहते हैं उस धरती को न तड़पने देना है। धरती हमारी जन्नी है हमें इसकी कद्र करनी है।।
- तुम सोच लो, तुम जिस धरती पर रहते हो उस धरती का दिल भी धड़कता है। इस दिल को धड़कने देना है इसके सम्मान में ही जीना है।।

***** समाप्त *****

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Expectation Of Rate Hike In Next Policy 'A No-Brainer', Says RBI Governor

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday hinted at another interest rate hike in early June to bring down stubbornly high inflation rate which has remained above the tolerance level for the past four months.

"Expectation of rate hike, it's a no-brainer. There will be some hike but how much I will not be able to tell now... to say that 5.15 (per cent) may not be very accurate," Das said in an interview with CNBC-TV18.

The next meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled for June 6-8.

RBI, in its first rate move in two years and its first hike in nearly four years, raised the repo rate by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent following an off-cycle meeting earlier this month.

In April RBI raised its inflation forecast for the current fiscal year to 5.7 per cent from earlier estimate of 4.5 per cent and lowered its GDP estimate to 7.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent for 2022-23, citing the impact of escalating geopolitical tensions triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war.

Das further said the RBI and government has entered into another phase of coordinated action to cool down inflation.

RBI has taken a number of steps to moderate inflation in the last 2-3 months, he said, adding that the government on other hand has taken measures, including wheat export ban and cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel.

All these put together will



have sobering impact on price rise, he added.

Retail inflation has been above RBI's upper tolerance level for the past four months.

The government has mandated MPC headed by the RBI Governor to keep the retail inflation between 2 to 6 per cent.

As per the latest print, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation increased to 7.79 per cent against 6.95 per cent in the pre-monsoon month and 4.21 per cent in April 2021.

"Interest rates in almost every country today are negative, except Russia and Brazil. The target for inflation for advanced economies is about 2 per cent. Except for Japan and one more country, all advanced economies have inflation of over 7 per cent," he said.

"We will move towards positive real rates, but it is impossible to forecast how soon because of the evolving situation," said the governor.

There is a silver lining too, for the economy, as private investment is showing signs of improvement.

The rebound in domestic economic activity is gradually getting generalised, Das noted

Economic Growth May Have Slowed To 3.5% In Q4 FY22: Report

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The economic growth may have slowed to 3.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021-22 from 5.4 per cent in the previous three-month period due to the impact of higher commodity prices on margins, the decline in wheat yields and on higher base, Icr Ratings said on Monday.

The agency said the hiccups in the recovery of the contact-intensive services attributable to the third wave of Covid-19 in the country may have also affected the economic growth in the quarter.

Even the gross value added (GVA) at basic prices (at constant 2011-12 prices) in Q4 FY2022 seems to have eased to 2.7 per cent from 4.7 per cent in Q3 FY2022, it said.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) will release the fourth quarter numbers of fiscal 2022 on May 31.

Icr's Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said Q4 was a challenging quarter, with the Omicron-fuelled third wave of Covid-19 arresting the momentum in contact-intensive services and pervasive pressure on margins from higher commodity prices.

Moreover, the heatwave adversely affected wheat output in March 2022.



"We are apprehensive that both agriculture and industry will post a sub-1 per cent GVA growth in Q4 FY2022, whereas services growth will print at around 5.4 per cent," Nayar said.

The agency further said that the recent cut in excise duties on petrol and diesel will help boost sentiments and improve consumers' disposable incomes, while simultaneously cooling the CPI inflation.

Last week, the government had 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 battered under high fuel prices that have also pushed inflation to a multi-

year high.

Retail inflation, as measured by consumer price-based inflation (CPI), accelerated to an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April.

"We are enthused by the recent excise duty cut on petrol and diesel, which has been complemented by VAT cuts by some states. This will bolster sentiment and create some cushion within stretched household budgets to undertake non-essential spending," Nayar said.

