

25th year OF PUBLICATION

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Marriage Assistance Scheme

Rs 37.15 Cr Provided To Poor Girls In J&K Last Year: LG

Says Central Act For Welfare Of Senior Citizen Implemented Post August 2019

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Territory administration has provided financial assistance to the tune of Rs 37.15 crore to over 9000 poor girls in Jammu and Kashmir for marriage, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Friday.

Sinha made these remarks while inaugurating free artificial limbs & calipers distribution camp at SKUAST, Jammu to mark birth centenary celebrations of late Dr Uttam Chand Shastri, an official spokesperson said Friday.

"Earlier, financial assistance for marriage of poor girls were provided to 100-200 beneficiaries, but we have covered 9309 such beneficiaries in one year with overall financial assistance of Rs 37.15 crore," Sinha said.

The LG also stated that the administration is making dedicated efforts to bridge the gap between the aspirations of the citizens and the administrative



delivery for the development of an inclusive society in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sinha, according to the spokesperson said, that there was no integrated system for physically and mentally challenged people and now Divyangjan in J&K have been brought under the ambit of Pension Scheme.

"For the first time, Jammu and Kashmir has been linked with the National Trust Portal so that they are given all the facilities and rights

granted to them by the Central Government," Sinha said.

"Our objective is to achieve 100% saturation of schemes for Divyangjan, women, senior citizens in the current financial year," he added.

According to the spokesperson, the LG further said that the social welfare department is implementing a comprehensive plan to reach out to the beneficiaries and a special enrolment campaign was launched.

Sinha, he said, also asserted that with the dedicated efforts, the number of beneficiaries receiving the pension benefits has doubled.

"The Central Government Act for the welfare of the senior citizen which was not applicable in J&K prior to August 2019 has been implemented. Elderline helpline is meeting their needs and geriatric wards have also been started for the care of the elderly in all the district hospitals," the LG said.

"There has been an increase of 206% in the scholarship to the children of poor families as compared to 2018-19. Till 2018, only 9500 girl children got the benefit of Ladli Beti Scheme. In three years, more than 1 lakh girl children **More on P6**

Maharaja's Birth Anniversary

'Decision Of Holiday Taken To Respect Sentiments Of Locals'

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that the decision to declare the birthday of Maharaja Hari Singh as a public holiday was taken respecting the sentiments of the local people.

"Respecting the sentiments of the local people, this decision has been taken in view of the contributions of late Maharaja Hari Singh. I expect the official orders to be issued in a few days," the LG Gov said. Jammu and Kashmir will have a public holiday on late Maharaja Hari Singh's birth anniversary, said the **More on P6**



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Humans Evolved With Their Microbiomes Like Genes, Your Gut Microbes Pass From One Generation To The Next

The Conversation

When the first humans moved out of Africa, they carried their gut microbes with them. Turns out, these microbes also evolved along with them.

The human gut microbiome is made up of hundreds to thousands of species of bacteria and archaea. Within a given species of microbe, different strains carry different genes that can affect your health and the diseases you're susceptible to.

There is pronounced variation in the microbial composition and diversity of the gut microbiome between people living in different countries around the world. Although researchers are starting to understand what factors affect microbiome composition, such as diet, there is still limited understanding on why different groups have different strains of the same species of microbes in their guts.

We are researchers who study microbial evolution and microbiomes. Our recently published study found that not only did microbes diversify with their early modern human hosts as they traveled across the globe, they followed human evolution by restricting themselves to life in the gut.

Microbes share evolutionary history with humans

We hypothesized that as humans fanned out across the globe and diversified genetically, so did the microbial species in their guts. In other words, gut microbes and their human hosts codiversified and evolved together just as human beings diversified so that people in Asia look different from people in Europe, so too did their microbiomes.

To assess this, we needed to pair human genome and microbiome data from people around



the world. However, data sets that provided both the microbiome data and genome information for individuals were limited when we started this study. Most publicly available data was from North America and Western Europe, and we needed data that was more representative of populations around the world. So our research team used existing data from Cameroon, South Korea and the United Kingdom, and additionally recruited mothers and their young children in Gabon, Vietnam and Germany. We collected saliva samples from the adults to ascertain their genotype, or genetic characteristics, and fecal samples to sequence the genomes of their gut microbes.

For our analysis, we used data from 839 adults and 386 children. To assess the evolutionary histories of humans and gut microbes, we created phylogenetic trees for each person and as well as for 59 strains of the most commonly shared microbial species. When we compared the human trees to the microbial trees, we discovered a gradient of how well they matched. Some bacterial trees didn't match the

human trees at all, while some matched very well, indicating that these species codiversified with humans. Some microbial species, in fact, have been along for the evolutionary ride for over hundreds of thousands of years.

We also found that microbes that evolved in tandem with people have a unique set of genes and traits compared with microbes that had not codiversified with people. Microbes that partnered up with humans have smaller genomes and greater oxygen and temperature sensitivity, mostly unable to tolerate conditions below human body temperature. In contrast, gut microbes with weaker ties to human evolution have traits and genes characteristic of free-living bacteria in the external environment. This finding suggests that codiversified microbes are very much dependent on the environmental conditions of the human body and must be transmitted quickly from one person to the next, either passed down generationally or between people living in the same communities.

Confirming this mode of transmission, we found that mothers and their children had the same

strains of microbes in their guts. Microbes that were not codiversified, in contrast, were more likely to survive well outside of the body and may be transmitted more widely through water and soil.

Gut microbes and personalized medicine

Our discovery that gut microbes evolved right along with their human hosts offers another way to view the human gut microbiome. Gut microbes have passed between people over hundreds to thousands of generations, such that as humans changed, so did their gut microbes. As a result, some gut microbes behave as though they are part of the human genome: They are packages of genes that are passed between generations and shared by related individuals.

Personalized medicine and genetic testing are starting to make treatments more specific and effective for the individual. Knowing which microbes have had long-term partnerships with people may help researchers develop microbiome-based treatments specific to each population. Clinicians are already using locally sourced probiotics derived from the gut microbes of community members to treat malnutrition.

Our findings also help scientists better understand how microbes transition ecologically and evolutionarily from free-living in the environment to dependent on the conditions of the human gut. Codiversified microbes have traits and genes reminiscent of bacterial symbionts that live inside insect hosts. These shared features suggest that other animal hosts may also have gut microbes that codiversified with them over evolution.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ANANTNAG PWD(R&B) DIVISION KHANABAL

NIT NO 108 OF R&B/Khanabal/2022-23 /E-TENDERING/13586-95 DATED 13-09-2022

For and on behalf of theLt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K-e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works: -

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Position Of AA	Class of Contractor
1.	Raising of Ist Floor Over the Existing Complex at Sub-Stores Bijbehara, Anantnag.	67.46	1600	134920	150 Days	Capex Budget	Accorded Vide Govt Order No DGM/P&S/ 1st floor/ Bijbehara/2022/36/3241-49, Dated 20.07.2022	AAY Class Only

Project Authority: Directorate of Geology and Mining.

1. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms- and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S.No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	13-09-2022
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 14-09-2022 (09:00AM) To 26-09-2022 (04:30PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 14-09-2022 (09:00AM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 26-09-2022 (04:30PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	27-09-2022 (10:00AM)

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Khanabal.

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Khanabal [Tender Inviting Authority] (Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-65) Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Khanabal. (Tender receiving Authority).

3. All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/ Bid Security shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.

4. The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Khanabal (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period(DLP) of the work.Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor be forwarded to Higher Authorities for a period of 01 Year.

5. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @3% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

6. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Khanabal

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical Bid

8. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

b. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

c. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

e. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid.

f. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents including tender document fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid.

Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

9. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

10. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Khanabal (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date)and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Khanabal must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The Original Treasury Challan (Cost of Tender Document), EMD and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of the Contract.

11. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

12. Price escalation and taxes: The %age quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees, shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

13. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

14. All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

DIPK-10086/22

(ErQaziJaveed Amin)
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Khanabal

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RIGHT RIVER WORKS DIVISION

Regal lane Lal Chowk Srinagar

Email id: eerrwdsmc@gmail.com

SHORT TERM

NOTICE INVITING E- TENDER No. 23 of 2022-2023

Dated: 14.09.2022

NOTE: - 1. The Bidders who have not started the works allotted in their favour in Right River Works Division need not to apply for bidding. As per the directions they are debarrd from participating in bidding. Their Bid if they apply shall be deemed invalid.
2. Bidders should participate keeping in consideration their financial and physical capacity to execute the works as per the time schedule and in case of being successful for multiple works they will have to start/complete all allotted works simultaneously and failure at one place/work) shall be treated as failure at all other allotted places (Works).
3. The lowest quoted items to be executed in full. In case any deviations, the deductions as per the rates in vogue shall be implemented on the final comparative work done. For percentage tenders, variations in quantity if any shall be strictly as per financial code (PWD)

For and on behalf of the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Commissioner, e-tenders are invited on percentage basis (as per the J&K PWD Engineering Manual 2020) from approved registered eligible Civil Contractors/ Self Help Groups for the below mentioned works.

S.No	Name of the Work	Adv. cost in lacs	Cost of T/ Doc. in Rs	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of Completion	Head of Account	Class of contractor
1.	Renovation of community hall at Gassi Mohalla	49.86	2000	99720	4 months	CAPEX	AAY/ BEE
2.	Development of Sarwar-e-Azam Stadium at Umar colony Malabagh	133.46	3000	266920	6 months	CAPEX	AAY

Position of AAA: Order No 133 of 2022 dated 28.01.2022 and 774 of 2022 dated: 18.06.2022)

Technical Sanction: Order No. 18 of 2022 dated: 09.09.2022 and order No. 135-SSCL of 2022 dated: 09.09.2022

The NIT consists of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms and conditions of contract other details can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the date schedule given below.

S.No.	Particulars	Date from to
	Date of Issuance/ Publication of NIT online e-portal	14.09.2022
	Date of Downloading of bid documents for said NIT	14.09.2022 from 04:00 PM
	Date of uploading of bid document / bid submission starts	14.09.2022 from 05:00 PM
	Date of uploading of bid document/ bid submission Ends	26.09.2022 upto 06:00 PM
	Date of Bid opening	27.09.2022 at 11:00 AM
	Date of Submission of Uploaded documents (Hard Copies) by Successful Bidder including Bid Security (CDR/FDR) fresh dated and all other relevant documents (GST clearance, Bank Receipt/ Registration duly renewed etc.	28-09-2022 upto 04:00 PM
	Note:- Fresh Date means the Documents Drawn after the issuance of said NIT.	

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The intending tenders should attach call deposit receipt equivalent to 2% of the total cost of the work shown against each work pledged to the Executive Engineer Right River Works Division, SMC, drawn from any schedule Bank without which no tender will be entertained.

