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A wholesome meal for people on the go

Turkish Burger

Now Taste Mediterranean Flavour in Srinagar

Bun Maska & Irani Chai JK Bank Lawns, Opp Ghat 6 Boulevard, Srinagar-1

Quote!

Courage is grace under pressure

-Ernest Hemingway

NEWS DIGEST

Migrant Worker Dies Of Heart Attack

Srinagar: A middle-aged migrant worker from Bihar died on Wednesday after suffering a heart attack in Pakherpora area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district. 52-year-old Lakhan Devrishi of Khawashpur Bihar, fell unconscious at his rented room in Mohandpora village of Pakherpora, reports said. He was shifted to **More on P6**

Landslide Briefly Blocks Banihal Highway

Jammu: A landslide on Wednesday blocked the Jammu-Srinagar national highway in Udhampur district here for nearly two hours, officials said. The landslide struck the 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, near Samroli around 12.30 pm during the ongoing work on a four-laning project, they said. **More on P6**

Rusted Arms, Ammo Recovered In Samba

Jammu: Rusted arms and ammunition, including a carbine, were recovered from a village in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, police said on Wednesday. The arms and ammunition were found by residents of Chak Manga village on Tuesday evening while digging a well, they said. The villagers informed the police, which recovered a rusted carbine. **More on P6**

BSF Porter Injured After Falling Off Cliff

Srinagar: A porter working with Border Security Force (BSF) was injured on Wednesday after falling off a hillock in North Kashmir's Kupwara district. Mushtaq Maqbool Mir, working with BSF 27 Battalion sustained critical injuries after he slipped from a hillock while carrying essentials for troops from Sakha Post to Jeel Post in Karnah area **More on P6**

Elderly Man Hit By Bike, Dies

Srinagar: An elderly man was killed on Wednesday after being hit by an unidentified biker outside his home in Anantnag district of South Kashmir. 73-year-old Gull Mohammad Lone was critically injured after being hit by an unidentified biker near Bilal Colony, KP Road on Wednesday morning, reports said. Lone was shifted to GMC Anantnag. **More on P6**

Prez To Attend IIM Convocation At Jammu Today

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: President Ram Nath Kovind will address the fifth convocation of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) here on Thursday and will also inaugurate a diversity cell at the institute.

A total of 214 students, including 77 women, will be awarded Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree at the convocation this year.

President Kovind will be the chief guest on the occasion and deliver the convocation address.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha will be the guests of honour.

Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) Director General Chandrajit Banerjee and Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce (DICC) President Ravi Kumar Narra will attend the convocation as special guests.

IIM Jammu Director B S Sahay said, "We are very happy that President Ram Nath Kovind has consented to grace the occasion and to address the graduating students."

The President will also inaugurate a **More on P6**

LG Rolls Out Rs 15L Insurance Cover For Govt Employees



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday rolled out 'Accidental Insurance Scheme' for all the government employees under which Jammu and

Kashmir Bank will extend free group personal insurance cover of Rs 15 lakh to all the employees.

The LG also launched J&K Bank's 'Phone Pe Loan' facility for the government employees.

According to an official spokesperson, the

Govt Okays Scheme For Promotion Of KP Employees

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to cool the rising tempers of Kashmiri Pandit employees seeking relocation from the Valley, the Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday approved the scheme which envisages maintaining a separate seniority for Kashmiri Migrant employees appointed under the Prime Minister's Development Package.

The scheme for promotion of PM package employees was taken in the Administrative Council which met here under the chairmanship of the

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday, an official spokesperson said.

He said the decision was taken in a bid to streamline the career progression of employees engaged under the PMs Package.

"This will remove the bottleneck in career progression of employees appointed under the PM package," he said.

"The scheme envisages maintaining a separate seniority for Kashmiri Migrant employees appointed under the PM package, by respective appointing departments which will run parallel to the seniority of regular **More on P6**

Govt Orders Probe Into GP Fund Embezzlement

Agencies

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday ordered a probe into the alleged embezzlement in GPF withdrawal of rupees twenty-nine lacs from official account of Geology and Mining Department Jammu.

"Sanction is hereby accorded to the appointment of Abdul Majid Bhat, Director Finance, Higher Education Department J&K, as Inquiry Officer to conduct enquiry into the involvement of officers/officials, then posted in the Treasury Office, New Plot Jammu, on the charges of embezzlement and crediting of GPF withdrawal amount of Rupees 29.00 lac into the official account of Geology and Mining Department Jammu, instead into the accounts of subscribers, and submit his report with specific recommendations, within 15 days from the date of issuance of this order", reads an order.

"The (enquiry) officer shall be assisted by the Accounts Officer Directorate of Accounts and Treasuries, Jammu", the order reads further.

Govt To Rename Kulgam School After Slain Teacher

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday announced to rename the high school in south Kashmir's Kulgam district after a female teacher from Samba, who was shot dead by unknown militants last month.

"The government high school, Gopalpora in Kulgam will be named after Smt. Rajni Bala. Assured her husband Shri Rajkumar that all his demands and concerns will be resolved on priority basis," the office of J&K LG Manoj Sinha wrote on its official Twitter handle.

The Tweet came hours after the LG visited the residence of slain school teacher Rajni Bala in Samba district and assured every possible assistance and support to her family.

Bala was shot dead by militants at her school in Kulgam district of south Kashmir on May 31.

Met the family members of Smt. Rajni Bala at their residence in Samba. She was one of the most loved & admired

teachers in the valley. J&K administration will provide every possible assistance and support to the family, Sinha tweeted.

Bala's husband Raj Kumar, also a teacher serving in Kashmir, said the family handed over a memorandum of demands to Lt Governor Sinha during their meeting with him.

The memorandum, signed by Kumar's father Ram Lal Atri, sought justice for the slain teacher, who served in Kashmir along with her husband for the past 13 years, and martyr's status to her.

The memorandum also demanded immediate transfer of Kumar to his home town, citing the security situation in the valley and the horrific tragedy.

It also sought release of full salary till the date of retirement of the slain teacher and pensionary benefits to her minor daughter, responsibility for her complete education and a government job thereafter.

Meanwhile, authorities on Wednesday ordered to observe 'two minute **More on P6**

Recent Killings Dampen Festive Spirit at Tulmul

'Our Hearts Are Filled With Pain As The Number Of Devotees This Year Is Very Low'



Press Trust Of India

Tulmulla: Amid tight security, hundreds of pilgrims paid obeisance at the famous Ragnya

Devi temple here in Ganderbal on Wednesday for the annual Kheer Bhawani mela with the recent killings of Hindus by militants in the **More on P6**

WE FEEL GOOD WHEN WE SEE OUR FRIENDS and relatives when they visit the temple. But, this year we are sad. The PM's package employees have also left. Not many people have come from outside."

PM Grooms KPs On Jyeshtha Ashtami

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday greeted Kashmiri Pandits on the occasion of Jyeshtha Ashtami. "Greetings to everyone, especially my Kashmiri Pandit sisters and brothers on Jyeshtha Ashtami. We pray to Mata Kheer Bhawani for everyone's well-being and prosperity," he tweeted. Kashmiri Pandits offer prayers at the Kheer Bhawani temple in Ganderbal district in Jammu and Kashmir on this day.

China's Infra Build-Up On Ladakh Border 'Alarming': US General

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A top US General on Wednesday said some of the defence infrastructure that is being created by China near its border with India in Ladakh is "alarming", calling the Chinese activity in that region as "eye-opening".

Flagger concerns over the Chinese infra build-up, the US Army's Pacific Commanding General Charles A. Flynn, who is on a visit to India, also said the "destabilising and corrosive" behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the Indo-Pacific region is simply not helpful.

"I think it is worthy of us working together as a counterweight to some of those corrosive and corruptive behaviours that the Chinese do," he told reporters here. The Indian and Chinese troops are **More on P6**

Fresh Centaur Bid Leaves Its Staffers In Despair, Distress

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar: After years of controversial sale bids, leases and take-over attempts, the possession of the Centaur hotel on the banks of Dal-lake will be taken over by the J&K Government for an unprecedented time in the coming days.

Officials privy to the development said that the Government had been very keen to take over the possession of the Centaur hotel since early 2021. However, the official noted, the Lieutenant Governor had given an official nod for taking over the paramount property in the month of February this year.

However, the decision has irked the Centaur Hotel



Employees, who fear that their livelihood will suffer if the Government takes over the famed hotel.

"Wednesday is the final date

to vacate the hotel. As of now, we haven't been informed about our future either by the HCL or by the Government. No government **More on P6**

Supreme Court Dismisses HCI Petition

The Supreme Court on Wednesday disposed of a petition filed by the Hotel Corporation of India (HCI) against the State of Jammu and Kashmir on termination of its lease given to the company to operate the Centaur hotel in central Kashmir's Srinagar. The counsel for the petitioner, HCI, said that the State government had terminated the 99-year lease of their hotel without giving a show cause notice. This action would render the employees of the hotel functioning on the banks **More on P6**

Twitter Gaffe

Anantnag Admin Claims 80 Lakh Tourists Visited Kashmir In Recent Months

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A record 80 lakh tourists have visited Kashmir since January, the deputy commissioner's office in south Kashmir's Anantnag district has claimed.

Kashmir is witnessing a 'golden period of tourism' as 80 lakh tourists have visited the UT in the past few months alone, breaking all the records of the past 20 years," the Anantnag deputy commissioner's office said in a tweet on Tuesday.

However, the figures quoted in the tweet are far from the actual number of tourists who visited Kashmir valley in the first five months of the calendar year.

According to officials in the tourism department, the number of tourists who have visited Kashmir this year is over nine lakh and is expected to cross the 10-lakh mark by the

end of June.

"If we are talking purely about people who have come as tourists, the numbers have crossed nine lakh from January 1 to May 31," an official of the department said on the condition of anonymity.

He said the infrastructure in the valley is not yet of the level to accommodate such a large number of tourists.

"We are talking about an average of 51,000 tourists every day. This is a little more than the listed bed capacity of all the hotels, guesthouses and houseboats in the valley," the official said.

Ironically, the erroneous tweet by the Anantnag deputy commissioner's office has skipped everyone's notice as the official Twitter handles of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Union **More on P6**

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With the prospect of more workforce and office workers taking up remote or flexible work practices, building occupancy rates may decrease in short term but a few segments such as co-working and flexible spaces are going to be the main demand driver in the commercial and real estate segment, it said.

Work From Home Is Here To Stay: CIRIL



Press Trust Of India

As Work from Home (WFH) has become a reality post-Covid-19 pandemic, there is an increased demand for functional and flexible spaces that can accommodate workspace conveniently located in urban centres for easy access of the employees, according to real estate research agency CIRIL.

It is not the only business that is looking for more resilience through flexible forms of real es-

tate, property developers and landlords also are seeking a sustained model of creating a need-based ecosystem for future of work where hybrid models of working are becoming acceptable norms, CIRIL said.

With the prospect of more workforce and office workers taking up remote or flexible work practices, building occupancy rates may decrease in short term but a few segments such as co-working and flexible spaces are going to be the main demand driver in the commercial and real estate segment, it said.

Developers and corporates have to work in tan-

dem to address the needs of the hybrid work culture through augmentation of existing infrastructure. Smaller cities are becoming an attractive investment option for both customers and investors.

The agency said there is a huge potential in infrastructure development and real estate sector, particularly in Tier II and Tier III cities.

According to CIRIL, though the WFH is increasingly becoming an acceptable mode of working, the downside of it is that there is a lack of organisational structure, team building activities, collaboration, interaction and motivation leading to employee burnout, loneliness and mental health issues.

This has led to exploring new models of hybrid and collaborative working environment that strikes the right balance between working place and time as well as fosters a healthy interpersonal relationship between employee and employers.

Traditionally, the IT and ITeS sectors have been the first movers in experimenting with hybrid models a decade back and since then they had created a robust policy framework to support the workforce. Other sectors are gradually adapting to hybrid models as a post-pandemic strategy, it added.

Covid-19 May Increase Risk Of Psychiatric Disorder In Months After Infection: Study

Press Trust Of India

Covid-19 may increase the risk of developing a psychiatric disorder in the months after infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to a study conducted in the US.

Researchers at the Oregon State

risk, the researchers said.

