

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

Winter Woes: Pollution, Post-Covid Effect Escalating Panting In Kashmir

Augib Javed

Srinagar: With the onset of winter, the hospitals in the valley are witnessing a huge rush of patients with respiratory ailments, especially chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, is a long-term lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. Sources told Kashmir Observer that the patient flow is showing "increase manifold" this winter with hundreds of patents visit to Government

Chest Disease (CD) Hospital, JVC Bemina, Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), State Hospital (SMHS) and other tertiary care hospitals for treatment. An official from the CD hospital told Kashmir Observer that the flow of patients in OutPatient Department (OPD) remains 200-300 per day. "But we are expecting more patients, especially elderly and covid-19 hit patients in coming months," Dr. Saleem Tak, Medical Superintendent, CD Hospital told Kashmir Observer.



At the same time, the medical experts and leading pulmonologists observe that post COVID-19 the situation of these patients have become severe and more people land

I USED TO TAKE MY GRANDFATHER to Jammu during every winter for the last eight years but this year we have decided to stay here only because the fear of COVID has gripped everyone especially those suffering from pulmonary diseases."

up in the hospitals.

"...The frequency of these patients who had contracted covid-19 earlier have risen since the winter is approaching. They are facing post-covid respiratory issues," Dr. Syed Mudassir Qadri, Prof. SKIMS Pulmonary and Internal Medicine Consultant.

Dr. Qadri further said patients suffer from a syndrome known as post-viral bronchial hyperreactivity and they have to put those patients on inhalers. All the patients, Dr. Qadri said, need to go for an influenza vaccination. He further maintained that

the mucus membranes become dry in dry weather as a result they become vulnerable to infection "that is why you witness a lot of respiratory issues during winters," he added. Every year, during winters, a large number of Asthma patients from Kashmir travel to places like Jammu, Delhi and Mumbai to escape the bone-chilling cold. "My father, who is a fibrosis patient, was advised by the Doctors at SKIMS to shift to Jammu for winter. So we came to Jammu for **More on P10**

Days Of Indiscretion And Arbitrariness Over: LG

'Today, A Transparent System Is Giving Boost To J&K's Economy And Making Its Growth Sustainable'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Asserting that the days of indiscretion and arbitrariness are over in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday that his administration has established fairness and transparency in the system to remove the development imbalances and to weed out nepotism and corruption.

Sinha made these remarks while addressing a gathering during the Back to Village programme held at Garkhal border village of Akhnoor in Jammu on Wednesday, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, observed that this participative Jan-Abhiyan promotes people-centric development for social transformation and focuses on improving the productivity of the rural J&K through increased ease of living.

Sinha, he said, also maintained that people's participation in development of border



villages is significant for social advancement and unleashing the spirit of self-reliance.

"Back to Village provides an opportunity for effective planning, roadmap for execution with PRIs to fulfil the dream of Gram Swaraj," the LG said.

Terming Border villages as a strategic asset, the LG, as per the spokesperson said the

development of border villages is an essential precondition to build an inclusive society where there would be no discrimination and everyone enjoys equal share of opportunity.

Emphasising that one-size-fits-all approach will not be feasible for transforming rural areas because each village has its unique identity and

requirements, the LG, he said, stressed that both administration and people must discuss and deliberate upon the aspirations of people and work on the projects that are viable and sustainable.

Sinha, the spokesperson said, maintained that solutions to the crucial issues will come from the people while directing the officers to interact with Gram Panchayat on first Monday of every month to understand the people's problems, realize their strength and bridge the chasm between policy and implementation for transformation of rural landscape.

"We have established fairness and transparency in the system to remove the development imbalances and to weed out nepotism and corruption. Today, a transparent system is giving boost to J&K's economy and making its growth sustainable," the LG said, while noting that the days **More on P10**

MeT Predicts Dry Weather For 2 Days

Agencies

Srinagar: Meteorological department here on Wednesday forecast 'mainly dry weather' in Jammu and Kashmir during the two days and a wet spell associated with the possibility of scattered light to moderate rain and snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir from November 5 to 8.

"Mainly dry weather over Jammu and Kashmir is expected till November 4," an official of the department said.

From November 5-8, he said, weather is expected to be cloudy with scattered light to moderate rain/snowfall over middle and higher reaches. "There is no forecast of heavy snowfall. (forecast confidence upto75%)," he said.

Meanwhile light snowfall was reported on higher reaches while rains lashed plains during the last 24 hours till 0830 hours today. He said Srinagar received 0.2mm of rainfall, Qazigund had 1.4mm, Pahalgam 7.9mm, Kokernag 0.8mm, Gulmarg 3.0mm, Jammu 0.2mm, Banihal 0.6mm and Baderwah 5.8mm. Meanwhile, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 5.0°C against 7.6°C on the previous night. The temperature **More on P10**

NC Sounds Poll Bugle, Appoint Constituency Incharges



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) on Wednesday issued a list of constituency incharges of Kashmir Valley to garner support for the party ahead of assembly elections slated to be held after completion of electoral rolls in the Union Territory. The list of 47 Constituency Incharges of the Valley was approved by NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah and released to the media by Party General Secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar on Wednesday.

The order, released by Sagar, also asked the office bearers in constituencies to coordinate with their respective Constituency Incharges and ensure full support to them, a party spokesperson said. "The order also enjoined respective Incharges to remain in regular touch with public, party workers and block and Halqa office bearers for making the party stronger at grass root level," he added.

According to the order, Sagar has been nominated incharge of Khanyar constituency while his son Salman from Hazratbal. Ahsan Pardesi has been named incharge of Lal Chowk constituency. Mushtaq Guroo Channapora, Tanvir Sadiq Zadibal, Mubarak Gul Eidgah, Irfan Shah Batamaloo and Shameema Firdous HabbaKadal.

Omar's close aide Nasir Aslam Wani (Sogami) is constituency incharge of Kupwara, Kafeel-Ur-Rehman Karnah, Saifullah Mir Trehgam, Qaiser Jamsheed Lone Lolab, Choudhary Mohammad Ramzaan Handwara, Shafqat Watali Langate, Irshad Ahmad Kar Sopore, Javed Ahmad Dar Rafiabad, Dr Sajjad Uri, Ghulam Hassan Rahi Baramulla, Farooq Ahmad Shah Tangmarg, Mohammad Yaqoob Wani Wagoor, Reyaz Ahmad Bedar Pattan, Hilal Akbar Lone Sonawari, Nazir Ahmad Malik Bandipora, Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurez, Mian Altaf Kangan, Ghulam Nabi Rather Ganderbal.

Similarly, Aga Ruhullah has been appointed constituency incharge of Budgam, Dr Mohammad Shafi Beerwah, Saifudin Bhat Khan Sahib, Ab Rahim Rather Char-i-Sharief, Ali Mohammad Dar Chadoora.

Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi has been named incharge of Pampore constituency. Dr Ghulam Nabi Bhat Tral, Mohammad Khalil Bandh Pulwama, GhMohiuddin Mir Rajpora, Showkat Ganaie Zainpora, Sheikh Mohammad Rafi Shopian, Sakina Itoo D.H. Pora, Imran Nabi Dar Kulgam, Feroze Shah Devsar, Tauqeer Ahmad Dooru, Ab Majeed Bhat (Larmi) Anantnag West, Peer Mohammad Hussain Anantnag, Dr Bashir Veeri Bijbehara, Riyaz Khan Anantnag East and Altaf Ahmad Kaloo **More on P10**

Schools Not To Charge Nov 2022-March 2023 Fee

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Committee for Fixation and Regulation of Fee of Private Schools (FFRC) on Wednesday directed all schools in the valley not to charge annual fees for the period from November 2022 to March 2023 following the change of academic calendar by the government.

Managements of all the private schools "are restrained from charging and collecting annual fee for the period November 2022 to March 2023. Any breach of this order will result in initiating action according to law," FFRC chairman Justice (ret'd) M H Attar said in an order.

The FFRC order was issued in response to Tyndale Biscoe

and Mallinson School, and two other affiliate institutions, asking parents to pay annual fee for the five-month period as the current academic session had been extended by virtue of the government order.

The Jammu and Kashmir State Board of Education used to conduct annual examinations for classes 10, 11 and 12 for students hailing from Kashmir and some parts of Jammu region in the months of October and November.

However, a government order last month aligned the academic calendar of all schools in the Union territory with the rest of the country.

The FFRC directive said that during an interaction with the managements of these four schools, it was **More on P10**

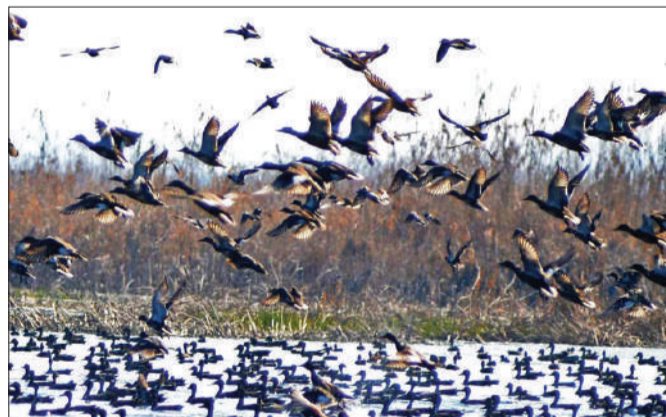
Avian Guests Keep Their Date With Kashmir

Zaid Bin Shabir

Srinagar- Navigating with the help of stars, moon and peaks and maintaining a centuries-old tryst with Kashmir valley, the migratory birds have started to arrive here from far-off lands to ward-off the extreme cold of their summer homes for their transitory habitat, Kashmir.

Each year, these hardy souls embark on a journey—ranging from 3500 kms to 5300 kms—to migrate from their breeding grounds in Siberia, North-China, Philippines and North Europe to overwinter in the relatively less harsh wetlands of Kashmir.

While Speaking with Kashmir Observer, Regional Wildlife Warden (Kashmir) Rashid



Naqash, said that these migratory birds have already started arriving in Kashmir's wetland and their numbers have reached to over 2 lakh.

"So far, over 2 lakh migratory birds have reached the Valley. Their numbers are expected to increase manifold in November & December as that **More on P10**

Man Dies After Boat Capsizes In Wular

One person died and two others were successful in making it back to the embankment after a boat they were travelling in capsized in Wular Lake in Bandipora district on Wednesday. Officials said that three persons were carrying willow twigs when the boat suddenly sank near Banyari village of north Kashmir district this morning. While two persons swam their way back to safety and reached the embankment, they said, the third one went missing and a rescue operation was launched to retrieve his body. They said added that after hectic efforts, his body was retrieved in the afternoon. The deceased has been identified as Javed Ahmed Dar son of Ghulam Mohammad Dar of Banyari.

CB Charges Man For Online Fraud

The Economic Offence Wing of Crime Branch Kashmir on Wednesday against an accused for cheating a man on pretext of installing a mobile tower and duped him of huge amount of money. In a statement, EOW produced a charge sheet in case FIR No. 14/2020 U/S 420 RPC, 66-D IT Act of P/S Crime Branch Kashmir (EOW, Srinagar) against Sumit Kumar S/o Bagwandas of Haryana before the court of Sub Registrar Srinagar. The statement reads that the instant case had been registered upon receipt of written complaint, wherein it was alleged that he was cheated online by some fraudsters. "The investigation conducted revealed that the complainant had been cheated by Sumit Kumar S/o Bagwandas **More on P10**

Conductor Dies As JCB Skids Off Road

A conductor of JCB died while driver and another person were injured after it skidded off the road at Kokran Bridge on Zoji La in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Wednesday. News agency KNO quoting an official reported that a JCB skidded off the road when it was coming from Kargil toward Sonamarg today afternoon. He said that in the incident the driver identified as Arun Singh of Punjab and the conductor identified as Muneer Ahmad of Baramulla and the other person identified as Sajid Ahmad of Baramulla. He said that all there were shifted to PHC Sonamarg, where the conductor was declared dead on arrival.



Fire Injures Two In Sumbal



Two persons were injured after fire broke out in a residential house in Chewa area of Sumbal in North Kashmir's Bandipora district on Wednesday. News agency KNO quoting an official reported that a fire broke out in a residential house in Chewa village today. He said that in the incident two persons were injured, while fire tenders reached the spot to douse the flames. He added that the injured were shifted to CHC Sumbal for treatment.

Leh Highway Reopens For Traffic

The traffic movement on Srinagar-Leh highway was restored on Wednesday, a day after snowfall near Zoji La forced the closure of the strategic highway. An official said that the road was opened for both ways traffic on Wednesday morning. Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Traffic police on its official Twitter handle also informed that traffic on the highway has been restored. **More on P10**



CRPF Promotes 2 Women Officers As IGs

In a first, the CRPF has appointed two women officers from its cadre as Inspectors General (IG) of its specialised anti-riots unit RAF and the Bihar Sector. The proverbial glass ceiling in the country's largest paramilitary force with 3.25 lakh personnel has broken after a long wait of 35 years as the first women officers joined the Central Reserve Police Force in 1987. There have been women Indian Police Service (IPS) officers heading CRPF formations and at present there are at least three such officers in the force. Officials said as part of a recent transfer/posting order issued by the force headquarters here, Annie Abraham has been appointed as the IG of the blue duangree donning Rapid Action Force (RAF) **More on P10**



DPS Srinagar Shines At The Virtual Inter-DPS Quiz

Observer News Service

Srinagar: DPS Srinagar was the runner-up at the junior level in the Virtual Inter-DPS Quiz organised by the DPS Society on Monday, 31st October 2022.

Simultaneously, the senior team qualified for the Nationals by beating 30 schools to secure their spot in the National Finale that will be held in December 2022 at DPS Mathura Road. Imaad Tahir and Hamza Bukhari of class VIII formed the junior team, while Ahmed Ibaad of class XI and Khalid Khursheed of class X formed the senior team.

The theme of the quiz for both the teams was 75 Years of India's Independence with multiple sub-themes related to sports, art, literature, music, corporate affairs and associated fields. The quiz began at 8 AM with the preliminary round followed by three rounds that ended at 4.45 PM with MCQs, direct oral questions and Visual Still questions.

The junior team was trained and accompa-

nied by Mr Javid Wani (STT faculty, middle) and the senior team by Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed Bhat (SST faculty, Secondary). IT support was provided by the school IT department with Mr. Javid Sofi (IT faculty, Senior) being the Tech head for the event.

Congratulating the participants for their stellar efforts, the Principal Shafaq Afshan said, "Both the juniors and seniors made us proud by not just outshining their peers, but also by their wit, awareness and grasp of facts and knowledge. Our tradition of excellence is forged precisely from such feats." The Chairman Vijay Dhar too congratulated the participants and said, "DPS Srinagar stands as a synonym for excellence, and this performance proves it yet again, though it hardly needs proving anymore. But we refuse to be complacent, and stand firm in our resolution to let talent of Kashmir shine at all platforms. Congratulations to the participants once again."

SUKOON Awareness Campaign Launched On Electronic Visual Displays

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to create mass awareness among youth regarding the features of SUKON, a Mental Helpline and help that can be availed, the Divisional Administration Kashmir launched SUKON Helpline campaign through visual display of messages through electronic display screens across the Srinagar District.