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in the shape of Bank Receipt / challan as a tender fee paid in the Municipal Account No. 0216010200000007 payable at J&K Bank Branch Dood Ganga Balgarden, Srinagar payable at Srinagar (with NIT No and Serial No of work mentioned) and Earnest Money/ bid security in the shape of CDR/FDR (The date of Bank Receipt/ Challan and earned money/bid security should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date). The tender fees is non-refundable and can also be paid through online mode via NEFT/RTGS in favour of F./A/ Chief Accounts officer, Srinagar Municipal Corporation with Bank Details as given below:-

Name of the Bank :- Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd.
Branch:- Balgarden, Srinagar
Bank Account No :- 0216010200000007
IFSC code:- JAKA0GARDEN
MICR CODE: 190051008

For one particular work, Only one bank Receipt / challan (not more than one) of the exact amount of tender fees (neither lesser nor greater) as shown against that particular work must be paid and uploaded with the tenders. The tender fees paid and uploaded for a particular work should not be again used/ uploaded for any other work in the NIT (i.e. one Bank Receipt / Bank Challan for one work only)

Tender Fee and other relevant documents including Bid security (CDR/FDR) duly filled up, if found uploaded, with any ambiguity or un-attested correction/over writing for any work such tender /bid shall be considered as invalid bid and shall be out rightly rejected and action under rules shall be initiated.
Further use of pencil in writing tender fees and EMD must be avoided.
Both the tender fees and Bid Security should be uploaded as coloured document (not as black and white document).

The participating agencies/ contractors are advised in their own interest not to resort to any cheating while submitting and uploading the tender document Fees or any other document.
The bidders are requested to upload the coloured scanned copy of the following

documents:

o Tender fees.

o EMD in the shape of CDR and FDR.

o Registration card and its latest renewal.

o Verification of Registration Card from competent Authority

o Latest GST clearance.

o PAN Card.

o Correspondence Address of the Agency with active Mobile No.

o Any other document required to be uploaded as per the NIT.

3. The date and time of opening of bids shall be notified on website www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an E-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on the same website in the office of the Executive Engineer, Right River Works Division, SMC (Regal Lane, Lal Chowk, Srinagar) or in the office of the Informatics officer, SMC (Karan Nagar Srinagar). In case of holidays/ offices happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, or there is any Net problem the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical bids.

5. The earnest money in favour of the unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of Bank Receipts/challans.

6. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-

a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any Modifications the terms and conditions of the bid.

b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.

c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process

DIPK-NB-3884/22

No: SMC/EERRWD/1808-17.

Dated: 14.09.2022

SD/-
Executive Engineer
Right River works Division
Srinagar Municipal Corporation

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Highway Horror: Hilly Terrain, Overloading; Rash Driving Claiming Lives Of Passengers

Auqib Javed

Srinagar: Hilly terrain, rash driving, overloading of passengers and dilapidated condition of roads are said to be the main reasons for the spike in deadly accidents in the Pir Panjal range and Chenab valley of the Jammu region.

In less than 24 hours, 16 people have lost their lives while 50 others sustained injuries in two different traffic incidents,

exposing the fault lines in the much hyped road safety measures of the traffic department.

Lately, government figures suggest that the deaths caused by road accidents in J&K in 2021 are much higher than those killed during the three decades of conflict. However, of late, the Chenab and Pin Panjal region of Jammu witnessed more traffic accidents and deaths than the Kashmir Valley.

According to figures, 896



people lost their lives due to traffic incidents in the year 2021

in J&K. Among them, 676 were reported from Jammu region

and 220 from the Valley.

The recently released Crime Gazette 2021 by Jammu and Kashmir Police revealed that 4506 people were injured in Jammu last year and 2317 in the Valley.

According to the data, sixty-five percent of road accidents (3585) were reported from the Jammu division. Around 1876 mishaps occurred in Kashmir. In 2020, 728 people lost their lives in the Union Territory.

The locals lamented from

time to time that the successive governments have failed to come-up with any preventive strategy to minimise loss of lives in the road rage.

"Apart from that, there is a very thick presence of traffic cops on the road to check the wrong doings," said Mohammad Taki, a resident of Doda.

Taki further added that the roads in the mountainous region are not only prone to landslides but are also **More on P6**

New Power Curtailment Schedule To Be Out Next Month

Agencies

Srinagar: With the augmentation of power infrastructure further in Jammu and Kashmir, the Valley would likely witness less power curtailments in the upcoming winter season while as the officials said that the new power curtailment schedule will be announced in next month.

Chief Engineer, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), Javed Yousuf Dar said that the power infrastructure has further been augmented in the past one year.

"There were less power curtailments in the last winters and with the further augmentation of power infrastructure, more relief is expected to the consumers this winters as well," Dar said.

Asked about the new power curtailment schedule for winters, he said that the present schedule will continue for the next one month and new schedule will be announced once the temperature plummets in Kashmir—(KNO)

Centre To Grant Land Ownership Rights To WPRs



Agencies

Jammu: In a major decision, the Centre is set to grant land ownership rights to West Pakistan refugees (WPR) in Jammu and Kashmir.

After the abrogation of Article 370, the Centre has initiated an exercise through which the ownership rights will be granted to the WPRs over lands measuring 46,666 Kanals that were allotted to them before the abrogation of Article 370.

Officials said these lands are in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts and were allotted to the WPRs in 1954 after they migrated to the Indian side of the International Border.

"The Union Home Ministry officials have discussed the matter with the revenue department officials of J&K who have initiated

the exercise," official sources said.

When J&K had special status under Article 370 and 34A, the West Pakistan refugees could neither own land nor apply for government jobs as they were not state subjects of J&K.

After coming to power in the Centre, the BJP government had given Rs 5.5 lakh per family as compensation to West Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK) refugees. After Article 370 was scrapped, West Pakistan Refugees, POJK refugees, Gorkhas and Valmikis have been declared as domiciles of J&K.

The lands on which the ownership rights will be granted to these refugees exist in Akhnour, R.S. Pura, Bishnah in Jammu district, in parts of Samba district and Hiranagar district. (IANS)

THE UNION HOME MINISTRY officials have discussed the matter with the revenue department officials of J&K who have initiated the exercise."

Ex-Governor Malik Drops Another Bomb Says Sajjad Lone Wanted To Be J&K CM With Just 6 MLAs

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Peoples Conference leader Sajjad Lone wanted to be Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister just before the dissolution of the Assembly in 2018 although he had only six MLAs, the erstwhile State's last Governor Satya Pal Malik has said.

Throwing light on behind-the-scenes political manoeuvring that preceded the dissolution of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly by him in 2018, Malik, now the Governor of Meghalaya, described Lone as the "blue-eyed boy" of the Centre.

He said he had asked Lone to write to him about the support



he enjoyed in the 87-member House. Lone said he had six MLAs but "told me if you administer me the oath, I will prove my majority in a week".

6 THAT IS NOT THE GOVERNOR'S ROLE AND I WILL NOT DO IT. The Supreme Court will flog me. The next day the Supreme Court will say you summon the House. You will lose. I will not do this."

Malik spoke of the circumstances in which he dissolved the Assembly in November 2018 although PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti had staked claim to form a Government with the support of the Congress and the National Conference (NC).

The PDP-BJP Government headed by Mehbooba had earlier

collapsed in June 2018 after the BJP pulled out of the coalition.

Malik said he had told Lone, "That is not the governor's role and I will not do it. The Supreme Court will flog me. The next day the Supreme Court will say you summon the House. You will lose. I will not do this."

The Governor said it seemed that the PDP-NC-Congress combine may have had a majority but "foolishly" they had not held a formal meeting or passed a resolution or given a letter of support "to the lady (Mehbooba)".

Malik told "The Wire" in an interview that he had spoken to the then Union Finance Minister Arun **More on P6**

SHORT TAKES

Blast Outside DDC Member's House

A low-intensity blast occurred outside the house of a District Development Council member in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Friday. No one was injured in the blast that occurred late on Thursday night, they said. A mysterious blast occurred outside the house of DDC member Sohail Malik in Fazlabad village of Surankote tehsil. Malik's SUV, **More on P6**

4.8 Magnitude Quake Hits Ladakh

An earthquake of magnitude 4.8 on the Richter scale occurred 189 km north of Leh's Alchi, said National Center for Seismology on Friday. The earthquake occurred at 4:19 am with a depth of 10 km below the ground. "An earthquake of magnitude 4.8 occurred 189 km north of Leh's Alchi. The depth of the earthquake was 10 km below the ground," NSE said in a tweet. **More on P6**

23 New Covid Cases In J&K

Twenty three more people tested positive for Coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, taking the number of people infected since the onset of pandemic in the Union territory to 478894. According to officials, Kashmir Valley detected 16 new cases of virus while seven others were registered in Jammu division. In the Valley, they said, Budgam reported **More on P6**

Minor Taken Away By Leopard In Uri

A minor girl on Friday was mauled and taken away by a leopard in Uri area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district. 6-year-old Munaza daughter of Imran Beigh was in the courtyard of her house in Gawashar village of Uri on Friday evening when a leopard appeared there and took her away, reports said. The family, reports said, tried to chase the leopard to **More on P6**

LG To Unveil First Ever Multiplex In Srinagar

Kashmir Valley's first ever multiplex is all set to be unveiled in the high-security zone Sonwar area of this capital city on September 20. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha will inaugurate the multiplex designed by INOX on Tuesday at 11:00 am. Vijay Dhar, a prominent Kashmiri Pandit businessman and the brainchild behind **More on P6**

Russia, Ukraine Conflict

'Today's Era Is Not Of War': PM Modi Tells Putin



Press Trust Of India

Samarkand: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday pressed Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the conflict in Ukraine soon, saying "today's era is not of war" even as he called for finding ways to address the global food and energy security crisis.

In a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in this Silk Road city, Modi also underlined

the importance of "democracy, dialogue and diplomacy" while calling for an early cessation of hostilities in Ukraine.

"Today the biggest worry before the world, especially developing countries, is food security, fuel security, fertilisers. We must find ways to address these problems and you will also have to consider it. We will get an opportunity to talk about these issues," Modi said in his opening remarks.

It was the first in-person meeting between **More on P6**

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ADVENTURES IN ARCHIVES

Enter The Durbar

The durbar is back in town after six months alongwith its elaborate paraphernalia and with it the capital city readies for the seasonal nightmare that one of the surviving vestiges of the “bad old feudal days” brings along. The town dwellers have had the taste of the things to come days ahead when the entire area around the civil secretariat was sealed off for the lesser mortals and the securitymen carried out an exhaustive drill to test the security bandobust.

Police and paramilitary personnel carried out extensive frisking of passers by while as sharp shooters and commandoes took positions at vantage points on rooftops in the immediate neighbourhood. If the reports and pictures appearing in local newspapers were any indication, the ordeal has begun in the right earnest. The exercise was carried out in

Batmaloo, Karan Nagar, Shaheed Gunj, Magarmal Bagh, Suthra Shahi, Jehangir Chowk and even in Budshah Chowk. The city localities in the close vicinity of the civil secretariat are the worst hit with the movement of their residents being watched stingingly by the men in khaki. A resident summed up the scenario thus, “After the opening of secretariat tomorrow, our lives will become a hell”.