Icr projects the average CPI inflation for FY2023 at 6.5 per cent, penciling in a 40 basis points repo rate hike in the June 2022 monetary policy review, amid a terminal rate of 5.5 per cent.

SEBI Allows Mutual Funds To Float Passively Managed Equity-Linked Savings Schemes

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Capital markets regulator Sebi on Monday allowed mutual funds to launch passively managed Equity-Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS).

However, the regulator said that mutual funds can have either an actively-managed ELSS scheme or a passively-managed one but not in both categories.

The passive ELSS scheme should be based on one of the indices comprising equity shares from top 250 companies in terms of market capitalisation, Sebi said in a circular.

The move will allow new fund houses that are especially focusing on passive schemes to float a passively-managed ELSS fund.

Besides, Sebi has put in place a framework for managing passive funds -- Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and Index Funds -- amid growing popularity of such funds as an investment product for retail investors.

The new framework will come into effect from July 1 and will be applicable to all existing ETFs and index funds, Sebi said.

Under the framework, the regulator has laid down guidelines for debt ETFs and index funds, its constitution, market making framework for ETFs, investor education and awareness charges, disclosure guidelines and other provisions.

"Considering the emergence of passive funds -- ETFs and index funds as an investment product for retail investors globally and various advantages of passive investing like transparency, diversification, lower cost..., a need was felt to review the regulatory framework for passive funds in India," Sebi said.



In this regard, a Working Group was constituted with representation from various stakeholders in the passive funds' domain like AMCs, mutual fund trustees and stock brokers.

The recommendations of the group and the feedback received from the industry were deliberated in the Mutual Funds Advisory Committee and after considering the recommendations of the committee, Sebi came out with the new framework on the passive funds.

Sebi said the norms for debt ETFs or index funds could be based on indices comprising corporate debt securities or Government Securities (G-Sec), T-bills and/or State Development Loans (SDLs) or a combination of corporate debt securities and G-sec/T-bills/SDLs.

For an index with at least 80 per cent weight of corporate debt securities, a single issuer should not have more than 15 per cent weight in the index in respect of AAA securities, not more than 12.5 per cent in case of AA securities and not more than 10 per cent in case of A and below rated securities.

In case of a hybrid index -- comprising both corporate debt securities and G-Sec /SDL

-- with up to 80 per cent weight of corporate debt securities, a single issuer should not have more than 15 per cent weight in the index in respect of AAA-rated securities.

However, for AAA-rated securities of PSUs and AAA-rated securities of PFI (Public Financial Institution) issuers the limit will be 15 per cent.

Further, in the case of AA-rated securities, a single issuer should not have more than 8 per cent weight in the index and not more than 6 per cent in respect of A and below rated securities.

"For an index based on G-Sec and SDLs, single issuer limit shall not be applicable," Sebi said, adding that such an index should not have more than 25 per cent weight in a particular group, excluding securities issued by Public Sector Units (PSUs), PFIs and Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

With regard to norms for market making framework for ETFs, Sebi said Asset Management Companies (AMCs) need to appoint at least two Market Makers (MMs), who are members of the stock exchanges, for ETFs to provide continuous liquidity on the exchange platform.

Prolonged High Temperatures Could Worsen Inflation, Hurt Growth In India: Moody's

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prolonged high temperatures are credit negative for India, as that could exacerbate inflation and hurt growth, Moody's Investors Service said on Monday.

Over the longer term, India's highly negative credit exposure to physical climate risks means its economic growth will likely witness the fifth heatwave in May with the maximum temperature touching 49 degrees Celsius.

The rating agency said although heatwaves are fairly common in India, they usually occur in May and June. However, this year New Delhi witnessed the fifth heatwave in May with the maximum temperature touching 49 degrees Celsius.

"The prolonged high temperatures, which are affecting much of the northwest of the country, will curb wheat production and could lead to extended power outages, exacerbating already high inflation and hurting growth, a credit negative," Moody's said.