Messages to aware public of various reasons to call SUKON MENTAL HELPLINE included Seven signs Your Mental Health is getting Bad, You don't

enjoy things you liked before?, You are finding it difficult to concentrate or Focus, Your View of yourself and world feels negative, Your appetite or sleep seems different, you are starting to withdraw from friends and family, You feel exhausted or your basic activities and chores seem difficult, Nasha Mukht Bharat etc.

At a time when drug abuse among youth rang warning bells across the Kashmir Valley, Divisional Administration has swung into action to curb the menace by using iron fist against drug peddlers.

Refresher Course In Research Methodology Concludes At GCW

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The two-week long Refresher Course in Multidisciplinary Research Methodology concluded Wednesday at Government College for Women (GCW), M.A. Road here.

The course was organized by GCW Srinagar in collaboration with UGC-Human Resource Development Centre of University of Kashmir.

Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Prof. Nilofer Khan was the Chief Guest during the valedictory function of the Refresher course while as former Director General, Department of Economics and Statistics, G.A. Qureshi, was the Guest of Honour.

In her valedictory address, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nilofer Khan underscored the need for colleges and universities to collaborate for successful implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020). Prof. Khan emphasized on building the capacity of teachers, including research acumen, in the light of the requirements of NEP-2020.

Speaking about the relevance of organizing such refresher courses in research methodol-

ogy, especially for college teachers, the Vice Chancellor referred to the emphasis on the research component in the NEP-2020 even at the undergraduate level.

Stating that female teachers generally tend to conduct and publish less research work mostly owing to additional domestic responsibilities, Prof. Khan said that it is important for female educators to balance their personal and professional life.

Referring to its illustrious history, Prof. Khan said that it is a premier institute of higher education for women in the region. "Many women of eminence have studied here and earned a place of distinction in their respective fields. I am happy that the university could collaborate with this college for the refresher course," she said, while assuring of all possible assistance from the university in conducting more such productive programmes in future as well.

"Kashmir University has old ties with this college though it's no longer affiliated with us, but we would love to do hand-holding and collaborate in various programmes," Prof. Khan said.

Drug Addiction Is Axis Of All Social Evils: DC Srinagar

During the current year, 132 FIRs were registered against drug peddlers and narcotic smugglers: Police

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to discuss the action plan to curb the drug abuse and narcotic trade in Srinagar, a District Level Committee of Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was held on Wednesday under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohamad Aijaz Asad here.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner discussed threadbare various issues related to menace of drug addiction, areas of concern, age group of addicts, hot spots of drug peddling/abuse besides, cultivation of illicit poppy and cannabis in the District.

The DC stressed upon the Officers of all the line Departments particularly the members of the NCORD which was floated by the Government to reinforce the steps at different levels to combat drug-trafficking and ensure better coordination among the Departments.

The DC also emphasized on conducting awareness camps in Schools and colleges on mass scale to sensitize the youth about hazards and ill effects of consuming drugs.

The DC also asked the officers of all line departments to work in co-ordinated efforts to con-



tain the drug peddling to break the supply chain and take stringent action against the persons involved in the dangerous trade of drugs.

The DC said in order to combat this rising societal problem, multi-pronged rehabilitation, counselling and guidance policy is being implemented on ground to monitor drug abuse and take remedial measures to curb the menace.

He sought cooperation from the families particularly

from parents to overcome the menace among the youth which also leads to other social evils and crimes. He said religious heads and parents have an important role to keep the youngsters away from the use of drugs and also the family support for the affected people could lead them towards normal life.

The DC also assured the Departments that all requisite support will be provided by the district Administration for saving youth from the ill ef-

fects of the drugs.

On the occasion the Officers apprised about the situation with regard to the drug menace and shared their suggestions and measures to be taken at District level to control the drug peddling and its consumption, besides measures for rehabilitation of drug victims.

During the meeting, Superintendent of Police, apprised the chair about the overall scenario of drug abuse in Srinagar and measures taken to curb the menace. He also informed the meeting that around 1200 drug affected persons visited the Youth Development and Rehabilitation Centre at Eidgah for treatment and about 200 victims have been treated successfully at the Centre.

It was further given out that 132 FIRs were registered against drug peddlers and narcotic smugglers, while over 200 arrested during the current year in addition to Rehabilitation of 1400 Victims of Substance Abuse completed in Srinagar District.

With regard to containment of drug peddling, it was given out that PSA has been slapped against 30 peddlers in the District and about 50 persons involved in the trafficking of the drug menace are behind the bars.

A MASS CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE TB

Take Pledge to Help Persons with TB
Join as Ni-Kshay Mitra

Urge every person, every organization and representatives associated with the civil society to take up this resolution of playing an active role in building a TB free India.

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

PRADHAN MANTRI TB MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAAN

Join as Ni-Kshay Mitra and take pledge to help persons with TB.
Any Individual, NGO, Elected Representative or Corporate Institute can become Ni-Kshay Mitra.

TO JOIN AS NI-KSHAY MITRA

- Log on <https://communitysupport.nikshay.in>
- Click on "Pradhan Mantri TB MukT Bharat Abhiyaan"
- Fill-up Ni-Kshay Mitra Registration Form
- Choose persons with TB you would like to support
- Contribute by providing monthly Nutrition Kit, Diagnostic Help and Vocational Support

Ni-Kshay Helpline
1800-11-6666

Scan to know more about Ni-Kshay Mitra Abhiyaan

For more information, contact ASHA/A.N.M. or visit your Primary Health Centre

Issued in Public Interest By:
State Tuberculosis Cell,
Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
BIJBHERA: 01932-228243
PAMPOR: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

 HIJRI CALENDAR 07 Rabi ul Sani 1444	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	5:27
	ZUHR	12:14
	ASR	3:59
	Magrib	5:40
	ISHA	7:01

This Day In History

- 644 - Umar ibn al-Khattab, second Muslim caliph, is killed by a Persian slave in Medina
- 1493 - Christopher Columbus discovers island of Dominica
- 1861 - Battle of Port Royal, fought in Port Royal Sound, South Carolina begins, Union victory (US Civil War)
- 1862 - Battle until the 5th November between gunboats at Bayou Teche, a waterway in Louisiana
- 1863 - Battle of Grand Coteau in Southwestern Louisiana in the American Civil War
- 1928 - Turkey switches from Arabic to Roman alphabet
- 1931 - First commercially produced synthetic rubber manufactured
- 1936 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt wins a second term in office, defeating Republican candidate Alf Landon in the most lopsided election in American history in terms of electoral vote
- 1944 - Pro-German government of Hungary flees
- 1946 - Emperor Hirohito proclaims a new Japanese constitution
- 1952 - Egypt protests German retribution payments to Israel
- 1954 - Nobel for physics awarded to Max Born & Walter Bothe
- 1955 - First virus crystallized (announced)
- 1957 - USSR launches Sputnik 2 with a dog (Laika), 1st animal in orbit
- 1958 - USSR performs nuclear test
- 1961 - UN General Assembly unanimously elects U Thant as acting
- 1967 - Vietnam War: The Battle of Dak To begins, becoming one of the bloodiest battles of the war
- 1970 - US President Richard Nixon promises gradual troop removal of Vietnam
- 1970 - Marxist Salvador Allende inaugurated as President of Chile
- 1978 - USSR & Vietnam sign peace & friendship treaty
- 1984 - 3,000 die in 3 day anti-Sikh riot in India
- 1984 - Body of assassinated Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi cremated
- 1986 - Lebanese magazine Ash Shirra reveals secret US arms sales to Iran
- 1988 - Pakistan claims it downed Afghan warplane
- 1988 - President Reagan signs credit-card disclosure bill
- 1988 - Soviet Union agrees to allow teaching of Hebrew
- 1992 - Bill Clinton (D) wins US presidential election over

From KO Archives

DTH TV Okayed

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Union cabinet today gave its nod for allowing direct-to-home (DTH) television services, which would revolutionize broadcasting in the country. The decision came three days after an eight-member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister L K Advani prepared a unanimous, report favouring DTH, official sources said.

The KU-band DTH service offers greater and direct connectivity to the viewer providing over 100 channels through a small dish antenna doing away with intermediaries like cable operators. It has enormous penetration power to cover far flung and remote areas.

Promising enhanced picture quality, it also has the scope for interactive TV services like movie on demand and possibility of introducing value-added services like internet access, e-mail, home-shopping, banking and tele-education.

The GoM was formed nearly two years ago to go into the controversial DTH issue and place its recommendations to the Union Cabinet when Pramod Mahajan was the Information and Broadcasting Minister. Besides Advani, others in the group are HnatKfc: Minister Vishwant Sinha, Defence Minister George Fernandes, Information and Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj, Information Technology Minister Mahajan, Communications Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister Vasundra Raje and Law Minister Arun Jaitley.

(Kashmir Observer, November 03, 2000)

Impossible For State To Prevent Any Inter-Faith Marriage: Delhi High Court

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday agreed to hear a petition filed by two foreign nationals, seeking solemnisation and registration of their intended marriage under the Indian marriage law pertaining to inter-faith couples.

Granting the liberty to the counsels for the petitioners as well as the Delhi government to file a synopsis of their submissions, Justice Yashwant Varma observed that it is not possible for the State to prevent any inter-faith couple to marry but questioned whether just because the petitioners have been residing here, it would entitle them to claim the benefits under the Special Marriage Act.

The counsel for the petitioner told the court that his clients, who belong to two different faiths, have been residing in Delhi for more than six months and intend to solemnise and register their marriage under the Special Marriage Act, but are unable to apply online for the same as the website requires at least one of the parties to be an Indian.

The petitioners' lawyer submitted that one of his clients is an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) and the right to get married is part of the petitioners' right to life.



"In order to enable parties to address submissions, list the petition on December 15," the judge said.

The lawyer representing the Delhi government, Shadan Farasat, said while "marriage tourism" cannot be allowed on principle, in genuine cases, non-Indian parties who have been residing here for a sufficient period of time may be permitted to solemnise their marriage under the Special Marriage Act.

One of the petitioners is a Hindu Canadian citizen who holds an OCI card and the other is a Christian American citizen.

In their plea, the petitioners -- represented by lawyer Rishabh Kapur -- said there is no bar on non-Indians from getting their marriages solemnised and registered under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 as long as they comply with the statutory requirements and preventing two consenting adults from getting married under the Act is a violation of their right to get married.

Azerbaijan To Open Embassy In Israel, Arrests Iran Affiliated Cell

Agencies

Azerbaijan officially announced its intentions to establish a diplomatic office in Israel, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the economic-military relationship between both states, that was celebrated earlier this month.

In an interview with news site Pravda, Arzu Naghiyev, member of the Azerbaijan-Israel parliamentary friendship group, announced Baku's intentions to finally open an embassy.

Naghiyev claimed that neighboring states will no longer influence Baku's foreign policy.

"If Iran opens a consulate in Kapan and says 'Armenia is our partner,' there is no reason for us to shy away from any country. It never was the case and never will be," Naghiyev added in a clear rebuke to Iran.

On 22 October, Tehran opened its first consulate in Kapan, a contested province between Armenia and Azerbaijan, becoming the first country to establish diplomatic representation in this territory.

In a statement issued by the State Security Service in Azerbaijan on 1 November, security forces announced the arrest of a group of locals who formed a religious organization that was ideologically affiliated with Iran.

The statement alleges that Iran's intelligence service has financed

the 'Muslim Unity Movement' and has abetted it to carry acts of aggression against Azerbaijan's national security.

Additionally, they accused the arrested of undergoing military training in Iran and Syria, and being in position of "radical, religious-extremist attitudes against the ideas of modern development and a secular state."

The Times of Israel reports that a member of the group was arrested while "attempting a terrorist act" in a different country.

The tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan stem from Baku's long-standing alliance with Tel Aviv, and the military cooperation that Iran views as major security challenge.

Earlier in 2021, Azerbaijan restricted Iran's access to transit routes connecting it to Armenia, trapping hundreds of cargo shipments on the border area.

Baku has also made significant territorial gains in Artsakh, mostly thanks to the use of advanced Israeli weaponry, such as the Harop/Harpy loitering suicide drones.

"Israeli technology helps Azerbaijan provide security and safety to its nationals," said Hikmet Hajiyev, a top foreign policy adviser to President Ilham Aliyev.

Observers report that between 2016 and 2020, about 69 percent of all the arms imports to Azerbaijan originated from Israel.

Russia: Nuclear War Can't Be Won, Must Never Be Fought

Agencies

MOSCOW: Nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, the Russian Foreign Ministry reiterated Wednesday as a principle of Moscow, a statement made amid heightened Western fears of the use of nuclear arms as the Ukraine war rages on.

On its official website, the ministry stressed that the Russian military doctrine pursues "solely defensive goals."

"We are strongly convinced that in the current complicated and turbulent situation, caused by irresponsible and impudent actions aimed at undermining our national security, the most immediate task is to avoid any military clash of nuclear powers," the ministry stressed.

The ministry said that as a permanent UN Security Council member and one of the world's nuclear powers, in line with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Russia considers itself a bearer of a special responsibility in matters related to strengthening international security and strategic stability.

"Russia proceeds from the continued relevance of the existing arrangements and understandings in the field of cutting and limiting nuclear weapons, as well as reducing strategic risks and threat of international incidents and conflicts fraught with escalation to



nuclear level.

"We fully reaffirm our commitment to the Joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races of January 3, 2022," it said.

The Russian diplomatic service urged other nuclear powers "to demonstrate in practice their willingness to work on solving this top-priority task" and "to give up dangerous attempts to infringe on each other's vital interests while balancing on the brink of a direct armed conflict and encouraging provocations with weapons of mass destruction, which can lead to catastrophic consequences."

"Russia continues to advocate for a revamped, more robust architecture of international security based on ensur-

ing predictability and global strategic stability, as well as on the principles of equal rights, indivisible security, and mutual account of core interests of the parties," the ministry said.

Since the Ukraine war began this February, Western countries have interpreted various statements by Russian President Vladimir Putin as threatening to use nuclear weapons in the conflict. The Kremlin has denied any such threats.

Recently Russia has also warned Western countries of a supposed plot by Ukraine to use a dirty bomb (a conventional bomb laced with nuclear material) on its own territory and then blame Moscow. The Western countries rejected the claims, suggesting they may be meant to lay the groundwork for a Russian ruse along these lines.

Most Murders Of Journalists Go Unpunished: UNESCO

AFP

Paris: An overwhelming majority of killings of journalists across the world go unpunished, a United Nations agency reported on Wednesday.

"Impunity for killings of journalists remains unacceptably high at 86 percent," said UNESCO, the United Nations cultural organisation whose brief includes media issues.

UNESCO called for "all necessary measures to ensure that crimes committed against journalists are properly investigated and their perpetrators identified and convicted."

The organisation called the global immunity rate for journalist killings "shockingly high" in a report to coincide with the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, a UN-backed initiative.

UNESCO Director-General



Audrey Azoulay said in a statement that "freedom of expression cannot be protected when there is such a staggering number of unresolved cases".

She said impunity had a "chilling effect on investigative reporting".

While UNESCO welcomed a 9-percentage-point drop in the impunity rate over the past decade it said this was insufficient to stop what it called "the spiral of violence".

In 2020 and 2021, the period covered by the report, of the 117 journalists

murdered for doing their job, 91 were killed while off the clock.

"Several were killed in front of family members, including their children," it said.

UNESCO said it was working with member states to develop and implement national media laws and policies.

It was also training judges, prosecutors and security forces "to enforce the rights of journalists and ensure that attacks against them are investigated and prosecuted".