What difference does the half-yearly move of the state government offices make to the people in rest of the city and beyond in the valley’s countryside could be anybody’s guess. The main road outside the secretariat will be a mute witness to long queues of desperate people jostling with one another to gain entry into the heavily fortified complex to seek solution to their manifold problems. If the reports that make headlines in the media were to be believed, barring the chosen few enjoying proximity to those at the

helm, most such people leave the premises thoroughly disenchanted and dismayed, perhaps with the famous couplet, “boo-e-gul, nala-e-dil,

dood-e-chirag-e-mehfil / jo teri bazm se nikla, so paraihan nikla”, echoing deep inside them. It may not be any different this time around, notwithstanding the tall claims of ‘good governance’ and ‘return of normalcy’, the rulers are never tired of making to hoodwink public opinion.

Going by the reports, not all the departments are involved in the half-yearly up and down trek between the two capital cities. Many of them have already been divisionalised giving the desired relief not only to the officials working in them but to the people as well. With their heads of department stationed in both the capitals, the day-to-day problems get sorted out quicker than those where moving offices are involved.

In spite of the communication revolution over the years, such departments continue to work in a primitive fashion with consequent inconvenience to the

people. Normally, on their bi-annual move, these offices take around a month to settle and become fully functional. The move order issued about a month

earlier has a sedative effect on the 10,000 odd officials working in them. Apart from that, the move entails a huge unproductive expenditure running into tens of crores of rupees on the move allowances, TA, transportation and carriage of men, material and records, without bringing about any perceptible

improvement in performance.

One is reminded of the ill-fated decision the former chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, took in the late ‘70s to truncate the exercise. He was forced to

withdraw the order following stiff resistance by the powerful Jammu lobby supported by those Kashmiri officials who have a vested interest in perpetuating the time and resource consuming practice. The stock

argument offered to justify it is that it promotes emotional integration between the two regions of Kashmir and Jammu. How much of it has been achieved so far could be a matter of debate. It is an open secret

the two regions, and their respective leaderships – NC, PDP and others in Kashmir and Congress, BJP, JKNPP et al in Jammu – have rarely been on the same wave length on matters of development, recruitments or

selections for coveted professional courses, or for that matter, on several other issues like the Permanent Residents (Disqualification) Bill, the

Resettlement Act, or the on-going turmoil in the state.

Even as the advisability of the feudal practice would continue to engage saner minds across the regional divide, the chaotic situation prevailing in the

capital city of Srinagar as a result of the durbar move is of an immediate concern. It appears the city which, incidentally, is going to be host to lakhs of tourists, both domestic as well as foreign, has been converted into a virtual prison with most civil lines areas declared out of bounds for the common people.

The heavy and obtrusive presence of the men in khaki all over speaks volumes about the perceptions of the present rulers. Unless the chief minister has lost his touch with the constituency he claims to represent and

sees every Kashmiri as a militant, why at all should his administration restrict the movement of the general public around the civil secretariat. There has

to be a rationale behind this anti-people decision. In case there is none, he and the coalition government that he heads has no business whatsoever to be in the office. He must know the people of Kashmir are even

otherwise groaning under a repressive security situation and by adding to their misfortunes he would be doing them no service. If he cannot humanize his administration, he better spare the people of the miseries and take it back to Jammu.

The article is an editorial from KO’s archives and was originally published on 10th Feb, 2005

Asad Mirza

The recent economic upheaval followed by the political disruption in Sri Lanka, has once again made the Chinese BRI, the focus of debate whether it is beneficial or insensitive to the participating countries besides being a success or a failure

The Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the BRI with much fanfare and high promises and grandiose plans for the participating countries in 2013. It was considered to be a centrepiece of Chinese foreign and trade policy.

Basically, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) earlier also referred to as One Belt One Road or OBOR for short, is a global infrastructure development strategy to invest in nearly 150 countries and international organisations, around the globe.

The BRI formed a central component of Xi’s “Major Country Diplomacy” strategy, which calls for China to assume a greater leadership role for global affairs in accordance with its rising power and status. As of August 2022, 149 countries were listed as having signed up to the BRI.

Xi originally announced the strategy as the “Silk Road Economic Belt” during an official visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013, referring to the proposed overland routes for road and rail transportation through landlocked Central Asia along the famed historical trade routes of the Western Regions; in addition to the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, referring to the Indo-Pacific sea routes through Southeast Asia to South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In fact the BRI was also considered a grandiose plan to challenge the American hegemony over global trade and diplomacy.

However, the recent events in Sri Lanka, with similar echoes being heard from Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan has led some China watchers to conclude that this is an indicator of the hit that the Chinese economy has taken during the Covid pandemic and the BRI appears to be under revaluation with recipient countries wary of the debt trap and its economic feasibility.

Let’s take a closer look at the original intent of the BRI, its expansion and its long and short-term impacts on the aid recipient countries and whether it has been a success or a failure and how the U.S. could have countered it in a much better manner.

In his report in 2020, Rafiq Dossani, Director, RAND Centre for

I have a friend in the US who served that country’s armed forces. Being a retired serviceman, he is interested in firearms and uses them for sporting activities. He often travels to a firing range near his house to keep his skills up-to-date and joins competitions on a regular basis.

During a conversation with me some years ago, he described how firearm owners sometimes shoot themselves in the foot. He explained that in actuality, these people shoot themselves in the thigh, and the bullet makes its way unerringly down the rest of the leg and into the foot. This occurs when the owner of a firearm becomes overconfident about his or her abilities and carries a concealed firearm on their person. “Concealed Carry” is a special status sought after by American gun aficionados who usually must go through focused safety training before they are issued a license by the authorities to carry a concealed gun on their person.

Evidently, these trained carriers can sometimes become so overconfident that they start carrying a concealed gun on their hips, under their shirts or jackets, that is not only loaded, but also has a bullet in the firing chamber, with the gun cocked and ready to fire.

Despite all the training, accidents happen, as they often do, and even bumping the firearm into a hard surface can cause it to go off, and the bullet in the chamber sears down the cowboy or cowgirl’s thigh and thence firmly lodges itself into the foot. Ouch! It seems to me that it would be far wiser to not have a bullet in the firing chamber, even if the firearm is loaded.

Discretion is after all the better part of valour.

Chinese BRI
A success or a failure?



Representational Image

Asia Pacific Policy opined that China’s strongest motive behind the BRI was its long-term economic security. The maritime routes of the BRI would have helped the relatively underdeveloped, landlocked areas of China such as Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces by linking them with ports in the more rapidly growing areas of Asia.

At the same time, the emerging land routes of the BRI were marked as an alternative to the South China Sea, through which most of China’s trade currently passes and which is becoming a zone of contestation between the United States and China.

Dossani further explaining the reasons for the initial welcome of BRI opined that traditionally, many countries prefer to work with the World Bank and other multilateral lenders, which provide borrowers with good practices, while making significant funding available on a meritocratic rather than political basis.

But, he says further that from a developing country’s viewpoint, accessing the world’s spare capital has been difficult because of the risk entailed in many such investments. The Asian Development Bank estimates that Asian countries face an infrastructure investment gap of \$459 billion a year.

This logic also explains the sentiments, which in the initial stages of the launch of the BRI seemed to be the main attractive reason for the BRI projects and Chinese funding. But nine years after its launch BRI seems to have lost its sheen, due to the economic meltdown in several countries, which borrowed heavily from China under the garb of infrastructure development, progress and prosperity.

Bangladesh Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has publicly blamed economically unviable Chinese BRI projects for exacerbating the economic crisis in Sri Lanka. He says that developing countries must think twice about taking more loans through BRI as global inflation and slowing growth add to the strains on indebted emerging markets.

In fact, Bangladesh has made it clear that it will not accept any further loans but only grants from Beijing. Nepal has also taken the same stand. Pakistan with some US \$ 53 billion being spent by Beijing under the aegis of BRI also faces the same fate.

China has also invested some US \$ 44 billion in Indonesia, US \$ 41 billion in Singapore, US \$ 39 billion in Russia, US \$ 33 billion in Saudi Arabia and US \$ 30 billion in Malaysia.

The cry against Chinese BRI is not limited only to the Indian subcontinent as its reverberations can be heard in the stalled US \$ 4.7 billion railway project in Kenya, also. Five years after its launch, the project ends abruptly in an empty



As conflicts between the United States and China appear to mount, some experts have questioned the intentions of China’s BRI. It has been viewed as a debt trap for impoverished states and a means for China to expand its territorial control, but is it a reality? Is the United States missing an opportunity to participate-in or initiate parallel activities?

Has Indian IT Shot
Itself In The Foot?

IT is facing structural problems from ITS short-sighted approach to mid-level hiring.

Siddharth Pai

At the risk of dating myself, I have to say I have been in and around the IT services industry for at least three major economic boom and bust cycles: the early 2000s’ dotcom boom and bust, the Great Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008, and the current Covid-fueled crisis.

During the first dotcom crisis, I was a senior executive at an American IT services firm, and the crude joke in those circles was that the term “B2B” stood for all the Indian origin software programmers who had been retrenched and were going “Back to Bangalore”.

But Indian IT services, despite its oft-heralded demise, went from strength to strength after the world realised that it could send work to the worker, and didn’t necessarily have to bring the worker to the work.

After the dotcom bust, it did well during both the GFC of 2008 and the Covid crisis of 2020-21. This time, however, it may have overplayed its hand, or to use the gun analogy, may have

been walking around with a gun strapped to its side with a bullet in the firing chamber.

While it has kept the salary for fresh IT engineering graduates about the same level for 20 years, which has not even kept up with inflation,

the need for talent with a medium level of experience during the Covid crisis went up significantly.

So, these firms started a bidding war for such talent, and were poaching staff from one another over the last two years. Many IT engineers in the 3-6-year experience bracket were being routinely offered up to twice (2X) their current salaries to switch jobs.

The work from home environment, forced on us by the pandemic, has made the barriers to switching jobs much easier; after all, you stay at the same desk at home to churn out the same code, all you’re doing now is to churn it out for a different employer for twice the money.

I challenge you to find a 26-year-old who is mature enough to understand that a 2X increase in salary is a fishy proposition; it is simply too good to be true, and even if true, certainly will not last.

Overconfidence is the wont of the young, and no amount of sage advice from an elder can stand in the face of a job offer that promises a youngster double his or her salary.

And last week, right on cue, there is news that India’s IT majors have started indicating that variable pay will be cut, pyramids normalised (by bringing in more fresh graduates

field, 200 miles from its destination in Uganda.

