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A wholesome meal for people on the go

Turkish Burger

Now Taste Mediterranean Flavour in Srinagar

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Quote!

Every word has consequences. Every silence, too
- Jean Paul Sartre

NEWS DIGEST

Militant Arrested In Doda: Police

JAMMU: A militant was arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district on Sunday, a police official said. A pistol, one magazine and some rounds were recovered from the militant, the official said. Based on specific information, the militant was nabbed by government forces from the outskirts of Doda town, the official added. He arrested militant has been identified as Fareed Ahmed son of Ghulam Hassan resident **More on P6**

Train Crushes Man To Death

ANANTNAG: A middle-aged man was killed after being hit by a train in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Monday, official sources said. They said Abdul Hameed Sheikh of Charsoo Awantipora came under the moving train near Melhura Zainapora area of Shopian, resulting in his instant death. The body was later on shifted by railway police to Bijbehara hospital for **More on P6**

Teenager's Body Retrieved From Pond

SRINAGAR: A team of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) personnel on Monday retrieved the body of a teenager, who had drowned in a pond in North Kashmir's Kupwara district on Sunday. 17-year-old Altaf Ahmad Tanchi's body was retrieved by the SDRF personnel from a pond in Rajwar area of Handwara on Monday morning, reports said. The teenager had drowned in the pond on Sunday afternoon when he and other boys were taking a bath. Immediately, **More on P6**

Man Killed In Suspected Bear Attack

SRINAGAR: An elderly man was killed in a suspected attack by a black bear in Kokernag area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district, officials said on Monday. 60-year-old Mohammad Akber Chouhan was found dead in a forest area near his native Ahalan Gadool village of Kokernag, they said. Chouhan had visible injury marks on his body suggesting that he was possibly mauled by a black bear. "It is believed that the victim had been on way to his farm, when the bear attacked him and subsequently disappeared in the nearby forests", they said. "The body was **More on P6**

Two Militants Killed In Kulgam Gunfight: Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two local militants of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were killed in a firefight with government forces in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, police said Monday.

The encounter, according to a police spokesperson, erupted when a joint team of police, army's 1RR and the paramilitary CRPF personnel launched a cordon and search operation in Nowpora-Kherpora village of Kulgam on Monday.

During the search operation, he said, the hiding militants

fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated effectively leading to an encounter.

"However in order to evacuate the civilians trapped around the encounter site, the joint team ensured the evacuation of all civilians to the safer places," he said.

In the ensuing encounter, the spokesperson said that two local LeT militants were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter. He identified the duo as Zubair Ahmad Mir of Qaimoh and **More on P6**



File Photo

Pak Intruder Killed Along IB In Jammu: BSF

A Pakistani intruder was killed by BSF troops along the International Border (IB) in Jammu district early Monday, officials said. A BSF spokesman said the area domination party noticed the intruder heading towards the border fence with an intention to cross over. "Our party challenged him to stop but he paid no attention and continued his movement **More on P6**

6 INCRIMINATING MATERIALS, ARMS & AMMUNITION have been recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation."

IGP Chairs High Level Security Meet

Threat Of Sticky Bombs, Grenade; Drone Attacks Discussed

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With just two days left for the Amarnath yatra to begin, the top brass security on Monday discussed a range of security issues, including the threat of sticky bombs, grenade and drone attacks by militants to disrupt the annual pilgrimage taking place nearly after three years.

The high-level final joint security review meeting was held in South Kashmir's Anantnag

district on Monday and chaired by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar, a police spokesperson said. The IGP, he said, was flanked by a galaxy of officers including GOC VictorForce, IG CRPF Kashmir ops Sector, DIGs of BSF, ITBP, CRPF & DIG SKR Anantnag. Besides all district SsP & COs of South Kashmir were also present.

On the onset of meeting, the spokesperson said that IGP explained the agenda of the meeting as strengthening of coordination between Army, CAPFs and J&K Police and stressed upon **More on P6**

AMARNATH YATRA

Forces On Alert, All Arrangements In Place: LG



Observer News Service

Jammu: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Monday that the security forces in the Union Territory are alert and have made adequate arrangements for the smooth conduct of the annual Amarnath yatra scheduled to begin from Thursday.

Sinha, who is also the chairman of the Shri Amarnathji

Shrine Board (SASB), made these remarks while speaking to media persons at Yatri Niwas, Bhagwati Nagar here on Monday, an official spokesperson said.

Sinha, he said, also stated that lakhs of families had to face financial hardship since Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra could not be held for the last two years due to Covid pandemic. "There is a lot **More on P6**

Yatra All Set To Resume After 3 Years

Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) is pulling out all the stops to ensure smooth pilgrimage, scheduled to begin on June 30, to the holy cave shrine housing the naturally formed ice-lingam in south Kashmir Himalayas. Jammu and Kashmir administration is also augmenting the efforts of the Shrine Board by providing fool proof security cover along both the Pahalgam and Baltal routes to the holy cave, a senior official said. While the board is making arrangements for the pilgrims intending to undertake the pilgrimage, it has **More on P6**

6 THERE IS A LOT OF ENTHUSIASM in the people of Jammu region and in Kashmir too this year and I see the local people are also ready to welcome the visiting pilgrims."

Sacrificial Animals To Be Costlier By Rs 25/Kg This Eid

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday fixed the rates for sacrificial livestock in the Kashmir Valley ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

According to an order, the director Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs department has revised and re-fixed the rates of Qurbani (sacrificial) livestock in the valley.

"Consequent upon the decisions taken in the meeting, regarding fixing/ review of rates of sacrificial (Qurbani) livestock, held today on 27-06-2022 and in supersession of all previous notifications issued on the subject and in exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Jammu & Kashmir Mutton Licensing & Control Order, 1973 read with SRO - 31 dated 1974, I, Dr Abdul Salam Mir, Director Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department, Kashmir revise and re-fix the sale rate of Qurbani livestock," read the order.

It reads that the rates for Delhi Walla **More on P6**

CORONA COMEBACK?

Top Doctor Sounds Caution, Says Don't Panic

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As the daily Coronavirus cases continue to show a slight increase in Jammu and Kashmir, a senior doctor on Monday cautioned people against lowering guard and paying no heed to Covid guidelines that can degenerate the situation.

Director SKIMS Prof. Parvaiz A. Koul asked people not to panic and instead follow Covid appropriate behavior to contain further spread of the infection in the Valley, an official spokesperson said.

Koul, he said, maintained that

the situation was not worrisome as the positivity rate so far is not that high and hence there is no need to panic but lowering guard and paying no heed to Covid guidelines can degenerate the situation.

He advised people to exercise caution in the face of recent reports of an increased number of COVID cases from various parts of the country.

"The rising numbers call for adoption of measures like use of masks and frequent hand washing in exercise of abundant caution for prevention of the spread of respiratory viruses in general and SARS CoV2 in particular", **More on P6**

Slight Uptick In Cases, 67 Test Positive

The daily Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir continue to show a slight rise as 67 more people on Monday tested positive for virus, even as no fresh fatality was reported in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. Jammu province registered 47 fresh cases of novel Coronavirus while 20 others were reported from the Kashmir Valley, taking the total number of people infected since the onset of pandemic in the UT to 454865, officials said Monday. In the Valley, **More on P6**

Religious Leaders Voice Support For Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The members of civil society, including prominent religious leaders on Monday extended their support to the Union Territory administration for the peaceful conduct of the annual Amarnath Yatra beginning Thursday.

The announcement in this regard was made during a day-long conference titled 'Milchar' - "The Future of the Future in Kashmir's Context" held at SKICC here on Monday, an official spokesperson said.

He said that the civil society members from different parts of Kashmir came together to give a message of solidarity against the targeted killings and to discuss the role of religious leaders as well as to welcome Amarnath pilgrims.

"The conference was organised with an aim to study the role of Islamic religious leaders in creating harmony between different communities as well as to explore the future of future in Kashmir's context," he added.

During the conference, the spokesperson said that several prominent religious leaders highlighted the significance of civil society in contemporary times and the ways for creating a harmonious and livable society.

The conference, he said, also discussed the importance of Amarnath yatra and its contribution **More on P6**

HYDERPORA 'ENCOUNTER' SC Asks J&K HC To Hear Plea Of Man Seeking Son's Body

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Monday asked the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to consider either on Tuesday or within a week the plea of a man seeking a direction to exhume the body of his son, who was dubbed a militant and killed in a controversial encounter in November 2021 and to permit the family to conduct last religious rites at the same graveyard.

A vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and J B Pardiwala also requested the high court consider the plea for the grant of compensation to Mohammad Latief Magrey for the death of his son Aamir Magrey.

The bench took note of the submission of senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for the father of the deceased, that now he does want to press for the first relief that the body be allowed to be exhumed for performing last religious rites at the family graveyard. Now I have taken the instruction. The single-judge **More on P6**

Rising Mercury, Less Rainfall Forcing Snakes Out From Burrows

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: Even as the heavy downpour last week forced people in Kashmir Valley to take out woollens in the month of June, the rise in temperature and less rainfall in the recent months has led to increased snake sightings across Jammu and Kashmir, according to a report by Wildlife SOS.

Wildlife SOS (WSOS) is a non-profit charity established in 1998 with the primary objective of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife in distress across India. The report says that there has been a considerable hike in the number of snake rescues conducted by conservation



NGO, Wildlife SOS this year as compared to last year.

"In the month of April, a nearly four-foot-long Levantine Viper was found inside a residential area in Srinagar within the Zabarwan Forest Range,"

the report says.

The panicked residents who spotted the snake in their garden immediately informed the Wildlife SOS Rapid Response Unit. The report further adds that, after an hour-long operation

conducted by Aaliya Mir, Kashmir's first and only female snake rescuer, the venomous snake was carefully extricated in what was the season's first viper rescue.

It adds that another Levantine Viper was rescued from the mess of a government office.

"This species is known as 'Gunas' in the local language feeds on rodents, lizards and birds, and is found in the mountainous regions of Jammu and Kashmir," it reads.

Aaliya Mir, Education Officer and Programme Head- Jammu and Kashmir, Wildlife SOS said "Our helpline starts receiving snake rescue calls generally from the month **More on P6**

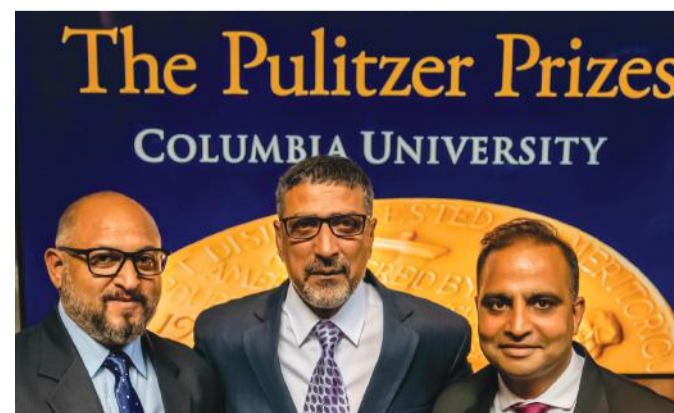
3 J&K Photojournalists Receive Pulitzer In New York

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar: After a pandemic-induced hiatus, two Kashmiri photojournalists and their Jammu colleague were among dozens of journalists, poets and authors who were honoured at the Pulitzer Prizes ceremony held at Columbia University on Saturday.