Pak PM Sharif Meets Chinese Prez Xi; Both Agree To Strengthen All-Weather Ties, CPEC

Press Trust of India

On his maiden visit to Beijing, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during which the two leaders agreed to strengthen the all-weather friendship and the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Shehbaz arrived in Beijing on Tuesday night on a two-day visit. This is his first visit to China since assuming office in April this year. However, this is Shehbaz's second meeting with Xi after becoming the prime minister. He met Xi last month on the sidelines of the Shang-

hai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit at Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

In his Samarkand meeting with Shehbaz, Xi had called for providing solid protection for hundreds of Chinese working on the CPEC projects.

Shehbaz and Xi on Tuesday met at the People's Great Hall of China and discussed broad-based cooperation in economy and investment besides

exchanging views on regional and global developments, Pakistan's state-run APP news agency reported on Wednesday.

The two leaders agreed to strengthen multilateral cooperation in diverse areas, including CPEC and strategic partnership, it said.

Both Shehbaz and Xi have expressed the desire to further promote the All-Weather Strategic Cooperation Partnership between their countries, the report said.

Shehbaz was the first head of state to felicitate the Chinese leader who was recently re-elected as General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) for an



unprecedented third term, perhaps for life, a privilege accorded only to party founder Mao Zedong.

Shehbaz will also meet Premier Li Keqiang and Li Zhanshu, the Chairman of China's Parliament -- the National People's Congress (NPC) -- to discuss the all-weather ties.

During his visit, a number of agreements are expected to be signed, officials said.

Women's Body Summons Delhi Police After 5 Uzbek Women Go Missing

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The DCW on Wednesday summoned a senior Delhi Police officer after five of the seven Uzbek women who were allegedly trafficked and sexually exploited in India went missing from a private shelter home here.

The Delhi Police said that it was a "sensitive" matter and they will submit their reply to the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW). The DCW has summoned the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), New Delhi, seeking an action taken report in the matter.

It said the seven women had alleged that they were trafficked from Uzbekistan to India and forced into prostitution. The women had managed to escape and get an FIR registered at the Chanakya-puri police station on August 28, the panel said.

Police said the women are in the age group of 18 to 25 years and a probe is underway.

"We have received the summons issued from DCW wherein New Delhi District Police has been asked to submit a reply and appear before the Commission on November 4 at 2 pm.

"We will file our reply and abide by the directions of DCW. As the matter relates to trafficking of certain women and has been classified as 'sensitive'; hence, we can't share any more information at this point of time," said Hemant Tiwari, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi).

DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal has also issued a notice to the private shelter home "to understand the circumstances under which the women have gone missing from the shelter home." "I have issued summons to Delhi Police. I want them to produce these five girls before the Commission, ensure arrests of all traffickers and recover the girls' passports. Strongest action should be taken against such international sex rackets operating in the capital," she said. The matter came to light after the Commission received a complaint from the seven Uzbek women about an international trafficking and prostitution racket, officials said.

According to the DCW, the Uzbek women had alleged that they were brought to India on the pretext of providing jobs, but were forced into "prostitution" and "sexual slavery".

NEWS MAKERS

Delhi Environment Minister Suggests Work From Home To Curb Pollution In City

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai today appealed to city residents to preferably work from home or use shared transport to reduce vehicular emissions, a major contributor to air pollution in the national capital.

He also said that vehicular emissions account for 51 per cent of the air pollution generated locally. "If possible, please share a ride to work or work from home. This is how we can reduce the share of vehicular emissions in Delhi's air pollution," he said during a press conference.

Mr Rai asked people to refrain from using coal or firewood for heating purposes and to provide electric heaters to security staff to avoid open burning during winters.

"We have to reduce our share of pollution. We have to do everything we can. We cannot sit idle waiting for others to act," the minister said. He said people should avoid bursting firecrackers. "Emission from even one firecracker can cause great harm in such unfavourable meteorological conditions," he said.

Mr Rai also asked people to take pictures if they find anyone violat-



ing the ban on construction work and upload them on "Green Delhi" application for necessary action.

With pollution levels worsening, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) had on Saturday directed authorities to impose a ban on construction and demolition activities in Delhi-NCR, except in essential projects, and other curbs under stage three of the Graded Response Action plan (GRAP).

Graded Response Action plan, first implemented in 2017, is a set of anti-air pollution measures followed in the national capital and its vicinity according to the severity of the situation.

The Delhi government had on Tuesday issued a notice to stop work at the BJP headquarters here and imposed a fine of ₹5 lakh on private firm Larsen

& Toubro Ltd for violating the ban on construction and demolition work.

Mr Rai said the Delhi government will run a special drive at the 13 pollution hotspots in Delhi, including Narela, Anand Vihar, Mundka, Dwarka, Punjabi Bagh, among others.

"Fire tenders will be deployed at these places to sprinkle water," he said. Citing a study conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment, Mr Rai said local sources account for 31 per cent of the air pollution in Delhi, 54.5 per cent comes from other areas in the National Capital Region and the rest is due to biomass burning.

"The air pollution problem cannot be resolved through politics. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has come up with Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which will have to be implemented in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana too - in Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Gurgaon and Bahadurgarh.

"We have been following GRAP and have accordingly banned construction work, barring some essential projects, in Delhi. We need the support of the governments in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. They need to become active," he said.

Man, 92, Sexually Assaults Minor In Odisha, Sentenced To 3 Years In Jail

Press Trust of India

ODISHA: A court in Odisha's Kendrapara district has sentenced a 92-year-old man to three years of imprisonment for molesting a nine-year-old girl three years ago. Additional Kendrapara District and Sessions Court Judge Tridikram Keshari Chinnara pronounced the judgment on Tuesday.

The court also imposed a fine of ₹3,000 on the convict, and if he fails to pay the amount, he has to serve six more months in prison.

The convict had molested the girl on January 26, 2019 when she was alone in her house in a village in Marshaghai area and threatened of dire consequences if she revealed it to anyone.

The girl, however, informed her parents of the incident and her mother filed an FIR against the elderly person.

Based on the FIR, the accused was arrested and booked under sections of the Indian Penal Code and POCSO Act, special public prosecutor Manoj Kumar Sahoo said.

Chhattisgarh Man Dies After Occultist Uses Hot Trident To "Drive Out Evil Spirit"



Press Trust of India

BILASPUR: A mentally-challenged man died in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district days after an occultist branded him with a hot trident on multiple occasions in order to "drive out evil spirit" and cure him of his illness, police said on Wednesday. The occultist was arrested on Tuesday on the charge of murder, they said.

The incident came to light after a villager informed the police that the victim, identified as Fekuram Nirmalkar (35), who died in Podi village under Ratanpur police station limits, had multiple burn marks on his body, a police official in Bilaspur said.

During the interrogation, Nirmalkar's wife Ganga Bai told the police that her husband had been suffering from some mental illness since the last few months and was availing treatment for it, he said.

"Recently, she came in touch with the tantrik from Junwani village under Malhar police station area of the district. Rajak claimed that the man is under the influence of evil powers and he can free him from it. She took her husband to the tantrik on October 23, following which the latter subjected the man to occult practices and branded him with hot trident on several occasions for four days," he said.

After her husband's condition worsened, the woman brought him back home on October 26, where he died on October 30, he said. "The short post-mortem report of Nirmalkar revealed that he succumbed to infection due to burn injuries on his body," the official said.

A case was registered in this connection and the accused occultist was arrested on charges of murder, he said, adding that further investigation into the matter is

"FIRE TENDERS WILL BE DEPLOYED AT THESE PLACES TO SPRINKLE WATER," he said. Citing a study conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment, Mr Rai said local sources account for 31 per cent of the air pollution in Delhi

Sajad Lone Elected Unopposed As JKPC President

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Sajad Gani Lone, son of People's Conference founder Abdul Gani Lone, was on Wednesday elected unopposed as the party's president for a four year-term.

The People's Conference's election authority headed by Syed Basharat Bukhari declared Lone elected as president unopposed as there was only one candidate at the closing time for filing of nominations, a party spokesman said in a statement.

The election authority had received eight nominations all in favour of nominating Lone as the candidate for party president. The nominations were re-



ceived from Anantnag, Budgam, Srinagar, Baramulla, Handwara, Kupwara, Poonch and Jammu, he said.

The party had announced the poll schedule on October 19, setting November 6 as the date for voting, if required.

Lone will be administered oath of office on November 10 at Darul Jawad, the residence of People's Conference general secretary Imran Reza Ansari.

Will Fight Against All Odds To Ensure J&K's Development: Azad

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Chairman Democratic Azad Party (DAP) Ghulam Nabi Azad Wednesday said his party will fight against all odds to ensure comprehensive development in J&K.

"The DAP will try its best and will clean all hurdles which comes in way of development of J&K", Azad said.

He said the democracy gives right to every citizen of the country to set up his/her own political party. "I came up with DAP with an aim to make J&K peaceful, prosperous and developed. We will press every effort for the welfare of people and will not indulge in defaming opponents. We will do our job and let others do their job", the DAP Chairman told a local news agency KNS.

He added the development will be his first priority to uplift the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "Today the people of J&K



have been sucked by inflation. If we have to save our people, we have to provide them 365 days work to overcome the circumstances", he added.

Speaking on the current situation across J&K, the former CM of J&K said in a democratic set up people should be given space to vent their feelings "There is a provision in a democracy to get rights. If that platform or channel will be stopped, then people will have no option but to express their anger in shape of hartals and agitation", he said and added "Hartal is a part of democracy which is being exercised in America, Britain also"

DC Budgam Chairs Meet To Review Progress On Ring Road



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam, S F Hamid on Wednesday chaired a meeting of officers to take a review of the progress of the Ring Road project in the district.

On the occasion, the DC directed all the stakeholders to expedite the work process to ensure timely completion of the project. NHAH gave a detailed presentation about the project.

The District Mineral officer was directed to allow only those vehicles who are registered for legal excavation and lifting of earth soil. He also directed to seize illegal vehicles and lodge FIRs against violators.

The DC directed NHAH representatives to get proper NOCs

from Forest department, PHE, Irrigation Department, PDD Department, DMO and other concerned departments before the execution of work. He asked NHAH representatives to share Feasibility report with the District Administration in terms of transport and assessment for coordination.

He said all the stakeholders involved in the execution of the project must act keeping in view the larger interest of the public and the benefits which the project will bring to the district.

The meeting among others was attended by ADC Budgam, Additional SP Budgam, SE Hydraulics, DMO, Ex. Engineers of Irrigation and PHE, District Horticulture officer and authorities from NHAH and other district officers.

Dr Sehrish Inaugurates National Conference At GDC Baramulla

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: In order to spread the message of love and peace, and in a bid to provide platform for nurturing the potential of budding youth, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar Wednesday inaugurated two days National Conference on 'The message of Love, Peace and Humanity in Urdu and English Literature' at Government Degree for Women Baramulla.

The Programme was jointly organized by the Department of Urdu & English of Govt. Degree College for Women, Baramulla.

On the occasion, the Galaxy of researchers and academicians across different literary backgrounds participated which include Head of Department of Urdu, JNU Prof. Khawaja MD Ekramuddin, Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Kashmir (South Campus), Dr. Shabir Hussain and other higher dignitaries.

While highlighting the objectives of the conference, the DC

emphasized upon inculcating the values of love, peace and humanity in the minds of children at a quite young age. She asserted that the involvement of youth and children in such programmes can be the greater achievement if they are properly sensitized.

Dr Sehrish also said that every nation builds and progresses only when they motivate and dictate their children and youth towards humanity. She urged upon the parents to look after their child and make them morally sensitized.

Earlier, the Principal Government Degree College, Prof (Dr.) Maheen Mustafa highlighted the importance of such conferences in strengthening the national integrity and unity of the nation.

Other dignitaries also spoke on the occasion and asserted that every religion has the same message to offer where peace and love has been given a priority and it is our responsibility to spread love and peace around.

Protests In Leh, Kargil For Statehood, Constitutional Safeguards



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of people in the Union Territory of Ladakh on Wednesday staged a massive protest demanding full statehood for the cold desert region, besides constitutional safeguards under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Barring the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) all political, religious and social organisations under the banners of Leh Apex Body (LAB) in Ladakh and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) in the Shia dominated Kargil staged peaceful protest in favour of their demands.

Besides statehood and constitutional safeguards under sixth schedule, the two major amalgams are also demanding two Lok Sabha and a Raj Sabha seat besides filling up of 10,000 to 12,000 vacancies to overcome unemployment.

According to reports from Kargil, hundreds of protesters marched from Hussaini Park to Lal Chowk and shouted slogans in favour of their demands. Among others who

Omar Meets Islamic Scholars, Luminaries In Kargil

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Party Vice President Omar Abdullah met prominent Islamic Scholars in Kargil on the last day of his Kargil tour, a party spokesperson said Wednesday.

The Party Vice President, who has been on a two day long tour of Kargil District met President Anjuman Jamiat-ul-Ulama Isna Asharia Shaikh Nazir Mehdi Mohammadi Sahib and other Islamic scholars and luminaries.

He also met with Chief Patron of the Imam Khomeni Memorial Trust Shaikh Mohammad Mohaqeeq Sahib and other Scholars of the trust.

Both the meetings focussed on the issues faced by the peo-

ple of Kargil. Party Vice President applauded their efforts in creating synergy among diverse sections of people in Kargil. He emphasised that the realisation of unity in diversity was the key towards fighting the challenges faced by the people of Ladakh.

Earlier Omar Abdullah also paid obeisance at the revered Shrine of the Founder of Anjuman-e-Sahibuz Zaman Hazrat Syed Haidar Rizavi (RA) at Sankoo, Kargil. On the occasion, he also met with Chief Patron Anjuman Sahibuz Zaman Syed Muhammad Razavi Sahib.

He was accompanied by Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, Dy Political Secretary Muddassar Shahmiri and local party functionaries.

addressed the protesters, included Qamar Ali Akhoun and Haji Asgar Ali Karbalaie.

In Leh, a similar protest was taken out from NDS Stadium to Polo Ground. The

protesters led by Thuptsan Chhewang (former MP), and Chering Dorjay Lakrook asked the centre to fulfill their genuine demands at the earliest.

Srinagar-Jammu Highway To Be 4-Lane By 2025: Official

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The widening of Srinagar-Jammu national highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, would be completed by 2025, an official said.

Project Director and Regional Officer National Highway Authority of India Pushpshant Kumar said that there are different packages in the national highway and every package has different deadlines.

He cited the example of Banihal sector saying it is divided in three parts with different deadlines.

The work on the last por-

tion was started in August this year and it is to be completed in three years, so the whole national highway four-laning will be completed by August 2025.

The widening work of the highway started in 2011 and was expected to be completed within five years.

Officials said that with the four-laning, travel time would be reduced by half as the distance would be reduced by 50 kms bypassing a number of treacherous points.

They said that work on the Banihal-Nashri stretch, the most problematic, is underway. The stretch often witnesses landslides with rains leading to

closure of the highway.

In 2020, in view of the topography of the hilly terrain between Ramban and Banihal, a detailed project report (DPR) worth Rs 2,000 crore was formulated by the NHAH to complete the 16-km four-laning realigned project. This includes more tunnels and bridges to avoid landsliding and sinking areas.