They looked specifically at anxiety disorders and mood disorders and found a minor but significant increase in risk for anxiety disorders and no change in risk for mood disorders.

The large sample size and the fact that this data cohort draws from across the US gave researchers a unique win-



University (OSU) in the US found that Covid-19 patients had about 25 per cent increased risk of developing a psychiatric disorder in the four months following their infection, compared with people who had other types of respiratory tract infections.

The finding, published in the journal World Psychiatry, supports previous research on psychiatric disorders among post-Covid patients, though the current study found a smaller effect than the earlier studies.

The study used data from the National Covid Cohort Collaborative (N3C) to match 46,610 Covid-19 positive individuals with control patients who were diagnosed with a different respiratory tract infection so they could compare how Covid-19 specifically affected patients' mental health.

The researchers looked at the rate of psychiatric diagnoses for two time periods: from 21 to 120 days after patients' Covid diagnosis, and from 120 to 365 days after diagnosis, limited to patients with no previous mental illness.

They found that Covid-19 patients had a 3.8 per cent rate of developing a psychiatric disorder compared with 3.0 per cent for other respiratory tract infections.

The 0.8 per cent difference amounts to about a 25 per cent increased relative

dow into post-Covid side effects, said study co-author Lauren Chan, a PhD student in nutrition in OSU's College of Public Health and Human Sciences.

The results emphasise the need for both patients and health care providers to be more proactive when it comes to addressing mental health concerns following Covid infection, she said.

"For people that have had Covid, if you're feeling anxiety, if you're seeing some changes in how you're going through life from a psychiatric standpoint, it's totally appropriate for you to seek some help," Chan said.

"And if you're a care provider, you need to be on the proactive side and start to screen for those psychiatric conditions and then follow up with those patients," she added.

The researchers noted that not every single person who gets Covid-19 is going to have this type of problem, but it is not unheard of, adding people should seek care for themselves or others around them.

"In the larger context of Covid and health care in the US, any increase in the amount of people seeking care, especially psychiatric care, will add further strain to a system that is already stretched to maximum capacity, Chan said.

Studies Pinpoint Which Patients Can Skip Cancer Treatments

Associated Press

After surgery, some cancer patients can safely skip radiation or chemotherapy, according to two studies exploring shorter, gentler cancer care.

Researchers are looking for ways to precisely predict which cancer patients can avoid unneeded treatment to cut down on harmful side effects and unnecessary costs.

One new study used a blood test to determine which colon cancer patients could skip chemotherapy after surgery. Another suggests some low-risk breast cancer patients can omit radiation after lumpectomy.

The research was discussed at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, which wrapped up Tuesday in Chicago.

The colon cancer study, funded by the Australian and US governments and non-profit groups, was published Saturday by the New England Journal of Medicine.

The findings could allow doctors to focus on the patients we think would truly benefit from chemotherapy and avoid the side effects for patients for whom it's likely unnecessary, said Dr Stacey Cohen of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Centre in Seattle, who reviewed the colon cancer findings and was not involved in the research.

COLON CANCER

Many colon cancer patients are given chemotherapy after surgery, even though they may be cured. The drugs can come with side effects such as nausea, anaemia and memory problems.

But pinpointing which patients might not need further treatment has been tricky. Scientists studied whether a blood test could help doctors make the call.



Many colon cancer patients are given chemotherapy after surgery, even though they may be cured. The drugs can come with side effects such as nausea, anaemia and memory problems.

The study involved 455 patients who had surgery because cancer had spread into the colon wall. After surgery, one group received a blood test, customised to their tumour's genetic profile, to detect any remaining bits of cancer DNA.

Their care was guided by the blood test: If it showed no signs of remaining cancer, the patients did not get chemotherapy. Meanwhile, doctors made chemo decisions for the rest of the patients in the usual way, guided by analysis of the tumour and nearby tissue.

Fewer patients in the blood test group got chemo 15% vs 28%. But about 93% of both groups were still free of cancer after two years. In other words, the blood test group fared equally well with less chemotherapy.

In patients where cancer DNA is not detected after surgery, the chance of cancer relapse is very low, suggesting that chemotherapy is very unlikely to benefit these pa-

tients, said Dr Jeanne Tie of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia, who led the research.

Skipping chemo makes a big difference in a person's quality of life if that can be done without having to put them at jeopardy for recurrence, said ASCO president Dr Everett Vokes, who specialises in head and neck and lung cancer at University of Chicago Medicine.

BREAST CANCER

The other study followed 500 older women with a common form of early-stage breast cancer and low levels of a protein known as Ki67, a marker for fast-growing cancer.

After surgery, the women took hormone-blocking pills, a standard treatment for this type of cancer, but they did not get radiation treatment.

After five years, 10 of the women saw cancer return in the same breast, and there was one breast cancer death.

There was no comparison group, but researchers said the results compare favourably to historical data for similar patients who had radiation.

We estimate the benefits of radiation would be very small in this population compared to the side effects, said Dr Timothy Whelan of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, who led the study, which was supported by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society.

Radiation can cause skin problems, fatigue and, less commonly, long-term heart problems and second cancers.

The study is a feel-good message for patients with low-risk tumours and will help doctors understand which of their patients they can comfortably, with confidence omit radiation, said Dr Deborah Axelrod of NYU Langone Health, who was not involved in the research.



Doctors At CD Hospital Go On Strike Against Assault By Patient's Attendants

Agencies

Srinagar: Doctors at the Chest Disease Hospital here went on a strike Wednesday over an alleged assault on them by a patient's attendants including a "DDC member accompanied by security guards".

As part of the strike, which started in the morning, non-emergency services are currently shut, affecting patients at one of the main hospitals catering mostly to chest related diseases, sources told GNS.

"Yesterday attendants of a patient attacked doctors and other staff besides vandalizing hospital infrastructure. Also security personnel of one of the attendants who is said to be a DDC member had pointed a gun at the doctors on duty," Dr Naveed Nazir Shah, Head of the Department at the Hospital told GNS.

"They did not even allow doctors to see the patients by locking them up inside a room," he said.

Hospital sources said that a female patient was brought to the health facility and admitted in the Emergency Ward on Tuesday (June 7) morning.

"The doctors on assessing the condition of the patient started the required treatment. At around 2 PM, the attendants of the patient took the patient to the washroom, returning wherefrom she collapsed as her overall condition showed major deterioration at around 4:30 PM," said doctor Zaid, adding, "With the doctors pressing to resuscitate the patient, several people attending the particular patient came in between and indulged in a verbal altercation with the doctors-on-duty." In the meantime, he said, attendants including one who claimed to be a "DDC member escorted by personal guards" barged inside, obstructing the doctors from performing their duties." "Outnumbering the doctors and medical staff, the attendants thrashed several of them and locked them inside the room," he said. They also vandalized the hospital infrastructure.

DHSK Organizes Medical Camp At Zeewan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The directorate of Health Services Kashmir on Wednesday organized a multi-specialty medical camp at NTPHC Zewaan Srinagar.

During the multi-specialty medical camp specialist consultation was provided to the registered patients by Dr Ufaque MD obstetrics and gynecology and Dr Asiya MD Paediatrics and Dr Sajjad Medical Officer.

Patients and the local residents expressed their gratitude to Director Health Srinagar and staff of Zone Batmaloo for such a special medical camp during which free-of-cost medicines and diagnostics were also conducted.

Development Works In Srinagar Being Done As Per Master Plan: VC SDA

Agencies

Srinagar: Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), vice-chairman, Haris Handoo on Tuesday said, the department is planning development in the city areas as per the master plan.

Handoo said that the infrastructure raised by the SDA is in consultation with its concerned agencies and per Master Plan.

"Residential areas in Srinagar are increasing and we don't want areas to be built in a haphazard manner. Any development is devised as per the master plan only," he said.

In response to a question over the ongoing construction of residential housing flats by SDA, he said that the department is focused on housing projects.

"We have constructed a five tower residential complex which has 7 stories and is built on modern lines. The complex has around 120 2BHK and 3BHK apartments," he said.

He added that the department is mulling to construct one more complex of 10 towers which will have 12 stories for which the



technical modalities are under process with the concerned agencies.

Replying to a query over parking issues in the city, Handoo said that the SDA under centrally sponsored schemes has two parking lots of which one is in Srinagar's press enclave and another one in Sheikh Bagh.

"We have provided parking space to the school vans which are hundreds in number on the basis of monthly tariffs and that has helped in smooth traffic movement during on and off school hours," he said.

He further said that Srinagar Smart City is a sister organization and they are working together to overcome the parking issues. "SSC is also helping us to develop parking in the city".

Responding to a question over vending zones for hawkers, he said that before any vending zone is notified, the land has to be identified first.

"You may have noticed that over the past 2-3 years there has been significant progress on it and vending zones have been allotted at Lal Chowk," he said.

He, however, added that the menace of road side encroachments by hawkers is still there and it needs to be worked on so as to have smooth flow of traffic in the city.

In a response to a query over drainage system and water-logging issues, Handoo said that SMC is looking after that and the issue is being taken up with them.

"There is a water logging issue in the city in which bus yards and other areas in the city get water-logged and we are taking up the issue with SMC to overcome it," he said. (KNS)

Tourists Visit Floating Village At Kachri Mohalla, Dal



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Tourists are visiting Kachri Mohalla at Dal Lake which has been developed as a floating village by the authorities.

The first time tourists visited the village was on 6th June and they continue to visit the place. Kachri Mohalla was developed as a Model village by the government and it has the facility of Home

Stay and other facilities. Indian Army has lended support to the government venture with support from other government departments.

Experts say this step is a revolutionary step and will result in the influx of tourism in the Kashmir Valley. Government of Jammu and Kashmir has decided to undertake 5 more hamlets for developing as Model Village.

Tourism players are overwhelmed by the heartwarming welcome, Culture and traditions reflecting kashmiriyat.

The location is away from congestion and overcrowding which leads to a peaceful, natural, serene and homely stay.

"This would be a major boost to the tourism industry, employment generation in the state" authorities say.

DC Srinagar asks officers not to leave office during working hours

Agencies

Srinagar: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz on Wednesday asked all officers and officials not to leave office during working hours, and warned of disciplinary action against them.

According to a circular, issued by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, it has observed that some officials working in different offices of Srinagar District, after marking attendance do not remain available continuously during working hours at their seats and desks.

"Some of them have been reported unauthorizedly out of office for personal work, leading to wastage of precious working hours as well as non-delivery of govt. services to the public. Absence from duties without prior permission, in absence of compelling circumstances amounts to breach of conduct rules," reads the circular.

It added that it is enjoined upon all officers and officials not to leave office during working hours, else disciplinary action as warranted under rules would be initiated against the erring officer/ official.

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

09- Zil- Qaddah

1443

PRAYERS

FAJR

3: 34

ZUHR

12:30

ASR

5:30

Magrib

7:44

ISHA

9: 25

This Day In History

- 641 - Arabic/Islamic army contrasts with the Hippo over Alexandria
- 1898 - China leases Hong Kong's new territories to the United Kingdom for 99 years
- 1915 - US President Woodrow Wilson sends 2nd Lusitania note to Germany protesting sinking of the Lusitania and refuting German claim British blockade illegal
- 1931 - First rocket-powered aircraft design patented by Robert Goddard
- 1940 - General Charles de Gaulle's 1st meeting with Winston Churchill
- 1946 - Bhumibol Adulyadej becomes King of Thailand after the death of his brother King Ananda Mahidol
- 1956 - Heavy earthquake strikes Afghanistan, 400 killed
- 1957 - First ascent of Broad Peak (the world's 12th highest mountain).
- 1964 - Lal Bahadur Shastri becomes Prime Minister of India after being selected by the ruling Congress Party after Jawaharlal Nehru passed away
- 1967 - Israeli troops reach Suez Canal
- 1972 - In a show of support for Iraq, OPEC moves to prevent companies whose interests were nationalized in Iraq from increasing production elsewhere
- 1980 - Soyuz T-2 returns to Earth
- 1983 - Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party wins British parliamentary election
- 1983 - Zimbabwe win their 1st one-day cricket international, v Australia
- 1985 - USSR's Vega 1 deposits lander on surface of Venus

From KO Archives

Bandipur Boy Dies In Kabul Fighting US Troops

Observer News Service

Srinagar- An 18-year-old militant from Bandipur, who had gone across the LoC at the age of 11 has died in Afghanistan during a bloody battle with American troops.