The three J&K based scribes Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan, and Channi Anand were given the prestigious award in 2020 for capturing life in Kashmir after the scrapping of Article 370 executed through the communication clampdown.

"Receiving the Pulitzer Prize at Columbia University in New York. What a great honour. A big



thanks to both families AP and home. I am humbled," Mukhtar Khan, one of the winners, wrote on his Twitter handle.

Pertinently, the awards presented on Saturday have only covered 2020 and 2021. The winners of the **More on P6**



Healthy Minds Commemorates World Drug Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar- On the occasion of World Drug Day, Healthy Minds in collaboration with civil society commemorated World Drug Day at Iqbal Khomeini Hall, Alamgari Bazar in Old city.

Speakers on the occasion highlighted the social, medical and ethical implications of drug abuse. Various remedies to address the drug abuse were also discussed.

Speakers emphasized it is important for the families of the drug abuse victims to offer them support. According to media reports, there are around 6 Lakh people in Kashmir valley who are drug addicts which includes females as well.

Speakers also threw light on how the government is taking various measures to contain the issue of drug menace. Measures include establishing new facilities of treatment at district level and enhancing the capacity of existing facilities in Srinagar.

Among the speakers was eminent Islamic scholar Allama Dr Syed Mudasir Rizvi, Dr Nazir Mushtaq, Mohammad Muzaffar Khan Dir YDRC and Ms Josiya Khan, team leader Healthy Minds.

The event was moderated by Syed Areej Safvi.

The event was attended by eminent members of civil society, youth, teachers and students.

Awareness was also made about different kinds of mental health issues and how the Healthy Minds team is trying to address the problem at individual and social level.

Speaking on the occasion Project Manager KASHMER Dr Syed Riyaz Ahmed briefed the audience about different programs conducted in collaboration with HELP Foundation and Help Poor Voluntary Trust in Kashmir Valley. The Healthy Minds programme is implemented on ground by HELP Foundation, supported and funded by KASHMER.

Revival Of Gilsar & Khushalsar Lakes:

Encroachments Won't Be Tolerated: Commissioner SMC

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Athar Amir said that no one will be allowed to encroach the Khushal Sar and Gilsar Lakes. He voiced these views during a meeting which was attended by SE Drainage, Executive Engineer Drainage, Executive Engineer Drainage Circle, Chief Enforcement Officer, Zonal Enforcement Officer North and Ward Officers.

President Nigeen Lake Conservation Organization was also present in the meeting.

At the outset of the meeting various measures to be taken for the conservation of these water bodies were discussed.

Besides the dredging pro-



cess, the working of STP's around Nalaha AmeerKhan, installation of barricades around the lake to avoid any violation or carrying of con-

structional material in trucks and Tippers was also discussed.

Athar passed directions to the enforcement wing to be

constantly vigilant and make sure that no encroachment, permanent or temporary structure should come up in these areas.

"No earth filling should be allowed in these areas, announcements should be made to offenders for removal of land filling or any other violation in a weeks' time else the law shall take its own course" Athar said.

Officials also voiced their support for the need to install CCTV around the areas of these lakes so that it is ensured that no carrying of constructional material will take place during night hours.

Athar also laid stress for construction of pedestrian walkway for people to have healthy walk at the banks of these lakes.

Start Online Tutoring Of Minority Community Students

Authorities To Hols Of Govt, Pvt Schools Of Srinagar

Agencies

Srinagar: Authorities on Monday directed all the Head of Institutions (Hols) of all government and private schools and Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) of Srinagar district to commence with online tutoring of students belonging to minority community

Officials at Chief Education Officer (CEO) Srinagar in a communication to all principals of both government and private schools and ZEOs has said, "It is enjoined upon all the Hols to start online tutoring of mi-

nority Hindu and Sikh students and reconnect them with the school activities.

The communication reads, "Prepare Database of student's Viz class and school wise and create class wise WhatsApp groups, use student friendly virtual platforms for the conduct of online classes as a supplementary measure to normal schooling."

It also reads that the learning level assessment of students in each subject must be conducted virtually through Google form questionnaire or any other feasible virtual format and record of that to be incorpo-

rated in the learning level register.

Further the teachers were directed to prepare their action plans for online teaching and e-materials as per their syllabus before and so that their students understand concepts quite easily.

"Online presence of students shall be recorded on the attendance register. Any kind of laxity in the matter shall be sole responsibility of the concerned Hols and ZEOs concerned and action taken report regarding the exercise be submitted within one day positively," it reads. (KNO)

Syed Mohammad Rizvi Passes Away After Prolonged Illness

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Syed Mohammad Rizvi, former Joint Director Horticulture (planning and marketing) passed away at his Baghwanpora residence on Monday.

He passed away following prolonged illness, family sources said.

He also served as General Manager Kashmir Observer.

Staffers at Kashmir Observer recalled his contribution to the organization and paid rich tributes to the departed soul.

He was also associated with various trusts and institutions working for public welfare.

His demise is being widely mourned with people recalling his contribution to the education sector in the Kashmir Valley.

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
- BIJBHERA: 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**
28- Zil- Qaddah
1443

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 37
ZUHR	12:33
ASR	5:34
Magrib	7:50
ISHA	9: 31

This Day In History

- 767 - St Paul I ends his reign as Catholic Pope
- 1098 - Fighters of the First Crusade defeat Kerbogha of Mosul.
- 1119 - Battle of Sarmada - Emir Ilghazi defeats French Crusaders
- 1389- Ottomans defeat Serbian army in the bloody Battle of Kosovo, opening the way for the Ottoman conquest of Southeastern Europe (see Vidovdan).
- 1635 - French colony of Guadeloupe established in Caribbean
- 1651 - Battle of Beresteczko between Poles and Ukrainians starts.
- 1675 - Battle at Fehrbellin: Brandenburg army beats Sweden
- 1762-Russian tsarina Catherine II seizes power, declaring herself Catherine II, the sovereign ruler of Russia
- 1778 - Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey (General Washington beats Clinton)
- 1778 - Mary Ludwig Hayes "Molly Pitcher" aids American patriots
- 1807 - British troops land at Ensenada, Argentina
- 1820 - Tomato is proven to be non-poisonous by Colonel Robert Gibbon eating a tomato on steps of courthouse in Salem, New Jersey
- 1895 - French painter Paul Gauguin leaves France for Tahiti for the second time
- 1902- US buys concession to build Panama canal from French for \$40 million
- 1902- Germany, Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire renew their Triple Alliance for six more years
- 1904-International Anti-Military Cooperation (IAMV) forms in Amsterdam
- 1919- Treaty of Versailles, ending WWI and establishing the League of Nations, is signed in France
- 1936- The Japanese puppet state of Mengjiang is formed in northern China.
- 1941- German & Romanian soldiers kill 11,000 Jews in Kishinev
- 1941- German troops occupy Galicia, Poland
- 1950- North Korean forces capture Seoul, South Korea in opening phase of the Korean War
- 1956-1st atomic reactor built for private research operates Chicago III

From KO Archives

Free Trade Area On Both Sides Of LoC Soon

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR- Prime Minister's working group for strengthening relations across the Line of Control (LoC) has suggested creation of a free trade area between Jammu and Kashmir Pakistan controlled Kashmir.

The ultimate aim (of recommendations) would be to encourage, in stages, the creation of a free trade area comprising Jammu and Kashmir and Pck, modalities of the same being worked out between the two sides, said the group headed by M Rasgotra, which submitted its report to the third roundtable conference on Kashmir in April.

The report said representatives of trade and commerce including the chambers of commerce, have al-ready visited the LoC and reported that there was lot of enthusiasm for opening up of trade and commerce between the two sides.

The group recommended setting up of a joint consultative machinery of officials and representatives of commerce from both the sides to resolve any difficulties in flow of trade. The list of items for export and import should include, handicrafts, fruits, cement, iron, medicines, sugar, basmati, rice, machinery and equipment, sports goods including raw material like willow, plastic pipes and other items that are manufactured or assembled by small scale industry in Jammu and Kashmir, the report said.

To facilitate the travel of traders across the LoC, the working group recommended that the traders should be given multiple entry and exit permits, which should be valid for a minimum period of one year. The issue of state taxes on the goods traded across the LoC may be determined by the state government after due consideration of all relevant aspects, it added.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 June, 2007)

ہنر انسان کو اقتصادی طور خود دار اور معاشرے کو منشیات سے

پاک کرنے میں مدد کرتا ہے: ڈپٹی کمشنر بارہمولہ ڈاکٹر سید سحرش اصغر



ڈپٹی کمشنر بارہمولہ محترم ڈاکٹر سید سحرش اصغر صاحبہ نے کہا ہے کہ ہنر انسان کو اقتصادی طور کو خود دار اور معاشرے کو منشیات سے پاک کرنے میں مدد کرتا ہے تعلیم کے ساتھ ساتھ ہنر سیکھنا آج وقت کی ضرورت ہے۔

24 جون کو Shining Star Society گنڈر جی بیٹ

لاوے پورہ کی طرف سے ہنر کی اہمیت پر منعقد کئے گئے ایک پروگرام سے خطاب فرما رہی تھی۔ اس پروگرام کے دوران مذکورہ سوسائٹی کی طرف سے مختلف ہنروں میں تربیت مکمل کرنے اور اپنے لیوٹ پائمنگ کرنے والے طلباء و طالبات کی حوصلہ افزائی کی گئی۔

Shining Star Society تعلیم یافتہ اور نیم تعلیم یافتہ

خواتین کیلئے Vocational Training کا انتظام کرتی ہے اور مخصوص فریقوں سے انہیں تین مہینوں کے اندر باہر بننا کر قابل روزگار بناتی ہے۔ اس موقع پر skill کی اہمیت پر مختلف پروگرام پیش کئے گئے جن کو حاضرین نے بہت سراہا۔

یہ فنکشن اس وقت توبہ کا مرکز بن گئی جب مہمان خصوصی محترمہ سید سحرش اصغر صاحبہ نے پچاس سال سے زیادہ عمر میں ہنر سیکھنے والی خواتین کو انعامات سے نوازا اس دوران ضلع بارہمولہ سے تعلق رکھنے والی ایک بچی رضیہ حفیظ جو سننے اور بولنے کی صلاحیت سے محروم ہوئے کو باوجود ہنر سیکھا اس کی بھی حوصلہ افزائی کی گئی۔