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in July this year had said that work on the 60-km road between Nashri and Banihal, in Ramban district, will be completed by December 7, 2023—(KNO)

CS Seeks People's Help To 'Weed Out' Corruption From J&K



Observer News Service

JAMMU: As part of observance of Vigilance Awareness Week, 2022, Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Wednesday observed the Nukkad Natak organised by the General Administrative Department (GAD) in collaboration with Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR), on "Bhrashtchar Mukht Bharat" at Civil Secretariat here.

Secretary, GAD, Dr. Piyush Singla; Secretary Mining, Amit Sharma; other senior officers and officials were also present.

Chief Secretary, while addressing the occasion, complimented the organizers for holding this informative event which would help in sensitizing the participants. He emphasized the need of organizing such events on relevant topics to benefit the society at large.

Dr Mehta termed the medium very impactful and messages impressive. He held that the menace of corruption deserves to be dealt with all the means. He encouraged everybody to be vigilant and help the government in its endeavor to weed out this evil completely from the UT.

He maintained that more teeth had been given to the anti-corruption bodies and effective laws had been put in place in the last couple of years. He asked people to take advantage of the same and be the conscious citizens of the nation.

While speaking on the occasion, Secretary, GAD highlighted the significance of observing such events especially in present era. "Only a corruption free society can flourish economically, politically and socially so such events gain added relevance", he maintained.

Singla informed that

the week is being observed throughout the UT at different levels ensuring that all segments are benefitted.

Pertinently, GAD had also organized similar programme in the Civil Secretariat both at Jammu and Srinagar yesterday in which students from various schools, who were nominated as vigilance ambassadors, participated. They distributed pamphlets among the officials and officers of Civil Secretariat Jammu as well as Srinagar as part of this vigilance awareness week.

The schools which participated in the campaign included Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Canal road and SRML Higher Secondary School at Jammu and at Civil Secretariat, Srinagar Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothi Bagh and Government SP Higher Secondary School, Srinagar participated in the awareness campaign.

Back to Village-4

DC Shopian Visits Panchayat Halqas, Takes Stock Of Activities

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The phase III of Back to Village-4 programme concluded Wednesday across Shopian with a number of activities held in 32 Panchayat Halqas of the district.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya visited Panchayat Halqas including Narapora, Safanagri, Wachi, Zainapora and others and interacted with the people along with visiting officers.

He took part in B2V-4 programmes and listened to public issues and sought feedback from the public on development works and implementation of welfare services and development projects.

Officers/officials of various line departments, DDCs, BDCs, PRLs and people in large numbers participated in these B2V-4 programmes across the district.

The Visiting Officers interacted with DDC Members, locals, Civil Society and PRI Represent-

tatives of their respective Panchayats to take stock of issues of public importance and other developmental activities.

Officers/officials of line departments inspected various ongoing works under and other welfare schemes.

Visiting Officers also inaugurated several projects including Roads constructed under MGN-REGA, drains and other developmental works.

On the occasion, Visiting Officers also distributed land pass-books, newborn baby kits under BBBP, Sports kits and Golden Cards among the beneficiaries.

During the programme, Visiting Officers took stock of the progress of various schemes/plans being implemented by various line departments.

Officers visited several government offices in the villages including schools, Healthcare centres, Anganwari centres, and other offices and took stock of the services being provided to the locals.

Vigilance Awareness Week Celebrated At IMGDC Shopian

DC Calls For Making Behavioural Changes At Individual Levels To Curb The Menace



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: An impressive function under Vigilance Awareness week was on Wednesday organised at Imtiyaz Memorial Govt. Degree College (IMGDC), Shopian.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, DC said that as part of the observance of Vigilance Awareness Week which started from October 31 to November 06, today's function is aimed at sensitizing the people about varied aspects of corruption.

He further said that various strict structural, legal provisions have been taken by the govt to ensure transparency and accountability in the governing set up.

The DC called for making behavioural changes at individual levels to curb the menace. He urged all to work with dedication and honesty and highlighted the role of education in inculcating moral, ethical values so that newer generations can imbibe values of integrity.

Vaishya said that the students

are the future of the nation and they should make themselves as well as others aware of all kinds of corrupt practices and ensure that no one should indulge in corruption, adding that corruption is prohibited in all religious teachings.

He advised students to take part in academic and extracurricular activities to build their mental and physical acumen in order to excel in life while being moral and said that administration has zero tolerance against corrupt practices.

Other speakers spoke on various issues connected with the issue of Vigilance Awareness and stressed upon the ill effects of corruption and emphasized for making the district corruption free.

The role of ACB was also highlighted on the occasion by the speakers.

Joint Director Planning, Khurshid Ahmed Khan; Vice-Principal, IMGDC Shopian, Tariq Hussain Mir; Dy.SP, Anti Corruption South Kashmir, Mohammad Shafiq; Prosecuting Officer, Khurshid Ahmed were also present.

PM Committed For Progressive Development Of J&K: Minister

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Union Minister of State (MoS) for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shoba Karandlaje on Wednesday started the two day visit of Baramulla district in continuity of Public Outreach Programme of the Union Government.

During the visit, the Minister interacted with several public delegations and PRI representatives at Dak Banglow here and heard various issues related to the developmental scenario of the district.

While interacting with the locals and PRI representatives, the minister remarked that the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi is committed for progressive development of entire Jammu and Kashmir. He added that in the last few years the developmental scenario of

J&K had changed and significant progress is being witnessed in the ground regarding the progression of this UT.

The minister further said that this Public outreach programme of Union Ministers has been devised to inspect the ongoing developmental works happening across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the visit, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr Syed Sehrish Asgar gave a brief overview of developmental activities to the minister.

Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, senior officers of district administration and large number of locals were also present on the occasion.

Pertinent to mention, the Public Outreach programme is an ambitious initiative of Union Government for reaching out to the common masses of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

39 Kanals Of Land Retrieved In Budgam

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: District Administration Budgam retrieved around 39 kanals and 11 marlas of encroached land on Wednesday during an anti-encroachment drive held across Block Sukhnag in the district.

The anti-encroachment drive was led by Tehsildar Khansahab,

Abid Gani Wani and included officials from several line departments and law enforcement agencies.

The anti-encroachment team retrieved land at two places in Zoogo and Kharien. The retrieved land was handed over to Youth Service and Sports (YSS) Department and RDD Department for construction of playfields for the local youth.

KASHMIR OBSERVER

Rising Cost Of Living

As the Ukraine war drags on, the world economy threatens to go into a tailspin. Already, some major western economies are threatening to go into recession. Some are already said to be in a technical recession. The US economy, world’s biggest, also shrank through the April to June quarter. Inflation has raised the cost of living while incomes for the middle class and the lower classes haven’t risen correspondingly.

The IMF has already said that the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, tightening monetary conditions worldwide, the greatest inflation in decades, and the lingering effects of the pandemic will cause a general slowdown across the world, including India, in the upcoming year. India’s growth has been projected to decline to 6.8 percent after registering a healthy increase of 8.7 percent in the last fiscal year. The IMF’s dismal growth forecast for the Indian economy is not a good news after a year of healthy growth. For two years after the advent of Covid-19 pandemic, Indian economy performed well below even some sub-saharan countries.

Ukraine war has been the single-most factor for the current setback to the global economy. In today’s globalized world, events in one part of the world trigger far-reaching fallout in other parts. There have been foodgrain and fuel shortages which have driven up prices and this has been a matter of great concern for developing countries.

A slowing US economy will have far-reaching effects on the world. And this is happening at a time when the global economy was gradually recovering from the debilitating fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic, a once-in-a-century event. The countries were opening up and letting the economy function normally. International travel has also returned to pre-pandemic levels. But Ukraine war threatens to undo the progress.

The situation is unlikely to change for the better unless the war draws to an end. And this looks unlikely to happen anytime soon. The US-led western military alliance NATO has so far ensured that Ukraine forces put up tough resistance to the advancing Russian army. The US and major European countries have supplied Ukraine with generous military aid to better defend itself against Russian aggression. The West has also got Russia’s neighbours like Finland and Sweden to join NATO. The development has further riled Russia which opposes the expansion of NATO right up to its borders, a position that became the trigger for its invasion of Ukraine. But if the world economy is to get back on track, the war has to end. And to this end, the major powers need to work towards a negotiated solution to the crisis.

OTHER OPINION

Musk Takes Bait

Nov. 1—Elon Musk set the trap and promptly stepped in it.

The purported richest man has purchased and taken over Twitter, the social media company favored by politicians, journalists, academia and people who don’t mind a bit of mess.

Musk had been critical of what he viewed big tech censorship, or a lack of “free speech” on the sight.

After the 2016 election, and reports that foreign countries used social media to meddle in the election. And, as misinformation was spreading more quickly than the coronavirus during the worldwide pandemic, social media companies did take a more stringent approach to what was allowed on the sites.

Misinformation and disinformation works because a lot of people believe it. As we know, social media uses algorithms that tailor content to each user. So, when people stop seeing as much of the kind of things they used to see, it’s going to lead to a lot questions for those already conspiracy minded.

But, it boils down to many right-wing folks believing that right-wing views were being snuffed out by Big Tech. And, that the Left wasn’t being treated with the same veracity.

It’s not completely unfounded. There is anecdotal evidence of some instances where Twitter went too far. The final straw for many might have been when Twitter treated the New York Post’s Hunter Biden story as misinformation. Not exactly.

But, private company platforms are not the government, and aren’t required the same guidelines for what they won’t allow.

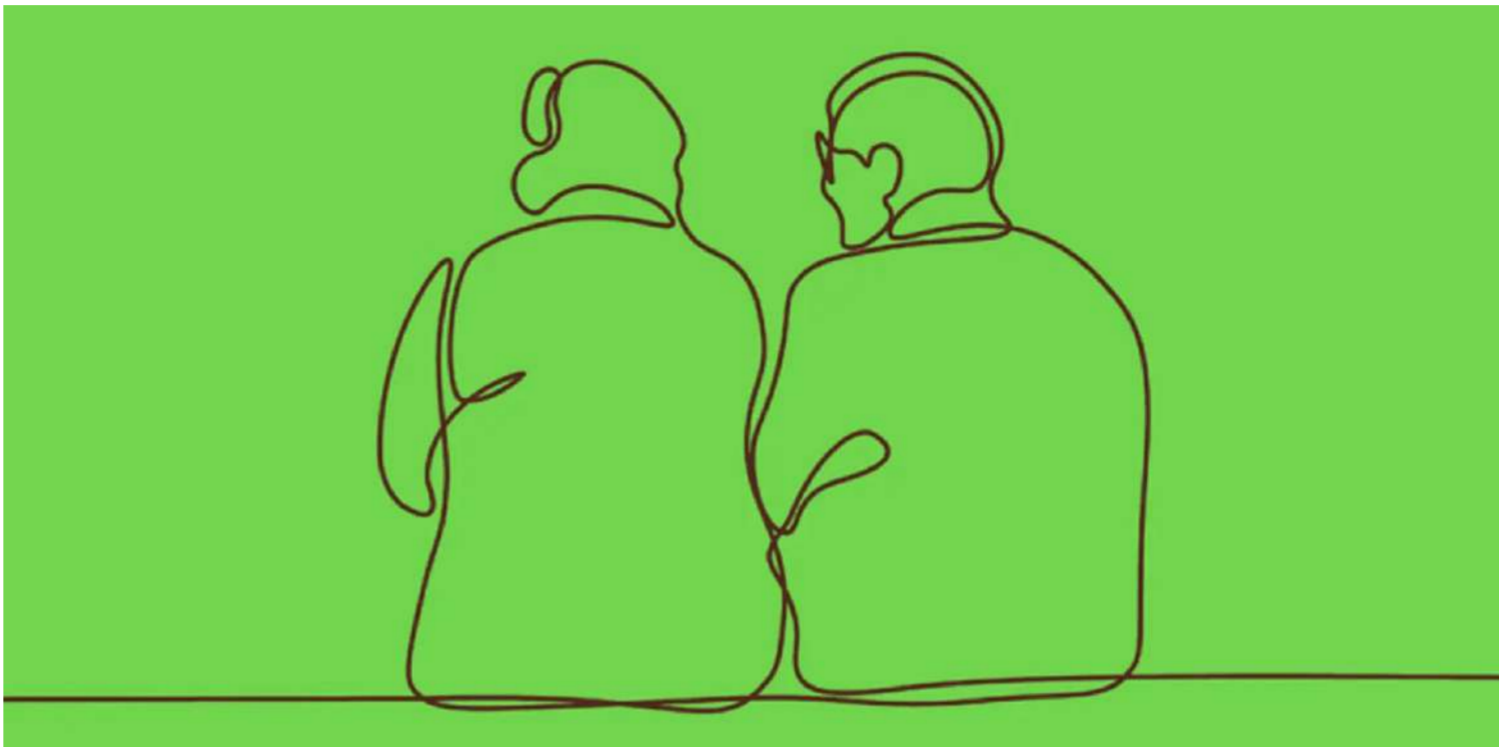
But, in came the fixer, Elon Musk, to set Twitter free. And, within days of his ownership, Musk retweets a conspiracy theory about Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s husband Paul from a website that traffics in fake stories.

What a feeling it must be to be rich and unbothered by pesky things like conscience.

It’s doubtful someone who had so much success doing things his own way will take the misstep as a lesson, but shared truths should be our baseline and not an unobtainable goal.

Yahoo News

Old Age Homes
Outsourcing Responsibilities



Amir Suhail Wani

The morphology of love and the structure of our relationships have witnessed a radical departure from their established age old norms and precedents. All relationships have come to be reevaluated in the framework of material perimeters. The elements of love, empathy, compassion, selflessness, sacrifice and attachment which once decided and defined the contours of our relationships have all been left behind and the perspective of consumerism and opportunism has invaded the landscape of our relationships

When objects are put on a pedestal, people, by default, slip to the status of objects. The tragedy with parents and the institution of parenthood in our times very much reflects this paradox. The recent spree of setting up of old age homes and initiating a chain of “senior citizen centres” in Kashmir has not only alerted society to the changes in social dynamics but has also compelled us, irrespective of our ideological predilections, to revisit our social ethics and contemplate the erosion of our values, traditions and morals.

Martin Buber, while writing about the tragedies facing mankind had observed that the relationships which ought to have had “I-Thou” character have transformed into relationships possessing “I-It” status. By this classification, Buber stated, in technical language, the bitter fact that relationship with people has been devalued to the typos of our relationship with material and inanimate objects and the objects have started to occupy the positions which erstwhile used to be reserved for our loved ones.

The morphology of love and the structure of our relationships have witnessed a radical departure from their established age old norms and precedents. All relationships have come to be reevaluated in the framework of material perimeters. The elements of love, empathy, compassion, selflessness, sacrifice and attachment which once decided and defined the contours of our relationships have all been left behind and the perspective of consumerism and opportunism has invaded the landscape of our

relationships – the point in case being the relationship of parenthood and the consequent damage foisted on this sacred and pristine relationship by the setting up of old-age homes.

Old age homes are supposed to be the last refuge for the destitute and shelterless elder citizens but even children who are otherwise well equipped to take care of their elder parents often outsource them to old age homes. While the utility and the essential purpose of age old homes is well accepted, people must not take them as sites to dump their parents. We may have fancy reasons to suit our conveniences but the fact remains that making old age homes a norm only breeds a host of social issues that can have detrimental consequences and can set a very odd precedent in the society.