He is the first Kashmiri youth to die fighting US soldiers in Afghanistan. Earlier, several Kashmiri youth had lost their lives during the Afghan jihad against the Soviet occupation.

When the 15 RR learnt of the boy's death in Afghanistan, it raided his home, dug up the grounds and tore up walls and ceilings, but were able to find nothing.

The Bandipur boy from the Pattu Shahi village, Ayaz Ahmad Malla, had given up his carpet-weaving vocation at the age of 11, joined militant ranks in 2000, and crossed the LoC for arms training.

His father, Ghulam Muhammad, said that he had talked to his son on phone many times during the past seven years, and had always pleaded with him to come back and live a normal life.

"The phone was our only contact. He would ring up and talk to his mother," he said.

"One day he told me that he was going to Afghanistan, and asked me to pray for him. Ayaz's father said, adding that he had crossed over to Afghanistan three times during the past seven years, and each time he would take leave of his family on phone.

"Two months ago he called for the last time and said that he was going to Afghanistan. He asked me to tell his mother that they would meet again if he returned alive, or else they would meet on Judgment Day," he said.

"He did not contact us while in Afghanistan. But we did not worry, because we had got used to it. But on June 1, we were informed that Ayaz Ahmad, alias Arif, had been killed on May 29 during an operation by the US-led allied forces on the outskirts of Kabul," he said.

The family could not immediately ascertain where their son had been buried, but they surmise that locals must have interred him somewhere in Kabul.

Ghulam Muhammad said that his son had been affiliated to the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, but he had been with some other militant group when he first left home to cross the LoC.

"I still remember when I used to ask Ayaz to return and he would tell me to pray for him," he said. People are flocking to Ayaz' home to pay condolence to Ghulam Muhammad who laments that he now won't even be able to see his son's grave.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Unending standoff

Chinese activity near Ladakh, a top US General has said, is "eye-opening" and some of the infrastructure being created is alarming. Commanding General, US Army Pacific, General Charles A Flynn, described Beijing's posture in Ladakh as "destabilizing and corrosive behaviour" as he talked about the Chinese infrastructure build-up across the Himalayan frontier. The General who oversees the Asia-Pacific region, further said that an incremental and insidious path followed by China projected on to the region was "simply not helpful".

Over two years into the standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India and China have yet to resolve it to their mutual satisfaction. In fact, it is China that is the aggressor here and the country has to withdraw from several ingress points. But China has refused to do so. Nor does it look likely that it would do so in the future. Recently, the two sides held 24th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) where they reviewed the situation along the LAC in the western sector of the India-China border.

The two countries have failed to arrive at a breakthrough in successive rounds of Corps Commander-level talks. The two sides have been looking at a possible agreement for disengagement from Hot Springs as part of the comprehensive disengagement and de-escalation efforts in eastern Ladakh. Last year, the two countries had disengaged from the friction point at Pangong Tso lake but ever since they have struggled to replicate the agreement at the other friction points: Hot Springs, Demchok and Depsang. Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army has enhanced its military profile on the border by deploying thousands of its soldiers and equipment.

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

Fifteen rounds of dialogue between senior-level Army commanders have so far achieved little. But there are huge geo-political stakes for both the countries that can't be ignored. A lingering state of confrontation between the two will not be in the interest of either. Here is hoping that China eventually sees the reason and rationale of having India as a partner in the economic advancement of the region than an adversary.

OTHER OPINION

Eyes shut

Words have meaning only when they result in action. The Congress does not seem to have made that connection. Had it done so, then the party's nominations for the Rajya Sabha would have reflected the promise held out by the Chintan Shivir in Udaipur. Not only do these show a lack of interest in the opinions of Congress members in the states but also a bland refusal to acknowledge past mistakes. Imposing candidates from above upon unwilling state party units cost the Congress dear earlier; this is happening again. It might be expected that a party reduced to governing two states, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, when once it governed the whole of India, would pay special attention to the wishes of the leaders and cadre in those states. But in Rajasthan, the Rajya Sabha candidates are from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Worse, the nominees from Haryana and Maharashtra will not be tolerated in their own states, but the Congress leadership still wishes to reward them. One example is enough to show that political logic and good political management are of no account. Chhattisgarh, instead of getting a tribal candidate — natural for a tribal state — has got one from UP and one from Bihar. The Congress's unrequited love for UP has resulted in a third candidate from the state, gifted to a restive Maharashtra unit.

The G-23's demand for sweeping changes has had no result, neither have the calls for consultative process. No one from the centre of power bothered to ask the state units what they wanted. The anger of the state units is directed towards the interim president and her two children — they are perceived as the fount of all decisions. It is as though the leadership has its eyes squeezed shut two years before the Lok Sabha elections. Even the steady departure of leaders to other parties or as Independent candidates has not forced them open. The failure to change its manner of functioning and correct the flaws of leadership is tragic not for the party alone but for the country. Only the Congress can take on the Bharatiya Janata Party everywhere in India unlike anti-BJP regional parties which are limited to their states. The Congress leadership is evidently unaware or uncaring of that responsibility.

Telegraph India

The Other Train to
Good Diplomacy

Newly started Mitali Express is set to improve the Dhaka-Delhi connect, an equation geared to set in motion changes in South Asian diplomacy

Dr. Shakuntala Bhaban

Following the commencement of the Covid-19 epidemic, passenger rail services between Bangladesh and India were discontinued in March 2020. Before the suspension, two trains ran between the two countries: the Maitree Express between Dhaka and Kolkata and the Bandhan Express between Khulna and Kolkata.

But it's a piece of good news for both Indian and Bangladeshi people that passenger train services between India and Bangladesh resumed Sunday (May 29, 2022), two years after they were suspended owing to the outbreak of the pandemic on March 28, 2020, with the Bandhan Express departing Kolkata for Khulna and the Maitree Express departing Dhaka for Kolkata. The Mitali Express, a third train has been already hailed by the two countries' railway ministers on June 01, 2022.

Mitali Express, the third passenger train service connecting Bangladesh and India, began operating on Wednesday morning (June 01, 2022). In nine hours, the train will travel 513 kilometers between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka (Dhaka Cantonment station).

The Indian Railways Headquarters in New Delhi hosted the flag-off ceremony. The event's main guests were Bangladesh's Railway Minister Nurul Islam Suhan and his Indian counterpart Ashwini Vaishnav. The train will run on the Haldibari (India) - Chilahati (Bangladesh) line from New Jalpaiguri in India to Dhaka Cantonment Station in Bangladesh.

The new train and resumption of the two train services would not only improve people-to-people contacts between the two countries, but it is also intended to boost tourism between them. Shopping malls, hospitals, and low-cost hotels are also expected to be built in the vicinity, allowing people to move around the stations more easily. In the next days, a hospital, shopping malls, and low-cost motels must be available near the station. But both parties must remove all hurdles and complexities regarding the bilateral trans service. Visa-related complexities should be addressed properly. The Target should be the welfare of the people from both sides. Millions of Indian and Bangladeshi citizens would be grateful to the Indian and Bangladeshi governments for restoring the train services. It would be much better if the procedure could be made more fluid.

This will help definitely enhance trade between the two countries, flourish tourism. The rail link will improve rail network access to the region's key ports, dry ports, and land borders, supporting regional trade growth and encouraging regional economic and social development. The benefits of both products and passenger travel will be available to ordinary citizens and businesspeople in both countries. As a result, it will strengthen people-to-people communication even more. It will facilitate commercial activity and allowing more people to contact with one another.

The two countries have been collaborating in an effort to improve and expand rail connectivity. Both sides are working on a number of projects, and some historic railway lines are being restored at the same time.

The Bandhan Express was resurrected by reactivating a long-dormant rail link between Kolkata and Khulna, Bangladesh's third-largest city. The Barisal Express served this route until 1965, when it was halted due to the India-Pakistan war. Bandhan was revived in 2017 by Narendra Modi government and PM Sheikh Hasina administration.

Following the launch of the Maitree Express between Kolkata and Dhaka Cantonment in April 2008, the Bandhan Express was the second train to depart. It spans the distance between Kolkata and Khulna, passing through Petrapole and Benapole on the way to meet the needs of people from both countries.

Since its inception, the Maitree Express has been a huge success. The 90 percent occupancy rate on the tri-weekly route between Kolkata and Dhaka used to be the norm. Now, the Mitali Express has been started to run between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka in North Bengal. PM Modi announced this train during his March 2021 visit to Dhaka.

Both countries' governments have been attempting to improve the rail link between them, and not simply through passenger trains. In August 2021, the two countries resumed regular freight train service between Haldibari, India, and Chilahati, Bangladesh, on the newly restored link.

The Haldibari-Chilahati train link between India and East Pakistan was also operating until 1965, when it was shut down owing to the war. At the time of Partition, this was part of the broad-gauge major line connecting Kolkata and Siliguri. On this route, the two sides expect at least



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20 freight trains to cross the border each month.

Trains continued to run between the two countries after the Partition because they were once part of a single, seamless railway network under British authority. As a result, the infrastructure to connect the two sides via railways was substantially there.

Policymakers on both sides saw this as an opportunity to strengthen diplomatic ties by allowing products and passengers to traverse borders. Between India and Bangladesh, five rail routes have been restarted thus far. Petrapole (India)-Benapole (Bangladesh), Gede (India)-Darshana (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India)-Rohanpur (Bangladesh), Radhikapur (India)-Biro (Bangladesh), and the Haldibari-Chilahati connection are among them.

According to the media reports, stone chips, ballasts, grains, and other items are commonly transported to Bangladesh. CONCOR, a railway PSU, has begun container shipping with private clients' Fast Moving Consumer Goods. Typically, the goal is to develop a speedier and more cost-effective freight link by weaning them off of the sea route. The Eastern Railway of India made it easier to import de-oiled soya cakes from Bangladesh last year.

Around 1.2 million tonnes of the cargo were transported via train in October of last year, rather than the customary route between the Nhava Sheva port and the Land Customs Stations, Petrapole Port.

"India would never go back on its word in this endeavor," stated the Indian rail minister recently, assuring Bangladesh of full assistance in improving the latter's rail system. It is true that India can help Bangladesh enhance its railway infrastructure, particularly in the conversion of the entire train network to broad gauge. He called the Mitali Express "another another milestone" in the strengthening of India-Bangladesh ties.

According to the media reports, the 17 railway projects in Bangladesh that India is funding are the largest component of India's three separate lines of credit given since 2011, accounting for 25% of the total soft loans.

Dhaka and New Delhi have agreed to work out the details of India utilising rail transit through Bangladesh after receiving a proposal from Indian Railways (IR).

Indian trains will pass through Bangladesh between Sealdah and Haldibari in West Bengal, as part of the proposal. Trains will enter Bangladesh via the Gede-Darshana (Chudanga) border and exit via the Chilahati (Nilphamar) Haldibari border to reach Siliguri in this instance.

At the moment, India has access to Bangladesh's road network. The proposed route will be the first rail transit infrastructure linking the two countries in more than half a century if both governments approve it.

There were eight railway interchanges between India and Pakistan before the 1947 division. Only five of them are currently operational: Benapole-Petropole, Darshana-Gede, Rohanpur-Singabadi, Biral-Radhikapur, and Chilahati-Haldibari.

According to the media reports, in April this year, the IR presented the plan to Bangladesh Railway (BR). The infrastructure of the route

from Gede-Darshana-Ishwardi-Abdullpur-Parbatipur-Chilahati-Haldibari.

The IR delegation also aimed to enhance the number of trains departing from India and passing through various places in order to facilitate freight transfer from one carrier to another.

Apart from freight trains, India and Bangladesh have been operating two passenger trains for numerous years. Now, third train has been added in this list. The Gede-Darshana junction is currently used by the Maitree Express between Dhaka and Kolkata. Between Khulna and Kolkata, the Bandhan Express runs. After a 55-year absence, rail communication between the two countries via the Chilahati-Haldibari route resumed in December 2020. Today, the Mitali Express, a third passenger train, resumes service.

The IR now has the opportunity to reestablish the ancient Siliguri-Sealdah route via Bangladesh, thanks to the resumption of train service on the Chilahati-Haldibari route.