اس پروگرام میں دہلی سے والے چند خواتین اینٹر پرائیور، بینک اور محکمہ تعلیم کے ملازمین کے علاوہ معزز شہری بھی شامل ہوئے۔ آخر میں سوسائٹی کی چیئر پرسن کو حیدر اختر نے ہنر کی اہمیت پر زور دیا اور Artisan Card کے فائدوں سے لوگوں کو روشناس کرایا۔

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES

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For details, the interested entities may refer to applicable Scheme Guidelines and Expression of Interest (EoI) available on Ministry's website - <https://mofpi.gov.in> or <https://plimofpi.ificilt.com>

DAVP-1601/11/00002/2223

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost permit certificate of my vehicle bearing Regd No: JK18- 6577. Now I have applied for duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO KULGAM within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

IFTIKAR PADDER
R/O: BOGUND KULGAM

rna

PUBLIC NOTICE

My DOB has been wrongly written in school Records as 15-06-2009 while my correct DOB is 15-06-2008 which needs to be corrected. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Islamic educational institute baghi buchroo within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Musavir bashir S/o Bashir Ahmad sheikh
R/O Baghi buchroo

fko

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K O V I E W

Fresh Covid outbreak

After a period of drastic decline when it seemed that Covid-19 pandemic is by and large over, India's daily Covid tally surged again on Monday as 17,073 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours. Maharashtra has seen a huge rise in tally with reporting of 6,493 fresh infections. Monday's cases have seen a 45% jump from Sunday when 11,739 people tested positive for Covid. The active cases in the country have now climbed to 94,420. Twenty-one more patients have died and with this, the cumulative count of deaths stands at 5,25,020.

If anything this shows that the pandemic is once again trying to take root and if people don't take care, things could once again go out of hand. The cases could spiral again triggering the fourth wave. As things stand, people have given up using masks. Hardly anyone follows Standard Operating Procedure. And there is a reason for that. India has witnessed fewer cases in recent months. And so has Kashmir. But now cases have witnessed a slight rise in the Valley also. Director SKIMS Prof. Parvaiz A. Koul has, however, asked people not to panic while advising observance of Covid appropriate behavior to preempt further spread of the infection.

The union government has already embarked on a massive programme to administer booster doses. However, at 2 percent Covid booster dose coverage is among the lowest globally. This is when 25 percent of the people across the world have received a booster shot. The US has administered 30 percent of its population with a booster shot, UAE (53 percent), UK (59 percent) and even Pakistan has covered 3.3 percent of its population with the third dose of the covid vaccine.

Meanwhile, cases in India are rising once again. It is thus premature to rule out more Covid waves and we have to be prepared for them. The world has been through several successive waves of the pandemic which have infected millions and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. With the abating of the Omicron wave which broke out early this year, there was a temporary sense of relief across the world. The economies started re-opening in most parts of the world. But fresh surges in some countries should be a warning that the virus is here to stay for some more time. In fact, it has already become endemic now.

So far, Covid-19 has turned out to be a very stubborn virus. Despite full vaccination by a large mass of people across the globe, the outbreaks have not stopped. Here's hoping that the new Covid variants become milder so that people can live with them. But meanwhile, the governments and the people can't afford to let their guard down. There is a need to continue to follow Covid precautions in public.

OTHER OPINION

On the Brics Bank

Getting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend despite the tensions owing to China's military incursions in Ladakh was a bonus. For India, BRICS was always about its commitment to building non-western alliances, but this time it was, more, an international balancing act. Ditto for Brazil. It voted for the UN Security Council resolution "deploring" the invasion of Ukraine and the General Assembly resolution condemning Russia, but President Jair Bolsonaro went to Moscow on a "solidarity trip" a week before the invasion and has insisted his country stands for "peace". South Africa too has been walking the neutrality tightrope on Ukraine. As for Russia, the summit gave President Vladimir Putin his first multilateral outing since February 24. The joint statement was able to find common ground on the invasion of Ukraine by asserting the sanctity of sovereignty and territorial integrity and the need to find a peaceful solution.

President Putin's proposal for an alternative reserve currency was received with caution. The Western sanctions on Russia have had a fall-out on economies around the world, but a post-dollar world is an idea whose time has not yet arrived. Barring Russia now, the other BRICS members are well-integrated members of the US currency-led, digitised global financial market. But in a nod to the concept, a BRICS Think Tank Network for Finance is to be set up, to "work independently and provide intellectual support, as and when tasked, for knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences and practices and cooperation on finance issues amongst BRICS countries, aiming at addressing global challenges and serving the interests of the EMDCs (Emerging Markets and Developing Countries)". The wording is suitably vague.

BRICS has yet to live up to its promise of an economic or trading bloc that can offer alternatives to developing countries. The New Development Bank, or the BRICS bank, is yet to catch speed as a multilateral lender of standing. China's push to dominate BRICS, and Russia's being in economic limbo, have set limits on what the grouping can hope to achieve.

The Indian Express

Why Can't Panchayats Decide
on Private School Land Issue?



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

The School Education Department of J&K through a notification SO 177 Dated: 15.04.2022 made some changes in the School Education Rules 2010 wherein it has been made mandatory for the private schools in J&K to obtain a no objection certificate (NoC) for land use from the Revenue Department. This has been incorporated in the Rule 4 after Sub Rule 2 A. There are several other changes that have been made in these rules to ensure closure of those private schools which operate on State land in different districts of J&K.

In response to the Notification dated 15.04.2022, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) on the direction of District Administration Budgam on 22.04.2022 issued a notice directing all the private schools operating from state land (khah charai, shamilat land etc) to close down their operations. The notice reads

"In the backdrop of directions of higher authorities in pursuance to S O 177 dated 15.04.2022, all heads of such private schools of the district operating on state, khah charai land are hereby directed to close the schools of the enrolled children with immediate effect & issue school leaving certificates in favour of their respective students so that they will be accommodated in nearby Govt schools, subject to the consent of their parents in this regard. The matter is of urgent nature and there is no scope of any kind of laxity."

These orders were challenged before the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh by J&K Private Schools Association headed by G N Var. The bench of Justice Mokshisha Kazmi on June 22nd 2022 directed the Government to maintain status-quo on the order asking private schools established on state land to cease operations. The status-quo is to be maintained till the next date of hearing i.e July 18th 2022.

The high court has given a week's time to the Government for filing objections to the petition.

The move to close private schools operating on state land comes on the heels of the government banning nearly a dozen schools operated by the Falah-e-Aam Trust. Recently, schools run by Jamaat-e-Islami through Falla-e-Aam Trust have been shut down and students enrolled in these schools asked to take admission in Government schools.

Panchayat and State, a False Dichotomy

The decision of the Government to close down private schools is an arbitrary decision as most of these schools are low budget private schools that are operating on 3 to 4 kanals of state land mostly in rural areas of J&K.

It's disappointing how a country with the Right to Education enshrined in its constitution can propose a step that stands opposite in spirit.

The constitution has given us Fundamental rights which are guaranteed to all the citizens under Part III of the constitution. These rights apply universally to all citizens residing in India, irrespective of their race, place of birth, religion, caste or gender. They are recognized by law as rights requiring a high degree of protection from the government and they cannot be violated by the Government.

Fundamental rights cannot be enforceable against individuals and private entities. The obligation of protecting these rights lies on the state or its instrumentalities. Most of the Fun-

If the Government was silent until now on this issue and provided all the amenities to such low budget schools, why shall they be asked to shut down their operations now?

damental rights provided to the citizens are claimed against the State and its instrumentalities and not against the private bodies. Article 12 explains the significance of the State.

We need to understand that State is a broader term. This does not mean that the Government in New Delhi, Prime Minister's Office, Chief Minister's Office, Civil Secretariat, Raj Bhavan, Governor, Lt Governor or President's Office (Rashtrapati Bhavan) Article 12 of the Indian Constitution states as under:

"Definition in this part, unless the context otherwise requires, the State includes the Government and Parliament of India and the Government and the Legislature of each of the States and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India."

This definition makes it crystal clear that the state within the meaning of constitution of India means:

1. Government and Parliament of India i.e the Executive and Legislature of the Union
2. Government and Legislature of each State, Union Territory i.e the Executive and Legislature of the various States / UTs of India
3. All local or other authorities (Panchayats, Municipalities) within the territory of India
4. All local and other authorities who are under the control of the Government of India

State Land Belongs to Panchayats

In addition to the constitutional definition of State there are numerous judgments of the Supreme Court and different High Courts that have made it clear that local bodies are covered under the definition of State.

If Panchayat is a state then the land located in its jurisdiction also belongs to this institution?

On one hand, the Government sets out agendas around the empowerment of the institutions of local self governance (panchayats and municipalities) but when it comes to taking control of the state land, the ownership rights are not given to the Panchayats especially in rural areas.

If a private school is operating on Government land/ State land in some far off corner of the state, why shall an order be issued from the Civil Secretariat to decide about the fate of that school?

Let the local panchayat, especially the Gram Sabha decide. Let the Panchayat fix an annual rent for such schools as they are imparting mod-

ern education to our future generation.

Issuing orders from Civil Secretariat and getting it executed through District Administration kills not only the essence of the Right to Education but also chokes the spirit of our local self governance as well.

On one hand, the Government of India talks about holding three tier panchayat elections in J&K but when it comes to empowering these institutions, the Government doesn't seem to be serious.

Limitation Act

In fact, under the doctrine of adverse possession, a person who is not holding the title to the land but holding the possession of the land owned by someone else for a considerable period may acquire a valid title to it, provided that the adverse owner is in possession for a sufficient period as per the Limitation Act.

In India, any person in possession of a property for a period of more than 12 continuous years (private property) may claim unfavourable possession of the property. In case of the Govt/ state property, the time period to claim the ownership is 30 years.

The Indian Limitation Act, 1963 deals with adverse possession and the same applies to Section 27, Article 64, 65, and 112 of the SCHEDULE. Section 27 Extinguishment of Right to Property- For instituting any suit for the possession of any property, any person needs to file the suit within a limitation period else his right to such property shall be relinquished. According to Article 64 of the Limitation Act, 1963 the limitation period is prescribed to be of 12 years for a claim based on the previous possession; not on the title. The date of dispossession will begin from the date when the Plaintiff has been dispossessed.

Article 65 of the Limitation Act, 1963 provides a time limit of 12 years for a suit for possession of immovable property or any other interest on the grounds of title and that term shall begin from the point at which the possession of the defendant becomes adverse to the Plaintiff. Art 112 prescribes a limitation time of 30 years for any suit brought by the Central Government or any State Government.