Every evil starts with necessity but once it overruns its legitimate boundaries and starts serving every trifling purpose, it not only self defeats the raison d’etre of its existence but opens up itself to all sorts and scales of misuse and abuse. Old age homes also emerged in response to the pressing necessity of catering to the needs of helpless and left out section of elderly people in our society. However, selfish values pushed men into misusing this institution and turning it into a space where they can outsource their responsibilities and shun their parents at a time when parents need them the most. The recent mushrooming of these spaces and upcoming projects in Anantnag, Bandipora, Rajouri and other places in Jammu and Kashmir have and will make it quite easy for people to admit

their parents in these centres even if they could have easily taken care of their parents. This is not a shallow admonition. So desperate were some in our society to drop their parents to old age homes that the Government had to come up with the statement that “people cannot come and drop their parents there”.

The trend of nuclear families along with the primary and sole emphasis on material well-being and economic prosperity has drastically altered the map of relationships and everything has come to be reevaluated in terms of its transaction value. It should not have taken more than a moment of introspection to understand and acknowledge the sacrifices that our parents make, the risks they run into and the hardships they withstand, for the comfort, joy and well-being of their children. Does it behove us as humans to ignore, neglect and alienate our parents when they need us the most? The maxim that “Do not do unto others what you won’t like to be done to you” sets the standard and touchstone and asks us earnestly, would we prefer to be thrown into old age homes by our children at our turn? If the answer is no, as it obviously is, people who deport their parents to old age homes must ask themselves as to what justifies their behaviour and what legitimises their asymmetry.

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

The author is a Srinagar based columnist



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Addressing Obesity

It is well known that a large population of the country is battling obesity, the root of all diseases, due to which diseases like diabetes, thyroid, and high blood pressure have increased not only among adults, but also in adolescents and children. The good thing is that like the epidemic, now the government has also become alert about the increasing obesity. NITI Aayog, the country’s policy-making body, has recommended to identify the major factors of its growth such as sugar, salt and fat-rich foods and increase the excise duty on these foods to make citizens free from obesity. In this episode, it has been said to take steps like ‘front of the pack labeling’ on products, so that people can be warned about the danger of obesity. The purpose is that people should be careful while choosing food items and they should know what is dangerous for their health. The report of the Research Institute of NITI Aayog for the year 2021-2022 warns that the prob-

lem of overweight and obesity among children, adolescents and women is increasing continuously in the country. NITI Aayog is taking steps in this direction in collaboration with the country’s Institute of Economic Development and the Public Health Organization of India. In fact, Indian food has traditionally been a trend of namkeen, chips, bhujia, etc., but in recent years, in the name of snacks, there has been an increase in the popularity of such foods which are injurious to health. It should be a matter of our concern that according to the National Family Health Survey, the number of women suffering from obesity in the country has gone up to 24 percent, while the figure for men is 22.9%. In such a situation, the need of the hour should be said that the government should take steps in this direction. Undoubtedly, obesity is the root of all diseases and the Indian medical system feels the pressure due to the diseases caused by it.

Actually, due to change in urban

lifestyle and eating habits, the problem of obesity has become worrying. Talks continued about this problem, but no serious initiative was seen in this direction. Due to the market gimmicks, the use of junk food and packaged food items increased in the country. In this, the producers searched the market but did not care about the health of the common man. The irony was also that there was mention of factors that increase obesity, but serious efforts were not seen to stop them. The steps taken to stop them were only symbolic. The market is full of such foods which are tempting in taste, but are heavy on health. They have a long-term harmful effect on health, due to which obesity increases and under its guise serious diseases ranging from diabetes to heart disease start growing. Which over time takes a frightening form due to neglect. Undoubtedly, the need of the hour is to strictly regulate the factors causing obesity. People should know that what they are consuming

affects their health. In fact, due to the change in eating habits, the problem of obesity in developed countries has started spreading rapidly in India too. In India, such a problem assumes a formidable form because people are not conscious in time. We have failed to create awareness among the general public about obesity. We do not care when the factors that increase obesity have become a part of our daily life. Also which foods are really fattening. When the body becomes a home of deadly diseases due to such carelessness, the person does not even realize it. But while taxing such food items, keep in mind that the lives of common and poor people are not affected. Along with this, there is also a need to run an awareness campaign against obesity in the country.

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AHMAD'S APPLE

Why is Kashmir's Apple Industry Facing a Rot?

The apple cart of Kashmir is facing an existential dilemma with nothing but its unrivalled quality acting as the only ray of hope

Tooba Towfiq and Zaid bin Shabir

In a dusky alcove of his orchard, Javed Ahmad sits with uncertainty and regret. An apple-grower, his orchard in Shopian's Herpora misses the usual mirth of annual apple-picking. He is one among the many farmers who had trusted the promise of prosperity and shifted from paddy-cultivation to apple cultivation back-in-the-day. To his dismay, the globally cherished quality fruit of his toil, now rots with little returns.

However, Javed's is not an isolated story. With rates plummeting, apple-growers across Kashmir are suffering helplessly at the hands of forces beyond their control.

Highway Hassles

When over 8000 fruit-laden trucks leaked out rotten fruit on the Srinagar-Jammu highway, Mandis back in South Kashmir decided to shut in protest. Politics prevailed as soon as the issue was flagged as political parties started issuing statements against government's negligence. The former Chief Minister and People's Democratic Party's President Mehbooba Mufti went on to join protestors in South Kashmir and called out "economic terrorism" that growers were being subjected to at the hand of the government's "deliberate design".

Since early September, a peak month of apple harvesting, there has been a frequent halting of apple-laden trucks leaving Kashmir for different parts of the country on the arterial Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. Despite assurances from the government, which includes removing SSP traffic, national highways for the delay in the movement of trucks, transportation is still a problem.

"Government should've ensured the free movement of transport carrying perishable fruit as our economy depends on it", says Mir Mohammad Amin, who heads Shopian's Apple Mandi. According to Mohammad Amin, the prolonged halting of apple-laden trucks has led to losses in crores for fruit-growers. "Why is all their focus on tourism when the Apple industry contributes over 10% to Kashmir's GSDP?", Amin adds.

Apple production accounts for over 78% of India's total annual output of apples and is also an employment generator for over 3.5 million people. Around 3.31 lakh hectare of land is under the fruit cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir, of which around 1.67 lakh hectares is under apple



Feature Image Credits: Faisal Bashir

cultivation.

The losses incurred at the beginning of the harvest season have kept disgruntling the cultivators as prices refuse to go up in markets across India.

While many have dismissed the case by putting the blame on highway hassles, there's more that's furthering the rot in Kashmir's prized orchards.

Beyond Highway Hassles

According to local apple-growers, this year, the fruit ripened early which preponed harvest. This created a clash in the market for Kashmir's apples with those from Himachal.

"In Himachal, fruit-growers are King-makers", continues Amin, who laments the lack of attention from the government's end towards Shopian's quality apples. Incidentally, Himachal is close to polls, as assembly elections are set to happen in the month of November.

"The delay in supply eventually led to a surplus as well as a clash in the market when all trucks reached markets around India, all at once", explained Amin, as he clarified the huge dip in the price per box. This is not all. According to local growers, this year, Kashmir's apple production was a bumper crop, while the demand remained the same, if not lower.

"I was producing 1000 boxes of apples every year but the weather ensured that

the quality and quantity of apples were better. However, the bumper crop didn't yield any profit for us. Instead, due to low demand and higher produce, we're facing losses. The prices of Kashmiri apples have declined from Rs 1,200 per box to Rs 600-800. I've personally suffered 30% loss this year compared to the previous year," says Parvez Sultan, who owns an apple orchard in Baramulla's Binner village.

Yet, the apple cart is overflowing profitlessly for more reasons than these.

Cost, Chaos and Climate Change

The much-talked-about bumper crop isn't the only reason why Kashmiri apples are overflowing in markets. "Climate factors have not only preponed pruning but also rushed harvesting this year," says Mir Iqbal, a professional turned businessman who has leveraged his apple venture by shifting to online business.

Typically, Kashmir would receive snowfall in the months of December with November being a dry month. However, the past few years have seen a change in climate patterns with snow dates shifting to November. This is especially true of colder regions like Shopian, where an untimely October snowfall had destroyed apple orchards last year and a brief spell of October snow kept the fears looming. Over the last four years, the region has seen late October and early November snowfall.

The sword of this inauspicious untimely snow had held farmers hostage this year as well. Surrendering to the climate uncertainty, many had hurried their harvest. This too had led to a proliferation of huge produce in the markets.

"This is a perishable crop and farmers have no cold storage of their own. They cannot store these apples for more than one month at their home. Besides that, a farmer has to pay his debts. So, he's forced to sell these apples at any rate even if the business means a loss," adds Iqbal.

The uncertainty isn't restricted to the colder months. Apple anxiety grips growers throughout the year. This year, weather events kept farmers restless.

The first five months of 2022 witnessed a rain deficit of over 38% with above-normal temperatures. Drought-like situation worried farmers for the want of irrigation for their orchards. Hailstorms in the month of May destroyed cherry as well as Apple crop in north as well as south Kashmir. However, sufficient rain and conducive weather conditions in the following months ensured that the crop matured well.

However, the crop matured prematurely. "The harvest season began 15 days earlier compared to last year", says Mohammad Amin. According to Amin, the bumper crop could still have been better in quality, if it had rained in September. "In September, rain is crucial for enhancing the colour of apples. However, this year, the deficiency of rainfall has impacted the quality", he said.

Other local growers add that early leaf fall also prompted premature harvest which set the wrong market perception for Kashmiri apples this year.

All these factors, beyond the farmer's control, have contributed to abysmal rates that the farmers are getting this year.

Newcomers, Old Brokers

Following the hurdles post abrogation of Article 370 and the pandemic, Kashmir's apple industry found another hurdle in the form of a competitor — the Iranian Apple. Orchardists insist that in terms of quality, Iran's apple is a poor competitor. It is their cheaper price on account of being duty-free that has made them dominate the market.

However, many farmers dismiss the overestimation of this rivalry. According to Basharat Ali, a researcher whose family is associated with apple cultivation, "Kashmir's apple has its own market and these rivalries are an overestimation". He adds that the discussion is futile as, "these are things beyond our immediate control". For Basharat, it is the middlemen at Mandis, the agents, brokers and representatives who are equally responsible and need to be questioned.

"What's the breakdown of the 12-15%



GROWERS ACROSS FRUIT MANDIS IN SOUTH AND NORTH KASHMIR complain that instead of being facilitators between growers and buyers across India; these mandi middlemen have become the ringmasters of the fruit business. According to them, they hold a monopoly over the entire process."

tax they charge per box?" Basharat complains. "If the mandi presidents across Kashmir truly represent apple-growers, why haven't they reduced this miscellaneous tax in the face of such a crisis?", he adds.

Another Baramulla based orchardist, Parvez Sultan, voices similar concerns.

"Who decides the price? It's the agents and brokers at the Mandis", says Parvez Sultan, who owns an orchard in Baramulla's Binner Village. "The price per box has dropped significantly, while the rates of pesticides, packaging and transport have increased", he adds as he explains his loss of over 30% this season.

Growers across fruit Mandis in South and North Kashmir complain that instead of being facilitators between growers and buyers across India; these mandi middlemen have become the ringmasters of the fruit business. According to them, they hold a monopoly over the entire process, especially the rates of produce, pesticides and packaging.

Some apple-growers complain that it is also the entry of big players in the market that needs to be called out.

"The government and the horticulture department need to step-in. They need to regulate the prices", says Parvez Sultan, "We feel orphaned."

This is the dominant mood in the orchards of Kashmir. The challenges that apple-growers face seem perennial at the moment. This has currently demoted the status of apple business and apple orchards to that of a liability. Farmers stare at an uncertain future, helpless due to challenges beyond their control. The apple cart of Kashmir is facing an existential dilemma with nothing but its unrivalled quality acting as the only ray of hope.

The authors are Opinions Editor and Special Correspondent Kashmir Observer, respectively



THE CHALLENGES THAT APPLE-GROWERS FACE SEEM PERENNIAL AT THE MOMENT. This has currently demoted the status of apple business and apple orchards to that of a liability. Farmers stare at an uncertain future, helpless due to challenges beyond their control."

Study Links Antibiotic Resistance To 'Triclosan' Used In Hand Soaps, Toothpastes

IAN S

Triclosan, a chemical often included in household items like hand soaps, toothpastes and cleaning products to fight off bacteria, has now been linked to antibiotic resistance.

According to the study by assistant professor Hui Peng's research group at University of Toronto, among thousands of co-occurring chemicals in the sludge, triclosan was found to be the predominant antibacterial compound impacting E. coli.

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria -- also commonly known as "superbugs" -- are strains of bacteria that are not killed by antibiotics.

They are produced when continuous exposure to antibiotics causes bacteria to evolve over several generations to survive antibiotic effects.

These bacteria can be very dangerous to humans, especially those with impaired immune systems. Between 2014 and 2016, there were seven lakh deaths around the world attributed to antibiotic resistance.

"Since there are so many different antibiotics in the sewage sludge, we were surprised to find that the majority of antibacterial activity of the sludge could be directly linked to triclosan alone," said Holly Barrett, a PhD candidate in the Peng group and lead author on the study.

The findings were published in the journal Environmental Science and Technology.

In 2016, the US Food and Drug Administration banned triclosan from being used in antibacterial liquid soaps, and then a year later from being used in topical antiseptics found in health care settings.

Currently, there are limited regulations on triclosan in Canada, and Health Canada deems triclosan as



safe for use in a variety of consumer products at specified levels.

"I think our results demonstrate that there is an urgent need for regulatory agencies in Canada to re-evaluate the use of triclosan," says Barrett. "It's still used in thousands of different household and cosmetic products as well as in health care settings. While there are a few regulations in place to restrict the maximum amount of triclosan allowed in consumer products, even very low levels of this chemical may cause antibiotic-resistant bacteria to form over time," the researcher noted.

'Covid-19 Disrupts Normal Mix Of Gut Bacteria, Increases Risk For Other Infection'

Press Trust Of India

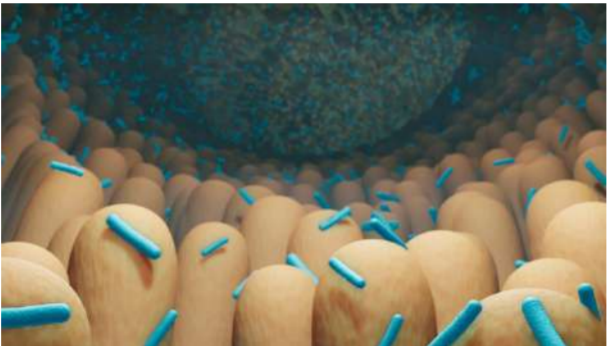
Infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, can reduce the number of bacterial species in a patient's gut, with the lesser diversity creating space for dangerous microbes to thrive, a new study has found.

According to the study, results showed that the majority of patients had low gut microbiome diversity, with a full quarter dominated by a single type of bacteria. At the same time, populations of several microbes known to include antibiotic-resistant species increased, possible due to widespread antibiotic use early in the pandemic, the study said.

Further, the antibiotic-resistant bacteria found in the gut were observed to have migrated into the bloodstream in 20 per cent of the patients.

Led by researchers at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, the investigation involved 96 men and women hospitalized with COVID-19 in 2020 in New York City and in New Haven, Conn.