According to the media reports, the proposed transit facility will save nearly three hours of journey time. At the moment, Indian trains must travel 573 kilometers from Sealdah in Kolkata to reach Siliguri. If the new route can be used, the distance will be reduced to merely 200 kilometers. Trains from Siliguri passed through Haldibari and entered Chilahati in the former East Pakistan en route to Kolkata before 1965. This line was permanently closed after the Indo-Pak conflict in 1965. But the Resumption of India-Bangladesh passenger and freight train services will provide benefits for both Bangladesh and India.

Transit of IR trains through Bangladesh may be a win-win situation for BR, IR, and the people and trade of the two nations. But there must have communication between the Northeast and Bangladesh, and the Akhaura-Agartala railway link must be resumed for both freight train and passenger train as soon as possible which can mark yet another significant milestone for the two countries. The increased connectivity between the Northeast and Bangladesh is intended to boost trade between the two countries.

This will strengthen not just people-to-people ties, but also trade and tourism between the two countries, particularly in the North East. In the future, it might be a link in an ambitious Asian Railway network that opens up Asean countries for trade while also serving as a success route.

Because Dhaka and Kolkata are already connected by rail, there is a possibility of connecting this network to Kolkata. This was the road from Kolkata to Siliguri before 1965, but it was closed after the 1965 war. Once the route is open, the distance between Kolkata and Siliguri or New Jalpaiguri will be cut in half. People can benefit from that. Thus, the Resumption of India-Bangladesh passenger train services is a milestone in the strengthening of bilateral ties.

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

The author is a Kolkata-based educator (Assistant Professor) and Southasian affairs researcher



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Biodiversity Committees and need for sensitization

This refers to an article titled, "Operationalizing Biodiversity Committees" by Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat (Kashmir Observer 7/06/2022).

It has been more than 20 years now since the biodiversity Act 2002 was enacted by Parliament of India.

Unfortunately, there is no awareness about this law even after two decades which is a matter of serious concern. Ironically, the biodiversity committees constituted at village or district level or in municipal bodies are also unaware of this law. The officials of the Rural Department, Forest De-

partment and even members of Panchayati Raj institutions don't know what the biodiversity act 2002 was all about? As the author has suggested, creating model biodiversity committees at panchayat and district levels is a must. I request the chairperson J&K Biodiversity Council to start

sensitizing the village and district level Biodiversity Management committees.

Shabir Bhat
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Kashmir's 'Great King' Who Turned Schizophrenic During His Last Days

Khalid Bashir Ahmad

SHAHI Khan aka Sultan Zainul A'bideen was the eighth king of Kashmir from the Shahmiri Dynasty whose rule is reckoned as the golden period of medieval Kashmir. The dynasty, founded by Shah Mir, ruled Kashmir for 222 years beginning AD 1339.

Zainul Abideen ascended the throne in AD 1420 and his rule lasted for 52 years. His image has travelled down to us as that of a just ruler who patronized art and crafts, built cities and bridges, developed irrigation system, promoted education, dispensed justice and was a benevolent ruler under whose shadow religious minorities flourished. Though not a great soldier like his great-grandfather, Shahabuddin, he sent some successful military expeditions to Ladakh and Baltistan. His official Hindu chroniclers, Jonaraja and Srivara, were the main architects of his immortalization as Budshah or the Great King, a popular title he was and is known by even today, 552 years after his demise. Historians characterize his rule by great literary and artistic activity. Whatever arts one sees in Kashmir today owe their existence to him.[1] Mirza Haidar Dughlat (1499–1551) writes:

"In Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts which are in most cities uncommon, such as stone polishing, stone-cutting, bottle making, window-cutting (tabdan turash), gold beating etc. In the whole Maver-ul-Nahr [Transoxiana located in lower Central Asia roughly corresponding to modern-day eastern Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kazakhstan and southern Kyrgyzstan], except in Samarkand and Bokhara, these are nowhere to be met with, while in Kashmir they are even abundant. That is all due to Zain-ul-Abidin." [2]

During Zainul A'bideen's rule, unlike the reign of earlier Shahmiri kings, chronicles in Sanskrit and Persian were composed. He was smitten by Kalhana's Rajatarangini and had it translated into Persian, thus literally pulling the tome out of the debris of time two centuries after it was composed and forgotten. Jonaraja took the thread of recording Kashmir history from where Kalhana had left it in the 12th century. He was followed by his disciple, Srivara. Other high points of Zainul A'bideen's rule include construction of several irrigation canals, inscription of his code of laws on copper plates in towns and villages — ala Ashoka, building of new towns, construction of the Mar Canal crisscrossing the Srinagar city and bestowing it a unique character like Venice, construction of the Budshuhun Dumath (Budshah's Dome), an architectural marvel in the form of the mausoleum of his mother, building of a four-storied palace called Zaina Dab, a mosque and a garden on the Wular lake.

The King, described by Srivara as 'handsome with flowing black beard', is known to have been a man of mild temper, affectionate and rarely provoked by anger. We are also informed that he was a deeply religious man, led a moral life, prayed five times a day and observed Ramadan fasts during which, strangely, he did not take meat. At the time of death, records Srivara, his lips quivered and it appeared that he was praying. Was he reciting the kalima shahdah, the Islamic oath affirming that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Messenger?

The King is believed to have enjoyed the blessings of one of the great spiritual giants of his time, Hadrat Sheikh Bahauddin Ganj Baksh of the Kubravi order. An information panel displayed at the

“Other high points of Zainul A'bideen's rule include construction of several irrigation canals, inscription of his code of laws on copper plates in towns and villages — ala Ashoka, building of new towns, construction of the Mar Canal crisscrossing the Srinagar city and bestowing it a unique character like Venice, construction of the Budshuhun Dumath (Budshah's Dome), an architectural marvel in the form of the mausoleum of his mother, building of a four-storied palace called Zaina Dab, a mosque and a garden on the Wular lake

mausoleum of the saint recalls that one day Zainul A'bideen visited Ganj Baksh when the latter was in a happy mood. "During the conversation, the Qutubul Aqtaab (Lord of Lords among the Friends of Allah) was pleased with Zainul A'bideen and gave him the tiding of kingship and treasure. Soon thereafter, he became the ruler of Kashmir and Hadrat Sheikh Bahauddin became popular as Ganj Baksh, the Giver of Treasure", reads the panel.

That he was a popular king revered by his subjects is a fact of history but the people's veneration for Zainul A'bideen seems to have touched the level of fantasy. The popular account presented him as a person with supernatural qualities like being present at two different places at the same time and voluntarily withdrawing his soul from his body. We have an interesting story, based on the local people's account, narrated by Mughal ruler, Jahangir, about the spiritual prowess of Zainul A'bideen. The account appears to be more based in people's adoration for the King rather than in reality. Jahangir writes:

"He [Zainul A'bideen] often came to the spot [Zaina Laank] by boat and engaged in worship of the King of Wisdom. They say he spent many "forty days " in that place. One day a wicked son of his came to that place to kill him, and finding him alone, drew a sword and went in. When his eye fell on the Sultan, however, on account of his venerable dignity and the might of his virtues, he became confused and bewildered and turned away. The Sultan shortly after came out and seated himself in the boat with this same son, and started for the city. On the way he said to his son, "I have forgotten my rosary; get into a canoe and fetch it for me." The son having gone into the temple sees his father in the same place, and the graceless man with complete shame of face falls at his fa-



“Although his admirers call his rule as the Golden Period of Kashmir, Zainul A'bideen had his share of troubles and sorrows. The last 25 years of his rule were disturbed by his rebellious sons, Adam, Haji and Bahram. Dissentions among them and their disloyalty towards him and death, one after another, of his wife and loyal advisors who were replaced by opportunists and unprincipled men, added to his sorrows and anxiety. He was taken over by frustration and became weak, both physically and mentally. He suffered from loss of memory, became indifferent towards everything and developed persecution mania

ther's feet and asks pardon for his fault. They have told many tales of such miracles as this of him, and they say also that he had well practiced the science of khala [withdrawal of the soul from the body]" [4]

Irrespective of whether or not he possessed spiritual powers, Zainul A'bideen is known to have been a man of wisdom who delivered justice using his intellect. Historian Hassan Khuihami quotes an incident where a jealous woman killed her own son, accused her co-wife of the murder and petitioned the King. After his courtiers failed to solve the case, Zainul A'bideen called the accused and told her in private that if she had murdered the child and spoke the truth then he would forgive her otherwise she would be punished. The lady denied having committed the crime and told the King to proceed as he deemed right. Upon this, the King asked her if she was not guilty, she must go home walking naked in front of the people. The lady replied that she would prefer death a hundred times than do such an act. The King then called the petitioner and repeated the same sequence with her. She told the King that if it was proved that her co-wife was not the murderer of her child then she was ready to die. When the King told her that if she was telling the truth she must walk naked in front of the people, she readily agreed and began to undress. The King admonished

her, stopped her from putting off her clothes and declared that the petitioner herself was the murderer of her child. The woman was thrashed following which she admitted to the crime.[5]

For his 'liberal religious policy and winning over minorities', Zainul A'bideen is likened to Mughal ruler, Akbar. Apart from the rule of both lasting for half a century each, Akbar seems to have followed Zainul A'bideen in so far as his disposition towards his Hindu subjects was concerned. About 150 years before Akbar followed suit, Zainul A'bideen had appointed Hindus on high administrative positions and married Hindu women. Two of his queens were daughters of a Hindu ruler of Jammu. He also married daughter of Sunder Sena, the ruler of Rajouri. He abolished jazia and banned cow slaughter and reversed his father, Sikandar's alleged oppressive policies towards the Hindus. In winning the hearts of his Hindu subjects he even crossed the redlines of his faith and actively participated in their religious ceremonies and visited temples. "[W]hen the monks of Sri Jain monastery celebrated the worship of vessels, he took part in it, and fed the monks." [6] He made Vythtruvah (birthday of River Jhelum) an officially celebrated annual festival whose roots lay in the local Hindu belief that the river was the incarnation of Patvati, consort of Hindu god, Shiva. The King would personally take

part in the celebrations. On one such occasion, he embarked on a boat and went to see the capital. Women made offerings to the Jhelum and the King spent with pleasure the whole night listening to music and witnessing the worship performed by the citizens.[7] He "forbade the killing of fish in certain tanks and meat eating on some days." [8] He also participated in Hindu pilgrimages. During one such pilgrimage to the famous Vijeshwara Temple in Bijbehara, he was accompanied by Srivara[9] who also writes that during a pilgrimage to Harmukta, the King sighted the Foot of Vishnu. He lifted the ban imposed by his father on suttee, Hindu ritual of burning alive of a widow on the pyre of her dead husband. He is believed to have issued an order allowing those who had allegedly embraced Islam under pressure to return to their faith if they so wished.

In deference to his benevolent disposition towards his Hindu subjects, Jonaraja deifies him and calls him Narayana incarnate, like other Sanskrit writers of the time who raised him to the status of God.[10] Muhibul Hassan, whose Kashmir Under the Sultans is a scholarly commentary on the Shahmiri rule, however, holds the view that Jonaraja had exaggerated the virtues of his master (Zainul A'bideen) and glossed over his failings." [11] He also accuses Srivara of exalting his virtues and minimizing his failings

"to free myself from my endless obligations to him." [12] The anonymous author of Baharistan-i-Shahi, however, is unforgiving for the King for "reviving idolatry and heresy" which, he recalls, had been stamped out during his father, Sikandar's reign. "The customs and practices of the polytheists and the heretics received fresh impetus and were given renewed currency," [13] he laments.

An incident of Zainul A'bideen's participation in merry-making event, is recorded in history according to which his foster son and a great spiritual person, Muhammad Amin Awaisi popularly known as Woosi Sahib, was so much annoyed on this 'un-Islamic' event that he jumped into the Wular Lake and was gone. The story has it that on the completion of Zaina Laank, an island built by him on the lake, the King organised a show of dance and music there which angered Woosi Sahib so much that he jumped into the Wular and disappeared. A frantic rescue operation was conducted and professional divers were pressed into service for the whole night and the following day to bring out the ascetic but without any success. The merry-making function turned into an occasion of grief and despair. Dejected and heart-broken, the King decided to return to Srinagar and, along with his companions, embarked on a boat in a state of bereavement. During his upstream journey, to his utter disbelief, he spotted Woosi Sahab at Asham, a village upstream of Wular, washing his khirqah (dress of a religious mendicant) on the banks of the Jhelum. After much persuasion and having expressed regret, the King made him to embark on the boat.[14]

An information panel at the shrine of Sheikh Bahauddin Ganj Baksh narrating, among other things, how Zainul A'bideen got kingship of Kashmir

As can be obtained from historical accounts, Zainul A'bideen's person appears to be a combination of contradictions. He was a strict observant of fundamentals of Islam yet indulged in rituals forbidden by his religion; offered five times namaz and drank wine also; [15] was God-fearing and compassionate and yet refused to return the throne to his brother, Ali Shah, who bestowed upon him the title of Zail A'bidee or the Adornment of the Devout, entrusted the kingdom to him and himself proceeded on a pilgrimage to Makkah but returned midway.