The Indian government has revised its estimates for wheat production by 5.4 per cent to 105 million tonnes for the crop year ending June 2022, given lower yields amid higher temperatures.

"The lower production, and fears that a surge in exports to capitalise on high global wheat prices would add to inflationary pressures domestically, has prompted the government to ban the export of wheat and to divert it toward local consumption instead.

"Although the move will partially offset inflationary pressures, it will hurt exports and subsequently growth. The ban comes at a time when India -- the world's second-largest wheat producer -- could have been capitalising on the global output gap from wheat following the Russia-Ukraine military conflict," Moody's said.

ALSO READ| Ukraine, wheat



ban to be discussed at Biden-Modi meet: US NSA

Global wheat prices have jumped 47 per cent since the conflict began in late February. The agency said India's export partners will likely face a further surge in wheat prices because of the ban.

They include Bangladesh, which absorbed 56.8 per cent of India's wheat exports in fiscal 2021, Sri Lanka (8.3 per cent), UAE (6.5 per cent) and Indonesia (5.4 per cent).

Moody's also said that further drawdowns in coal inventory could lead to prolonged power outages in industrial and agricultural production, leading to significant cuts to output and weighing further on India's economic growth "particularly if the heatwaves continue beyond June."

Inflation will be partially alleviated by keeping wheat production for domestic consumption and the cap in power prices in exchanges, as well as the Reserve Bank of India's 40-basis-point policy rate rise in early May.

"However, given the prominence of cereals and food more generally in India's consumption, elevated food prices could add to social risks if they persist," Moody's said.

A rise in prices 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 nearly eight-year high of 7.79 per cent.

High inflation prompted the Reserve Bank to hold an unscheduled meeting to raise the benchmark interest rate by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent earlier this month.

Mcap Of 3 Of Top-Five Valued Firms Jumps Rs 1.78 Lakh Cr; Reliance Lead Gainer

Company	Market Cap (Rs Cr)	Change (%)
Reliance Industries	1,78,650.71	8.15
Tata Consultancy Services	1,73,889.78	2.90
Infosys	1,31,320.80	2.90
HDFC Bank	1,31,320.80	2.90
Hindustan Unilever	1,31,320.80	2.90

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Three of the top five valued firms together added Rs 1,78,650.71 crore to their market valuation last week, led by Reliance Industries.

Last week, benchmark BSE Sensex climbed 1,532.77 points or 2.90 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers from the top-five pack, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys emerged as the laggards.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries rallied by Rs 1,31,320.80 crore to reach Rs 1,73,889.78 crore.

Hindustan Unilever added Rs 30,814.89 taking its valuation to Rs 5,46,397.45 crore. HDFC Bank's market valuation jumped Rs 16,515.02 crore to Rs 7,33,156.15 crore.

In contrast, the market capitalisation (mcap) of Tata Consultancy Services tanked Rs 43,743.96 crore to Rs 12,05,254.93 crore.

The valuation of Infosys eroded by Rs 20,129.66 crore to Rs 6,12,303.26 crore.

In the ranking of top-five valued firms, Reliance Industries was leading the chart, followed by Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Infosys and Hindustan Unilever.

Meanwhile, the country's largest insurer LIC on Tuesday made a lacklustre debut on the stock exchanges, listing at over 8 per cent discount.

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) also earned a place in the 10 most valued firms on its debut trading day on Tuesday.

LIC is now at the 6th place in the list of top-10 valued companies by market capitalisation. It commands a market valuation of Rs 5,22,602.94 crore.

ICICI Bank is at the 7th spot with a valuation of Rs 4,93,251.86 crore, followed by State Bank of India (Rs 4,12,763.28 crore), HDFC (Rs 3,99,512.68 crore) and Bharti Airtel (Rs 3,77,686.72 crore).