As conflicts between the United States and China appear to mount, some experts have questioned the intentions of China’s BRI. It has been viewed as a debt trap for impoverished states and a means for China to expand its territorial control, but is it a reality? Is the United States missing an opportunity to participate-in or initiate parallel activities?

BRI has been repeatedly labelled a debt trap and a power grab, and perhaps this seemed like a possible scenario. However, this concept has been debunked by recent research. Deborah Brautigam, director of the China Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins University, found no evidence that Chinese banks over-lend or invest in loss-making projects to obtain a foothold in those countries, in one of her studies on Chinese lending to Africa.

There is further evidence that China is not engaging in debt trap diplomacy. Brautigam has noted that in some countries the IMF has been labelled as being vulnerable. Also Chinese loans were not responsible for pushing indebted countries above IMF debt sustainability limits.

Furthermore, it should be noted that not just impoverished nations, but East Asian and Europe countries have also been smitten by the BRI. Over 18 European Union countries have joined the BRI.

In fact, rather than decrying China, the United States should engage in infrastructure lending to poor countries, and/or make it easier for multilateral banks to lend for such projects, reducing bureaucratic requirements. It should also initiate similar activities in underdeveloped or developing countries.

To better its image, China should improve transparency around BRI deals. The World Bank and other bodies have also called for increased transparency. This would go a long way in improving U.S. and other countries’ understanding of Chinese intentions about the BRI.

Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi. He was also associated with BBC Urdu Service and Khaleej Times of Dubai.

He writes on Indian Muslims, educational, international affairs, interfaith and current affairs.
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whose salary levels have remained static while ejecting high-cost resources), and employees brought back to the office to foster more cohesion between the firm and its employees.

Almost all Indian IT services majors have seen a worsening demand environment, while the indiscriminate hiring and poaching has caused wage bubbles in their workforce, thereby bringing their margins down by several hundred basis points. The use of subcontractors has also gone up, and registrations on IT subcontractor marketplace platforms such as TopCoder have risen by up to 60%. Equity analysts have downgraded most of these stocks and are calling for further corrections in share prices; in many cases, their target prices are 20% lower than today.

While a 26-year-old can be expected to be immature about life-choices, one would expect more maturity from the head-honchos of such companies.

Both the last crises saw the printing of new money followed by later attempts to mop up excess liquidity through interest rate hikes—indicative of a slowdown. Didn’t they see this coming? Why on earth were they poaching each other’s resources at 2X compensation?

Indian IT is facing structural problems from this short-sighted and overconfident approach. The irrational exuberance of the last two years will take time to iron out of the system. Expect more pain before their feet begin to heal.

Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Financial Express

BOOK REVIEW

Redeemable Representation Of The Modern Muslimah

Sahar Mustafah

When it comes to exploring the Muslim identity in the realm of fiction, one is hard-pressed to find a story that provides a realistic narrative for the lay Muslim. Whether it's the war-waging jihadi, the pitiful oppressed victim, or the faith-renouncing liberal, such orientalist caricatures in literature perpetuate distasteful stereotypes and provide little to no characters for average Muslims to relate to.

In the past few decades, there has been an influx of literature authored by Muslim writers, a success championed by publishers who strive to include and amplify Muslim voices in the name of diversity. Likewise, there has been a slow but distinct shift in the Muslim narrative over time. Novels that debunk popular stereotypes and endeavor to reconcile the Muslim identity with the twenty-first century are finally on the rise. Young Adult Fiction in particular has been instrumental in challenging stereotypes and carving out storylines to empower the young Muslim reader. Though there is certainly much to celebrate, there are still problematic and potentially harmful narratives that impact our impressionable youth. This does not mean we should restrict creative integrity and limit showcasing diversity within the Ummah by any means, rather that we become more conscious about the ideas and morals we promote.

Certain publishers are more than happy to support Muslim writers who pitch a 'tolerant' and 'liberal' Islam, as if Islam is inherently archaic and in dire need of reformation. The hidden agendas, covert motives, and sly narratives further a secular-liberal worldview and assert that Muslims should be grateful for any morsel of representation they receive in mainstream media. More specifically, it seems that when Muslim women are not being sexualized and fetishized in real life, we are being sexualized and fetishized in literature. True freedom apparently lies in superficiality, that is, in abandoning our hijabs, dressing defiantly and allowing ourselves to be sexualized – enjoying it, even.

A prominent Muslim author has recently written a book starring a young Muslimah with a passion for breakdancing. Despite hostility and discrimination from her peers, she powers through and pursues her dreams. At first glance, the story sounds empowering: who said a hijabi couldn't breakdance? The catch, however, is the swift introduction of the white boy love interest. Books, movies, and TV shows thrive off showcasing the brown-skinned girl (Muslim or otherwise) fulfilling the exotic fantasy of the white man. There are exceptions to this rule however.

PLOT

The Beauty of Your Face centers around the life of protagonist Afaf Rahman, a culturally conflicted Palestinian-American Muslim woman. Much of Afaf's life is spent in Chicago after her immigrant parents, Mahmood and Muntaha, are expelled from their homeland Palestine and migrate to the US. Afaf, her older sister Nada, and younger brother Majeed thus grow up as first-generation Arab Americans.

Flitting between past and present, the novel largely details each major decade of Afaf's life. The episodic nature of the narrative is such that the events of her past are peppered by an alternative perspective. The sporadic

disruptions in the overall narrative track the actions of a school shooter who has suddenly infiltrated Nur-deen Islamic School for Girls where Afaf is the principal. The events that lead up to the convergence of past and present ultimately render Afaf in an intense standoff with the shooter as narratives collide.

THE ARAB-AMERICAN-MUSLIM AXIS

Literature exploring the immigrant/diaspora identity is nothing new under the sun. There are plenty of writers who explore what it means to be the three-in-one Arab American Muslim. Unfortunately, it is the Muslim aspect that is often the first to be sacrificed. Remarkably, Mustafah carves a narrative that does not center around a compromised Muslim identity, and in fact is quite the opposite.

The Beauty of Your Face evidences just how many interpretations of this identity there can be, debunking the orientalist myth that Arabs and Muslims are a monolith. Each character is unique in his or her attempt to reconcile their internal/external conflicting identities. On one end there lies Nada, Afaf's older sister, who wholeheartedly embraces American culture and utterly dissociates from her Arab roots by running away from home early in the novel. She expresses her frustrations prior to her escape, exclaiming, "we're Americans but they don't want us to act like it." Nada is inclined towards fully embracing the one aspect of her identity she feels will provide her the freedom she desires. Contrastingly, their mother, Muntaha, harbors the opposite sentiment. Her intense disapproval of American culture stems from it being the land that tore her family apart and caused her favourite child to leave her. Muntaha's misery calls for nothing less than a return to the homeland. In the end, both culture and religion play a key role in shaping Afaf's adulthood, with the latter taking precedence.

SCHOOL SHOOTING

The school shooting is an integral part of the storyline. Although the story would have been intriguing enough based on Afaf's religious journey alone, the shooting proves vital in showcasing her development as a protagonist. It is during her tenth year of teaching at the Islamic school that the shooting takes place. These scenes are written from the first-person perspective of the shooter, a middle-aged white man. Mustafah does a great job at providing a granular account of the motives behind the attack from his perspective. The shooter is exposed for what he truly is: a radicalized, xenophobic, perverted individual who harbors sick thoughts, especially towards women. The juxtaposition of his calm, mundane demeanor on the morning of the incident and his horrifying, dastardly actions later on in the day are chillingly relayed.

What's quite interesting about the school itself is that it was formerly Our Lady of Peace, a convent. The standoff between Afaf and the shooter happens to occur in the confessional, a dwelling Afaf frequents for prayer. Within this space, the shooter also reflects on his own rocky experience with religion. Interestingly, many parallels can be drawn between events that shaped both the protagonist and antagonist's lives.

IRRELIGIOUS CHILDHOOD

The Rahman family never cared for religion, neither Mahmoud nor



“Certain publishers are more than happy to support Muslim writers who pitch a ‘tolerant’ and ‘liberal’ Islam, as if Islam is inherently archaic and in dire need of reformation. The hidden agendas, covert motives, and sly narratives further a secular-liberal worldview and assert that Muslims should be grateful for any morsel of representation they receive in mainstream media

Muntaha expressed an affinity for faith or spirituality, and as such their offspring were raised with little to no knowledge about Islam. Palestinian culture therefore plays a big role in cementing the Rahman family's values and traditions. The writing incorporates common Levantine vernacular (unitalicized, thankfully) in a manner that flows coherently throughout the novel. Despite the parents being fluent in Arabic, the children are not, and thus the crisis of identity is even more so pronounced. In one scene, Afaf is mocked by her Arab brethren for her lack of Arabic competency. Nada's disappearance plays a major role in exacerbating unstable family dynamics. Afaf's irreligiosity is so deep-rooted that, "she never prayed to God, not even when her sister disappeared." Ultimately, it is this lack of faith paired with parental negligence that serves as the primer of Afaf's rebellion.

DISCOVERY OF FAITH

The uniqueness of The Beauty of Your Face lies in its faithful portrayal of Islam. Mustafah's novel digs into the core of religion, that is, salvation from worldly misery. A sad reality for many immigrants is that their journey for a better life in a foreign land often results in faith being lost along the way. Does becoming an immigrant by

necessity confer leeway in blame for a deficiency of faith? Indeed, no one expects to one day be so abruptly expelled from their homeland, and a holy land at that. As Muntaha criticizes, "why has the Lord turned away from the suffering of the Muslim? Why has He forsaken the Palestinians?" A lackluster understanding of religion, coupled with the devastation of losing one's homeland results in a trauma that seems unsalvageable.

Afaf's irreligious upbringing causes her to express an interest in Islam only after witnessing her father's discovery of religion after a fateful accident – "it's like he's stumbled upon a spring of water and he wants them all to drink from it." Her father's transformation is exemplary in evidencing how changed behavior speaks louder than words. Rectification of his prior behavior is more inspiring to his daughter than harsh parenting.

Afaf's key transitory moment in becoming a practicing Muslimah occurs principally during her visit to the city's Islamic Center. It is here that she has her first taste of spirituality and a desire to be part of something greater – "[she] feels like a stranger who's finally come home." The contrast between the rejection she faces by her peers at school and the acceptance she receives from the wider Muslim community

strengthens her embrace of religion. The apprehension and edginess she feels during her visit exemplifies the feeling universally experienced during a first experience. It is seldom the glorious, idealistic moment one expects. It is here that Afaf ends up befriend-ing Kowkab, the sole hijabi at her school. Kowkab becomes a significant presence in Afaf's life, instrumental in supporting Afaf on her religious journey. This moment really emphasized the importance of good company (subha) in aiding one's religious growth and spiritual development.