The limitation period shall begin from the date laid down in the same suit by a private person.

A Setback for Education

Asking Private Schools operating on Government land to close down their operations will impact over 3 lakh students in Jammu & Kashmir. Hundreds of teaching and non-teaching staff will become jobless. If the Government was silent until now on this issue and provided all the amenities to such low budget schools, why shall they be asked to shut down their operations now?

This is a violation of the Limitation Act 1963 as explained above. Let the institutions of local self governance decide about the fate of these schools. Let some amount be fixed as an annual rent by local Panchayat or Municipality and the same be utilized for the welfare of the village, Mohalla or a colony.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author is an Acumen Fellow. He is Founder & Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement



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Homelessness in India

Homelessness in India is a growing issue, and to overcome the problem it requires multilateral co-operation. Our country has a population of 1.40 billion, nonetheless it struggles with maintaining an equal distribution of wealth. 75 years have rolled by since India's independence,

sadly there are many homeless people in our country, who live on streets, under bridges, on highways or just in any place they seek refuge. In addition they are exposed to the vagaries of extreme weather conditions, and they have to use what is at their disposal to protect themselves.

Homelessness is one of the worst

conditions of existence for a person deprived of security, growth and dignity in life. It is a pity that the far cries of these vagabonds and their fundamental life needs are unheard of by the policy makers of the government. Simple, yet essential daily needs like taking a shower or going out for work that we take for granted,

are big and real concerns for the community of homeless people. We, as a society, must create shelters for these dispossessed lots and provide basic support, and help them fight for their rights and dignity in life.

Ranganathan Sivakumar
siva19kumar@gmail.com

Covid Reinfection: The Lesser Evil

Ben Krishna

The COVID pandemic has been going on for well over two years now. During this time, SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) has slowly mutated, allowing it to evade the immune system enough to infect people many times.

As so many of us have had COVID already, it's no surprise that plenty of people are catching the virus for a second or even a third time. In the UK, this has been particularly noticeable since the emergence of the omicron variant from December 2021 onwards.

But when reinfected, are you likely to feel better or worse than you did the first time you had COVID? As well as being a question many people are curious about, this is an important issue from a public health perspective.

If symptoms are more severe, each time someone gets infected, we would expect the pandemic to escalate as people become sicker and sicker. A zero-COVID strategy would be the only way to avert waves of serious illness.

The alternative is almost precisely the opposite. If each subsequent infection is less severe, the pandemic would eventually fizzle out on its own without the need for masking, quarantine, lockdowns or other measures.

SO WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

A recent preprint (an article published online before undergoing peer review) was interpreted as suggesting that symptoms of reinfections with COVID are worse than those of initial infections.

But the authors didn't specifically look at symptom severity. They looked at the likelihood of death from any cause, hospitalisation, and a variety of health problems within six months after infection. The researchers concluded that these measures were worse after reinfections.

While this isn't good news, the results need to be interpreted carefully. The data used in this study comes from electronic healthcare records of over 5 million US army veterans, over 290,000 of whom had COVID at least once.

For a start, the group studied was already at higher risk of experiencing worse outcomes compared with the overall population. The average age was 60, around 20% smoked and more than 80% of those who contracted COVID were not vaccinated.



nated. So the results may not apply to the general population.

Second, the reinfection group were analysed immediately after reinfection, while the initial infection group were not analysed until 30 days following infection. This means that the outcomes observed for reinfection include all the early COVID symptoms (headache, cough, fatigue and so on) which the other group may have recovered from. As the data included any symptoms or health problems that occurred within the study period, including acute infection in one group skews the findings, making reinfections appear worse.

So what does this preprint show? It suggests that reinfections increase your general risk of health problems. But it's worth remembering that the study population was at higher risk already.

Respiratory infections such as influenza are a leading cause of death globally, so it's not entirely surprising that any extra respiratory infections will increase a person's risk of health problems.

This finding, however, is not the same as symptoms of reinfections being more severe.

“Reinfections increase your general risk of health problems. But it's worth remembering that the study population was at higher risk already. Respiratory infections such as influenza are a leading cause of death globally, so it's not entirely surprising that any extra respiratory infections will increase a person's risk of health problems

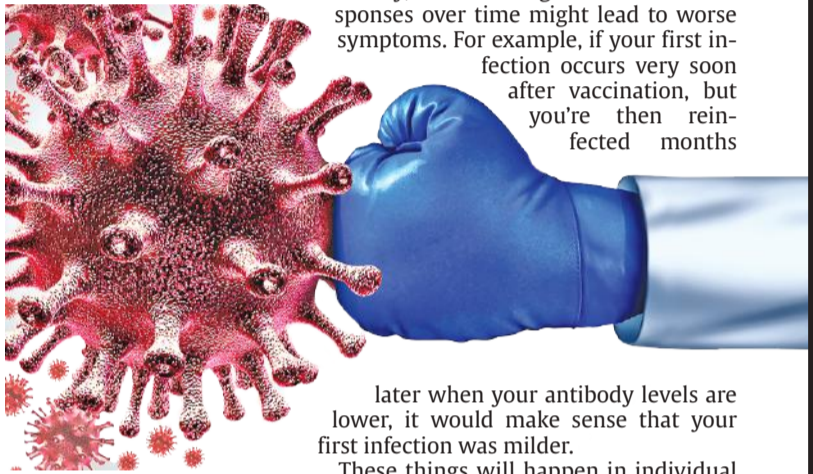
IMMUNE MEMORY

This study caused somewhat of a stir on Twitter because we would expect the opposite – that each subsequent infection would tend to cause less severe symptoms than an initial infection, or at least very little change.

Immune memory is the phenomenon where the immune system “remembers”

past infections and responds more quickly and effectively to reinfections, lessening the spread of the virus and general symptoms. This is because the immune system makes antibodies, and a type of white blood cell called a T cell during the initial infection. The immune system then reuses the same antibodies and T cells to fight the reinfection.

Many modern vaccines (including CO-



later when your antibody levels are lower, it would make sense that your first infection was milder.

These things will happen in individual people but are unlikely to play a major role across large populations. What would concern me is if we started to see trends of hospital admissions among people who had mild symptoms during a first infection but were getting very sick with reinfections. So far, I have seen no evidence of this.

By Arrangements with The Conversation

Representation Culture: Negotiating the TV Muslim

Heraz Hashmi

In the third episode of the TV show 911 Lone Star, Muslim firefighter Marjan's hijab falls off during training. Unbeknownst to her, her luscious hair captures the attention of bystanders, and in an inspirational moment her colleagues surround her to cover her from the public view. But, a video capturing the incident goes viral, and she is ostracized from her mosque.

In the most recent release of Skam Italia, the sole Muslim main character, Sana, briefly takes off her hijab in front of two boys after they encourage her and doll out a drum roll. “So sexy!” one exclaims. In another show, Elite, Nadia stops wearing the hijab regularly (while in the first season, she had stopped wearing it at school due to threat of expulsion). In one scene, she walks into a bar with beautiful hair and manages to snag the rich boy. Meanwhile, her brother Omar's character arc involves becoming more open with his homosexuality.

Channel 4's We Are Lady Parts features a punk rock band with Muslim women, featuring weed-smoking, boyfriends, and arranged marriage jokes. In the months leading up to Ramadan 2021, news of a “gay Ramadan rom-com” made headlines, and during the month itself, Netflix's Why Are You Like This? featured a Muslim woman breaking her fast by saying Bismillah and downing a shot. Far from humanizing Muslims, a starker message is echoed in these shows: freedom means freedom from religious injunctions, epitomized by the ability to pursue every imaginable avenue of physical pleasure.

In an effort to satiate demands of representation, popular narratives force the Muslims into the framework of the larger industry. With Muslim women, as with other women, the fixation on the physical comes to fore. When watching women for pleasure is as easy and accessible as it is now, it is almost an affront to the viewer to not strip naked the people they watch altogether. It takes a hijab falling off for the viewer – and other characters – to realize that perhaps the Muslim woman is, after-all, worthy of being considered equal to other women. They call her empowered, as this challenges a perceived understanding of religious morality, but her empowerment only exists within the parameters of a highly sexualized and liberal paradigm. The irony is also in assuming Islam's suppression of beauty and sexuality, that media must now nobly take

to task – yet far from a rejection of adornment or sexuality outright, the Islamic vision reorients sexuality to the appropriate channels.

This is one illustration of the many attempts to “fight stereotypes” and “normalize” certain norms that dominate the entertainment industry. They are positioned as noble causes without defending the virtue of such norm, and what goals normalization hopes to achieve. Instead, we are told of vague links to empowerment. One may argue that this is not a zero-sum game, and that some representation, however imperfect it is, is better than nothing. While this a pragmatic approach, and often stems from a position of understanding that it will take time for the breadth of mainstream media to widen enough to platform nuanced stories, I caution against becoming placated. Dr. Asim Qureshi, in a review of Dr. Sahar Chumkor's The Political Psychology of the Veil: The Impossible Body, writes:

This sits within a larger movement of neoliberalisation of Muslim identity, just one example being the, ‘hijab-wearing Muslim ‘cool girl’ in the west’ [p.237]. The narrative isn't so much of an escape from the western-gaze, but rather a melting into it. It is through the very act of normalisation, the one does not become human, but rather assimilated. The promotion of diversity through these voices in entertainment and popular culture is supposed to serve a ‘shattering’ of myths, only to perpetuate them through other means – the jouissance, as an act of cognitive dissonance...

Few expect the media to be concerned with theology. Indeed it would be grossly naive to do so, but far from even attempts at framing Islamic modesty properly, the hijab is reduced to a cultural artifact. The authenticity and diversity sought by the media is the kind that reaffirms Western hegemony. One might point out, like in the example of Nadia, that there are women who “choose” to take off their headwear, and that it accurately portrays a personal relationship with hijab. However, this misses the critique of the role hijab plays in these stories, and the scarcity of narratives about the opposite. What of women who, along their journeys, wish to don the hijab? These stories, just as pertinent and real, would require acknowledging the deeply transformative, spiritual ethos of Islam. But no such stories exist (unless it is to show some “radicalization” narrative).