Biden Launches Indo-Pacific Trade Deal, Warns Over Inflation

Associated Press

TOKYO: President Joe Biden on Monday launched a new trade deal with 12 Indo-Pacific nations aimed at strengthening their economies as he warned Americans worried about high inflation that it was "going to be a haul" before they feel relief. The president said he does not believe an economic recession is inevitable in the US Biden, speaking at a news conference after holding talks with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, acknowledged the U.S. economy has "problems" but said they were "less consequential than the rest of the world has."

He added: "This is going to be a haul. This is going to take some time," even as he rejected the idea a recession in the US was inevitable.



The comments came just before Biden's launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, a new trade deal his administration designed to signal US dedication to the contested economic sphere and to address the need for stability in commerce after disruptions caused by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Nations joining the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework are Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Along with the United States, they represent 40% of world GDP.

The countries said in a joint statement that the pact will

help them collectively "prepare our economies for the future" following disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

President Joe Biden meets with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at Akasaka Palace. (Photo | AP)

Biden and Kishida were joined by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi while representatives from the other countries appeared by video to help launch the pact. Modi was in Tokyo for Tuesday's meeting of the Quad, a security grouping that also includes the US, Japan and Australia.

The White House said the framework will help the United States and Asian economies work more closely on issues including supply chains, digital trade, clean

energy, worker protections and anti-corruption efforts. The details still need to be negotiated among the member countries, making it difficult for the administration to say how this agreement would fulfill the promise of helping U.S. workers and businesses while also meeting global needs.

Critics say the framework has gaping shortcomings. It doesn't offer incentives to prospective partners by lowering tariffs or providing signatories with greater access to US markets. Those limitations may not make the US framework an attractive alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which still moved forward after the U.S. bailed out. China, the largest trading partner for many in the region, is also seeking to join TPP.

Oman, Iran Sign Trade Deals During President Visit

AFP

MUSCAT: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Oman on Monday as the two countries signed a string of trade deals and as international talks on Tehran's nuclear programme hang in the balance, leaving the Islamic republic under sanctions.

Raisi, on his second Gulf visit since taking office in August, was greeted by Sultan Haitham bin Tareq at the airport and received a 21-gun salute at the royal palace, an Omani statement said.

Raisi's one-day trip comes at a time when renewed talks on restoring a 2015 nuclear deal are at a stalemate. Oman played a mediating role between Tehran and Washington in the build-up

to the original agreement.

The countries signed 12 memoranda of understanding during the visit, including in the fields of oil and gas, transport, education, trade and investment, reported the official Oman News Agency.

"Trade exchanges between the two countries of Oman and Iran will improve definitely," Raisi said before departure, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA. "Both countries are determined to upgrade the level of political and economic ties," he added.

A delegation of 50 Iranian businessmen travelled to Oman last week, IRNA said, adding that Iran's minister for roads and urban development has announced plans for a joint shipping line and tourist flights.

Climate Change Made Record Heatwave In India 30 Times More Likely: Study

Agenceis

New Delhi: The record breaking heatwave in India and Pakistan, which caused widespread human suffering and hit global wheat supplies, was about 30 times more likely to happen due to human-caused climate change, according to a study by an international team of climate scientists published on Monday.

Large parts of India and Pakistan experienced an unusually early and long-running heatwave, beginning early March, which has largely persisted until now.

March was the hottest in India since records began 122 years ago, with Pakistan also seeing record temperatures, the researchers said.

To quantify the effect of climate change on the long-running high temperatures in India and Pakistan, they analysed weather data and computer simulations to compare the climate as it is today, after about 1.2 degrees Celsius of global warming since the late 1800s, with the climate of the past.

The attribution study, which determines the influence of climate change on a particular weather event, focused on the average maximum daily temperatures during March and April, in Northwestern India and Southeastern Pakistan, which



were most severely affected.

The results showed that an event like the current long-running heatwave is still rare, with a 1 per cent chance of happening each year, but human-caused climate change has made it about 30 times more likely to happen.

The analysis suggests the heatwave would have been extraordinarily rare without the effects of human-induced climate change.