ADULTHOOD

As an adult Afaf begins her teaching career at the Islamic School and at a center for refugees. Her adoption of the hijab is a notable moment, signifying just how far she has come. No longer is she the faithless, confused teenager with no sense of direction in life. She is now firm in her beliefs and wishes to display her faith to the world. The novel depicts this honorary donning as a celebratory event, with Afaf surrounded by her friends congratulating her on this bold move. Afaf's marriage to a non-Palestinian man also marks a change in her mentality and growth as they support each other as a couple and even go on Hajj with Afaf's father. Her mother's battle with mental illness, however, takes a turn for the worse. Though Muntaha is an incredibly strong figure, the façade of stability can only be kept up for so long. As Afaf returns to religion, her mother returns to Palestine, and her father returns to God.

CHARACTERS

Often-times, secondary and tertiary characters in stories are overlooked as their sole purpose is usually to flesh out the protagonist, rather than being distinct characters in their own right. In The Beauty of Your Face, it is these characters that define the novel alongside the protagonist. There are several pivotal moments in the book that propel each family member into finding his or her own individual purpose. The characters in Mustafah's novel are three-dimensional, familiar, and personal:

Afaf – Afaf's initial demure nature is emphasized as the sibling living in her older sister's shadow, one that is perpetuated by her disappearance. Afaf faces much discrimination in school by both her Arab brethren and her white peers. The fetishization of brown women is touched upon in the narrative, its prevalence in Western society acknowledged and accounted for. The statement, "they think she's exotic—not beautiful" demonstrates the 'otherness' that is part and parcel of a non-white visage. Some storylines tend to climax here – the innocent brown girl inadvertently captures the attention of the white boy who frees her from her backwards culture. Whilst the story acknowledges this, the concept imminently wanes into irrelevancy. This is not the instrumental moment that shapes the rest of Afaf's life.

Muntaha – Of all the characters in this novel, Afaf's mother Muntaha is one of the most fascinating. Afaf's relationship with her mother is complex. On the one hand, Afaf adores the doting mother who endlessly strives to maintain the presence of Palestine in their lives. However, after Nada's disappearance, her mother becomes a shell of her former self, so intensely overcome by grief that she barely acknowledges her remaining children. Muntaha's every waking thought is punctuated by a

longing for the homeland, and eventually her wish is fulfilled. Though Nada's disappearance is indeed the root of her misery, it is not the only thing that deteriorates her sanity. Mahmood was no ideal husband, and her declining mental state can attest to that.

Mahmood – Afaf's father is the key player in the turning point of the plot. It is through his own discovery of Islam after a terrible accident that his daughter Afaf herself submits. The rekindling of the father-daughter relationship does not happen overnight, rather Afaf's observation of her father's changed behavior inspires her to abandon her rebellion. Grief-stricken Muntaha, however, is skeptical of her husband and daughter's newfound faith. She criticizes her husband's sudden zeal for a religion he never formerly cared for: "So you've found religion? After all these years you think God will ever forgive you? I certainly will not." Likewise, there seems to be a sense of betrayal in her daughter following her husband's footsteps and joining him in his reclamation of faith. An avid oud player, Mahmood's comfort is found in playing the traditional Arabic instrument, a hobby that was halted after his accident. The melody of the oud suffuses an appreciation for Palestinian culture throughout the novel.

Nada – Nada's absence for the majority of the book does not render her a forgotten presence. The gap she leaves in the collective life of the family is one that is unable to be reconciled. Instead of drawing the family closer together, it drives a rift between them, hitting Muntaha the hardest. It is often the most favorite child that ends up rebelling the hardest, the constant suffocating attention having the opposite desired effect. Afaf idolized her sister, describing her as 'bold and fearless.' Nada's return towards the end of the novel was heartwarming and emotional and provided closure to her family.

Majeed – A typical younger brother, Majeed experiences the same upbringing as Afaf. Where Afaf and her father are one, Majeed and his mother are one. Majeed's affinity to his mother is birthed from his perception of Mahmood as a negligent father and careless husband. Thus, the skepticism Muntaha harbors regarding Mahmood's discovery of faith are reflected in Majeed, who eventually resents his father and spends his adolescence living out in university far from family politics.

CONCLUSION

The novel ultimately drives home the importance of family ties and the impact a holistic understanding of Islam can have on the traditional family structure. Up until this book, I had little faith in literature doing justice to Muslim women. It is not often that one finds a narrative so personal and relatable. Afaf's spiritually devoid upbringing, teenage rebellion, family trauma, and most importantly her rocky journey to Islam are experiences many diaspora Muslims can identify with. The exploration of her renewed faith in light of her traumatic childhood and life struggles are inspiring to the Muslim and non-Muslim reader alike.

The Beauty of Your Face succeeds at providing a narrative that does not only forgo falling into clichés, but demonstrates the beauty of Islam as a means of redemption in an increasingly irreligious, immoral and shameless world.

The article was originally published by Traversing Tradition

7 Books Every Child Must Read

Sanjana S Megalamane

It is safe to say that a good and a relatable book will not only help your child get through their every awkward, unexplored and unforeseen phase in life with ease but also fill their preteen years with hope and perseverance. Metrolife brings you seven such books.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Author: Eric Carle

Published in 1969, this is a picture book designed, written and illustrated by Eric Carle and has bagged multiple children's literature award and a graphic design award. The book records a journey of a caterpillar who eats different varieties of food in order to grow and evolve into a butterfly. At every different stage a child opens this book, he will learn new things as it contains different colours, days of the week, numbers and most importantly, the

life-cycle of a butterfly.

A Really Short History of Nearly Everything

Author: Bill Bryson

Travel to space and back with this fascinating book where you can learn about the sun, life on earth, ice ages, dinosaurs and more.

This book is tailor-made for science enthusiasts who are keen on exploring more about the comprehensive side of geology, particle physics and chemistry and to top it all off you can also learn more about the scientists who have uncovered bizarre and brilliant things.

The Tyrant's Tomb (The Trials of Apollo Book 4)

Author: Rick Riordan

The book circles around a Greek god who is living as a teenage boy named Lester. Even as a young boy, he is still constantly battling monsters, decoding prophecies, rescu-

ing oracles and doing everything he did as a former God Apollo. This interesting read will keep you on the edge with all the adventures the little boy has to offer.

Caddie Woodlawn

Author: Carol Ryrie Brink

Caroline Augusta Woodlawn, nicknamed 'Caddie' is all about being free-spirited and being herself which is not very lady-like. This eleven-year-old lively tomboy spends most of her time exploring the woods where she befriends an Indian tribe with who she runs wild, causes trouble and experiences life in general. This adventurous book is for all the enthusiastic young individuals who are always up and ready to face the world for as it is.

Little Women

Author: Louisa May Alcott

Three sisters with three distinct

characters represent any girl of any generation. Meg (16), Jo (15) and Amy (12) spend their day doing creative and fun activities while falling in love with the same boy charm next door in three different ways.

With illustration throughout the book, Little women is a classic girl book that is dedicated to all our woman-to-be young readers who aspire to have a strong and striking impact on anyone they meet.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Author: Mark Twain

Our mischievous boy Tom is one of the famous character in literature known for his mishaps and funny adventures. From witnessing a murder to running away to be a pirate to attending his own funeral, Tom is always doing what he is not supposed to do.

Just like any other boys, Tom, in his adolescent age, wants to do

something out of the box so he goes on an escapade looking for a treasure hunt while he escape his nemesis, the villainous Injun Joe.

The Jungle Book

Author: Rudyard Kipling

It is no secret that 'The Jungle Book' has captivated both young and old readers since the time it came into existence. Raised by a pack of wolves, Mowgli has lived the luxury life of the jungle ever since he was rescued from the clutches of the evil tiger 'Shere Khan'. Although he is put through a lot of hurdles everyday, his best friend Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther helps him get through all the dangers by sticking by his side no matter what. All in all, the book records the fun experience of the 'man-cub' and depicts the classic relationship between man and beast.

–Deccan Herald

Indian Railways Taking Big Stride On e-Auctions Of Commercial Assets

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Indian Railways has taken steps to bring Commercial Earning and Non-Fare Revenue contracts under the ambit of electronic auction through Indian Railway e-Procurement System (IREPS).

Ashwini Vaishnaw had launched e-auction for commercial earning in June 2022. This e-auction portal has increased Railways earning and helped in realization of true value of the assets.

Since the launch of e-auction portal for commercial assets, auctions have been conducted 1,200 contracts have been awarded covering 8,500 assets. Total value of contracts awarded: Rs 844 Crore. 68 Divisions have conducted e-Auctions.

Earning Assets: Parcel Van, Pay & Use Toilets, Advertisement rights on station circulating area and coaches, AC waiting rooms, Cloak rooms, Parking lots, Plastic Bottle crushers, ATMs, Station co-branding, Video screens for content on demand etc. These assets will be mapped location-wise in the portal once, and the system will remember forever if it is covered for earning or not. This will improve monitoring of assets on real time basis and will minimize asset-idling.

Success Stories:

1) In Khurda Road division over East Coast Railway, the FSLR Comptt. of Train No. 15643 (PURI-KYQ Exp.) put on for e-auction on 03.09.2022, and was awarded at 80% more than the last accepted rates. It is pertinent to mention that the normal tariff rate is much

less than the LAR.

2) Ahmedabad Division had conducted e-Auction for 2 lots Gandhidham Junction & Himmatnagar (GIMB and HMT) of Parking on 04th June 2022. For Gandhidham Junction (GIMB) 24 bids were received with the highest one being 12,60,000 (Per Annum) which is 38% above Conventional Bidding Price. For HMT 26 Bids were received with the highest one being 62,500 (Per Annum) which is 72% above price of conventional bidding.

3) On 06.06.22, e-auction was conducted for Mixed Parking near Gorakhpur Airport, in which highest bid of Rs. 8,47,458 was received against estimate of Rs. 5,31,000 which is 59.60% higher than the price of conventional bidding.

4) Parking site – Anand Vihar Terminal, Contract Period – 3 year, Total Bids Received – 74, Offer Price per annum- 75 lakh. Total earning – Total 2.25 Cr. Offer received was 127.33% higher than the conventional bidding price.

Salient Features of e-Auction System:

The Auction will be conducted online through 'E-Auction Leasing' module of IREPS: www.ireps.gov.in

Policy for e-Auction and Standard Conditions of Auction issued by Railway Board: Earlier system of physical registration of contractors Division-wise has been done away with,

Only financial criteria – based on self-declaration of past turnovers by contractors

Financial turnover criteria rationalized and standardized – No turnover requirement

upto Rs. 40 lacs annual contract estimates

One time online self-registration of contractors

No geographical restrictions for participation in any auction of any Division

All assets will be fed in the system for better monitoring and ensuring issuing contracts in advance – reduce asset idling

Auction catalogues with all details of the assets will be published online on IREPS portal, minimum 15 days in advance

Auctions will be conducted online- bidders will be able to participate from anywhere in India

Minimum 30 minutes will be given for auction so that all interested contractors can submit their bids.