So, for example, where the hijab is allowed to exist, it is only within a highly in-

dividualistic and secular construction that has no bearing on the values and overall lifestyle of the woman, who is portrayed no different than the average atheist or agnostic millennial. The involvement of Muslim directors and writers in these projects do not absolve these issues, because they still operate within an industry that props up ideologies promoting the self-as-god, overconsumption, hyperindividualism, and glamor, and overwhelming the stories follow suit. Researcher Butheina Hamdah diagnoses this problem in summary:

Liberalism is an increasingly secularizing doctrine, and secularism in turn reinforces liberal principles, as Talal Asad conveys. In Formations of the Secular (2003), Asad shows that the public space has been pre-populated by powers that only invite public expressions of religion as they align with liberal thought. Therefore, only a certain manifestation of religion—one which ‘bends to modernity's will’—can enter and engage in rational debate within the public sphere. The experience of religion in private life constitutes an essential discursive background with which individuals eventually enter the public space, and as a result, disrupt existing assumptions in the public space in order to be heard. This is the concern secularists have with religion ‘invading’ their domain because religion is assumed to be authoritative and restrictive...[1]

Put simply, there are reasons for wearing hijab, or any action resulting from belief in Allah, that the public will bolster, particularly those against a backdrop of individuality, breaking norms, defiance, beauty, etc. But reasons that refer to an interpretation of normative Islam and how Islamic ethics is a positive force in their lives will be scrutinized. And, what else would we expect – why would an industry largely concerned with singing the slogans of self-truth be invested in doing so?

LINK TO THE WAR ON TERROR AND THE GOOD/BAD MUSLIM

As Muslims, we know what Islam demands of us is true and that it is objectively superior to actualize God's injunctions than to reject them. That is the ideal we are morally obligated to strive for to the best of our abilities, regardless of mankind's prescription as sinful beings. I believe it is important that both aspects are considered in fictional tales, that there is clarity on the obligations to God while maintaining the uniqueness of the individual experience and the grapple with sin within an Islamic framework. But the

former must be established first: the absence of baseline ideals creates suspended characters with no endpoints, or a vacuum filled by agnostic, vaguely humanistic values.

My response to the objection that at the very least it is commendable that stories about Muslims who struggle with aspects of faith and practice exist on TV, or that they make for more interesting/reliable characters in comparison to “boring, simple religiosity,” is once again the framing of the sin. Is the overcoming of the strug-

“Producing strong, evocative stories can be a way to call others to Islam and strengthen love for our deen. If we accept these as adequate justifications to engage in production, then from beginning to end, from the conceptualization of an idea to its execution and medium should fall within Islamic guidelines, even if the story does not explicitly involve Muslims

gle in return to faith as a positive force being considered, or is it part of social commentary on the broad “restrictive,” “judgmental” nature of religion and religiosity? In discussing Islamic and Muslim fiction, Rania Albadry writes that the key component “is not really the ‘unIslamic’ events that take place in [books] so much as how the characters feel about them and what the author voices about them.”

This is not to be overlooked, because the industry and the public usually determine what is extreme or what constitutes fundamentalism on arbitrary standards. Illustrative examples include the SuperSisters scandal in 2019, a ‘Muslim’ platform that accepted money from a UK counter-terrorism program and with a “team...far removed from the principles of Islam, some even disagreeing outrightly with our beliefs”, to the exposé of media company This is Woke as “a covert British government counterterrorism programme.” Under a façade of progressive values, these sorts of platforms reveal the odious attempts by the state to surveil and bolster certain ideological strains of belief and practice. They promoted perspectives on sexuality, gender, community organi-

zation, and politics that are antithetical to Islamic values – creating a basis to justify their policing of the Muslim community.

See the countless examples of terrorist characters in mass media, and even more subtly the alternatives presented. In the 2019 Belgian movie Young Ahmed, Ahmed becomes “radicalized by a local Imam”; his teacher represents a “liberal and modern form of Islam” evidenced by her insisting on shaking hands with him; he becomes “dour and unsmiling” while obsessing over memorizing the Qur'an. The 2016 Layla M has a similar narrative, with the eponymous Layla's radicalization shown to the audience by her opposition to a burqa ban and donning of one. It is not only that Muslims are shown as terrorists or terrorist-adjacents, but the Islamic of evidence as such. More sophisticated narratives, like the ones elucidated at the beginning, don't avoid this problem, even in their inclusive storytelling, now with the emergence of a new type of Muslim representation: the secular-liberal-progressivism with brown skin representation.

THE STORYTELLING INDUSTRY AND RECKONING WITH RELIGION

The equivocation of the practicing, bland, close-minded and less practicing, interesting, open-minded is a direct extension of the way popular storytelling sees religion as a whole: restrictive, an obstacle to overcome in “finding one's true self.” The narrative journeys of Muslims in fiction are shoehorned into a pendulum of tradition versus modernity, Western versus strange. Stories illustrating the journey to reconcile the two necessarily entails subsuming Islam under discount Netflix theology with the sirens of self-as-god. Books follow suit, with a burgeoning niche of “Muslim YA” is quickly becoming a force for peddling secular-liberal values cloaked as reformation. Vulgarly, kaba'ir (major sins), and blatantly false creed are justified as innocently challenging stereotypes for the noble good of diversity.

Beyond critiquing, however, is the question readers may be most concerned with: what should we, as consumers and perhaps producers, of media do? Hollywood, Bollywood and other -woods are unconcerned with showing the potential of Islam as the cure for the human condition, but could there be room for aspiring Muslim directors, actors, and writers to reckon with an “Islamic” storytelling from medium to execution to themes?

I do not have the answers – I believe feeble cries for representation are shal-

lowly justified, and the limitless need for entertainment is largely a product of a mollified society. Neil Postman's Amusing Ourselves to Death (which I reviewed previously) provides a starting point for critiquing not only mass entertainment, but the forms that have turned our primary mode of consumption – previously through televisions and now through social media and streaming services – as vapid and silly.

However, I am still a consumer of select animes, as well as mystery and science fiction novels. Pride and Prejudice remains a favorite for Muslim women (and men!). Some Muslim writers have used storytelling to bring to light the realities of war that so often remains a distant object to apathetic Americans, like Zoufka Katouh's As Long As the Lemon Trees Grow. One can better understand the values, times, philosophies of a particular society by engaging their works, or use narratives to teach, guide, and promote our values. Producing strong, evocative stories can be a way to call others to Islam and strengthen love for our deen. If we accept these as adequate justifications to engage in production, then from beginning to end, from the conceptualization of an idea to its execution and medium should fall within Islamic guidelines, even if the story does not explicitly involve Muslims. This would include, for example, production teams and actors avoiding khalwa (isolation, and inappropriate interactions with members of the opposite sex [2]), the way sin is approached and to what degree it is visually portrayed (sexual activity, vulgarity for the sake of it), etc. Not unlike the exploration of Christian themes within fantasy stories like Lord of the Rings and Narnia, there is an opportunity to seriously engage the Islamic tradition and worldview beyond surface level characters that make biryani jokes.

Lastly, acknowledging the potential of growing, creative endeavor for Muslims, we must realize that dependency on such visual forms of representation are ill-suited to inspiring a truly confident, sincere, and principled community. A visual, material culture is steeped in obsession with the even more-so; mass media's hegemonic force should not induce a void without which we feel worthless and unacknowledged. Instead, it's a reminder of the prescription of Islam coming as strange and for Muslims to live in this world as strangers.

The article was originally published by Traversing Tradition

Journalist Mohammad Zubair arrested in Delhi for 'hurting religious sentiments'

New Delhi: Fact-checking website Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair was arrested by the Delhi Police on Monday for allegedly hurting religious sentiments through one of his tweets, officials said.

Earlier this month, a case against Zubair was registered under sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, language etc.) and 295A (deliberate and malicious act intended to outrage religious feelings) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), K P S Malhotra, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Cyber Cell), said.

Opposition leaders, including former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government over Zubair's arrest.

The Alt News co-founder was arrested in connection with one of his recent tweets that had a questionable image with a purpose to deliberately insult the god of a particular religion, the DCP said.

Police said the case was registered on the complaint of a Twitter user who accused Zubair of hurting religious sentiments.

Alt News co-founder Pratik Sinha alleged that Zubair was arrested in a case for which no notice was

given by the police, which is mandatory under law for the sections under which he has been held.

"Zubair was called today by Special Cell, Delhi for investigation in a 2020 case for which he already had a protection against arrest from High Court. However, today at around 6.45 pm, we were told he has been arrested in some other FIR for which no notice was given which is mandatory under law for the section under which he has been arrested.

"Nor FIR copy is being given to us despite repeated requests," Sinha said in a statement posted on Twitter.

In another tweet, he alleged that after the medical examination, Zubair was being taken to an undisclosed location.

"...Neither Zubair's lawyers or I are being told where. We are in the police van with him. No police person is wearing any name tag," Sinha alleged.

Police in a statement said Zubair was "evasive" on their questions and neither provided the "necessary technical equipment" for the purpose of the investigation nor cooperated in the case.

"During investigation, the conduct of Mohammed Zubair was found questionable, which

warranted his custodial interrogation to unravel the conspiracy in this matter. Accordingly, he has been arrested," the statement said, adding that he will be produced in a court here.

According to the officials, Zubair's tweets were getting re-tweeted and it appeared that there was a brigade of social media entities who indulged in hate mongering, thereby leading to a possible ramification on communal harmony and which was against the maintenance of public tranquillity.

On Monday, Zubair joined the probe in a case registered against him in connection with another tweet in 2020. During the investigation of the case, the Delhi Police had given a status report, in which that tweet was not found to be objectionable.

But his subsequent tweets were found to be questionable and derogatory, the police said, adding that in the investigation of FIR number 194/20, Zubair was examined earlier and the probe is about to be concluded.

"In June 2022, when Delhi Police was alerted by a Twitter handle that Mohammad Zubair had made an objectionable tweet earlier and his followers/social media entities had

amplified and created a series of debates/hate mongering in the thread, he was examined in the case registered earlier this month and his role was found objectionable," the statement said.

Opposition leaders slammed the Centre over Zubair's arrest.

"Every person exposing BJP's hate, bigotry and lies is a threat to them. Arresting one voice of truth will only give rise to a thousand more. Truth ALWAYS triumphs over tyranny. #DaroMat," Gandhi said in a tweet.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien also condemned the journalist's arrest.

"Strongly condemn the arrest of one of the world's finest journalists @zoo_bear who exposes the BJP's #FakeNews factory every single day. PM @narendramodi and @AmitShah for all the power you wield, you are essentially COWARDS," the Rajya Sabha MP wrote on Twitter.

TMC's Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra, in a tweet, said: "Delhi Police bending over backwards to please sahibs and thumb nose at law. @zoo_bear arrested on trumped up case w/o notice while assisting in case where HC given him protection.

Twitter doc shows govt requests for blocking tweets of some advocacy groups, politicians

Agenceis

New Delhi: Social network Twitter was asked by the government to block multiple accounts and some tweets from advocacy group Freedom House, journalists, politicians, and supporters of farmers' protest last year, according to a document filed by the platform on June 26.

The requests from the government were sent between January 5, 2021, and December 29, 2021, according to the document filed with Lumen database.

Leading internet companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter file information with Lumen database about web-links or accounts that they have been asked to block by any entity under applicable laws.

However, details about whether the request to block a link or account was fulfilled are not available on the database.