The study was conducted by 29 researchers as part of the World Weather Attribution group, including scientists from universities and meteorological agencies in India, Pakistan, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

"High temperatures are

common in India and Pakistan but what made this unusual was that it started so early and lasted so long," said Professor Krishna Achuta Rao from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.

"Across much of both countries, people had little relief for weeks on end, with the costs particularly high for hundreds of millions of outdoor workers. We know this will happen more often as temperatures rise and we need to be better prepared for it," Rao said in a statement.

The researchers noted that until overall greenhouse gas emissions are halted, global temperatures will continue to increase and events like these will become more frequent.

For example, if global temperature rise reaches 2 degrees

Celsius, a heatwave like this one would be expected as often as once every five years, the scientists found, adding even slower emission cuts would likely make such a heatwave yet more frequent still.

The results might underestimate how common such a heatwave is now and how frequently it can be expected if greenhouse gas emissions continue, because the relatively short length of weather data records limited the statistical analysis that the researchers could make.

"Heat waves also have the potential to increase risk of forest fires and even droughts," said Arpita Mondal, Civil Engineering, and Climate Studies, IIT Bombay.

"Thousands of people in this region, who, to begin with, contributed very little to global warming, are now bearing the brunt of it and will continue to do so if emissions are not significantly cut globally," said Mondal.

The early onset of the heatwave, combined with the lack of rain, hit India's wheat production. As a consequence, the government announced a ban on wheat exports, further increasing global prices, the researchers said.

Across the world heatwaves occurring today have been made more likely and more intense by climate change, they said.

HDFC Bank partners with B2B pharma marketplace Retailio to launch co-branded credit cards

Agenceis

Mumbai: HDFC Bank and Retailio today announced the launch of a new range of co-branded credit cards. These B2B credit cards are primarily targeted at chemists and pharmacies in the merchant segment. The credit cards will be available to over 1 lakh customers of Retailio from their existing merchant base and as well as new customers.

HDFC Bank is the leading player in the payments ecosystem with a base of over 6 crore credit, debit and prepaid cards addressing every market segment. Retailio has its presence in over 1000 cities along with a network of over 1000 Health care and Pharma companies, 3000 Pharmaceutical distributors, 1 Lakh pharmacies, hospitals & nursing homes.

Under the Retailio Cobrand program the credit cards will offer up to 50 days of interest-free credit period, reward points on spend and purchases through all merchants, annual milestone benefits like 500 Bonus Reward Points on spending Rs 25,000 per month and 1,500 Bonus Reward Points on spending Rs 50,000 per month, 5% Cashback on all Business essentials like Utility, Telecom, Govt. & tax payments, 1% fuel surcharge waiver between Rs.400 to Rs.5000 of Fuel purchase and up to Rs. 250 per statement, other Subscription

offers on Smartbuy, SmartPay and Payzapp offer and no cost & low-cost EMI options for all customers on their credit card along with term loan eligibility for business purposes.

"As India's largest card issuer, we are committed to nurturing the payments ecosystem by collaborating with different players in Corporate India. Our strategic partnerships include the who's who from travel, FMCG, hospital-ity, telecom and fintech sectors. Through our partnership with Retailio we will extend this collaboration further into the pharma sector with a customised product for retail pharmacies, distributors and hospitals within the Retailio merchant network," said Parag



Rao, Country Head – Payment Business, Consumer Finance, Technology and Digital Banking, HDFC Bank.

"This co-branded initiative with HDFC bank is a step towards acknowledging their importance and one of our core offerings to enable continued growth for our partners," said Harsh Parekh, co-founder, API Holdings.

"This launch is an important step for us to ensure that we aid our ecosystem partners with the necessary ammunition for their next level of growth – while we continue to innovate and provide them the necessary structures for continued and sustained growth," said Rohit Anand, Head – FinTech – API Holdings.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Won't Rest Till

to resolve all issues on fast-track basis. "Enough blood has flown in Kashmir. Roots of militancy have remained stronger here in Jammu and Kashmir and there was a time when even the case was not being registered," he said, adding that "his government is committed to end militancy from Kashmir for everlasting peace."