Auction of consecutive Lots in any catalogue will be closed after gap of 10 minutes

In case any bid is received within last 2 minutes of auction closing time, then the closing time for the lot will be extended automatically for 2 minutes. 10 such auto extensions will be permitted to ensure adequate time for all bidders to submit their bids.

Reserve Price of the lots will not be disclosed and the bidders will be free to offer any bid according to true commercial potential of the assets as per their assessment.

Bids will be auto decided.

If Highest bid (H1) is equal or above the Reserve Price then the contract will be finalized on the same day after auction closing.

Bid sheet and contract agreement will be signed digitally.

Payment schedule for the contract will be generated

immediately.

All payments by the contractor will be made online

Entire process will be online & paperless

Benefits:

1) Online mode makes potential bidders from distant location across country to participate in the bidding process.

2) Online payment to Railways post award of contract. Till now provision of daily manual payment in parcel leasing contract is there, which is a tedious process. Now it is made online.

3) Better Monitoring: After mapping, portal prompts when an earning contract of a particular asset is nearing completion and compels to start fresh auction, thus making idle time of the asset minimal.

4) Standardization of eligibility conditions pan-India.

5) Simplification of processes.

a) Drastically reduces the time taken in finalization of Tenders and will prevent revenue loss on this account.

6) Quick re-award of contract in case of failure of any contractor

7) Breaks the cartel among bidders. Bidders' identity will be masked from each other and from IR.

8) Will increase revenue earning by fetching true commercial potential of assets due to higher competition amongst bidders.

9) Will minimize assets' idling, resulting in maximization of potentials from the assets.

10) No eligibility criteria upto 40 lacs will help in promoting start-ups.

CS Chairs 5th Governing Council Meeting Of Ayushman Bharat

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Friday chaired the 5th Governing Council Meeting of State Health Agency (SHA) and also reviewed its performance regarding the implementation of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)/ AB-PMJAY Sehat here in the UT.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Labour and Employment; Secretary, Health; Secretary, IT; Principals of Medical Colleges, Srinagar/Jammu; Directors of Health Kashmir/Jammu, Nodal Officer, SHA; SGNO, SHA; and other officers of the concerned Departments.

Jammu based officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Dr Mehta impressed upon the officers to ensure that each person is facilitated to obtain the available benefits. He asked them to work for registering each person under the scheme so that the end person receives free medical care as envisaged under the scheme.

The Chief Secretary also emphasized upon the health authorities to work towards creating health history of the patients starting from those of students in our schools. He urged them to make it convenient for every person to register for the scheme at his doorsteps. He maintained that the scheme should be saturated fully in both urban and rural areas.

He exhorted upon them to conduct the Governing body meetings quarterly for timely confirmation of intervening decisions taken during this period. He made out that both audit and accounting of the scheme should be strengthened at every level for maintaining transparency in

the effective implementation of this welfare scheme.

Dr Mehta advised the health agency to study the claims of other state to make the scheme more sustainable and promising for the beneficiaries. He asked them to work out the best sustainable model in consultation with different stakeholders for extending maximum benefit to the needy patients of the UT.

The ACS, Finance made out that the administration did best to extend the health benefits uninterruptedly to the people. He reiterated that it is the endeavour of the administration to devise policy that is in the best interest of people.

In this meeting the Council gave approval to SHA for introducing 'e-RUPI Concept' as a pilot project in selected Tertiary Care hospitals in the UT. It was given out that the primary objective of using e-RUPI is reducing out-of-pocket expenditures (OOPE) borne by the beneficiaries on diagnostic tests not performed in these government run health facilities.

The meeting was informed that among the 196149 received claims amounting to Rs 353.74 crores, 147180 claims amounting to Rs 236.84 crores had already been disbursed with 35536 claims under the process at various EHCPS.

It was further revealed that 25.74 lakh eligible beneficiary families has been insured for the current policy period. It was given out that apremium amount of Rs 1840 per family is paid by government to provide free health care in 209 local hospitals (118 public+91 private) to our population across the 20 districts of J&K. Highest average claim size of Rs 18004 has been registered in this policy period from 15th of March to 31st August this year, as was informed in the meeting.

Earlier in the 4th Governing Council meeting of State Health

Agency, J&K held on 08.11.2021 it was decided that State Health Agency, J&K will go ahead with the fresh tendering process by using Model tender document issued by National Health Authority.

A tender document for selection of Insurance Company for implementation of AB PM-JAY/AB PM-JAY SEHAT was floated. Pre- Bid meeting was held on 23-11-2021 at NHM Office Old Secretariat Srinagar, in which following five insurance companies participated including IFFCO TOKIO General Insurance Co. Ltd, Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Pvt. Ltd, United India Insurance Company and National Insurance Company.

It was found that four Insurance Companies have submitted their bids including Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Pvt. Ltd, National Insurance Company, IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company, the meeting was apprised.

The committee had deliberation as per GFR 2017. The procurement process for selection of an insurance service provider for implementation of ABPMJAY/ ABPMJAY SEHAT has followed the "transparency, competition, fairness and illumination of arbitrariness in the procurement process/ NIT has been advertised widely. Further it was ensured that the qualification criteria indicated is very minimum and used the same qualification criteria notified by National Health Authority.

The text of the bidding document was self-containing and comprehensive without any ambiguities besides all the clarifications, modifications have been notified to the bidders and also placed on the www.jktenders.gov.in. The bidders are provided sufficient time to prepare and submit their bids, in this case, 22 days of time has been provided.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Rs 37.15 Cr Provided

have been linked with this program and Rs 150 crore has been transferred directly into their bank accounts," he added.

Earlier, the LG, according to the spokesperson appreciated Chudamani Sanskrit Sansthan, Basohli, Shri Kailash Jyotish avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, Mahavir Seva Sadan and Abha Bagrodia Charitable Trust, Kolkata; SKUAST-Jammu and Central Sanskrit University, Ranbir Campus, Jammu for the remarkable, self-less and noble initiative.

"Aids and assistive devices for empowerment of Divyangjan and bringing them in the mainstream of society have always been one of the topmost priorities of the Government. Such initiatives are fitting tribute to the ideals and values that our society stands for," Sinha said.

"Selfless efforts to help others in need are the true service of mankind. It is our primary responsibility to mobilize resources for the Divyangjan, create infrastructure and facilities to make them equal partners in the nation's development journey," he added.

The spokesperson also quoted LG as saying that enlightened citizens of the society and voluntary organizations must come forward and complement the government's efforts to provide succour to the sufferings of the people and contribute to accessible India campaign.

"Last year, we decided to distribute a total of 4000 motorized tricycles to provide universal access, accessibility and a dignified life to the specially-abled across the UT. 1000 motorized tricycles were distributed in the first phase in the month of July this year and this has brought a paradigm shift in the lives of those 1000 beneficiaries. The government is committed to reach out to all those seeking assistance," the LG said.

"Our ancient texts are a beacon of light for humanity. The source of our prosperous present and future is deeply rooted in Sanskrit scriptures. I convey my best wishes to Chudamani Sanskrit Sansthan for social service and promotion of Sanskrit," he added.

According to the spokesperson, Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Adhokshajanad Dev Tirthi Maharaj, while speaking on the occasion, appreciated the development works carried out by UT Administration, especially for the promotion of Sanskrit.

'Decision Of

officials on Thursday. Maharaja Hari Singh was born on September 23, 1895.

The announcement was made by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha following his meeting with a delegation comprising prominent political leaders, members of the Yuva Rajput

Sabha, and civil society members, including the head of the Jammu and Kashmir transport union, at the Raj Bhavan today.

"The government has taken a decision to declare Maharaja Hari Singh Ji's birthday as a public holiday. Maharaja Hari Singh was a great educationist, progressive thinker, social reformer and a towering man of ideas and ideals. The public holiday will be a fitting tribute to Maharaja Hari Singh Ji's rich legacy," the Lieutenant Governor observed.

Pertinently, on the directions of Lt Governor, a four-member committee was constituted by the UT administration earlier this year to examine the public demand regarding the holiday on the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh.

Maharaja Hari Singh was the last ruling Maharaja of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. (Agencies)

MORE FROM PAGE 03

Highway Horror:

surrounded by deep gorges and river borders as a result of which chances of survival in accidents are very less.

"In most of the accidents, the vehicles fell in the rivers and it is difficult to locate the dead bodies even," Taki said.

Mohan Lal Kaith, Senior Superintendent of Police, Traffic Rural Jammu, told Kashmir Observer that the frequent accidents are a challenge for them and there are several factors that need to be looked-up.

In the Poonch accident, he said, the driver couldn't control the vehicle because of the brake failure as a result the mini-bus which was overcrowded plunged into a deep gorge.

"The driver was also in our bad books as we had challaned him on at least six occasions," Kaith said.

He further said the min-bus has the seating capacity of over 29 people but the driver had carried over 38 people.

"You need to understand that in remote areas the buses are usually overloaded due to less public transport," Kaith added.

In Rajouri accident, he said, there was no overcrowding but the driver also lost the control over his new vehicle apparently due to "human error" "It will get clear once the mechanical report comes" he added.

In the backdrop of two back to back deadly accidents leading to public outcry, traffic police have tightened the noose against violators and are likely to intensify the road safety measures.

"We have directed all the SHO's to go for FIR's against the drivers who resort to overloading of passengers," Kaith added.

While rejecting the allegation, Javid Naik, who operates a tour and travel company from Doda region, said they don't resort to overloading and drive very sensibly.

"If the passenger vehicles are overloaded, what about the private vehicles that become the cause of accidents," Naik said, adding "These are mere allegations. The truth is that the government is not serious about the maintenance of roads and other infrastructure in the region"

Sources said that the traffic department lacks manpower and faces a staff crunch.

"We don't have staff to deploy at vulnerable stretches, and to check the overloading of passengers at most of the places," said an SSP rank officer, who wished not to be named.

He further added that the department is not in a position to deploy traffic personnel on every route of the region.

However, Shabir Ahmad Malik Superintendent of police (SSP) Traffic, NHW, Ramban argued that in 80 percent of the accident cases, the drivers are responsible.

"First they overload the vehicle, then they either use mobile or do rash driving despite knowing well that the terrain is hilly," said Malik, who is overseeing the treacherous stretch of Srinagar-Jammu national highway.

He, however, said that "engineering fault" is also one of the factors that the government needs to look into.

"The hilly roads need to be guarded with crash barriers. The super elevation of the roads is to reduce the tendency of vehicles to overturn in transverse slopes," Malik added.

Malik further noted that the reason Chenab and Pir Panjal witnessed massive traffic casualties is that the vehicle falls in a deep gorge and ultimately goes into China River.

"The number of the casualties are high because it's very difficult and time consuming to rescue the injured," he added.

However the locals said the lack of infrastructure and less transport in the region is one of the main reasons for the spike in accidents.

"The government has never focused on Chenab and Pir Panchal. Their entire focus was always on Kashmir and Jammu city," Zubair Ahmad Khan, a resident of Kishtwar alleged.