"Our findings suggest that coronavirus infection directly interferes with the healthy balance of microbes in the gut, further endanger-



ing patients in the process," study co-senior author Ken Cadwell said.

"Now that we have uncovered the source of this bacterial imbalance, physicians can better identify those coronavirus patients most at risk of a secondary bloodstream infection," adds Cadwell.

The study is published in the journal Nature Communications.

According to Cadwell, the new study is the first to show that the coronavirus infection alone damages the gut microbiome, and not the initial use of antibiotics to treat the disease as others experts had thought. He adds that the study also provided the first evidence that the very same bacteria in the gut were also entering the blood stream of patients, causing dangerous infections.

The study built on the realization that widespread use of antibiotics to fight infections with disease-causing bacteria in recent decades has left in place more species that are resistant to antibiotics. In addition, disruptions in gut bacterial ratios have previously been linked to more severe COVID-19.

However, researchers say, it has remained unclear until now which came first, the coronavirus infection disrupting the gut microbiome or an already weakened gut making the body more vulnerable to the virus.

The new study appears to favour the former explanation. The new investigation, which revealed that antibiotic-resistant species can escape into the bloodstream, put patients at greater risk for

life-threatening secondary infections, the study said.

The study authors note that further research is needed to uncover why this group was at a higher risk for a secondary infection while others remained protected.

For the investigation, researchers first infected dozens of mice with the coronavirus and analyzed the makeup of bacterial species in their stool samples. This step allowed them to untangle whether the coronavirus could directly disrupt the microbiome independently of hospitalization and treatment.

Next, they collected stool samples and blood tests from COVID-19 patients at NYU Langone Health and Yale University hospitals to assess gut microbe composition and presence of secondary infection. If any bacteria group made up a majority of the bacteria living in the gut, they were considered dominant.

"Our results highlight how the gut microbiome and different parts of the body's immune system are closely interconnected," says study senior author Jonas Schluter. "An infection in one can lead to major disruptions in the other."

(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA) (UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CITY ROADS (SMC) DIVISION SRINAGAR.							
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS							
NIT No:- E-NIT/42/CRD/SMC/SGR/2022-23 DATED: 01-11-2022.							
For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of J&K, e-tenders (in Single cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments.							
S.No	Name of Work	Advt. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit @2% of Adv. cost	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	M.H of A/C
1	Improvement/upgradation of road surface at Firdous colony Chandpora Harwan by way of providing and laying of GSB and WBM Grade 2 nd	7.57	300/-	15140/-	20 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
2	Improvement/ upgradation of link road by way of WBM Grade 2 nd at New Colony Tulbagh Gasco.	7.51	300/-	15020/-	20 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
3	Improvement/ upgradation of link road by way of WBM Grade 2 nd at Brein Colony Mulfaq Tailbal.	4.19	200/-	8380/-	15 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
4	Improvement/Upgradation of Shalimar lane at Tailbal Shalimar road by way of providing and laying of WBM Grade 2 nd	4.23	200/-	8460/-	15 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
5	Upgradation/ Improvement of main trunk Road and allied links of Alamdar Colony Abinowpora Srinagar.	6.83	300/-	13660/-	18 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
6	Improvement/Upgradation of inner links at Lashkari Mohalla Aasgari Masjid, Ishber-Nishat by way of providing and laying of GSB, WBM Grade 2 nd and 3 rd .	7.51	300/-	15020/-	20 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
7	Improvement of various Lanes at Zoonimar BWO WBM works.	2.73	200/-	5460/-	10 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
8	Providing and laying of RCC pipes for X-Drainage 10 spots (8" dia) on Rawalpura housing colony road including restoration of road surface.	2.72	200/-	5440/-	12 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
9	Improvement/ upgradation of Shadab College lane Mallabagh by way of WBM works (Balance portion).	3.83	200/-	7660/-	12 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
10	Improvement/ Upgradation of Link Roads at Ashai Bagh and Saida Bagh Saida Kadal.	6.12	300/-	12240/-	18 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
11	Improvement/ upgradation of road from Shalla Naseem Tailbal to Wagund Alliya Bagh Upper Wagund and allied links of Dangpora.	8.64	600/-	17280/-	22 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
12	Improvement/ upgradation of road at Arabal Shalimar including Syed Colony Nishat and Laam Syed Rahmani.	8.24	600/-	16480/-	22 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
13	Improvement/ Upgradation of Gulshanbad road in stretches/patches including Gul Bahar Colony Noorbah Rathpora Srinagar BWO WBM Works.	4.41	200/-	8820/-	15 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
14	Improvement/upgradation of various links at Saidpora BWO of WBM works.	7.88	300/-	15760/-	20 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
15	Improvement/ Upgradation of lane at Hamdania Colony Bemina Sector 4 BWO P/L WBM Grade 2 nd .	3.15	200/-	6300/-	13 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
16	Improvement/ Upgradation of Interior link roads of Rainawari (LHS/RHS).	24.72	800/-	49440/-	30 Days	BEE/ CEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
17	Improvement/ Upgradation of road Chopan Mohalla, Ganie Mohalla, Chinara lane, ATM Lane at Ishber.	6.49	300/-	12980/-	15 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
18	Improvement/ Upgradation of road at Mulfaq upper Sheikh Mohalla and Danihamia incl. Chana Mohalla Chesti Colony and Chinara Colony.	7.76	300/-	15520/-	20 Days	CEE/DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
19	Improvement/ Upgradation of road BWO WBM works at Astan Mohalla (Bulan) Sangam, Syed Merakshah Colony Poshwatarasangam and allied links.	10.57	600/-	21140/-	22 Days	BEE/ CEE/ DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
20	Improvement/ upgradation of Links at B.A.M to Elahi Bagh and other allied Links (Law College Links, Shifabagh and other allied links).	30.24	1100/-	60480/-	30 Days	AAV/ BEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
21	Improvement/ upgradation of road Shalteng to Narbal (Right and Left Hand Side) including Gund Hassi Bhat (Part 2 nd).	34.30	1100/-	68600/-	30 Days	AAV/ BEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
22	Improvement/ upgradation of link road at Yayil near Beigh house.	10.12	600/-	20240/-	20 Days	BEE/ CEE/ DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
23	Improvement/Upgradation of various links from main road to receiving station via Govt. Higher Secondary School Sangam and other allied links at Sangam Eidgah Srinagar BWO WBM works.	2.39	200/-	4780/-	10 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
24	Construction of road connectivity for Govt. Primary school Sheikh Hamza colony Kreshbal BWO Earthfilling GSB and WBM grade 2 nd .	21.02	800/-	42040/-	22 Days	BEE/ CEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
25	Improvement/Upgradation of various links at Baghi-Sundar Bala Chattabal BWO of WBM works	4.71	200/-	9420/-	15 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
26	Improvement/Upgradation of various links at Shaheen Mohallah Baghawanpor incl Link from House of Ghulam Ahmad Wani to Graveyard BWO of WBM works.	3.97	200/-	7940/-	14 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
27	Improvement/ Upgradation of various Link roads at Badiwadur Eidgah BWO WBM Works	4.41	200/-	8820/-	10 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
28	Improvement/upgradation of link road at Zoonimar situated on R.H.S Dr Ali Jan road.	0.75	200/-	1500/-	5 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
29	Improvement/ Upgradation of various link roads at Kreshibal by way of WBM works.	1.82	200/-	3640/-	10 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants
30	Improvement/ upgradation of Road from Graveyard to Channa Mohalla Kashipora via Sheikh Mohalla to Astanpora and Dew Mohalla Tailbal by way of providing and laying of WBM Grade 2 nd .	2.48	200/-	4960/-	10 Days	DEE Class Civil	4217 City Grants

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The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specification, Drawings, 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 the schedule of dates given below:

Scheduled Dates & Time of Online Tenders.			
1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice Online	02-11-2022.	
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM	02-11-2022 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	FROM	10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	UPTO	4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	12-11-2022 at 10:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar.	

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar (tender receiving authority) by simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury Challan Receipt and bid security Declaration as per format attached.

2. Bids must be accompanied with Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) @2% of the advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar which shall be uploaded with the tender documents at the time of tendering. The same shall be released after receipt of 3% of performance security.

3. 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 Financial bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar. (Tender receiving authority).

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

5. As per the circular issued by the Govt. of Union Territory of J&K Finance Department vide No.FD-Codes/233/2021-02-27 dated 10.02.2022 duly endorsed by Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department Kashmir vide No.CE/RBK/WS/37104-36 dated 15.02.2022.

a. All the bidders have to submit bid security declaration which shall be duly signed by the bidder with full residential address, Card registration details & active Phone / Cell Nos. Form of bid security declaration attached as Annexure-A.

b. The lowest bidder (LI) also called the successful Bidder has to produce a performance security amount equal to 3% (Three percent) of the contract value in the shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG having less validity period shall not be entertained. The CDR/ FDR/ BG shall be released after successful completion of the Defect Liability Period (DLP).

c. In case of abnormally low bids, the tender inviting Authority reserves the right to ask from the bidder for additional performance security with the approval of the next higher Authority which shall be binding upon the bidder in such case.

6. If any bidder / tenderer withdraws/ modified his bid during the period of validity etc, the Department is at liberty to suspend the bidder for one year or as shall be deemed suitable by the tender inviting Authority. Same shall hold good if the bidder fails to produce performance security within the specified time.

7. The successful bidder (LI) shall have to furnish hard copy of the uploaded documents viz Registration card duly renewed, Valid GST Registration, PAN Card, GSTR-3B etc. alongwith Treasury Challan Receipt and Bid security declaration form (Annexure-A) in original.

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

f. Bidders must ensure to upload the clear scanned copies of all necessary documents with the bid.

DOC-1	DOC-2	DOC-3
CLEAR SCAN COPY OF CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION CARD DULY RENEWED.	CLEAR SCAN COPY OF TREASURY CHALLAN/ Earnest Money Deposit.	Scanned Copy of:-
(2022-2023)	Note: The Date of Treasury Challan Earnest Money Deposit should be between the bid submission dates of NIT/ Fresh NIT, any Treasury Challan/ EMD which is before the bid submission date of published NIT shall summarily be rejected.	1. PAN Card
Note:-		2. Copy of GSTIN Registration
All the bids online shall be open in light of Finance Department communication O.M.No: A/24 (2017)-651 Dated: 07-06-2018 No.FD-Codes/233/2021-02-27 dated 10.02.2022.		GSTR-3B Return of previous Quarter to the issued date of NIT i.e. SEPTEMBER 2022 or after that.
Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.		
The bidder should upload all the necessary documents details given above in One "01" No. PDF file.		
The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.		
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. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate / (%) percentage rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.		
Price escalation and Taxes:- The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder (item rate basis or %age rate basis whatever the case may be) entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work unless otherwise, specified. 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.		
In case of CRF and any other specified project, the relevant guidelines/ standard bidding document shall be followed.		
All bidders shall upload the information and documents with their bids such as Copies of original documents defining constitution / legal status, place of registration and Principal place of Business, GST Registration and PAN Card.		
The bidder at his own responsibility and risk should visit and examine the site of work and its surroundings before submission of bid.		
A pre-bid meeting will be held to clarify any issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage by the bidders. However participation in the pre-bid meeting shall not be binding on bidders.		
All documents relating to the bid shall be in the English language.		
The bidders shall have to quote the rate percentage in the prescribed rate percentage column in case of percentage based BOQ and in case of item rate based BOQ if the bidder does not quote rate for any item or items of the BOQ, cost of such item / items shall be deemed to be part of overall / total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item / items in the allotment of contract.		

NIT/42/CRD/SMC/SGR/2022-23/e-tendering/
DATED:- 02-11-2022.

DIPK-12724/22

Executive Engineer,
City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar.

Our Aim Is To Keep 'Arjuna's Eye' On Inflation, Says RBI Governor Das

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India wishes to concentrate on inflation in the same way as Arjuna focussed on hitting the eye of a revolving fish in the epic Mahabharata, Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday.

"No one can match the prowess of Arjuna, but our (RBI's) constant effort is to keep an Arjuna's eye on inflation," Das said at the annual FIBAC conference of bankers here.

The remarks come at a time when inflation is ruling high and RBI will soon be explaining to the government about the reasons for overshooting the inflation target for nine consecutive months.

Probably hinting at various factors which influence his own fight against inflation, Das said Arjuna would have assessed the speed at which the fish was revolving, the prevailing wind conditions, the intensity of the ripples in the pool of water below and the noise levels in the king's court while aiming at the fish.

Das also defended RBI's strategies in the recent past amid



criticism over price rise.

He said the country would have had to pay a heavy price if RBI had begun tightening earlier than when it did, hinting that the process of recovery had to take root in the economy first.

Das also said that RBI's rate-setting panel will be meeting on Thursday to formulate a reply which will detail the circumstances that led to missing the inflation target and the corrective measures it plans to undertake.

Further, the governor said RBI chose to utilise the flexibility available in the monetary policy framework to tolerate a slightly higher inflation which was within the 2-6 per cent target range to ensure that overall economy remained resilient and financial stability was maintained.

AirAsia India-Air India Express Merger Likely By 2023-End: Air India

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Air India on Wednesday said an operational review process is underway to integrate budget carrier AirAsia India with Air India Express and the merger is likely by the end of 2023.

Tata group-owned Air India has also signed agreements to have a 100 per cent stake in AirAsia India. The carrier is a joint venture between Tata Sons and Air Asia Investment Ltd. Tata Sons has an 83.67 per cent stake and the remaining 16.33 per cent shareholding is with AirAsia.

The merger, likely by the end of 2023, is aimed at having a single low-cost carrier for the Air India group. Post-merger, the entity will be branded as Air India Express, according to a statement.

AirAsia India was launched in 2014 while Air India Express started operations back in 2005.

The consolidation of the two low-cost carriers -- AirAsia India and Air India Express -- will be undertaken as part of the restructuring roadmap that is being envisioned for the Tata group's airline business, Air India said in a statement.

"The assessment and implementation of the full integration process of AirAsia India and Air India Express, through a possible scheme of merger or otherwise and subject to necessary corporate approvals, is expected to take approximately 12 months, with network and other synergies to be realised progressively during that period," it said.

Currently, four airlines are



part of the Tata group. They are Air India, Air India Express, AirAsia India and Vistara. The latter is a joint venture with Singapore Airlines. Tata group acquired Air India and Air India Express in January this year.

Earlier in the day, Malaysia's AirAsia Aviation Group Ltd said it has entered into a share purchase agreement to sell the remaining equity shares held in AirAsia India to Air India.

The consolidation of AirAsia India and Air India Express is expected to bring customer, revenue, cost and operational benefits through broader adoption of each airline's best practices, systems and routes, and the combined entity's greater scale, Air India said in the statement.

Air India has signed agreements to complete the acquisition of 100 per cent shareholding in AirAsia India.

A working group has been formed to evaluate and execute the integration of the Air India group's low-cost operations, which will be co-led by AirAsia India MD and CEO Sunil Bhaskaran and Air India Express CEO Aloke Singh.

The working group will report to a committee chaired by Air India MD and CEO Campbell Wilson.

About the merger of the two budget carriers, Wilson said, "We are excited to initiate the creation of a single Air India Group low-cost carrier".

'Back To Village' Aims At Making Rural Economy Self Reliant, Self Sufficient: Kansal

Observer News Service

KATHUA: Principal Secretary, Information, Higher Education, Rohit Kansal, Wednesday visited remote Panchayat Hutt in district Kathua to preside over array of activities during the ongoing Back to Village programme Phase-4.