The LG said that it was a fact that no one can compensate for the death of any person. However, the government is taking measures to provide job compensation to the NOKs of Rahul Bhat," said LG, who was accompanied by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P K Pole and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar.

He further added that from the last over a year, the security forces have had the upper hand. "Despite that, some incidents have taken place. There are informers everywhere. Nobody can even identify them. However, I can't assure that no such incident will take place, those who kill people with guns are not our only targets, but all those who are running this ecosystem. We will not stay calm until this ecosystem is put to an end. Everybody knows what has happened, but can't tolerate it anymore," he said.

Sinha further said that the attempts by some elements have been made since long and the KPs are knowledgeable about it.

"I belong to an outside State and you are well aware about the situation," he told the agitating KPs and urged them not to fall prey to some hands who are playing politics over the killing of Rahul Bhat.

He assured KPs that all their issues will be resolved including providing safe and secure accommodation. "One officer at my office has been assigned the job of monitoring the fulfillment of your all demands. Besides that Divisional Commissioner is also working on all your demands," he said and urged the KPs to have faith in the system.

"The homes are being constructed while at some places lands are being made available and DPR in some cases are in final stage," he assured the KPs while paying tributes to Rahul Bhat, a Revenue official, who was killed at Tehsil Office Chadoora almost ten days back—(KNO)

Govt Removes

service with immediate effect," the order read.

Police To Identify

Ramban, Mohita Sharma Garg, Islam invited the attention of the officer towards the growing number of unregistered web-based news organisations operating through various social media platforms, especially Facebook, which are seen spreading propaganda, fake news, and also indulging in blackmail of government functionaries in the district.

On most of the occasions, they are seen interfering in smooth running of the administrative affairs and planting anti-government stories which are largely aimed at maligning the image of the administration and always portraying them in bad light.

A large number of district & sectoral officers have complained of harassment at their hands and stated that many self-proclaimed media persons, without carrying any authentic identification, barge into their offices and start recording videos and posting them in various social media groups, the district magistrate said.

He said if channels and journalists operating these illegal portals remain un-checked, there is every apprehension of emerging of law and order situations with potential to disturb the peaceful fabric of the district.

In the larger interest of the general public, you are requested to identify all such fake media groups which are operating without any proper registration in the district. You are also advised to verify the antecedents and source of funding of all so-called journalists who operate these illegal portals without any valid qualification and authorisation from the competent authority, Islam said.

The list of all such 'media organisations' and so-called journalists may be shared with this office for taking further necessary action in the matter, the DC said.

President of the Working Journalist Association, Ramban, M Taskeen Wani welcomed the decision of the district administration and said it was a long pending demand of the association to curb the activities of such elements who are bringing a bad name to the

profession.

Govt Not To Disengage

the Service Selection Board. "This is to clarify that the Govt of J&K has no plans to disengage employees who are working under Rehber-e-Khel, Rehbar-e-Janglat and NYC scheme," the union territory government's Information and Public Relations department said on its official Twitter handle.

National Emblem

be," reads an order by Principal Secretary, Home Department R K Goyal.

In January 2020, the administration changed nomenclature of police medal for gallantry and police medal for meritorious service by removing the word 'Sher-i-Kashmir', a reference to former Prime Minister of J&K and National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

"It is hereby ordered that the words 'Sher-i-Kashmir Police Medal for Gallantry and Sher-i-Kashmir police medal for meritorious service' wherever appearing in the government order No.332(P) of 2001 dated 01.08.2001, as amended from time to time, shall henceforth be read as 'Jammu and Kashmir police medal for gallantry and Jammu and Kashmir police medal for meritorious service,'" the Principal Secretary, home department, had said in an order issued in the third week of the January 2020. (GNS)

More Govt

University and a school teacher Mohammad Maqbul Hajam for encouraging and involvement in anti-India activities.