Although his admirers call his rule as the Golden Period of Kashmir, Zainul A'bideen had his share of troubles and sorrows. The last 25 years of his rule were disturbed by his rebellious sons, Adam, Haji and Bahram. Dissentions among them and their disloyalty towards him and death, one after another, of his wife and loyal advisors who were replaced by opportunists and unprincipled men, added to his sorrows and anxiety. He was taken over by frustration and became weak, both physically and mentally. He suffered from loss of memory, became indifferent towards everything and developed persecution mania. Given his behaviour, he seemed to have been afflicted by schizophrenia as he refused to touch his food suspecting it to be poisoned and imagining that his ministers were out to overthrow him. He even stopped signing official papers and did not respond to queries on public affairs and, when he did, spoke words without meaning.[16] He died in AD 1470 at the age of 69 and was buried beside his father, Sultan Sikandar, within the premises of the mausoleum of his mother. His demise saw the downfall of the Shahmiri rule. A few of his weak successors held power only in name as the real power was usurped by the nobles. Ultimately, the Chaks overthrew the Shahmiris and assumed power.

The author is a historian, writer and poet. His books include "Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind the Narrative" and more recently published "KASHMIR: Looking Back in Time (Politics, Culture, History)"

Iran Says 2 UN Watchdog Devices At Nuclear Site Turned Off

Agenceis

Tehran: Iran turned off two surveillance devices Wednesday used by UN inspectors to monitor the Islamic Republic's uranium enrichment, further escalating the crisis over its atomic program as Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers remains in tatters. The move appeared to be a new pressure technique as Western

nations seek to censure Iran at a meeting this week in Vienna at the International Atomic Energy Agency. The censure deals with what the watchdog refers to as Iran's failure to provide credible information over nuclear material found at undeclared sites across the country. But Iran's latest move, announced by state television, makes it even more difficult for

inspectors to monitor Tehran's nuclear program. Nonproliferation experts have warned Iran now has enough uranium enriched close to weapons-grade levels to pursue an atomic bomb if it chooses to do so. The state TV report, later repeated by other Iranian media, said authorities deactivated the beyond-safeguards cameras of the measuring Online

Enrichment Monitor ... and flowmeter. That apparently refers to the IAEA's online monitors that watch the enrichment of uranium gas through piping at enrichment facilities. In 2016, the IAEA said it installed the device for the first time in Iran's underground Natanz nuclear facility, its main enrichment site, located some 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of the capital, Tehran.

RBI Monetary Policy ‘Aggressive: Chief Economist, HDFC Bank

Agenceis

Mumbai: Abheek Barua, Chief Economist, HDFC Bank while reacting over the monetary policy announced by RBI said that the policy announcement was aggressive and moves beyond just “frontloading” of interest rate increases. The central bank seemed far more concerned about inflation-reflected in its

upward revision in its inflation forecast by 100bps to 6.7% and relatively more sanguine on domestic growth impulses. “Clearly the RBI is concerned about the broad-based nature of the increase in inflation and the risk of the second-round impact on inflation expectations. Therefore, the policy rate is likely to be raised well beyond the pre-pandemic level, close to

6% by fiscal year-end.” The Chief Economist said that bond yields saw an initial relief rally post the policy announcement as the rate hike was broadly priced-in and the fear of a larger rate increase or a CRR hike has been alleviated. “With elevated oil prices and rising global yields, this rally is likely to be short-lived and yields could march north yet again.”

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Prez To Attend

diversity cell at the institute. IIM Jammu has set high standards for outstanding value-based quality education, high-quality research, executive education, consultancy and strong corporate as well as international linkages, Sahay said.

LG Rolls Out

LG said that people-centric initiatives such as ‘Phone Pe Loan’ & ‘Accidental Insurance Cover’ will ensure hassle-free credit flow and social security net for employees. Sinha, he said, also asserted that people-centric initiatives such as ‘Phone Pe Loan’ & ‘Accidental Insurance Cover’ will ensure hassle-free credit flow and social security net for employees. “J&K Bank, with a strong & diversified banking system and serving all sectors of the economy, is reaching out to all sections of society for financial inclusion & delivering financial services to the last man in queue,” the LG said. “With consistent reforms in the last two years, J&K Bank has demonstrated resilience in adapting to the challenges, and emerged as one of the most trusted & reliable banks in the UT,” he added.

The free Group Personal Insurance Cover is extended to all the permanent employees of J&K Government in addition to the offers that they are entitled to on behalf of MoU between J&K Bank and J&K Government. The Bank has contracted with Oriental Insurance Company for extending the cover.

The policy for group accidental insurance shall cover personal accidental deaths under all circumstances including terrorism, on any-time and anywhere basis.

The insurance company will be required to settle the claims within 15 working days of submission of all requisite papers.

According to the spokesperson, the LG directed the bank to enhance the insurance amount from Rs.15 Lakh to Rs.25 Lakh from the next financial year.

Highlighting several steps being taken to end the non-transparent credit culture and to bridge the gap in credit availability, the LG, he said, maintained that the UT government is making dedicated efforts to strengthen the credit flow system.

“Higher credit flow was witnessed in Agriculture, MUDRA, small scale industries, SHGs & promotion of entrepreneurship, infrastructure related investment,” Sinha said.

“Financial assistance is being extended to the enterprising Youth from panchayats to realize their dreams and transform their entrepreneurial ideas into reality. Last year, 44,403 young boys and girls, Self-Help Groups were provided financial assistance. In the first 4 months of this year, 3,407 youth have been turned into entrepreneurs by this financial assistance,” he added.

The LG, as per the spokesperson said that under Prime Minister's Stand Up India Mission, 1560 beneficiaries have received the credit of Rs 10 lakh to One crore for starting their business ventures.

“More than 2.62 lakh accounts have been opened, and Rs 5696 crore has been disbursed to small and micro-entrepreneurs under the MUDRA Yojana. For the first time, the street vendors of Jammu and Kashmir have been connected with the banking facility and loan has been disbursed to 14,682 beneficiaries till date,” the LG said.

“J&K Bank has been the leader in implementing Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana, connecting poor families to the formal financial system. Out of the 43 lakh accounts under this scheme, 25.65 lakh accounts were opened in Jammu and Kashmir Bank alone,” he added.

The spokesperson said that the LG also enlisted the measures taken to reach out to the population living in such areas as remained disconnected with the banking and financial system.

“As many as 99 villages out of the 104 villages in the UT with population above 5000 with no banking outlets have been connected to the financial system and the remaining villages will be covered soon. Besides, 147 small villages, which were outside the financial sector were also being linked with banking facility,” the LG added.

Under ‘Phone Pe Loan’ scheme, the spokesperson said, the salaried employees can avail personal consumption loan and cash credit facilities at discounted rate of interest.

Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta and MD & CEO, J&K Bank Baldev Prakash also spoke on the occasion.

“J&K Bank has registered an annual net-profit of Rs 501 Cr for the Financial Year 2021-22, which is the best performance of the bank in the last seven years,” the spokesperson added.

Govt Okays Scheme

employees and will take effect from the date of appointment against the supernumerary posts under the PM Package,” he added.

Accordingly, the spokesperson said that the AC sanctioned creation of pre-facto supernumerary posts at corresponding higher levels to pave way for timely career progression of

Kashmiri Migrant employees, by reducing the supernumerary posts at lower levels in the same ratio.

“However, these promotions will be based on seniority and eligibility requirements as per the recruitments rules,” he said.

Further, he said that for maintaining the spirit of the PM Package, all posts under the PM Package have been re-designated as divisional level posts in Kashmir Division.

“The new structure will provide avenues for in-situ promotion to all PM Package employees as per eligibility and seniority,” the spokesperson said, adding “The implementation of the scheme will be monitored at the highest level to ensure that the eligible employees avail the benefits of the scheme at the earliest,”

The spokesperson said that during the financial year 2008-09, Prime Minister's Package was rolled out for return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Migrants to the Kashmir valley which included various incentives like Housing, Employment, and Transit Accommodations etc.

“The employment component of the package extended employment to 6000 eligible candidates by creating various supernumerary posts in different departments,” he added.

The announcement of scheme by government comes at a time when KP employees are holding continuous protests seeking relocation from the Valley after a surge in militant attacks on KP and migrant employees, besides non-local labourers.

Hundreds of employees have already fled from the Valley, even as the government has shifted nearly 200 KP teachers from vulnerable areas to safer locations in Srinagar and other towns.

Govt To Rename

silence’ in all schools of Jammu and Kashmir during the morning assembly on Thursday in observance of 10th day of the slain teacher Rajini Bala.

In an important notice, Undersecretary to Government has said, “In view of

10th of the Martyr Rajini Bala, Teacher, a ‘Two Minute Silence’ shall be observed in all educational institutions in the morning assembly on 9th of June 2022 at 10.30 am.”

“The photographs of the same shall be shared with the administrative department by 12 noon positively,” it reads.

Recent Killings

Valley casting a shadow on the festivities.

While the Mela has been organised after a gap of two years due to COVID-19 pandemic, the number of devotees this year was far less than in the past.

Nestled in the shade of mammoth Chinar trees in Tulmulla village in this central Kashmir district, the temple is visited by Kashmiri Pandit devotees from across the valley and Jammu region as well as tourists.

Devotees - walking barefoot - carried rose petals and offered prayers to the goddess, as the chants of hymns reverberated in the temple compound.

The devotees paid obeisance to the deity while offering milk and kheer (pudding) at the sacred spring within the complex.

The festivities are different this year as compared to the previous years. The fervour is missing. It is painful. Our hearts are filled with pain as the number of devotees this year is very low, Meenakshi, a devotee, told PTI.

She said there was an atmosphere of fear in militancy-hit Kashmir before as well, but since the last couple of months, the fear has increased due to the killings.

We (Kashmiri Pandits) are terrified, she added.

A series of killing of non-Muslims, including migrant Kashmiri government employees, in recent months in Kashmir has sparked fears of fresh exodus from the Valley.

Another devotee Sandeep Koul said it was unfortunate that there was not much of a rush of devotees.

We feel good when we see our friends and relatives when they visit the temple. But, this year we are sad. The PM's package employees have also left. Not many people have come from outside, Koul said.

It is believed that the colour of the sacred spring water which flows below the temple indicates to the situation in the valley.

While most of the colours do not have any particular significance, black or darkish colour of the water is believed to be an indication of inauspicious times for Kashmir.

Referring to the colour of the water in the temple compound which is “clear and milky white” this year, another devotee Vivek Bhat expressed hope that the coming time would be good for the Kashmir valley.

We wish to see the festivities as they used to be in the previous years. We hope it brings back good times and our brothers who have left the valley return, he said.

Meenakshi said the government had made security arrangements for the mela, but the community members were living under constant fear.

See I had no security with me while I travelled. Even when we go to the market to get

vegetables, we are constantly in fear. We see everyone with suspicion. We never know who will take out a pistol and opens fire, she said, adding, “people here are good, but there are certain elements who are bad.

Meenakshi said the community is hopeful of the situation improving.

Nanna Ji, a Kashmiri Pandit who is a regular at the Mela every, said there used to be no vacant space left in the temple compound in the previous years, but this year, the scene is different.

I pray to Mata that the situation improves and those who have left the valley because of target killings return to the valley and next year, we can celebrate with great enthusiasm, he said.

He appealed to the Muslim brethren to support the community to give a befitting reply to those behind the target killings.

Meanwhile, a government spokesperson said that around 18,000 Kashmiri Pandits and devotees visited the Kheer Bhawani Temple.