According to the document filed by Twitter, the social network was asked by the government to block tweets of international advocacy group

Freedom House which conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights including freedom of speech and expression on the internet across the world.

An e-mail query sent to the Ministry of Electronics and IT did not elicit any reply.

According to the document, the government had asked Twitter to block a few tweets from Freedom House which talked about the state of internet freedom in 2020 and noted its sharp decline in India.

The document showed that the government requested to block tweets belonging to members of India National Congress and Aam Aadmi Party, including MLA Jarnail Singh.

The government had also requested Twitter to block the account of Kisan Ekta Morcha.

A random check showed that most of the tweets and Twitter accounts that were requested to be blocked were accessible to users.

In a statement released on Monday, the umbrella body of farmers' unions, Samyukta

Kisan Morcha (SKM), raised strong objections to the requests made by the government for blocking tweets of those who stood in its support.

"Samyukta Kisan Morcha strongly opposes and condemns the withholding Twitter accounts allied with the farm movement on the instructions of the Union Government. Twitter has withheld about a dozen Twitter accounts in India, including the Twitter handle @kisanektamorcha allied with the Farm Movement, without any warning," SKM said.

International group Committee to Protect Journalists condemned the government's move to block tweets of journalists-- Rana Ayyub and CJ Werleman.

"Twitter complying with the Indian government's directive to withhold journalist @RanaAyyub's tweet and block columnist @cjerleman's account in India are part of an unacceptable new trend of censorship on social media. This must stop! Journalists' voices are essential for a democracy," CPJ Asia tweeted.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Two Militants

Idrees Ahmad Dar resident of Kulpora, Kulgam.

As per police records, he said, both the killed militants were categorized and involved in several cases including attacks on Police/security forces and "civilian atrocities including killing of PRIs".

Zubair, the spokesperson said was active since Aug-2021 and was trying to revive the militant folds by recruiting & motivating the gullible youth including Idrees Ahmad to join "terror folds".

"Incriminating materials, arms & ammunition have been recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation," he said.

"In this regard, a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated. People are requested to cooperate with Police till the area at encounter site is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any," he added.

According to the spokesperson, IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar termed this operation an important as encounter site is very close to highway on the yatra route and LeT (TRF) has been issuing threats to yatra.

Pak Intruder Killed

towards the fence", he said. BSF troops fired three rounds at the intruder, the spokesman said, adding his body was found close to the fence.

The body was handed over to the police.

Forces On Alert

of enthusiasm in the people of Jammu region and in Kashmir too this year and I see the local people are also ready to welcome the visiting pilgrims," the LG said.

"The security forces are alert and have made adequate arrangements for the smooth conduct of Yatra, besides it has been our endeavor to make the best arrangements this year," he added.

Earlier, the spokesperson said that the LG reviewed arrangements for the annual pilgrimage taking place nearly after three years.

The LG, he said, directed the concerned officials to ensure health facilities, adequate number of Doctors, nursing staff, sanitation staff, and duty officers on the Yatra routes.

Sinha, he said, also called for collective efforts of all stakeholders and inter-departmental synergy to ensure best in class arrangements and smooth conduct of yatra.

As per the spokesperson, the LG was briefed by concerned officers regarding the facilities along the yatra route, besides the arrangements in regard to water, power supply, sewage disposal, food and RFID counters at the yatri Niwas.

The yatra will commence on the Baltal and Chandanwari routes simultaneously from June 30.

Yatra All Set

also made a provision of online darshan for those who cannot physically undertake the yatra.

"For the devotees who can not come for the Yatra, they can avail facility of online darshan, pooja, havan and prasad," an official of the SASB said.

At Baltal base camp, a 70-bed fully-equipped DRDO hospital had been set up for quality healthcare services to the pilgrims.

The hospital, funded by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, will have X-ray and ultrasound facilities, general

and oxygenated wards, OPD, ICU, pharmacy and a laboratory.

The health department of the Union territory also has made special arrangements for providing healthcare facilities to the pilgrims.

They have stationed 109 Basic Life Support ambulances and 26 Advance Life Support critical care ambulances have at 55 locations en route Baltal and Chandanwari routes from Qazigund for the pilgrims.

During a recent visit to the twin base camps, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said this year special focus is on cleanliness and the board aims for a "Swachh Amarnath Yatra".

"We have made provision of toilets all along the routes. We are very serious about the overall cleanliness. Swachh Bharat is not just a slogan but a commitment announced by the Prime Minister," he said.

The security along both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes has been beefed up with new security pickets being established to ensure that the subversive elements are not able to disrupt the pilgrimage, the official said.

To ensure only bona-fide pilgrims are present at the yatra, the SASB has asked all intending pilgrims to carry Aadhar cards or any other biometric verified document with them.

The Yatra is scheduled to begin on June 30 and culminate on August 11, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan.

This year the pilgrimage is expected to see higher than usual attendance of pilgrims as the Yatra is resuming after a gap of three years.

In 2019, the Yatra was cancelled midway due to the Centre's plan for abrogation of Article 370, the pilgrimage did not take place in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (PTI)

Religious Leaders

to the overall development of the entire Jammu and Kashmir.

"The religious luminaries on the occasion committed that they will provide all possible support to the government of J&K for a successful and peaceful yatra this year," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Muzaffar highlighted the role of civil society in establishing a harmonised society.

Malik Mohammed Jameel, an eminent Islamic scholar, according to the spokesperson, highlighted the important role of the religious leaders in creating amity and how they can be ambassadors of goodwill and foster understanding.

Jameel, he said, stressed the importance of such initiatives that can serve as a meeting ground of diverse views and can further foster communal harmony.

According to the spokesperson, Abdul Latief Bukhari, Mirwaiz Central Kashmir while speaking on the occasion stressed on more and more participation of religious leaders to dispel mistrust amongst communities.

The Mirwaiz Central Kashmir, he said, pointed out that the religious leaders in present times are not doing their best to be an instrument of change.

"Further, he assured the gathering that in coming months the religious leaders will be pro active in educating empathy, harmony, and understanding through sermons in their respective areas in J&K," he added.

Mufti Nasir Ahmad, a leading seminary of Kashmir valley, spoke on the challenges in the way of any change, the spokesperson said.

"He observed that one is bound to

face obstacles and difficulties in the way of any fruitful change or initiative. All such obstacles can be overcome with conviction and aiming for greater good. Good coordination, consistent amicable efforts do bear results," Ahmad added.

According to the spokesperson, Master Ghulam Nabi Gani and Raja Muneeb, in their address, called upon all Kashmiris to welcome Amarnath yatris.

"He said that it's our duty to cooperate for a peaceful yatra and a chance to extend our hospitality, for which Kashmir is known for. Every yatri should carry a message of peace and harmony from this holy land," he said.

The spokesperson further said that the participants of this unique conference have brought forward the importance of people's power.

"They urged the government to facilitate and expand the space for the Civil society to play its role and come forward to dispel any mistrust or disharmony,"

IGP Chairs High

the concept of joint responsibility & accountability and coordination for the safe, secure and smooth Yatra.

"IGP Kashmir highlighted the eminent threat from terrorists and stressed for strengthening of the intelligence grid so as to neutralise them. He also discussed the other threat perceptions for Yatra as well as tourists and emphasized for establishment of a proper security grid," he said.

While taking district-wise security review and stock of arrangements put in place for the yatra, Kumar, he said, also elaborated the role and responsibility of all the four districts of South Kashmir which were represented by the concerned District SsPs.

On the occasion, the spokesperson said that the senior officers of Army/Security Forces also presented detailed presentation and shared their valuable inputs/suggestions for strengthening the overall security grid and providing fool proof security cover to the yatris during their forward & return journey. "Special attention was laid on regular briefing and de-briefing, cut-off timings, elimination of threat of sticky bombs/IEDs/grenade lobbing & drone attacks, security of parking areas, traffic management, ROP, implementation of SOPs etc," he added.

On the conclusion, the spokesperson said that IGP Kashmir emphasized that multiple checking points must be established for restricting un-registered yatris to reach to base camp to avoid chaotic situations.

Kumar, he said, also directed that all stakeholders be taken into confidence by creating synergy and cordial relations with them so as to achieve objective of conducting successful Yatra.

"He also emphasized on the role of supervisory officers for ensuring briefing and de-briefing, strengthening of the intelligence grid on ground, alertness of deployed nafri, intensified legal action on OGWs and following all the SOPs in letter and spirit," the spokesperson said.

He further said that IGP Kashmir also stressed on better coordination, cooperation and cohesive efforts between all the different agencies on ground including Army, CRPF, BSF, ITBP, Civil Administration and Police for safe, secure & smooth yatra.

Sacrificial Animals

and Merino Cross varieties of Sheep have been fixed at Rs 310 per kg, those of Bakerwal and Kashmiri varieties at

Rs 295 per kg and for goat has been fixed at Rs 285 per kg.

Top Doctor Sounds

he explained.

He further said modeling studies from credible institutes like the IHME, University of Washington do not predict any fresh COVID wave in the immediate future for the region of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. However, exercising caution is clearly beneficial so that we avoid any upsurge in the cases.

"The positivity rate among the tested samples is not high and the authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation. Since there are areas globally as also in the country, where sporadic increase of cases is reported, it would be prudent to stay alert without any panic. We need not be complacent but at the same time, panic should not creep in", he further said.

Slight Uptick In Cases

officials said, Srinagar detected 16 and Baramulla four new cases of Covid-19 while the other eight districts remained Corona free. In the winter capital, they said, Jammu reported a maximum of 40 new cases, Udhampur, Kishtwar and Poonch two each and a single new case from Kathua district.

"Moreover, 29 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 19 from Jammu division and 10 from Kashmir division," the officials said.

Also, they said that no new Covid-19 related fatality was reported in J&K during the last 24 hours. So far, 4756 persons--2331 in Jammu and 2425 in Kashmir--have died due to the virus.

SC Asks J&K HC

bench order was that I would be handed over the body and I will be taking that to my own graveyard. That portion of the order I am not pressing anymore.

Because, I am prepared to go the graveyard where he is buried and remains will be exhumed and re-entered and I will perform the religious rites myself there only..., the senior lawyer said, adding that there were judge-benches which say that the right to perform last rites lies with the family members.

The bench said that as the matter was listed for hearing before the high court on Tuesday, it will request the court to hear and decide the plea of Mohammad Latief Magrey either tomorrow or within a week thereafter.

The counsel for the petitioner, at the outset, states that he does not want to press for the first relief granted by the High Court for exhumation and handing over of the body remains of his deceased son...He, however, wants to perform the last rites as per the religious practices at the... graveyard where his son was buried, the bench noted in its order.

The bench disposed of the appeal without expressing any opinion on the merits and asked the high court to permit the counsel to appear through video conferencing mode.