DDC Chairperson Kathua, Mahan Singh, Deputy Commissioner, Kathua, Rahul Pandey, ADC Basohli Ajeet Singh, District and Sectoral officers, Sarpanch Surinder Singh and others concerned officers accompanied the Visiting Officer.

The Visiting Officer expounded the concept of Back To Village and urged the Rural Populace to actively participate in the ongoing Back to village programme which is meant to assess the developmental achievements projected during previous B2V programs. He said that the main aim of B2V4 is to make Rural Economy self reliant and self sufficient by exposing ruralites to new skills, vocational trainings and covering them under tailor made government schemes of self employment through proper handholding.

Referring to the record Tourist Footfall in J&K during the current year, the Visiting Officer said Panchayat Hutt also holds tremendous potential to emerge as one of the attractive tourist destinations owing to its picturesque and scenic beauty. The Visiting Officer directed



the officers to focus on saturation of all schemes of their respective departments to provide benefits to deserving people in a transparent and hassle free manner.

While interacting with the students, Rohit Kansal took feedback from them about facilities available for them in the Panchayat.

The Visiting Officer also participated in Gram Sabha where he interacted with representatives of PRIs to take stock of their issues pertaining to welfare and development of their respective areas.

After giving patient hearing to the concerns of the Panchayat inhabitants, the Visiting Officer assured that their genuine issues like Road Connectivity, Piped Water supply, disbursal

of Local Area Development Fund (LADF) from NHPC SEWA project, shortage of School and Medical Staff will be taken up with concerned at appropriate levels to ease out the sufferings of the local populace.

Rohit Kansal also distributed the loan sanctioned letters of various government schemes viz PMEGP, Banks besides distributing AB-PMJAY Health cards. He also distributed Land Passbooks among the local land owners.

Earlier, the Principal Secretary planted a sapling in the premises of GHSS Hutt where he appealed people to encourage afforestation as a means to keep the environment clean and green. Besides he also flagged off a rally of Anganwadi workers.

Govt Hikes Ethanol Price, Targets 12 Pc Blending In Petrol Next Yr

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday hiked the price of ethanol used for blending in petrol as it looked to raise the doping quantity to cut India's reliance on imported oil.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, raised the price of ethanol from all three varieties, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told reporters here.

The price of ethanol extracted from sugarcane juice was increased to Rs 65.61 per litre, from the current Rs 63.45 per litre for the supply year beginning December 2022.

The rate for ethanol from the C-heavy molasses route has been increased to Rs 49.41 per litre, from Rs 46.66 per litre currently, and that of ethanol from the B-heavy route to Rs 60.73 per litre, from Rs 59.08 per litre, he said.

At present, 10 per cent ethanol is blended in petrol (10 per cent ethanol, 90 per cent petrol) and the government is looking to double this quantity by 2024-25.



"We have saved about Rs 40,000 crore in forex outgo from 10 per cent blending besides benefiting the farmers," he said, adding a pilot to start E-20 (petrol with 20 per cent ethanol) will start from April 2023 at select petrol pumps. The use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help the world's third-largest oil consumer and importing country cut its reliance on overseas shipments. India currently is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs.

As much as 452 crore litre of ethanol was blended in petrol during the supply year ending November 30, 2022. For the next year, 540 crore litres procurement is being targeted with an eye to start larger vol-

umes of blending.

The government expects 12 per cent ethanol blending in petrol in 2023 at most places.

Puri said from 2023, the supply year will change from November to October instead of the present practice of considering the ethanol supply year from December to November.

This is to avoid sugar mills from holding ethanol stocks in anticipation of price revision.

So, the 540 crore litres of ethanol procurement is the target for 11 months (December 2022 to October 2023), he said.

"As we reach the 20 per cent target, we can look at raising the percentage of the blend," he said.

Automobile engines can run on E-20 (petrol doped with 20 per cent ethanol) with minor modifications in the engine for corrosion etc.

The government has notified the administered price of ethanol since 2014. For the first time in 2018, the differential price of ethanol based on feedstock utilized for ethanol production was announced by the Government.

Dulloo Reviews Preparations For Implementation Of ODOP In J&K

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo, Wednesday chaired a meeting to review preparations for implementation of One District One Product (ODOP) in Jammu and Kashmir here at Civil Secretariat.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Industries and Commerce, Prashant Goyal; Directors Horticulture, Directors Agriculture, Director Horticulture (P&M), Managing Director JKHPMC, General Manager UTLC, AGM RBI Jammu, Chief Manager PNB, Jammu, representatives of SKUAST Jammu and Kashmir and other concerned officers while Kashmir based officers participated online.

ACS directed the officers to con-

ardana, Honey products, Basohli paintings and other such products which have high market value to benefit the farmers to the optimum.

He was informed that a common facility center would be established either at every district or more than two districts where facilities like testing laboratories, product development centers, training centers and common cold storages would be stationed.

ACS asked the committee to submit its report at the earliest in consultation with all the allied departments so that the ODOP scheme will trickle down to all the farmers and agripreneurs alike.

Earlier, a detailed presentation was given wherein overview of ODOP scheme was presented.



stitute an expert committee from allied and other departments for identification of products from each district having good export equality and marketing potential at international level.

Dulloo suggested several products which have demand at international market like Apple, Walnuts, Saffron, Trout Fish, Wool, Silk, Basmati Rice, Rajmash, Spices, Kala Jeera, An-

The meeting was told that food processing is unorganized sector in Jammu and Kashmir and the scheme will create employment and value addition in the sector.

It was informed that J&K has 144 food processing units which are largely unorganized and are involved in manufacturing of bakery products, pickles, spices, jam, jellies, juices, honey etcetera.

Mushroom Farming Emerging As New Form Of Employment Among J&K Youth: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- With the latest technological interventions of J&K Administration as well as subsidy for Mushroom growers, the Mushroom production has registered a substantial increase across Jammu and Kashmir, a government spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna, a National Agriculture Development Programme, mushroom cultivation is focus area and Mushroom growers are equipped with quality seeds and trained in scientific cultivation techniques. Kashmir boasts hundreds of success stories in the mushroom cultivation business and administration's 50 percent subsidy and technical knowledge is making the cultivation profitable among growers.

J&K government is emphasizing upon stakeholders for encouraging and promoting Mushroom Cultivation, a potential entrepreneurship for youth in a big way.

With the recent government interventions, forest-dwellers in Jammu Shivaliks are being given formal training and instructions about mushroom collection and processing techniques, market knowledge as well as market access, so that their efforts pay them their rightly earned share.

Mohammad Ishfaq Malla of



Battapora, Baramulla district of north Kashmir started growing mushrooms in 2018 and is now reaping the rewards with government help. The 38-year-old agripreneur currently makes around Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.5 lakh per year from mushroom farming, spawn production and training of aspiring mushroom farmers.

Malla is currently producing 1.5-1.75 quintals of mushrooms annually and selling them for Rs 250 per kilogramme. He is grateful to the horticulture division for providing him with a platform and aiding in his marketing.

"In the future, I intend to create a mushroom farm through which I would not only cover the entirety of north Kashmir but also place young people in jobs," he said. He advised those who are interested in the mushroom cultivation to visit the agriculture department for any assistance and occasionally seek the advice and guidance of the officials.

SHORT TAKES

Sebi Pegs Dues Worth ₹67,228 Cr As 'Difficult To Recover'

NEW DELHI- Capital markets regulator Sebi has segregated dues to the tune of Rs 67,228 crore under "difficult to recover" category at the end of March 2022.

Overall, the regulator has dues worth Rs 96,609 crore that needs to be recovered from entities, including those that failed to pay the fine imposed on them, failed to pay fees due to markets watchdog and did not comply with its direction to refund investors' money, according to Sebi's annual report for 2021-22.

Out of Rs 96,609 crore, the regulator said that Rs 63,206 crore, which is 65 per cent of the total, pertains to Collective Investment Scheme (CIS) and deemed public issues of PACL Ltd and Sahara Group company -- Sahara India Commercial Corporation Ltd. Also, Rs 68,109 crore, amounting to 70 per cent of the total dues, is subject to parallel proceedings before various courts and court-appointed committees. In these cases, Sebi's recovery proceedings are subject to directions of respective courts or committees.

In its annual report, the regulator has categorised dues worth Rs 67,228 crore as Difficult To Recover (DTR). Defining DTR, Sebi said these dues are the ones which could not be recovered even after exhausting all the modes of recovery.

"During 2021-22, 59 new cases were taken up for investigation and 169 cases completed in comparison to 94 new cases taken up and 140 cases completed in 2019-20," the report noted. PTI

'Retail E-Rupee Trials Will Start This Month Itself'

MUMBAI- The RBI will follow up on the wholesale e-rupee pilot with a similar trial on the retail side this month itself, governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday.

He termed the launch of the central bank digital currency (CBDC), which started on the wholesale front between a limited set of banks on Tuesday, as a landmark moment in the history of currencies in the country, and added that it will majorly transform the way of doing business.

"The retail part of the CBDC trial will be launched later during this month. We will announce the date separately," he said, speaking at the annual FIBAC conference of bankers here.

The broader wish of the RBI is to execute a full-fledged launch of the CBDC "in the near future", Das said, choosing not to share a timeline for the same.

"I don't want to give a target date by which time the CBDC will be launched in a full-scale manner because this is something where we have to proceed very carefully. This is the first time the world is doing it. We don't want to be in a great hurry," he said.

There will be some technological challenges, some process challenges and the RBI will want to iron out all those aspects and introduce the CBDC in a manner that is non-disruptive, he said. PTI

Airtel Says Crossed 1 Mn Customers On 5G Network

NEW DELHI- Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it has surpassed 1 million customers on 5G network within 30 days of its commercial launch even while the network is being built.

Earlier, Airtel had announced phase wise roll-out of its 5G services in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Siliguri, Nagpur and Varanasi.

The services in these cities are getting rolled out in a phased manner as the company continues to construct its network and complete the roll-out, according to Airtel.

"Bharti Airtel...today announced that it has crossed the 1 million unique 5G user mark on its network. The company achieved this milestone in less than 30 days of its commercial launch even as the network is being built," the company said in a statement.

Randeep Sekhon, Chief Technology Officer of Bharti Airtel, said these are early days but the response from customers have been "very encouraging".

"Our network is being built every day even as all 5G devices are now capable of working on the Airtel 5G Plus network barring a few exceptions which should also be done in the coming weeks," Sekhon said.

The Airtel senior executive added: "We will continue to advance our network with a vision to connect the entire country." PTI

Maruti Suzuki India Crosses 2.5 Cr Production Mark

NEW DELHI- Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Wednesday said it has crossed 2.5 crore cumulative production mark.

MSI started production in December 1983 and crossed the 10-lakh production mark in March 1994. It crossed 1- crore mark in March 2011 and 2-crore milestone in July 2018.

Its first production facility came up in Gurugram, Haryana.

The company now has two manufacturing plants in Gurugram and Manesar in Haryana, with an installed production capacity of 15 lakh units per annum.

The company sells 16 passenger vehicles in the domestic market and also exports to around 100 countries.

"2022 marks 40 years of Suzuki's partnership with the people of India. Crossing 25 million cumulative production milestone this year is a testimony of Suzuki's continued commitment and partnership with the people of India," MSI Managing Director and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said in a statement.

Going forward, the automaker will continue to introduce new products in the market, he added.

"Anticipating growing demand for passenger vehicles, we have also started work on setting up a new manufacturing facility in Kharkhoda, Haryana," Takeuchi stated. PTI

Oil Cos Still Losing Money On Diesel: Minister Puri

NEW DELHI: PSU oil companies are losing a net Rs 4 per litre on diesel while their margins have turned positive on petrol, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Wednesday on talks of a price reduction in the offing as international rates have softened.

Puri said his ministry will seek assistance for the three fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) for the losses they incurred on holding petrol and diesel prices since the Ukraine war to help the government fight inflation.

"OMCs (oil marketing companies) still have under-recoveries on diesel," he told reporters when asked if there is a price reduction in the offing.

The three firms held prices despite international oil prices shooting up to more than a decade high.

The under-recovery - difference between the retail selling price and the international rate - currently is about Rs 27 per litre on diesel but the actual cash loss (the loss based on the actual cost of procurement of crude oil and turning it into fuel) is about Rs 3-4 per litre.

Puri said oil companies moderated prices during extreme volatility to help consumers. PTI

US keeping 'watchful' eye: US official on Chinese activities along India's northern border

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: The US remained "watchful" on Chinese activities along India's northern border as it cannot take its eyes off the regional security issues, a senior American official said on Wednesday in the backdrop of the over 29-month border standoff in eastern Ladakh that has significantly frayed ties between the two neighbours.

Rear Admiral Michael L Baker, the US Defence Attache to New Delhi, also said that it is important to be "mindful" of Chinese actions in the South China Sea as well, even as he described India-US defence ties as the "cornerstone" of the overall bilateral relations.

"It is certainly an important area for us. We do remain watchful," he told a small group of reporters.

"We do work closely with India to exchange our views on this area to make sure that we have a clear understanding of what we think may be happening and I think it is a space that, for both India and the United States, we are going to remain watchful over time. We cannot take our eye off the regional security issues," Rear Admiral Baker said.

His remarks came when asked whether the US has been tracking the developments along India's border with China and how the US views the lingering conflict playing out in the coming months.

The senior defence official also noted that the US wants to be a "partner of choice for India" and that New Delhi has the ability to choose its partners.

He was asked about India's decades-old defence ties with Russia including in projects relating to nuclear-powered submarines.

"We want to be partner of



choice for India. India has its ability to choose its partners and it has made a conscious decision to diversify more over the last decade. It has made a conscious decision to continue to diversify going forward. And it has made a conscious decision to partner with the US on a host of areas," Rear Admiral Baker said.

In response to another question on China's increasing military muscle flexing in the South China Sea, Rear Admiral Baker said it is important to assist countries across the region to have a choice of security partners.

"They have a very aggressive stance in the South China Sea. The United States has a pretty clear public position on this too. That's something we need to be mindful and watchful of," the senior American defence official said.

He said the countries in

the region could partner with someone like India or the US or both. "That is the key to ensuring that the Indo-Pacific remains free and open, which is the mutual goal for both India and the United States."

To another query on the successful launch of a ballistic missile by a nuclear-powered submarine of India last month, he said the country has done it in a "responsible way".

On whether the US was assisting India to deter China, he did not give a direct reply but said, India has an "incredibly bright future" as it has "superb geography and high mountains" which are critical for defence.

He also mentioned India's large landmass and access to the sea saying, "these are key elements for becoming a highly powerful country."

On the situation in the Indian Ocean, he said China has been having a pretty continuous

maritime presence in the region for at least a decade now.

"That has been a pretty consistent presence," he said.

Rear Admiral Baker said the robust defence trade, numerous high level dialogues and increasing number of military exercises in the sea, air and the land are further strengthening the defence relations between India and the US.

"I think we have a lot of trust between our countries and between our militaries. We conduct more exercises together in India than any other country. We operate together at sea routinely and these kinds of interactions deepen trust and familiarity everyday," he said.

Rear Admiral Baker also noted that India and the US are carrying out joint maritime patrols and operating in the same operational space in the North Arabian Sea as well as in the Pacific.

"We know each other so well with a strong level of trust," he added.