He said that elaborate security arrangements were made in this event, it was monitored by the LG Manoj Sinha himself.

“Around 2,500 Kashmiri Pandit devotees participated in the evening aarti. The religious sanctity of Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple, built atop a holy spring, has a special spiritual significance among Kashmiri Pandit devotees across the world,” he said, adding that the event could not be held here due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

The spokesperson further said that a free bus service was run from Srinagar Airport, Tourist Reception Centre, Dal Lake Side Nehru Park, Shankaracharya Temple, Shivpora, BB Cantt, Indira Nagar etc. in areas where Hindu communities live in large numbers.

Delhi, Mumbai

attacks in Delhi, Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat to “fight for the honour of the Prophet”.

The letter comes in light of the controversy that has erupted after a few Bharatiya Janata Party leaders made controversial remarks on the Prophet Muhammad.

“We shall kill those who affront our Prophet and we shall bind explosives with our bodies and the bodies of our children to blow away the ranks of those who dare to dishonour our Prophet... The saffron terrorists should now await their end in Delhi, Bombay, UP and Gujarat,” the letter read.

Over the last few days, several countries such as Malaysia, Kuwait and Pakistan condemned recent remarks made by a few BJP leaders on Prophet Muhammad. While Nupur Sharma made comments during a TV debate, another leader Naveen Jindal posted a controversial remark on Twitter.

India, meanwhile, has maintained that the views belong to a few fringe elements only and do not represent those of the Government of India. India also “categorically rejected” the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) statement slamming India as “unwarranted and narrow-minded”.

Earlier, the BJP suspended spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled media in-charge, Naveen Jindal, over the remarks. The party issued a statement emphasising its intolerance for disrespect of any religious personality. (ANI)

China’s Infra Build-

locked in a tense border standoff in eastern Ladakh since May 5, 2020, when a violent clash between the two sides erupted in the Pangong lake area.

Last month, it emerged that China is constructing a second bridge in an area held by it around the strategically key Pangong Tso lake in eastern Ladakh and this could help its military to quickly mobilise its troops in the region.

China has also been establishing other infrastructure such as roads and residential units in the border areas with India. It also has maritime border disputes with various countries in the Indo-Pacific region such as Vietnam and Japan.

“I believe that the activity level is eye-opening and I think some of the infrastructure that is being created in the (Chinese Army's) western theatre command is alarming,” Flynn said when asked about his assessment of the prolonged India-China military standoff in eastern Ladakh. The western theatre command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) oversees the India-China border.

Flynn said when one sees China's military arsenal in all domains, one must ask the question ‘why is it needed’.

“So, I do not have a crystal ball to tell you how it (India-China border standoff) is going to end or where we will be at. I will express to you that it is worthy of asking this question and try to get their response as to what are their intentions,” he noted.

The visiting US General said the talks that are going on between India and China are helpful.

“However, behaviour matters here as well. So, understanding what they are saying is one thing but the way they are acting and behaving by the way of build-up is concerning. It should be concerning to every one of us,” he noted.

Flynn also talked about how the behaviour

of China has changed between 2014 and 2022.

He said when he looks back on what the CCP and the PRC (People's Republic of China) were doing then to what they are doing today, it can be said that they have taken an “incremental and insidious path”.

The destabilising and corrosive behaviour that they project into the Indo-Pacific region is simply not helpful, he added.

“Our ability to strengthen the relationships in the region as a counterweight to those destabilising activities and to strengthen the network of allies and partners and like-minded countries that care about the protection of their people, national sovereignty, land, resources, free and open Pacific Ocean and society.”

Army Chief General Manoj Pande had on May 9 said China's intention has been to keep alive the boundary question with India though it remains the basic issue between the two countries.

India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the Ladakh standoff. As a result of the talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

However, each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the sensitive sector.

Flynn said the armies of India and the US did a joint military exercise in Alaska last year and stressed such engagement increases readiness to respond to any crisis and has a deterrent effect in the region.

“I am really excited about the future of ‘yudhabhyas’ (combat exercise) this year in India where General Pande and Lieutenant General Raju have agreed to do the exercise at 9,000-10,000 ft above sea level,” he added.

An exercise at such a high altitude increases the readiness, joint inter-operability and coalition inter-operability of the armies of both the countries, he said.

“At the end of the day, this sharing of soldier, tactical and operational practices increases everybody's readiness to respond to whatever crisis may occur. This has a deterrent effect in the region,” Flynn noted.

Fresh Centaur Bid

official is ready to meet us. We just want to seek assurance about our future. The only possibility in front of us is that once the Government takes over Centaur hotel, we employees will be made to fend for ourselves. No one will remember us,” said Farooq Ahmed Bhat, a representative of the Centaur Hotel employees Union.

Another representative of the employees said that an eviction notice is never in favor of Centaur employees. “We may lose our jobs. We've no issue with anyone taking over the possession of the hotel but only if we're made part of it. However, if we're left out of the deal then there will be consequences. We've a family to feed. Even the central Government has supported us but the state administration has been tight lipped on the matter,” the representative lamented.

For taking over the Centaur hotel, in March, J&K Government appointed Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Faz Lul Haseeb as the estates officer for the procurement of the prime location under several laws including J&K Public Premises Act, 1988 which empowers the state Government to evict “unauthorized occupants”.

“In exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of The Jammu and Kashmir Public Premises(Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1988 read with section 6 of The Jammu and Kashmir Land Grants Act and rule 7(K) of The Jammu and Kashmir Land Grant Rules, 1960, the Government hereby appoint

Faz Lul Haseeb, IAS, additional deputy commissioner Srinagar, as estates officer for the purpose of The Jammu and Kashmir Public Premises(Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1988 for taking over possession of the premises of Centaur Lake Hotel, Srinagar.” reads the notification, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer.

When Kashmir Observer contacted ADC Srinagar Faz Lul Haseeb, he refused to reveal any development into the issue noting that, “It's a public holiday. I'll talk to you tomorrow.”

Pertinently, the Srinagar's Centaur hotel is currently operating under the Hotel Corporation of India(HCI) which is a Public limited Company wholly owned by Air India Limited. Presently HCI operates only two Hotels, one each at Delhi and Srinagar under the brand name “Centaur”.

In May last year, the J&K government had constituted a five-member committee to negotiate with the Hotel Corporation of India (HCI) to take over the control of the hotel Centaur. “The committee shall finalize all details and modalities with the representatives of Centaur Lake View Hotel and HCI and come up with a concrete proposal for the consideration of the government.” reads the official order issued at that time.

If officials are to be believed then the deal between HCI and J&K Government has already ended with J&K Government acquiring all the

possession rights of the hotel. However, the Government is yet to take over the daily running of the hotel and HCI is still looking after the daily functioning of the hotel for this week only.

It is also learnt that the UT government is keen to start upgradation and renovation of the five star property soon after the process of transfer and VRS is completed.

The hotel has played host to all important gatherings held in the state capital in the past few decades, including the Inter-State Council meeting chaired by former Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Pertinently, in 2004, HCI decided to sell Centaur Lake View Hotel in Srinagar to the J&K government for a consideration of around Rs 55 crore. The state government was also expected to pay Rs 18.2 crore as outstanding dues to the HCI.

In 2011, the Jammu and Kashmir Government had also planned to submit a proposal to the civil aviation ministry for control of the Centaur hotel after a controversial deal was cancelled between the state-run airline's subsidiary, HCI and Mumbai based hotel group, DB realty.

Similarly, in 2018, the erstwhile state government had said that they were getting back Centaur hotel from the hotel corporation of India limited. Former Finance Minister, Haseeb Drabu at that time had said that the ministry of civil aviation had decided to transfer the Centaur hotel back to the state government and a written agreement between the two sides had also been finalized.

However, the state government never got the possession of the famed hotel.

Supreme Court

of Dal lake unemployed, HCI said, reported Business Standard.

The apex court noted that it was not inclined to entertain the petition at this stage. However, it also said that petitioners will be able to make a representation before the appropriate authority or the Government Redressal Mechanism and also make a request to continue them for some time, so that it may not affect tourism.

“Such representation should be considered sympathetically and the larger interest should be kept in mind,” the court said.

Anantnag Admin

home ministry, Union tourism ministry, Jammu and Kashmir tourism department and Department of Information and Public Relations of the Union Territory have been tagged.

The tweet also had a collage that claimed that “the Union Territory administration has taken several steps to ensure that air traffic to Jammu and Srinagar airports grows unhindered in the future so that trade and tourism flourishes in Jammu and Kashmir”.

People associated with travel and tourism in Kashmir rubbished the claim, saying there is a dip in tourist arrivals after the recent spate of targeted killings of civilians in the valley by militants.

“The numbers of enquiries and bookings have declined in the wake of the civilian killings. There has been a sudden dip in our business, especially after the killing of a bank employee hailing from Rajasthan in Kulgam district,” Sheikh Basharat, a travel operator, said.

Migrant Worker

the Community Health Centre (CHC) Pakherpora, where doctors declared him dead.

The reason behind his death was said to be a heart attack, reports added.

Landslide Briefly

The concerned agencies immediately pressed their men and machines into service and completed the road clearance operation within two hours, much to the relief of commuters who were stranded on both sides of the highway amid the scorching heat, the officials said.(PTI)

Rusted Arms, Ammo

two magazines, a mortar bomb and two springs from the spot, officials said.

A case has been registered in the matter and an investigation launched, they said.

BSF Porter Injured

of the district, reports said.

A resident of Dhaani village of Karnah, Mir was shifted to Sub District Hospital (SDH) Tangdar for treatment. However, the doctors there referred him to Srinagar hospital for advanced treatment.

The condition of the injured porter is stated to be critical.

Police in this regard have registered a case under relevant sections of law and set investigation into motion. (KNT)

Elderly Man

where doctors declared him dead.

Meanwhile, Police said that a case is being registered in this regard and further investigation initiated. (GNS)

AMARNATH YATRA

DGP Asks Officers To Step Up Vigil Along Banihal Highway

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh directed officers on Wednesday to beef up the security arrangements and keep a vigil on suspicious elements along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

Singh passed the directions during his visit to the Amarnath Yatra camps along the highway, ahead of the upcoming pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine of Amarnath in the south Kashmir Himalayas.

The 43-day-long yatra is scheduled to start on June 30 from the twin routes -- the traditional 48-km Nunwan route in south Kashmir's Pahalgam and the 14-km short Baltal route in central Kashmir's Ganderbal -- after a gap of two years due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The police chief visited the yatra transit camps at Mir Bazaar, Walnut Factory and Lamber in Qazigund district of south Kashmir and Ramban district of the Jammu region and took stock of the security arrangements put in place for the pilgrims, according to a police spokesperson.

He said the DGP reviewed the security arrangements at the Navyug tunnel, connecting Qazigund and Banihal towns, and sought reports from the security deployments regarding arrangements and area domination along the national highway.

Interacting with the officers at different places, Singh directed for beefing up the security arrangements to ensure a smooth



conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

He also directed the officers to further augment the security arrangements and keep a strict vigil on suspicious elements and movement along the highway and areas surrounding the yatra transit camps.

The DGP emphasised on increased coordination and communication among the forces for a quick response to the requirements for the security and assistance of the pilgrims, the police spokesperson said.

Singh said the security grid needs to be strengthened and all important locations along the yatra route should be kept under round-the-clock surveillance.

He said all important places, including the "langars" (community kitchens) and parking lots, should be brought under the security cover and stressed on sharing of inputs among the agencies for preventive measures.

The DGP also directed for area domination and joint patrolling along the highway.

He discussed the traffic management on the highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, with the officers.

Kishtwar Shuts Down Against 'Insulting' Remarks On Prophet

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Normal life was disrupted in Jammu and Kashmir's communally sensitive Kishtwar township during a strike convened on Wednesday against the "insulting" comments on Prophet Mohammad by suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma during a recent TV debate.

The strike, called by the management of Jamia Masjid, Kishtwar, and supported by the local Bar Association, was held peacefully and no untoward incident was reported, a police official said.

The members demanded action against a BJP youth leader and two members of Ikkjutt Jammu, a regional political party, for extending their support to Sharma.

Shops and business estab-



lishments owned by the Muslims remained closed across the town in response to the strike, while skeletal transport services operated throughout the day.

Lawyers affiliated to the Bar Association, Kishtwar, abstained from work in response.