Earlier on June 24, another vacation bench had agreed to hear the plea seeking exhumation of the body for performing the last rites by the family.

Grover had said that a single-judge bench of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court had allowed the exhuming of his son's body but it was later stayed by a division bench.

He had said that his client has supported the Army all through his life, and the only need to exhume the body

was to perform the last rites of his son Aamir Magrey, who was killed along with three others in the "encounter".

On June 3, a division bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh stayed the single bench order for exhuming the body of Aamir Magrey and handing it to his family for last rites.

On May 27, the single judge bench had directed the Jammu and Kashmir authorities to make arrangements for exhuming the remains of the deceased from the Wadder Payeen graveyard in the presence of Latief Magrey.

The high court, however, had said if the body is "highly putrefied and is not in deliverable state or is likely to pose risk to public health and hygiene, the petitioner and his close relatives shall be allowed to perform last rites as per their tradition and religious beliefs in the graveyard itself".

In that situation, the state shall pay petitioner Mohammad Latief Magrey a compensation of Rs five lakh for deprivation of his right to have the dead body of his son and give him a decent burial as per the family traditions, religious obligations, and faith which the deceased professed when he was alive, the single judge bench order had said.

Bodies of two more civilians, Altaf Ahmad Bhat and Dr. Mudasar Gul, who was killed in the Hyderabad controversial encounter, were exhumed and returned to the families following an outcry days after the gunfight.

Four people were killed in the alleged encounter on the outskirts of Srinagar on November 15, 2021.

While the police said all of them were militants and buried their bodies in Kupwara in North Kashmir, the families of the victims said that they were innocent civilians.

Rising Mercury

of May, with the arrival of summer. But this year, due to the excessive heat and the lack of rainfall, there is a high probability that the hibernation period (known as brumation) of the snakes was shorter, forcing them to come out of their burrows earlier."

The report says, since snakes are ectothermic animals (cannot regulate their internal body temperature), they do not come to the surface during the colder months of March and April. They remain underground to keep themselves warm, and only surface in summers for natural sunlight and heat.

Kashmir usually experiences rainfall in the months of March and April, followed by summer in May and June. But human-induced climate change resulted in a quick switch from winter to summer this year.

Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder and CEO, Wildlife SOS said, "Our team has conducted numerous awareness drives to educate people about the causes of increased snake sightings due to factors like climate change and rapid urbanisation. Because of these efforts, there has been a palpable shift in people's attitude towards snakes and other wildlife."

The month of May also saw a considerable rise in snake sightings with a total of 24 snake rescues, which kept our rescue team busy.

A nearly six-foot-long Himalayan Trinket Snake got injured in a conflict situation in the Zabarwan Forest Range area of Jammu and Kashmir when the reptile was spotted.

"A few people attempted to chase it away using either a stick or a sharp object, which injured the snake on its neck," Mir said. The snake's injuries were treated with topical medication

and once found fit, it was safely released back into the wild.

In some rare cases, the NGO said it also encounters snake species like the common Sand Boa which is not native.

"It was suspected to have boarded a transport or goods carrier truck coming from another state," it adds.

3 J&K Photojournalists

2022 awards, which were announced in May this year, will be recognized at a separate ceremony in October.

The highly acclaimed Pulitzer Prize was established in 1917 by provisions in the will of newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer. It is administered by Columbia University and is considered to be the most prestigious award in the field of Journalism. These awards recognise journalists who are at the frontlines of blatant challenges and are intrepid in their commitment to reporting.

The three J&K based photojournalists are currently associated with the American news agency, Associated Press.

"Snaking around roadblocks, sometimes taking cover in strangers' homes and hiding cameras in vegetable bags, the three photographers captured images of protests, police and paramilitary action and daily life -- and then headed to an airport to persuade travellers to carry the photo files out with them and get them to the AP's office in New Delhi," Associated Press had said in 2020 after the three lensman won the Pulitzer Prizes.

Notably, Dar Yasin and Mukhtar Khan were first Kashmiri journalists who were bestowed with the prestigious award. In May, Sanna Irshad Mattoo, a Kashmir based photojournalist currently associated with Reuters, became the third Kashmiri journalist to have won the Pulitzer Prize.

One of the winners Mukhtar Khan who started his career with the Kashmir Observer and later joined AP in early 2000 has covered Kashmir conflict extensively. Besides Khan, Dar Yasin South has also covered the Kashmir situation besides the 2005 devastating earthquake and its aftermath.

The photographs for which the three AP photojournalists were awarded Pulitzer were termed as "Striking Images of Life" by the Pulitzer jury. Jointly the honour carries US \$15000.

Besides the three honoured lensmen, among those who rejoiced in the award were members of Kashmir's media fraternity who flared up the exhilarating moment with their congratulatory messages.

Militant Arrested

of Koti Doda, the official said, adding that he was tasked to target J&K Police personnel in Doda district. (PTI)

Train Crushes

medico-legal formalities.

A police official in the meantime also confirmed the incident to a local news agency GNS.

Teenager's Body

police and locals assisted by army's 21 RR started a rescue operation at the site. However, no trace of the drowned boy was found till late Sunday evening.

A team of SDRF joined the rescue operation Monday morning, leading to the retrieval of the body.

Man Killed In

shifted to SDH Kokernag for medico-legal formalities following which it would be handed over to the family for last rites", they further said.

Apex Body In Ladakh Reiterate Four-Point Demand

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Apex Body of various political, social and religious organizations of the Union Territory of Ladakh on Monday reiterated their pledge to continue their struggle on the four-point demand.

On Monday, the Apex Body convened an important meeting which was chaired by former Member Parliament Thupstan Chhewang and attended by former J&K minister Tsering Dorjee Lakrook, President Anjuman Imamia, Anjuman Moin-ul-Islam and Christian community, Former President Ladakh Gonpa Association, Women Representative, Panchayat Coordination Committee Leh, Representative of District Congress Committee Leh and Am Admi Party Leh, be-

sides Students' Union, a spokesperson said.

In this meeting, he said, Chhewang, briefed the participants about his recent meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah on June 13 in New Delhi.

"The Apex body in today's meeting decided to stand firm and continue to struggle on the four-point demand," the spokesperson said.

Regarding these objectives, he said, the Apex Body Leh is scheduled to meet Kargil Democratic Alliance KDA soon to further strengthen the movement for the interest of the people of Ladakh.

"The members of the Apex Body proposed a Youth Wing of the Apex body and to be constituted soon to expedite the movement based on the objectives of the Apex Body," he added.

Govt Formally Winds Up S&OS Department

Staff To Be Deployed To Other Departments

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday formally wound up of Department of Stationery & Office Supplies, J&K.

The decision was taken administrative council meeting on June 8.

"Sanction is hereby accorded to the closure/winding-up of Jammu and Kashmir, Department of Stationery and Office Supplies, J&K," reads a government order.

The employees of the wind-up department shall be deployed to the Government Departments as per need and shall

be governed by their existing rules and regulations till their retirement from service, it said.

"All fixed and movable assets of the wind-up Department at Jammu/Kashmir shall be utilized by other Government Departments depending upon their requirement," it said, adding, "The liabilities, if any, pending against the Department, shall be referred to ARI & Trainings Department for clearance out of Government Accounts after thorough Verification."

Also the official records shall be handed over to the ARI & Trainings Department for future correspondence and record, the order added. (GNS)

DGPC Election- 2022 Conducted Smoothly In Kashmir Division

63 Elected Unopposed, Elections Contested In 16 Constituencies, 49.58 Percent Voter Turnover Recorded



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The elections for District Gurudwara Prabandhak Committees (DGPC) 2022 were successfully and peacefully held on Monday amid sufficient security across 16 constituencies in Srinagar, Baramulla and Pulwama districts of Kashmir Division for which 34 Polling Stations were established.

Out of 40 Candidates in fray 12 candidates were contesting for six Constituencies in Srinagar District, 23 Candidates were contesting for eight Constituencies of Baramulla District and 05 Candidates were contesting for two constituencies of Pulwama District.

The polling commenced from 7:00 AM till 1:00 PM at 34 Polling Stations in these 03 Districts. The total number of eligible electors registered for these sixteen constituencies was 12701. The total number of votes polled during the prescribed time were 6297 with a voting percentage of 49.58%.

The counting of votes was held from 2:00 PM onwards and the results of 16 candidates were declared soon after the counting was finished.

Pertinent to mention here, that there are 80 DGPC Constituencies in Kashmir Division 11 constituencies each for District

Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla, Kupwara, Anantnag, Kulgam and Pulwama, and 02 Constituencies for Shopian District.

Out of these 80 DGPC Constituencies, candidates of 63 constituencies were elected unopposed which include each 11 candidates of District Budgam, Kupwara, Anantnag, Kulgam and 02 of District Shopian, 05 candidates of Srinagar, 03 Candidates of Baramulla and 09 candidates of Pulwama District. Further in Bandipora no nomination paper has been received for one DGPC constituency of the District and in District Ganderbal no DGPC Constituency therefore elections were not held in these two districts.

The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir who is the Nodal Officer and under whose supervision these elections were held expressed satisfaction on the free and fair, peaceful, transparent and smooth conduct of the elections. He congratulated the winning candidates and hoped that the elected candidates will work for the betterment of respective electorates for next five years. The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir also thanked the respective Deputy Commissioners, District Election Authorities, Security Agencies and all the officials involved in the smooth conduct of these elections.

LG Calls For Prompt Action In Complaints From People



Says First Step Towards Good Governance Is Listening To People, Resolving Their Grievances

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday interacted with 20 complainants from across the UT and addressed their grievances during "LG's Mulaqaat"- Live Public Grievance Hearing programme, at the Civil Secretariat.

First step towards good governance is listening to people and resolving their grievances expeditiously. There is a visible improvement in performance of departments and level of public satisfaction, said the Lt Governor.

A proactive and citizen-friendly administrative system has made life easier for common man. Direct communication and speed & scale of governmental intervention to resolve daily issues faced by the

masses, is providing a strong boost to public service delivery, observed the Lt Governor.

In today's LG Mulaqaat program, with the intervention of Lt Governor, various issues of the applicants got resolved on the spot.

The Lt Governor passed explicit directions to all Deputy Commissioners and concerned officials to maintain promptness in grievance redressal mechanism by ensuring that requests and complaints from people are responded to within a reasonable timeframe.

Zahoor Ahmad Khan from Budgam expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor-led UT Administration for taking appropriate action for quick redressal of his grievance.

One Shaikh Mudasar from Pulwama projected the issue of cleanliness of the freshwater stream - Laeth Khul, upon which the Lt Governor directed the concerned Deputy Commissioner to involve Civil Society and PRI members and mobilize the local people in keeping the water stream clean.