Khan said the people have no other option but to choose the overloaded bus because there is very less public transport in the district.

However, be it faulty road engineering and pathetic condition of roads the people of the region continuously become the victims of road rage.

Ex-Governor Malik

Jaitley about the situation and sought directions from the Centre. He said he had told Jaitley that if he got a letter from Mehbooba Mufti staking claim to form the Government, "I am bound to call her for oath".

The Centre had not given him any advice and told him to do what he thought was appropriate. He had then

dissolved the Assembly in November 2018, Malik said.

Mehbooba Mufti wanted to reach the Governor's house with the support of 56 MLAs which included the Congress and the NC, but the letter could not be delivered as the fax machine of the Raj Bhavan in Jammu was out of order.

'Today's Era

the two leaders after the Ukraine conflict began in February.

"I know today's era is not of war. We discussed this issue with you on phone several times, that democracy, diplomacy and dialogue touch the entire world. We will have the opportunity to talk today about how we can move forward on the road of peace in the coming days," Modi said.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said the prime minister reiterated his call for an early cessation of hostilities and the need for dialogue and diplomacy in the context of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

On his part, Putin told Modi that he was aware of India's concerns over the Ukraine conflict and that Russia will do everything possible to end it as soon as possible.

"I know about your position on the conflict in Ukraine. I know about your concerns. I know that you share these concerns and we all want an end to all of these as soon as possible," Putin said in his televised opening remarks at the meeting.

The Russian President said Ukraine has refused to engage in the negotiation process and it wants to achieve its "objectives on the battlefield militarily."

"We will keep you abreast of everything that is happening over there," Putin conveyed to Modi.

Following the meeting, Modi described the talks as "wonderful".

"Had a wonderful meeting with President Putin. We got the opportunity to discuss furthering India-Russia cooperation in sectors such as trade, energy, defence and more. We also discussed other bilateral and global issues," he tweeted.

The MEA said the two leaders appreciated the sustained momentum in bilateral ties, including contacts at various levels, adding they discussed important issues of bilateral cooperation as well as regional and global issues of interest.

"The discussions also pertained to global food security, energy security and availability of fertilisers in the context of the challenges emanating from the current geo-political situation," it said.

In his opening remarks, President Putin said the ties between India and Russia continued to develop "very rapidly" and both sides are actively engaged at international platforms on key issues.

"It is important that we constantly

coordinate our positions," he said.

Putin also referred to increase in bilateral trade turnover.

"The trade turnover is growing, in particular due to the supplies, as you asked to do, of additional deliveries of Russian fertilizers to the Indian market," Putin said.

"Deliveries of fertilizers from Russia to India have increased by more than eight times," he added.

The prime minister said he is thankful to Russia and Ukraine for facilitating rescue of Indian students from various areas of Ukraine in the initial phase of the conflict.

"I would like to thank Ukraine and you because in the initial days of this crisis, thousands of our students were stuck in Ukraine. We managed to get our students safely out of Ukraine with help from you and Ukraine. I am thankful to both the countries," he said.

The prime minister said ties between India and Russia have strengthened manifold and New Delhi values its relationship with Moscow.

"Ties between India and Russia have grown manifold. We give importance to the relationship as we have been friends who have stayed together for many decades and the world knows what Russia's relations with India have been and what India's relationship with Russia have been. The world knows that this is an unbreakable friendship," Modi said.

In his remarks, Putin also talked about his "warm memories" of visiting India in December last year and invited Modi to visit Russia.

Putin also greeted Modi on his birthday on Saturday.

"I also know that tomorrow, my dear friend, you are about to celebrate your birthday. As part of Russian tradition we never offer congratulations in advance. So I cannot do that right now...we wish all the very best to the friendly Indian nation and we wish prosperity to India under your leadership," he said.

In a tweet, the prime minister's office described the talks as "productive".

"The two leaders had productive discussions on a wide range of subjects aimed at further strengthening India-Russia ties," it said on Twitter.

In the last few months, India has increased the import of discounted crude oil from Russia notwithstanding increasing disquiet over it by several Western powers.

India's crude oil imports from Russia have jumped over 50 times since April and now it makes up for 10 per cent of all crude bought from overseas.

Last month, Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov said Russia appreciates India for not supporting attempts to isolate it in multilateral forums and that bilateral trade between the two countries is on an upswing.

India has not yet condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and it has been maintaining that the crisis must be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue.

Blast Outside

which was parked on the road, was damaged in the blast, the officials said. Police and Army personnel rushed to the spot soon after the blast and an investigation into the incident is underway, they said.

4.8 Magnitude

Earlier last week, an earthquake of magnitude 3.5 on the Richter scale occurred 62 km East-North-East of Katra in Jammu and Kashmir National Center for Seismology (NCS) is the nodal agency of the Government of India for monitoring earthquake activity in the country.

23 New Covid

the highest six new cases of virus, Srinagar 5, Baramulla 2 and one each in Kupwara , Anantnag and Kulgam. No new cases were detected in the remaining four districts of Pulwama, Bandipora, Ganderbal and Shopian.

In the winter capital, officials said, six new cases of Covid-19 were detected in Jammu and one in Doda. The remaining eight districts of Udhampur, Rajouri, Kathua, Samba, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramban and Reasi registered no new cases of Coronavirus.

Also, the officials said that the death toll in the pandemic remained unchanged at 4784 in J&K–2351 in Jammu and 2433 in the Valley, as no fresh fatality was reported during the last 24 hours.

"Moreover, 43 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and been discharged from various hospitals including 09 from Jammu division and 34 from Kashmir division," they added.

Minor Taken

save the minor girl but the beast disappeared in the dark.

Following an alarm by the family, the villagers launched a search operation to trace the minor girl. Police also reached the village and started searches.

The searches for the girl were going on when the last reports came in.

LG To Unveil

the project, had started construction work on the multiplex at Shivpora near Badami Bagh Cantonment, around two years ago.

Dhar also runs Delhi Public School (DPS) Srinagar, a prominent school in the city. His sons Vikas and Vishal worked keenly at the project, first of its kind in the Valley.

Dhars have also organised a special screening of Amir Khan starrer Laal Singh Chaddha on the inauguration of the multiplex.

Omar Responds To Twitter Video Featuring J&K BJP Chief 'Political Opponents Aren't Enemies'

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Political opponents are not enemies and politics is not about division and hatred, National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah said on Friday.

His remarks were in response to a video posted on Twitter wherein a netizen hinted at some backdoor understanding between the National Conference (NC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In the video, Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina describe Abdullah as a "gem" among top political leaders in the Union territory. "As I became a member of the assembly when Omar was also there, we saw that as an individual, as a

person, Omar Abdullah is a gem among the top political leaders in Jammu and Kashmir... so we are friends as well," Raina said.

He added that Abdullah was also the first person to call him when he was suffering from coronavirus. Responding to the tweet, the NC leader said politicians do not have to hate each other personally while disagreeing politically.

"Why is politics all about division & hatred? Where does it say that to disagree politically we also have to hate each other personally? I have political opponents, I don't have enemies," he said in a series of tweets. "I'm grateful for Ravinder's kind words & I'm glad they won't stop us opposing each other," he added.

ECI Releases BLO e-Patrika To Establish Direct Communication With BLOs

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission of India Friday released a new digital publication 'BLO e-Patrika' at an interactive session held with BLOs spread across the States in India.

Over 350 BLOs joined via video-conferencing from the office of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) in States/UTs and 50 BLOs from the nearby states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi joined the launch event physically at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

The BLOs participated enthusiastically during the interaction with the Commission sharing their experiences, challenges they come across while performing their duties and success stories.

Today's event was a first-of-its-kind direct interaction by the Commission with the BLOs across the country. Senior officials from the Election Commission and CEOs of all States (via video conferencing) were present during the event.

Addressing the gathering, CEC Rajiv Kumar acknowledged that BLOs perform a monumental role

as fundamental blocks of the ECI system being the most effective field level institution, the direct link of the Commission with the people and facilitating their participation in strengthening democracy.

Kumar assured the BLOs that the Commission recognises the strengths of BLO institution which with its multifaceted presence ensures door step delivery of services to voters. BLOs are the primary source of information for every voter across the length and breadth of the country.

CEC added that the intent behind introducing BLO e-Patrika is to ensure a cascading information model for a better informed and motivated Booth Level Officer.

EC Anup Chandra Pandey during the launch event said that the idea behind introducing this bi-monthly e-magazine is a novel initiative of the Commission.

Pandey said the Patrika in fact provides a platform for three way communication - A platform for ECI to share instructions till ground level, for sharing feedback and success stories and facilitating learning of interstate best practices.

KO IMPACT: Authorities Wake Up to Stinky State At Srinagar Airport

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: A day after Kashmir Observer carried a story on how the unhealthy state of washrooms inside the Srinagar International Airport (SXR) was hampering smooth travel, authorities have swung into action and begun to clean the washrooms inside the terminal.

Sources revealed that authorities have taken note of the "unhygienic washrooms" and begun cleaning them.

Passengers had long complained of unclean washrooms inside the airport terminal.

Earlier, a passenger speaking on anonymity had told Kashmir Observer that Lavatories are unclean with dysfunctional flush systems and no toilet papers.

"The stink coming out from washrooms is strong that it even can be felt in the seating areas"

Another issue which passengers had long complained about was the inadequate seating at the airport.

Much to the respite of passengers, Officials of the Srinagar International Airport (SXR) say the issues of unclean washrooms and inadequate seating is being looked into.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Director Srinagar International Airport, Kuldeep Singh said that authorities have taken notice of the issues brought forth by the passengers.

"Washrooms at the airport are being cleaned and unused bottles left in washroom premises are also being removed" he said.

On the issue of inadequate seating for passengers, he said "adequate seating is also being increased to the adequate number so that passengers face no problems.

Govt Orders Smooth Movement Of Fruit, Vegetable Trucks In Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday directed the concerned officials of the Union Territory to ensure smooth movement of trucks carrying fruit and vegetable to various markets.

The directions were issued by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department (APD), Atal Dulloo who chaired a meeting at civil secretariat here to discuss the issues pertaining to the movement of trucks carrying fruits and vegetables through the National Highway and other roads in the valley.

"Dulloo directed the concerned authorities to take immediate measures so that fruit-laden trucks are provided a smooth passage," an official spokesman said.

He said the ACS directed police and traffic authorities to provide round-the-clock and hassle-free passage to the fruit-laden trucks on the interior roads and highways on priority basis and avoid their unwarranted stoppages.

He also directed them to monitor the fruit transportation on a daily basis, besides holding review meetings with fruit growers and concerned officers.

Dulloo said that fruits and vegetables, being perishable commodities, need hassle-free passage and all measures should be taken to ensure prompt and remunerative marketing of such products.

Earlier, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti had appealed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to look into the complaints of transporters with respect to movement of fruit and vegetable trucks.