The BJP has suspended Shar-

ma following an outrage within and outside the country over her controversial remarks.

Police had on Tuesday registered a case against three political activists for hurting religious sentiments and also warned netizens against sharing "objectionable posts".

LG Chairs Executive Council Meeting Of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University



Approves Post-Graduate Courses In Dogri & Hindi Under School Of Languages And Literature

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday chaired the Executive Council meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University at Raj Bhavan here.

During the meeting, executive council approved Post-Graduate courses in Dogri & Hindi under the School of Languages and Literature.

The Executive council headed by the Lt Governor reduced an-

nual fee for Ph.D students from Rs 6000/month to Rs 4000/month in order to encourage quality research. Further, in a significant decision, approval was given to the adoption of Reservation Policy for both faculty recruitment and admissions.

"All provisions of reservation as provided in the constitution are to be implemented in the University in the letter and spirit", the Lt Governor said.

The Council also approved the adoption of AICTE regulations regarding constitution of a grievance redressal committee (GRC) for faculty members. A grievance cell for students and non teaching staff is already functional.

The Lt Governor was apprised about uploading of more than

3000 students' degrees who have graduated under different programs and courses of the University on National Academic Depository (NAD). The Lt Governor issued directions for expediting the process and completing it at the earliest following all modalities and verification.

The Executive council held detailed deliberations on a number of agenda items pertaining to better functioning of the university and welfare of students and faculty of the university.

Prof. Ravindra Kumar Sinha, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU apprised the Lt Governor on the functioning of the University, besides other matters pertaining to administration and admission process of the university.

Inaugurates State Data Centre In Jammu

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday inaugurated the State Data Centre at Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor said that the future-ready central facility will ensure efficiency, agility, optimization, control and security for e-Governance and other citizen-centric applications for transparent and hassle-free government services.

Our aim under Digital India Mission in J&K UT is to make services face-less, paper-less & cash-less. This flagship programme is enabling technology empowered citizen-centric services, bringing government closer to the citizens and promoting citizen engagement, he added.

The Lt Governor observed that Technology is a powerful agent of inclusive and sustainable growth. Major E-services are running parallel and compulsorily providing for feedback/rating

system, helping the departments to list, review, re-engineer the necessary processes.

Pertinently, this new future-ready facility with fully integrated cloud foundation offers combine computing, storage and networking as well as life cycle automation to Jammu & Kashmir Government. The data centre is modernized and managed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), one of the premier R&D organizations of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), with the support of J&K Information Technology department.

The new facility will not only promote e-Governance for empowering citizens, but will also foster inclusive and sustainable growth by enhancing Internet Governance, facilitating easy development of human resources, promoting R&D & innovation, besides enhancing

efficiency through digital services and ensuring a secure cyber space with industry's best security features.

The State Data Centre J&K, co-terminus with J&K State Wide Area Network (SWAN) will act as an IT Hub for all government owned services for the entire public to achieve Digital J&K through transparent e-Governance. It will further the government's objective of digitally empowering the citizen and ensuring that Government schemes and services reach the last person with transparency and efficiency.

The e-office implementation, hosted on the State Data Centre, has been enabled in about 350 departments/offices across the UT to date, saving crores of rupees annually on account of seamless movement of e-Files, besides placing J&K at top in the uptake of e-office among all UTs of the country.

Govt's Forced Efforts To Establish Peace In J&K Have Failed Miserably: Dr Farooq

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is "alarming" and the administration's "frantic and forced" efforts for establishing a "negative peace" have "failed miserably", National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah said here on Wednesday.

Addressing party workers at a daylong block-level meeting in the Hazratbal constituency, Abdullah said the consequences of August 5, 2019 -- when the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcated the erstwhile state into Union territories -- can only be judged by looking at the depths of "torments faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir on every front".

Appreciating the workers for rallying round the party during the most trying times, the NC president asked them to prepare for future challenges.

"We are facing an alarming situation that has arisen out of the August 5, 2019 undemocratic and unconstitutional decisions. The government's efforts to force peace in Jammu and Kashmir have failed miserably," he said.

The Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar said even at the hour of "pervasive fear" in a sensitive region like Jammu and Kashmir, people who run the show from New Delhi have



"failed" to see the wisdom of local democratic forces, "the real stakeholders" in Jammu and Kashmir.

"It has failed to make earnest efforts to establish a set-up here that rests on the active will of our people in Kashmir, Jammu, Chenab and Pir Panjal," he added.

"We tried to persuade the ruling party to bring about a change in its approach with regards to Kashmir but they did not listen to us. Now, they are struggling with their failures. Neither there is peace nor any visage of development here," the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said.

Abdullah said the NC's mission is to protect the relationship with the Union of India, which was built upon the constitutional safeguards that respected the unique identity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are fighting legally and democratically. We are also reaching out to political forces across the country to help us in our fight to get back our rights," he said.

President Lecturer's Forum Meets Principal Secy Education, Discusses Various Issues

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A delegation of the Association led by President Mr. Mansoor Ahmad Khan met Principal Secretary School Education Mr. B. K. Singh at the Civil Secretariat Srinagar on Wednesday.

The delegation had a detailed interaction with him and apprised him about the long pending demand for Assured Career Progression (ACP) and removal of stagnation at +2 level. Mr. Singh assured the Delegation that the case is in active consideration of the department.

The delegation while thanking Shri Singh for this act, requested him to personally intervene into the matter and get the issue resolved for the Relief of thousands of lecturers who have been waiting for this moment for decades.

Mr. Singh was reminded about the grievances submitted by the Association last year about revisit and reframing of Education Gazetted service rules and creation of Vice Principal post, to which Mr. Singh replied that Reframing of service rules is being examined

by allied departments. He assured the delegation that he is committed to creation of VP posts and feasibility and technicalities are being explored in this regard.

The ongoing ATD 2022 was also discussed and the department under the leadership of Mr. B.K. Singh was highly appreciated for switching over to online transfer mode.

The delegation termed it historic, transparent and employee friendly move as teaching community is transferred based on their preferences. Their grievances are heard and given options to reapply. Such a positive gesture is morale boosting for Teachers and a step in the direction of restoring honour and dignity of teaching community.

Mr. Sigh was requested to issue adjustment orders in favour of those lecturers who were recently repatriated from UT of Ladakh awaiting adjustment orders and those who were retained on health grounds to resolve their Salary issues and to overcome deficiency of lecturers in Higher secondary schools.

Police Starts Probe Against Journalist Who Claimed Harassment Following His Article

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: A journalist with a news magazine has alleged that he was being harassed by the Jammu and Kashmir Police over his article on the Army's interference in activities in Kashmir Valley, a charge denied by the force which said it had received a complaint against him for putting lives of some prominent individuals in danger.

The journalist, Shahid Tantray of 'The Caravan', issued a statement that he and his family were intimidated by the police for writing articles on daily developments in Kashmir.

Tantray had put out an article in the June issue of the magazine claiming that the Army was staging peace marches to project normalcy in the valley and had named some of the corporators and peace activists working on behalf of the Army.

He claimed that he was being summoned by the police without any

proper documents.

"...kindly issue me an appropriate notice under Section 41A, CrPC. Upon receipt of the same, I said I would join the investigation and cooperate fully," he said in the statement released to the media.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police tweeted from its verified handle that "a complaint has been received from many prominent persons against one reporter, namely Shahid Tantray, for his article 'False Flags' in Caravan. It is alleged that the article names them in mischievous manner which is akin to giving targets to terror groups and puts them in danger."

"In past, many prominent personalities like Shujaat Bukhari have been targeted & killed due to similar articles focussed on certain personalities in blogs like Kashmir Fight etc. Inquiry into allegations and reasons for naming these persons has started led by a DySP rank officer," the police said.

REVOLUTIONIZING HEALTHCARE IN J&K

228 Jan Aushadhi Kendras Providing Quality, Affordable Medicare To People At Doorsteps: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With dedication of 108 Jan Aushadhi Kendras to people of Jammu and Kashmir by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the UT now has 228 Kendras functional with high standard and quality medicines, surgical equipments and other requisite services available at affordable prices, an official spokesperson said Wednesday.

He said that such developments in the healthcare world of J&K has tremendously helped the ailing here in availing the best medicare within

the UT that too in a total hassle free and transparent manner. He said that the people here now are completely satisfied and happy with the qualitative and quantitative improvement in healthcare utilities at their door steps which has also reduced their out of pocket expenditure on this account.

An official of health department said that the initiative will popularize generic medicines among the masses and dispel prevalent notion that low priced generic medicines are of inferior quality or are less effective.

On May 9, 2011, the first store was opened at Red Cross Building Exchange Road Srinagar after Jan Aushadhi scheme was launched in the year 2010.

The Jan Aushadhi outlets known as Jan Aushadhi Kendras are becoming popular for providing generic medicines at affordable rates with quality and efficiency at par with branded medicine.

According to official data, 11 centers have been set up in Jammu, 2 in Doda, 9 in Poonch, 5 in Rajouri, 3 in Ramban, 6 in Reasi, 10 in Samba, 4 in Kathua and 2 in Udhampur districts

of Jammu region.

Similarly, 8 such centers have been set up in Srinagar, 6 in Pulwama, 6 in Ganderbal, 5 in Bandipora, 10 in Kupwara, 6 in Anantnag, 1 in Shopian, 4 in Kulgam, 5 in Baramulla and 6 in Budgam districts of Kashmir region.

These Kendras have been established within the government health care institutions in tertiary care hospitals in Jammu and Srinagar, District Hospitals, Sub District Hospitals and Primary Healthcare Centres which also covered far flung areas like Arnas, Darmi (Reasi), Sedow (Shopian) Tangdar, Kalarose and

Sogam (Kupwara) to make available affordable and quality medicines available to people.

Procurement of Janaushadhi products is being executed through e-tender portal (CPPP) of Government of India while following SAP based inventory management. Besides, the administration has put in place an effective mechanism of blacklisting and debarring of vendors, suppliers and manufacturers for failure in supply and penalty for late delivery. As per quality of medicines is concerned, two tier quality assurance is being maintained

by procuring medicines only from WHO-GMP certified companies and testing through laboratories accredited by NABL.

Meanwhile, the scheme is doing justice to its tagline "JANAUSHADHI SEVA BHI, ROZGAR BHI" by providing medicines to common citizens of the country at a price cheaper by 50 per cent to 90 per cent of average market price, at the same time providing self employment with sustainable and regular earnings to unemployed youth. Also, affordable sanitary napkins are being made available in these stores to improve the men-

strual hygiene management.

"The central government is contemplating to increase number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras to 10,000 across the country by March 2024. As on October 10, 2021, the number of Janaushadhi Kendras has increased to 8,366 covering 736 districts in the country. The product basket of PMBJP comprises of 1,451 drugs and 240 surgical instruments. Medicines available under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) are priced around 50 per cent to 90 per cent less than that of branded medicines".

JASHN-E-GUREZ

Coaching Camp For Various Sports Held



Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: In connection with Jashn-e-Gurez festival, a coaching camp for various sports and martial arts was organised on Wednesday by Ali's Sports Academy in collaboration with District Administration, Tourism Department and Indian Army, at Army Helipad Dawar.

The camp was organised for the youth and students both boys and girls of Gurez in the field of Rugby, Pencak Silat, Wushu and other sports and martial arts.

The event was attended by SDM Gurez Dr. Mudasir Ahmad, Commanding Officer 9-Rajput

and Padma Shri awardee Faisal Ali Dar.

Students from HS jurniyal Tullail, MS Chorwan, BMS Markoot, GMS Markoot, Girls Higher Secondary Dawar, Boys Higher Secondary Dawar, BMS Dawar, GMS Dawar, HS Wanpora, BMS Wanpora and GMS Wanpora participated in the coaching camp.

The local youth appreciated the efforts of administration, army and Ali's sports Academy for conducting such events in Gurez.

The Jashn-e-Gurez Festival is being conducted to boost the tourism potential of Gurez valley and promote it as an adventure tourism destination.

SAI Terminates Cycling Coach Accused Of 'Inappropriate Behaviour'



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Wednesday terminated the contract of chief cycling coach RK Sharma, acting on a preliminary report of an inquiry committee after a female cyclist accused him of "inappropriate behaviour" during a training-cum-competition tour of Slovenia.