On the issue of illegal soil extraction in the Kishan Ganga River, the Deputy Commis-

sioner Bandipora informed the chair that appropriate action has been taken in this regard.

Mohammad Ayaz Khan of Poonch drew the attention of authorities pertaining to delay in installation of hand pumps. The Lt Governor passed directions to the Deputy Commissioner Poonch and Jal Shakti department to expedite the work.

Redressing the grievance of Mustafa from Doda regarding dysfunctional irrigation canal Pranu Khul, the Lt Governor directed the Administrative Secretary Irrigation and Flood Control Department to complete the work on making the canal functional in the shortest possible time.

On the issue projected by Balwant Singh of Reasi regarding non availability of Government Transport Facility in his locality, the chair was informed that necessary measures have been taken to address the issue.

Ms. Rehana Batul, Commissioner/Secretary, Public Grievances moderated today's program of LG's Mulaqaat and informed the chair about the progress and status of grievances received.

All J&K Colleges To Introduce Skill Courses This Year: Kansal

'Student Feedback, Biometric Attendance To Be Introduced, Research To Be Facilitated'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Principal Secretary Higher Education Department (HED), Rohit Kansal said on Monday that all colleges in J&K will introduce a 30 credit voluntary skill certification programme this year.

"This will be in addition to the curriculum prescribed by the UGC for the undergraduate programme and the aim to this will be to give the students an additional skill certification leading to their higher employability. In addition several other innovative and reformative steps such as a uniform academic calendar, fidelity of the time table and exam schedule, student and institutional feedback, ERP support and biometric attendance will be introduced from this year onwards," he said.

He made these remarks while speaking at the two-day Conference on 'NEP-2020: Preparedness & Implementation' here at Lalla Arifa Auditorium of Govt. College for Women, MA Road. The conference is jointly being organised by four city colleges, viz. Amar Singh College, S P College, Islamia College of Science and Commerce and Women's College MA Road.

Terming the NEP 2020 as a revolutionary policy, he said that the policy promises to change the entire higher educational ecosystem in India and its focus on flexibility, multidisciplinary and equity are unique and unprecedented. He reiterated that NEP 2020 had come into being after extensive stakeholder consultations and discussions, deliberations and



suggestions from all concerned.

"Now it is time to implement the package. And when it comes to the implementation of policy, all of us have a role to play. Universities have a very important role being norm setting institutions and the guardians of our academic standards; but in the actual implementation at the ground level the colleges will have to lead the way," Kansal said while addressing the inaugural session of the conference.

During his address, Vice Chancellor Cluster University, Prof Qayoom Hussain talked about the importance of NEP 2020 and the preparedness of the University in drafting the syllabus and all related activities.

While speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir, Prof Neelofer Khan expressed confidence that the NEP 2020 would be fully implemented across all the educational institutions of J&K. She outlined the efforts of the University of Kashmir in this direction and promised all support to the Higher Educational Institutions in the implementation of the policy.

Director Colleges J&K, Dr Yasmeen Ashraf gave a brief about the conference and said that the conference would help in effective and wide consultations

with stakeholders and academicians and will set a roadmap for better implementation of NEP 2020.

Principal Government Women's College Srinagar, Prof (Dr) Ruhi Jan Kanth gave a brief overview of NEP 2020 and said the policy envisages multidisciplinary and holistic education with creative and logical thinking coupled with extension of technology.

She said that the deliberations of the conference would be used to roll out NEP's implementation in the Union Territory of J&K.

On the first day of the two day conference, a technical session on 'Multidisciplinary & Holistic Education' was also held which was chaired by VC University of Kashmir, Prof Neelofer Khan. A total of 4 technical sessions will be held during the course of the conference wherein eminent academicians and administrators will participate in panel discussions to deliberate on the different aspects related to the implementation of NEP-2020. The Sessions will be chaired by Vice Chancellors of several Universities.

The conference was attended by eminent academicians, VCs of various universities, Principals of different colleges of Kashmir, faculty members and others.

Cong Hold Protests Demanding Roll-Back Of Agnipath Scheme

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Congress here on Monday held protests against Agnipath military recruitment scheme, demanding the central government to roll-back it immediately and stop "playing with the future" of the youth.

The Congress leaders and activists observed a "peaceful Satyagraha" in all assembly constituencies across the country on Monday to demand a withdrawal of the new scheme.

They blamed the BJP-led central government for deceiving the youth while claiming the new military recruitment scheme has lowered the prestige of the armed forces too.

Led by J&K Congress chief and former minister Gulam Ahmed Mir, hundreds of party workers, including dozen former ministers and legislators sat on the protest dharna in Tawi Bridge area here.

Carrying placard in support of policy's roll-back, the protestors raised anti-government slogans.

They opposed "dictatorial policies of BJP" besides highlighting

other anti-youth, anti-farmers and anti-labour policies of the saffron party and the J&K administration, a senior Congress leader said.

"We have held Satyagraha here to stand by the youth of this country and in support of the immediate roll-back of the policy", Mir told reporters here.

He said the youth of this country has been "deceived by the BJP-led central government."

Congress held anti-Agnipath protests in various districts and towns of Jammu and Kashmir.

Congress spokesperson Ravinder Sharma, who led another protest in Sunderbani, lashed out at the BJP for "its failures on all fronts especially in giving employment and controlling prices".

The BJP had promised two crore jobs annually and one rank one pension but it betrayed the youth, and imposed huge taxes on common man, he alleged.

He opposed heavy taxes and power tariff hike in rural India amidst "unprecedented price rise."

He asked the people to oppose the wrong policies of the government.

Stranded Vehicles Cleared On Mughal Road After 21 Hours

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Mughal road, connecting Poonch and Rajouri districts with Shopian district, reopened on Monday for stranded traffic after remaining closed for 21 hours.

The road was closed after a massive landslide occurred at Dougrian towards Poonch side in the afternoon, leading to the closure of the thoroughfare.

A police officer confirmed to a local news agency GNS that stranded traffic vehicles were cleared only. However, the officer said, fresh rains have started in the area and decision regarding allowing the traffic would be taken by the authorities after accessing the situation. "People are requested not to undertake journey unless confirming the status of the road," he said.

CPI (M) Calls For Release Of Teesta, Others

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Monday called for release of activist Teesta Setalvad and others and demanded withdrawal of cases filed against them.

In a statement issued here, the CPI (M) spokesperson said that Teesta's arrest is an ominous threat to all democratic minded citizens not to dare to question the role of the State or the government under whose regime "communal violence" takes place.

"This is abhorrent to democratic rights of citizens," he said.

"However, the action of the Gujarat administration in her arrest has been enabled by the questionable verdict of the three member Bench of the Supreme Court which has made the complainant into the accused and ordering "all those involved in such abuse of process need to be in the dock and proceeded with in accordance with the law," he added.

The spokesperson said that her arrest means any SIT established by the Court is to be considered outside the purview of judicial appeals and if anyone appeals against it, as did Zakia Jaffri and Teesta Setalvad in the present case, then they are charged with "abuse of process." A fight for justice for 16 years is described in unusual derogatory terms as keeping the "pot boiling for ulterior design".

"It should be noted that the Court appointed amicus curiae in the SIT case, while agreeing with many recommendations of the SIT, had also recorded that certain sections of the IPC causing hatred among communities should be considered. Earlier in April 2004, it was the Supreme Court itself which had described the then Government leaders as "modern day Nerors," he added.

The spokesperson further said that the present verdict does not address any of these issues and instead punishes those who like Teesta believe in the judicial system.

"It is a fit case for a curative petition," the CPI (M) spokesperson said, while demanding the withdrawal of cases and release of Teesta Setalvad, Sreekumar and others.

Farooq Writes To LG, Seeks Compensation For Fire Victims Of Poonch

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National President and Member of Parliament from Srinagar Dr Farooq Abdullah on Monday expressed profound grief over the nocturnal fire incident that rendered a number of families homeless at Gagrian Wazli Swajan, an area of Mandi in Poonch district.

In this regard the party President wrote a letter to LG Manoj Sinha seeking an adequate compensation package for the fire victims.

Asking the LG to reach out to the victim families, Dr Farooq said, "The devastating fire has completely smothered lifelong saving, valuable household items, belongings and edibles of the victims. Affected families have been

left with nothing. It is therefore imperative for the government to reach out to them. It is expected that the administration will lose no time to reach out to the affected with necessary relief and compensation."

He further said that there was no way the affected families could manage the reconstruction of their houses on their own.

"I hope the administration will lend support to the affected in reconstructing their dwellings under various rural flagship schemes including Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana. Administration should also give free firewood, ration, and other household merchandise to the affected for at least six months. Required permission for rebuilding gutted structures should also be provided forthwith," he added.

J&K Inks Pact For Capacity Building Of IT Infrastructure, e-Services

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Government of UT of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Indian Institute of Technology, Jammu to jointly work on the capacity building of IT infrastructure & e-Services.

The MOU was signed between Prema Puri, Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Information Technology Department, and Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director IIT Jammu in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, at the Raj Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor said that the collabora-



tion will create center of expertise and excellence towards design, development of projects related to software services, cyber-security, capacity building for cyber compliances and IT policies.

The agreement will also pave the way for developing and

organizing hackathons for talent hunt, besides incubation of startups in the UT, he added.

Highlighting the areas of collaboration through the MOU, the Lt Governor stressed on adopting cutting-edge technology for Cyber Security Solutions to provide security to all the Digital

Assets of the Government.

He said the biggest goal of this MoU is to improve the effectiveness of the governance with prime objective to make services face-less, paper-less, easy, effective and efficient.

Many initiatives have been undertaken by the government for revolutionizing the public service delivery and improving responsiveness and accountability of department, he further added.

Citing the example of "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" Land Records Information System (LRIS) for establishing a transparent system by facilitating easy online access to the individual Land Records by citizens thereby

curbing corruption, the Lt Governor suggested for going a step ahead and exploring the possibility of a new platform based on Block-chain technology to keep the land data records absolutely safe and temper-proof.

The Lt Governor also highlighted the need for transition of government websites to user friendly mobile versions owing to universal mobile usage. The Lt Governor suggested collaborative efforts to develop community monitoring tool for school education and higher education departments to objectively monitor the quality of education in schools and colleges across the UT.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I Farooq Ahmad Sheikh intend to change the name of my son from Mujasam Farooq Sheikh to Mohsin Ahmed Sheikh, DOB 17-01-2014, Mother's Name Aaliya R/o Bemina Umer Colony Srinagar. In this regard if anybody have any objection he/she may file the same with Registrar Births and Deaths, SMC Srinagar within 7 days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

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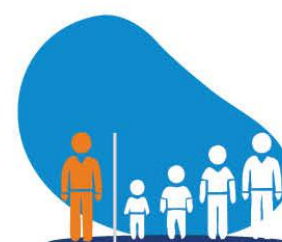
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