Taking a strict stand on the involvement of the government employees for keeping links with militant outfits, the J&K government has so far sacked 38 officials for keeping in touch with militant outfits in the Union Territory in the last two years.

They were accused of playing an active role in creating and sustaining the ideological narratives for the militant networks in J&K. (IANS)

Newborn Comes

dead and was not given medical attention at the hospital for over two hours before the family

decided to perform her burial at Hollan village.

When they were returning to the hospital, some locals objected to the burial in their graveyard, forcing the family to dig out the grave nearly an hour later.

Wani said when the baby was taken out of the grave she was found to be alive. The family rushed her to the hospital.

"After initial treatment, she was referred to Srinagar for specialised treatment by the doctors," he said.

Gujjar leader Choudhary Mansoor, also a panch, accused the hospital staff of negligence. The incident sparked protests by the family and others inside the hospital complex against the "non-professional attitude of the doctors and the hospital staff."

Banihal Block Medical Officer (BMO) Dr Rabia Khan said an inquiry has been ordered into the incident.

"We have already placed a junior staff nurse and sweeper working in the gynaecology section under suspension with immediate effect, pending an inquiry," she said, adding further details will be shared after the inquiry is completed.

Replacement Work

completed. This is an essential infrastructure and replacement is necessary for flight safety."

"Inconvenience caused to the passengers is regretted. Kindly reschedule your flight bookings accordingly." The Director noted.

Pertinently, in March, the authorities at the Srinagar airport had installed six new modern equipment including In-Line Baggage System (ILBS) in an attempt to enhance the air navigation of the aircraft, passenger safety and security.

The six equipments installed at the Srinagar airport included Doppler Very High Frequency Omni Range (DVOR), non-directional (radio) beacon (NDB), the instrument landing system (ILS), X-Ray Baggage Inspection System (XBIS), In-Line Baggage System (ILBS) and ETD.

While talking to Kashmir Observer, Director Srinagar Airport, Mr. Kuldeep Singh had said that these newly installed modern equipment at Srinagar Airport will ensure an increase in rush, enhance a smooth conduct of flight

operations and will provide a hassle free experience to the passengers.

Subsequently, in April, the Srinagar International Airport marked the busiest day in its history, handling its highest number of per day passengers at nearly 15,200 on Monday, with 7,305 arrivals in 102 flights.

J&K Logs Five

three were reported from the Jammu division and two from the Kashmir division of the union territory, they said.

Seventeen of the total 20 districts in Jammu and Kashmir did not report any fresh cases.

There are 58 active COVID-19 cases in Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said.

So far, 4,49,394 people have recovered from the viral disease, they said.

Minor Earthquake

at 10.31 am, the officials said.

They said the quake hit Bandipora district in north Kashmir at a latitude of 34.43 degrees north and the longitude of 75.03 degrees east at the depth of 50 Km.

There were no reports of any loss of life or any damage to property, they officials said.

Oil Tanker Mows

of Ghulam Hyder Wani of Shadipora Payeen was hit and grievously injured by an unknown oil tanker at around 4:00 AM at his native village.

Farhad was subsequently shifted to SKIMS Bemina where he succumbed to injuries, they said. Farhad, married only four days ago, was heading towards a Masjid (mosque) to offer Fajr (morning) prayers, they said.

Confirming it, a police official said that cognizance of the incident has been taken and investigations have been initiated.

Heart Attack Kills

that the circumstances leading to the incidents were being ascertained.

Meanwhile, the deceased BSF trooper has been identified as Akeel Ahmad hailing from Madhya Pradesh while CRPF man has been identified as ASI Subhash Chandra son of Kamta Parsad belongs to CRPF Battalion 243—(KNO)

Despite being geographically distant from Kashmir how Kashmiris in West maintain cultural, social, and emotional linkages with their homeland. Tune-in to latest KO podcast

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Bombay now in Srinagar*



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