SAI said the inquiry committee, formed by it following the complaint, found the allegations of the female cyclist to be true.

"SAI had constituted an inquiry committee to hear the case of a national level cyclist's complaint against a coach of inappropriate behaviour during a foreign exposure trip in Slovenia which was organised by the Cycling Federation of India. The committee has submitted its preliminary report today and prima facie the case is established and the allegations of the athlete are found to be true," the SAI said.

"The coach who was hired on recommendation of the Cycling Federation of India had a contract with the Sports Authority of India. Following the report, SAI has terminated the contract of the coach with immediate effect," the statement added.

SAI said the committee will continue a detailed investigation into the case and submit a final report.

The complainant was part of the Indian endurance contingent, consisting of five male and a female, that flew to Slovenia on May 15 and was scheduled to

return on June 14.

SAI has already called back the cyclist, who made the allegation, to ensure her safety. It has also called back the entire contingent from Slovenia in the aftermath of the incident.

The training-cum-competition trip to Slovenia was arranged to help Indian team prepare well for the Asian Track Cycling Championships, scheduled to be held in the national capital from June 18 to 22.

The female cyclist had apprised the SAI of inappropriate behaviour by coach during her stay in Slovenia and was so terrified that she feared for her life. The matter had come to light on Monday when SAI issued a statement, saying it has called the cyclist back to ensure her safety.

The complainant claimed that the coach forced her to share a hotel room with him on the pretext that accommodation has been arranged on twin-sharing basis.

The accused coach also threatened the cyclist that he will destroy her career by having her removed from the National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) if she will not sleep with him, according to the complainant.

Fearing for her safety, the cyclist had then decided to quit the training camp. Later on her request, SAI arranged for a separate single room for her but the coach did not take her to Germany for an event along with the other members of the contingent for putting up resistance.

Norway Chess: Anand Beats Radjabov, Carlsen Loses To Tari

Press Trust of India

STAVANGER (Norway): Indian maestro Viswanathan Anand de-



feated Azerbaijan's Teimour Radjabov in the Armageddon in the seventh round of the Norway Chess tournament to remain in the second spot behind world number one Magnus Carlsen.

The 52-year-old Indian grandmaster has 13 points after the seventh round, half a point behind Carlsen, who was shocked by Norwegian compatriot Aryan Tari in the sudden death tie-break.

Anand and Radjabov drew their classical match in 42 moves in a Guicco Pianissimo game. In the subsequent sudden death tie-break (Armageddon), the former world champion needed only 25 moves to beat the Azerbaijan player to secure a win early on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Carlsen went down to his countryman in 37 moves after the classical match had ended in a stalemate.

Azerbaijan star Shakhriyar Mamedyarov scored over Anish Giri to move to third spot with 11.5 points along with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, who defeated Wesley So. Both scored wins in the classical for full three points.

In the other match of the day, China's Hao Wang edged veteran Veselin Topalov in the Armageddon.

In the ongoing tournament, the players take part in an Armageddon (sudden death) in case of a draw in the classical game.

IND vs SA T20Is

KL Rahul Ruled Out Of Entire Series, Pant Named Captain

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India skipper KL Rahul was on Wednesday ruled out of the five-match T20 International series against South Africa due to a groin injury, a day before the first match here.

Wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant, who was named as Rahul's deputy, will lead the side in his absence. All-rounder Hardik Pandya will be the vice-captain in the series.

Left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav will also miss the entire T20I series after getting hit on his right hand while batting in the nets on Tuesday.

"Team India captain KL Rahul has been ruled out of the T20I series against South Africa owing to a right groin injury while Kuldeep Yadav will miss out in the T20I series after getting hit on his right hand while batting in the nets last evening," the



BCCI said in a statement.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has named wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant as captain and Hardik Pandya as vice-captain for the home series against South Africa."

The selection committee has not named replacements for Ra-

hul and Kuldeep. Both the cricketers will now report to the NCA where the medical team will assess them further and decide on the future course of treatment.

It is understood that Ruturaj Gaikwad will open the batting alongside Ishan Kishan in the series-opener on Thursday.

With T20 WC In Mind, India Begin Auditions For Select Spots



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Zeroing in on a core group for the upcoming T20 World Cup will be India's main endeavour as they audition a bunch of players, both old and new, in the five-match T20 International series against a strong South African side, starting here on Thursday.

The Men in Blue are on a 12-match winning streak and come Thursday, they can create an all-time record of winning 13 T20I games in a row.

However for head coach Rahul Dravid, the primary aim over the next 10 days will be to narrow down on a core group of players going into the World Cup in October.

And he couldn't have hoped for a better opposition than a gritty South African side which has seen its stock rise recently.

With likes of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli rested for the series, stand in captain

KL Rahul was a certainty at the top until his injury, but it would be a tough choice between Ruturaj Gaikwad and Ishan Kishan as openers.

Shreyas Iyer, was terrific at No. 3 against Sri Lanka in February, could hold on to the spot, in the absence of the injured Suryakumar Yadav. But Deepak Hooda, who has been in fine form, could also be given a chance since his impressed batting in the same position for Lucknow Super Giants.

The mercurial Rishabh Pant and comeback man Dinesh Karthik form an explosive middle order.

If Hooda, Karthik and Venkatesh Iyer perform well, it would give the management an opportunity to play around with the line up during the World Cup.

Hardik Pandya is likely to resume his duties as the finisher despite a splendid run batting at No. 3 and 4 in the IPL.

The seasoned Bhuvneshwar Kumar will spearhead the pace attack alongside death overs specialist Harshal Patel and would hope to prove their prowess given that only Jasprit Bumrah is a sure pick for the World Cup among the fast bowlers.

Avesh Khan is likely to fill in the third pacer's spot but if he falters, Arshdeep Singh, who impressed in the IPL with his ability to bowl yorkers, could be handed a debut over fellow rookie Umran Malik.

The wrist spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav return to the side after for the first time since 2019. Both players have reinvented themselves and have been rewarded for a superb IPL season.

With the injured Ravindra Jadeja expected to be a sure-shot selection for the World Cup and Chahal unlikely to miss out, Ravi Bishnoi, Axar Patel and Kuldeep will have to make a strong case for themselves.

Doyen Of Women's Cricket, Mithali Raj Brings Curtains On Glorious Career

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Mithali Raj, one of the greatest female cricketers to have played the game, on Wednesday announced retirement from all forms of international cricket, having made a significant contribution in popularising the women's game during a storied 23-year-long career.

The trailblazer ended her glorious career with a record 7805 runs from 232 ODIs, the most in the format.

With an overall tally of 10868 runs, she is also the leading-run getter in women's cricket across formats.

The 39-year-old featured in 89 T20 Internationals and even though she got to play only 12 Tests in her long career, she managed to score a double hundred and remains the only woman cricketer from India to do so in the longer format.

She had retired from the T20 format in 2019 and her decision to stop playing all formats was expected after India's underwhelming ODI World Cup campaign in March. She was the captain of the team in the ICC mega event.

"I set out as a little girl on the



journey to wear the India blues as representing your country is the highest honour. The journey was full of highs and some lows," Mithali wrote in a statement posted on Twitter.

"Each event taught me something unique and the last 23 years have been the most fulfilling, challenging & enjoyable years of my life. Like all journeys, this one too must come to an end. Today is the day I retire from all forms of International Cricket."

The cricketer from Rajasthan attained the legendary status with her exploits with the bat for over two decades.

When she made her India debut back in 1999, women's

cricket was a neglected sport but now it has become a career choice with millions of girls aspiring to be like her.

Mithali played in as many as six ODI World Cups and also holds the record of scoring seven half-centuries in a row.

She is the only Indian captain - male or female - to have led India in two World Cup finals (2005 and 2017).

The team's performance in 2017 had given a huge fillip to the women's game.

However, a fairy tale ending eluded her five years later in New Zealand, where India made an early exit from the competition after an inconsistent campaign.

Australia Thump Sri Lanka By 10 Wickets In 1st T20I



Agencies

COLOMBO: Josh Hazlewood starred as Australia made an excellent start to its tour of Sri Lanka, winning the first Twenty20 by 10 wickets on Tuesday.

Australia, the T20 world champion, was chasing a modest target of 128 at R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo and got home with six overs to spare to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. It was Australia's third 10-wicket win in its T20 history.

Sri Lanka had got off to an excellent start. After scoring 50 for one in the six overs of power play, Charith Asalanka (38) and Pathum Nissanka (36) extended their second wicket stand to 61 runs and the hosts were looking set to post something in the range of 160 runs.

Mitchell Starc, who was expensive earlier on, broke the stand when Nissanka was cleaned up by a yorker.

Hazlewood then picked up three wickets in an over to reduce Sri Lanka to 103 for five as the hosts lost four wickets for two

runs in the space of 13 deliveries.

Australia was excellent in the field and that multiplied Sri Lanka's miseries as there were two run outs. The hosts lost their last nine wickets for 28 runs.

Hazlewood hardly put a foot wrong and finished with four for 16 in his four overs during his man-of-the-match performance. Starc claimed three for 26.

Openers Aaron Finch and David Warner were involved in a 134-run stand for the first wicket as Australia cruised to a big win in front of a sold out crowd of 28,000. Finch had been given out leg before wicket to Maheesh Theekshana in the third ball of the innings. But the captain successfully overturned the decision.

Australia scored 59 runs in the power play, picking up boundaries comfortably as the bowling wasn't penetrative.

Warner reached his half-century in 32 deliveries and was unbeaten on 70 with seven boundaries while Finch, who reached his fifty in 37 balls, finished on 61 with four fours and four sixes.

Madrid Extends Modric's Contract, Keeps Midfield Intact



Agencies

MADRID: Real Madrid extended Luka Modric's contract for another year on Monday, keeping intact the midfield that helped the club win a record-extending 14th European title this season.

The 36-year-old Croatian signed a new deal with the Spanish club until June 2023 and will return to play alongside Toni Kroos and Casemiro, the trio that helped Madrid win five Champions League titles in the last nine seasons.

"Very happy to announce that I will continue playing for the best club in the world," Modric said on Twitter and Instagram. "I've been fulfilling a dream for the last 10 seasons, and I remain with the same excitement and desire from the first day."

Posing in front of the 14 European titles won by Madrid, Modric held a

club jersey with his name and the number 2023.

Modric will be playing an 11th season with Madrid after joining from English club Tottenham in 2012. He helped Madrid win 20 titles, including five Champions Leagues and three Spanish leagues.

Financial details for Modric's new contract were not disclosed. His current deal was going to expire at the end of this month. Madrid is keeping Modric but is already looking to refresh its midfield, as Kroos is 32 years old, and Casemiro is 30.

Last season, Madrid signed 19-year-old Eduardo Camavinga from Rennes, and now it is close to announcing an agreement with 22-year-old Aurélien Tchouaméni from Monaco. Camavinga played often this season, as did 23-year-old Federico Valverde, who has been with the senior team since 2018. (AP)

English Football Fans Arrested In Munich For Nazi Salutes



Agencies

BERLIN: England football fans were arrested for making Nazi salutes in Munich ahead of Tuesday's Nations League tie away to Germany, according to local reports.

On the eve of the game, two England fans were reportedly arrested in Munich city centre for giving the Nazi salute, which is banned in Germany.

Munich's fire service was called out to a city centre hotel after an England fan lit a flare out of a window, which spread smoke through the building, triggering the smoke alarm.

Police in the Bavarian city were also twice called to a disturbance at one of the city's famous beer cellars, where a group of around 300 England fans were disturbing the peace.

On Monday, England head coach Gareth Southgate said he hoped the

behaviour of travelling fans would not "embarrass us".

"You feel ashamed when you hear about it," he admitted.

Officially, England fans have been allocated 3,466 tickets for the match at the Allianz Arena, but there are fears thousands more could get in having used fake information to buy tickets from the German FA. Harry Kane's late penalty earned England a 1-1 draw against Germany on Tuesday, while Italy and Turkey registered wins.

Kane slotted the equalizer from the spot in the 88th minute, though there was controversy over referee Carlos del Cerro Grande's decision to award it after a VAR check as Kane looked to be offside. Jonas Hofmann had given Germany the lead in the 51st minute.

Meanwhile, Italy beat Hungary 2-1 and Turkey romped to a 6-0 win in Lithuania. (AP)