"Unfortunately that apple laden trucks are stuck on NH for days altogether. The apple business - a mainstay of our local economy already faces a major crisis. Now, hindrances in transportation & low rates are causing huge losses. Request @manojsinha_ to intervene," Mehbooba tweeted.



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Govt Approves Shifting Of Paediatric Services Of GB Pant To Children's Hospital Bemina

'Principal GMC to share detailed action plan for shifting of CD hospital to GB Pant'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Government on Friday formally approved shifting of paediatric services of GB Pant Hospital to newly constructed 500 Bedded Children Hospital Bemina Srinagar, by Principal, GMC Srinagar after assessing the proper functionality of all vital aspects and continuation of Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgical services will continue to function at GB Pant hospital.

In order to shift CD hospital Srinagar to GB Pant hospital Principal GMC Srinagar has been asked to share a detailed proposal delineating holistic action plan.

"In the interest of seamless patient care, sanction is hereby accorded to shifting of entire paediatric services of GB Pant Hospital Srinagar to newly constructed 500 Bedded Children Hospital Bemina Srinagar, by Principal, GMC Srinagar after assessing the proper functionality of all vital aspects and continuation of Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgical services along with dispensaries and commercial services at GB Pant Hospital Srinagar as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)," reads the order.

The order also reads that for shifting of Chest Diseases Hospital Srinagar to the GB Pant by

Principal GMC Srinagar, a detailed proposal delineating holistic action plan shall be shared with the Department for Procurement of Machinery and Equipment such as MRI, Other Paediatric Equipment etc, originally approved for GB Pant Hospital and its installation at newly constructed 500 Bedded Children Hospital Bemina by Managing Director, J&K Medical Supplies Corporation Limited and utilization of CT Scan machine available at make-shift DRDO, hospital Srinagar for paediatric services at 500 Bedded Children Hospital Bemina Srinagar, by Principal GMC Srinagar.

Merrymaking In Jammu On Declaring Hari Singh's B'day As Public Holiday

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Celebrations broke out at various places in Jammu on Friday as people danced to tunes of drumbeats and distributed sweets following the declaration of Maharaja Hari Singh's birth anniversary on September 23 as a public holiday.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the decision has been taken in view of the aspirations and feelings of the people and the great contribution of the Maharaja.

People assembled at different places, particularly at Tawi bridge, and danced to tunes of drumbeats and distributed sweets as they hailed the government's move as "historic" and "monumental".

Besides, Karni Sena, Team Jammu, and various Rajput associations also celebrated the announcement with great pomp and show, and chanted pro-Maharaja slogans.

The Lieutenant Governor said Ma-

haraja Hari Singh was a great educationist, progressive thinker, social reformer and a towering man of ideas and ideals.

"The public holiday will be a fitting tribute to Maharaja Hari Singh Ji's rich legacy," he observed.

Praising the decision of the government, former deputy chief minister Nirmal Singh told reporters here that the demand of the Dogras of the region have been fulfilled after 72 years.

Dogra Sadar Sabha chief and former minister Gulchain Singh Charak said Maharaja's birth anniversary should be celebrated as "social justice day" because the ruler not only delivered justice to all, but also undertook great reforms.

The announcement was made following Sinha's meeting with a delegation comprising prominent political leaders, members of Yuva Rajput Sabha, civil society members, including head of Jammu and Kashmir transport union, at the Raj Bhavan on Thursday.

Mehbooba Condemns PSA On Clerics

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday condemned the booking of clerics under the Public Safety Act by the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

"If normalcy as claimed by GOI has indeed returned to J&K with zero incidents of stone pelting & other activities considered anti-na-



tional, why are they booking religious scholars under draconian laws like PSA?" Mehbooba said in a tweet.

"Outrightly condemn such actions that reflect BJP's communal mindset."

The Peoples Democratic Party president was reacting to government's move to book five people, including three clerics, under the stringent Public Safety Act.

DIC Shopian Conducts Media Tour To Zampathri, Keller

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: To highlight and promote the virgin tourist destinations being developed by District Administration Shopian under the aegis of J&K UT Government, the District Information Centre (DIC) Shopian Friday conducted a media tour to Zampathri, one of such picturesque destinations in the district.

As Nature has bestowed Kashmir with majestic mountains, beautiful valleys, lakes, rivers, picturesque places etc., the present dispensation has been working to develop and tap the potential of less known or unknown destinations in the district to give tourists the chance to enjoy colours of nature.

Zampathri, 20 kms away from Shopian Town, in Keller Block has many breathtaking things on offer, ranging from mesmerizing beauty of lush green meadows and plains, views of gushing waters of Romshi River, other streams, and captivating rich tribal culture. The area is also suited for Paragliding, Trekking, Camping and other adventurous activities.

Gaddar Meadow, once of the largest in Valley, Ringward, Chotimarg shall be a delight for tourists, who are more interested in trekking and camping.

The media tour to Zampathri is District Administration's one of such exercises to promote newly developed/ notified tourist destinations in the district under Tourist Villages Network

Programme (TVNP) besides other tourism activities so that tourists get to know about these serene places to enjoy the beauty of nature.

Media persons belonging to different national and local organisations took part in the exposure tour and highlighted the significance of the government's historic decision of notifying the area under TVNP of Mission Youth.

The locals while speaking to the media expressed happiness about the inclusion of the village under TVNP. They appreciated UT and the District Administration for leaving no stone unturned to bring destinations with tourist potential on tourism map besides creating opportunities for locals to earn for their living in the shape of home-stays, creating campsites, restaurants, handicraft kiosks/shops, etc.

Mir Hussain Kasana, a local while thanking the UT Government said that vast employment opportunities shall get created especially for the unemployed youth due to the inclusion of villages in TVNP.

Similarly, Sajad Hussain Wani, a resident of Keller also thanked the government and said that long pending demand of the locals has been met by this decision of Mission Youth and that economic prosperity for the area is in offing once the village is developed in line with the ecological needs of the area.

Security Reviewed At Vaishno Devi Shrine Ahead Of Navratri

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Ahead of Navratri, authorities on Friday reviewed the security situation at Mata Vaishno Devi cave shrine located in Trikuta hills in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, officials said.

In view of the forthcoming Navratri festival and expected rush of pilgrims at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, DIG, Udhampur-Reasi range, Mohd Suleman Choudhary conducted a security review meeting at Katra, the base camp of the cave shrine, they said.

During the meeting, special emphasis was given to ensure fool proof security of the yatri, the officials said. Strict directions were passed to carry out a thorough checking of suspected people so that no unwanted element is allowed to indulge in any kind

of criminal activities or any action which may prove prejudicial to the security of the area, they said.

A joint long-range patrols of police and CRPF have also been launched round the clock in the entire area of Katra and Bhawan and its surrounding areas, the officials said. The DIG also directed to conduct a joint security drill of security forces for the security of the shrine and its surroundings.

J&K Haj Committee Chairperson Discusses Haj-2023 Preparation

Observer News Service


SRINAGAR: Safina Baig, Chairperson, J&K UT Haj Committee convened a meeting at Haj House Bemina, here to take an overview of Haj-2022 and discuss preparation for Haj-2023, Budget Estimates, repair/ renovation of infrastructure and auction of unserviceable/ scrap items.

Among others, Talib Hussain Choudhary, Member; Mohammad Rafiq Chishti, Member; Molvi Mohammad Ashraf, Member; Syed Mohammad Rafiq, Member; Dr. Abdul Salam Mir, Executive Officer; Irshad Ahmad Budoo, Haj Officer and Mohammad Irfan Akhooon, Accountant attended the meeting.

The meeting held threadbare discussion regarding the agenda points and it was decided that the matter regarding hardships faced by Haj pilgrims of J&K UT on account of haphazard grouping/ congestion in rooms and distant accommodation for old aged pilgrims shall be taken up with HCoI / CGI Jeddah to avoid recurrence of such accommodation problems during Haj - 2023.

It was also decided that two members from J&K UT Haj Committee shall be kept in the Selection Committee for the interview of KhadimUIHuajj and no repeater KUH shall be selected for next Haj - 2023.

Regarding the performance of KhadimUIHuajj, it was informed that there would be more accountability, reception of daily updates from KUHs, besides recommendation of strict disciplinary action to the respective departments of KUHs against the defaulters.



GOVERNMENT DENTAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL

SHIREEN BAGH, SRINAGAR

Email Address: gdcsrinagai@gmail.com

PHONE NO: 0194-2504701, 0194-2504702 | FAX NO: 0194 - 2504703.

Subject:- Cancellation of House Job form.

ORDER

The application of the candidate namely Qudsi Fatima, D/o: Abdul Wahab Rather who has applied for the House Job advertised vide Notification No. GDC/Estt/Notification/HJ/ File-2022/4861-76, dated: 30.06.2022 is hereby cancelled on account of non-crediting of the fees in the account of this Institution as per the bank statement.

No. GDC/Estt/House Job/6828-35
Dated:- 15-09-2022
DIPK-10127-22

[Mr. Arshid Hussain Ashai]
Administrative Officer
Govt. Dental College & Hospital,
Srinagar.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER

Special Forest Division Kulgam

Extension Notice

Reference to: - e-NIT NO: -14 of 2022-23DATED: -05-09-2022 (S.No.2,3,4,5&6)

Name of Works:-

S.No.2.
Planting of Polybag raised saplings and Naked root and Fruit plant saplings and providing and fixing of Barbed wire fencing with Angle Iron Posts in cement concrete Blocks in Complt. N-03 Nandimarg of Kulgam Forest Division.

S.No.3.
Planting of Polybag raised saplings, Naked root and Fruit plant saplings and providing and fixing of Barbed wire fencing with Angle Iron Posts in cement concrete Blocks in Complt. V35a Khushidar of Kulgam Forest Division.

S.No.4.
Planting of Polybag raised saplings, Naked root and Fruit plant saplings and providing and fixing of Barbed wire fencing with Angle Iron Posts in cement concrete Blocks in Complt. N-48 Gudder of Kulgam Forest Division.

S.No.5.
Planting of Naked root and Fruit plant saplings and providing and fixing of Barbed wire fencing with Angle Iron Posts in cement concrete Blocks in Complt. N-09 Dregden of Kulgam Forest Division.

S.No.6.
Planting of Naked root saplings and providing and fixing of Barbed wire fencing with Angle Iron Posts in cement concrete Blocks in Complt. N-15 D.K.Marg of Kulgam Forest Division.
Due to poor response the critical dates for above noted works are hereby extended as per the schedule mentioned below:-

1	Bid submission End date	21-09-2022 upto 6:00 PM
2	Date & time of opening of bids (online)	22-09-2022 at 11:30 AM

All the terms and conditions will be same as mentioned in Tender Notice and Document

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer,
Special Forest Division
Kulgam

Dated:15/09/2022
DIPK-10107/22



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*T&C apply

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