Asked how the US sees increasing collaboration between Russia and China in the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, Rear Admiral Baker, said the amount Moscow is getting from "that other partner" is not in accordance with international law or rules.

"We would call on both of them to take proper stand in that war in Ukraine immediately," he said and referred to comments by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken that if Russian President Vladimir Putin "stops fighting, the war ends and if Ukraine stops fighting, Ukraine ends."

The Indo-US defence ties have been on an upswing in the last few years.

In June 2016, the US designated India a "Major Defence Partner" paving way for sharing of critical military equipment and technology.

The two countries have also inked key defence and security pacts over the past few years, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 that allows their militaries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.

The two sides also signed COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) in 2018 which provides for interoperability between the two militaries and provides for the sale of high-end technology from the US to India.

In October 2020, India and the US sealed the BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement) agreement to further boost bilateral defence ties.

The pact provides for sharing of high-end military technology, logistics and geospatial maps between the two countries.

Morbi bridge collapse an 'act of God': Accused to Gujarat court



Press Trust of India

Morbi Gujarat: A manager of the Oreva group, one of the nine persons arrested in connection with collapse of a suspension bridge in Gujarat's Morbi town, sought relief from a local court claiming the tragedy which has claimed 135 lives was an "act of God", the prosecution said on Wednesday.

Chief Judicial Magistrate M J Khan had on Tuesday remanded four of the arrested accused -- two managers of the Oreva group and two sub-contractors who had repaired the ill-fated bridge -- in police custody till Saturday (November 5). The other five accused were remanded in judicial custody and sent to jail.

The British-era carriageway, built on the river Machchhu, had collapsed on Sunday evening, killing 135 people, including women and children.

In their defence during arguments on remand application on Tuesday, one of the Oreva managers had sought relief on the ground that he was just doing the job given to him by the company and the tragedy was merely an "act of God", public prosecutor HS Panchal told reporters here.

He also informed that the police have added Indian Penal

Code (IPC) sections 336 and 337 in the FIR (first information report) related to the case following a preliminary probe.

Both the sections deal with punishment related to rash or negligent acts which would endanger human life or the personal safety of others.

Meanwhile, Chief Officer of Morbi Municipality Sandipsinh Zala on Wednesday appeared before Investigative Officer PS Zala, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, and submitted some crucial documents related to the contract given to Oreva for the bridge's renovation.

Police had on Monday booked the nine arrested persons under IPC section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), among others, after the tragic incident.

The four accused remanded in police custody were Oreva managers Dipak Parekh and Dinesh Dave, and repair contractors Prakash Parmar and Devang Parmar, hired by the Ahmedabad-headquartered corporate group.

Citing a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) report, Panchal had told the court on Tuesday that experts believed the tragedy occurred after the main cable of the bridge snapped because of the weight of the new flooring.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Winter Woes: Pollution,

his safety," said Mohammad Umar, a resident of Dalgate, Srinagar.

"I used to take my grandfather to Jammu during every winter for the last eight years but this year we have decided to stay here only because the fear of COVID has gripped everyone especially those suffering from pulmonary diseases," said Azhar Bashir, a resident of Dal Gate, Srinagar.

Asthma is a chronic condition which can flare up when sufferers are exposed to their "triggers". Common ones are pollen, chemicals, dust smoke, or viruses.

Dr. Saleem Tak, said that a number of post COVID-19 patients are suffering from Fibrosis which affects the functioning of the lungs.

"The winter and the pollution has aggravated the situation for those patients. We are expecting more footfall of these patients in coming months," Dr. Tak who is the head of only Chest Disease hospital in the valley told Kashmir Observer.

Medical Superintendent at JVC Hospital, Dr Shifa Deva told Kashmir Observer that the hospital has kept the separate beds for those patients and are fully prepared to tackle any issue.

It may be noted that Jammu and Kashmir, is among the four Indian states with the highest prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to a study.

The report, titled as "burden of chronic respiratory diseases and their heterogeneity across the states of India: the global burden of disease study 1990-2016" was published in Lancet in 2018.

It revealed that in UT over 4750 people per lakh population suffer from COPD. The number is much higher given the socio-demographic index (SDI) of the UT.

The experts advised people to take the necessary precautions during the winters so that they can save themselves from respiratory ailments.

Dr. Tak said that the people with COPD and Asthma should cover them well with woollens and avoid coming out of their houses during morning and evening.

"Since the temperature is down during the hours, they should avoid coming out of these homes," Dr. Tak said adding that "timely flu vaccination will help them to tackle the respiratory issues."

He said people shouldn't sit in overcrowded rooms and there should be a proper ventilation system in the room. "People should prefer a protein-rich diet. The drinking water should be boiled and people should avoid fire-pots," Dr. Tak added.

The pulmonologists maintain that the use of steroid inhalers for asthma patients had gone up in the valley post covid-19.

Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK)

President Dr Nisar ul Hassan argues that the COPD is a chronic disease and during the dry weather they thrive-up.

He said that freezing weather depresses the immune system and thus a person becomes prone to respiratory infection.

Dr. Hassan further maintained that COVID-19 patients are more vulnerable to other infections and the freezing weather depresses the immune system of these patients and thus a person becomes prone to respiratory infection.

"These patients are more vulnerable to other infections. So the severity is more," Dr. Hassan added.

Days Of Indiscretion

of indiscretion and arbitrariness are over.

"It is our firm resolve to improve the implementation on the ground. A lot has been achieved in the last three years with speedy implementation of the projects, and we continue to invest in schemes to make rural J&K self-reliant and to increase incomes by creating more self-employment opportunities at the local level," he added.

The LG, as per the spokesperson, further said that it is his government's endeavour to realise the vision of Prime Minister to encourage the participation of all citizens to be part of the decision-making in order to steer the engine of development and change the socio-economic landscape of rural Jammu Kashmir.

"We have prioritised the development of rural & border areas. This year, 10 PRI, 5 MGNREGA, one BDC, one Samridh Seema Yojana & 23 projects under 14FC are in progress in Garkhal to improve the lives of people, fulfil their basic needs and to accelerate overall development", the LG added.

The spokesperson said that the LG highlighted that employment, health, education and improving the productivity of the people are among the focus areas of the government during Back to Village and said a target has also been set to identify 15 young boys and girls from every panchayat for Self-employment assistance and 20 youths for skill development.

The LG, he said, also assured all necessary support from the administration for comprehensive and holistic development of panchayats. Sinha also asked the public representatives and rural population for making their village drug-free, litigation free and ensuring every woman is associated with self-help group, and youth are aware of their real potential.

"It is the responsibility of PRI members to ensure saturation of various schemes and initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, KCC, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Soil Health Card, agriculture-related schemes, Ayushman Sehat Golden Card etc," the LG said.

"It must be ensured that every child

is immunized; every citizen has a bank account, every child, every girl goes to school; every land owner has a land passbook; everyone should have a ration card with Aadhar seeding; Panchayat Ghar should function smoothly and youth are engaged in sports & other constructive activities," he added.

The LG, the spokesperson said, maintained that in the last two years, through continuous mass campaigns, block Diwas, Gram Panchayats, other outreach campaigns and result-oriented policies, inclusive development of panchayats has been ensured.

"Efforts have been made to bring government services to people's doorsteps," Sinha said.

"Development of rural and far-flung areas is being given special attention. Now the development plans are being prepared in consultation with PRIs and around 20,000 projects have been taken up for execution which were decided by the people's representatives and the people together," he added.

The LG, the spokesperson said, also stated that budget allocation of Rs 1000 crore to Panchayats, Rs 200 crore to DDCs, Rs 71.25 crore to BDCs, Rs 600 crore for Samridh Seema Yojana, this year, which is a reflection of the administration's commitment to empower and strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions, border villages and addressing challenges by harmonizing policies and programmes, ensuring that the benefits of development reach all sections, granting every citizen due rights and entitlements.

"The principle of transparency and zero tolerance towards corruption has revolutionized the implementation of projects. Fear-free corruption-free system has been established through paperless, faceless administrative mechanism. This system has ensured that every citizen can keep track of every rupee being spent in their locality," Sinha said.

"The capex budget of Jammu and Kashmir has also been increased to Rs 22,126 crore this year which is four times more as compared to earlier and this increase has been given for development works in collaboration with the three levels of Panchayati Raj system," he added.

On the occasion, the spokesperson said, the LG distributed land passbooks, sports kits, wheelchairs and sanction letters to beneficiaries under various schemes and also inspected the stalls set up by the government departments.

MeT Predicts

was 2.5°C above normal for the summer capital during this time of the year, he said.

Qazigund recorded a low of 3.0°C against 8.0°C on the previous night. The temperature was 0.5°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir,

he said.

In Pahalgam, the mercury settled at 0.2°C against minus 6.0°C on the previous night and it was 0.4°C above normal for the south Kashmir resort, he said.

Kokernag recorded a low of 3.8°C against 7.6°C on the previous night and it was 0.2°C below normal for the place, he said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 1.0°C against 0.0°C on the previous night and it was 2.7°C below normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

In Kupwara town, the mercury settled at 5.1°C against 6.4°C on the previous night, the official said. It was 3.2°C above normal for the north Kashmir place, he said.

Schools Not

made clear to the schools that in view of the government order the new admissions will commence from the month of March of the calendar year.

"It was thus impressed upon these authorities that the school managements' notice to the students to pay annual fee for the months November 2022 to March 2023 is legally not sustainable and the authorities in these circumstances should withdraw the notice," it said.

"It was made clear to the authorities of this school management that academic session cannot be stretched beyond 12 months period, which now starts from 1st April and ends on 31 March of the calendar year. The period of five months commencing from November 2022 to March 2023 being not part of the academic session, the students cannot be asked to pay annual fee for the period, it added.

Avian Guests

is the time when most of these avian souls escape the extreme cold of their summer homes," Naqash said.

Having an upper hand over other states of India, Kashmir has some 400 water bodies, out of which the officials and avian watchers observe birds in some 25 big and notified water bodies. Presently, the valley has nine wetlands out of the total 13 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Wular Lake, Dal Lake, Hokersar and Mirgund Lake are among a few important wetlands of the valley where these migratory birds have been making a temporary shelter for the winter months.

"Every winter, more than 23 species

of ducks and other migratory birds arrive in Kashmir," he said.

The official said that at present, Kashmir has around 1.5 lakh migratory birds in Dal Lake, and small flocks in Hygam, Shallabugh bird reserve, Chatlum and Wular Lake.

In addition to these winter dwellers, some species of birds called the 'birds of passage' like the cormorant and sandhill crane also spend some time in the Valley in early winter and late spring while flying to and going back from the Indian plains.

"In Kashmir, during extreme cold, the water bodies inside the bird reserves are frozen. This sometimes pushes migratory birds to fly over to other water bodies. That's why our department needs to arrange feed for the birds inside these water bodies," Naqash said, adding that these birds live here from late October to the end of April.

Notably, as the yearly arrival of these winged visitors starts in the valley, the threat of them being poached and hunted by the ongoing human intervention has also augmented.

Wildlife warden, wetlands, Ifshana Dewan said the department has increased patrolling this year in order to put hunters and poachers at bay. "We had already established 24x7 control rooms in and around various lakes to stop poaching of birds last year. However, we've increased patrolling this year and whenever we get information of any poaching incident, our teams will reach the spot immediately," Ifshana told Kashmir Observer.

She further said that bird reserves like Hokersar, Hygam and Shallabugh, where permanent staff of the department is posted, there's no threat of poachers. "The real threat of these birds falling prey to poaching becomes a problem in unprotected and isolated wetlands," she added.

It is pertinent to mention here that killing of these migratory birds has been an offense under the local laws of J&K, enacted in 1978 that were later repealed and replaced by the Indian wildlife Protection Act of 1972, when the special status of J&K was abrogated and the erstwhile state was downgraded into two Union Territories.

NC Sounds Poll

Pahalgam constituency.

A senior NC leader told Kashmir Observer that it doesn't necessarily mean that the ones nominated as constituency incharges will be the candidates of the party in the upcoming assembly polls.

"The party will take a call on the mandate," he said.

NC spokesperson, Tanvir Sadiq told Kashmir Observer that the move was inevitable for the better coordination between the constituencies.

"To ensure that there is coordination

between the constituencies, the party has decided to nominate incharges. It was the need of the hour," Sadiq added.

However, the announcement about the constituency incharges is likely to widen rift between NC and its alliance parties in the PAGD, an amalgam of several mainstream parties, fighting to restore pre-2019 status of Jammu and Kashmir. The move is also likely to cast shadow over the relations between National Conference and its one time arch rival the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), led by Mehbooba Mufti.

CB Charges

R/o House No. 327, Ward No. 19 Aryanagar Bahadurgarh Haryana-124507 on the pretext that a installation of mobile tower and for the purpose of registration the complainant was made to deposit a huge amount as fee," it reads.

It added that the Economic Offence Wing of Crime Branch Kashmir once again advises the general public to be vigilant and never respond to any unknown messages, calls and requests.

Leh Highway

"Traffic plying on Jammu-Srinagar NHW. Mughal road and SSG road through for vehicular movement," police tweeted.

CRPF Promotes

while Seema Dhundia has been posted as the IG of the Bihar Sector.

This is the first time that the RAF will be headed by a woman IG. An IG Is the head of the sector in the CRPF.

Both officers joined the paramilitary force in 1987 as the first batch of women officers. They have also commanded an all-women Indian police contingent at the UN.

They have been decorated with the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, Police Medal for Meritorious Service and the 'Ati Utkrisht Sewa Padak' during their service, a CRPF spokesperson said.

Abraham told PTI that the appointment "was an honour for her and she would work to take RAF to a higher position."

The 15 battalions strength RAF is deployed for anti-riots, counter-protests and sensitive law and order duties in various parts of the country and is called in to assist state police forces during important events where heavy crowds are expected and also for VIP visits.

The Bihar Sector of the CRPF commands about four battalions of the force that are deployed for anti-Naxal operations and other law and order duties apart from some small units of the RAF and the jungle warfare unit CoBRA.

The CRPF was the first Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) to induct women in combat in 1986.

It has six such battalions at present with women constables filling more than 6,000 posts in these.

A Look At The Players Who Won't Be At Qatar World Cup

Agencies

BERLIN: Not every football star will be competing at the World Cup.

Some big names will be missing from the tournament in Qatar because of injuries or because their countries didn't qualify.

ERLING HAALAND (Norway)



The 22-year-old Haaland has had a phenomenal start in his first season at Manchester City with 17 goals in his first 11 Premier League appearances, but Norway failed to beat the Netherlands in the team's final qualifying game in Group G. Haaland, who had scored in the 1-1 draw when they met in Oslo, missed the decisive game because of an injury.

MOHAMED SALAH (Egypt)



Salah, who won the Golden Boot as the Premier League's top scorer alongside Son Heung-min last season, missed a penalty against Senegal in the shootout that eliminated Egypt from the World Cup playoffs. Salah blasted his attempt over the crossbar and former Liverpool teammate Sadio Mané kicked the winner for his team's 3-1 victory.

PAUL POGBA (France)



Paul Pogba was ruled out of the tournament this week because of ongoing right knee problems. The 29-year-old

Pogba played a vital part in France's World Cup success four years ago, but has yet to play a game this season since his last official match in April. After returning to Juventus from Manchester United in the offseason, Pogba tore his meniscus during the Italian club's preseason tour of the United States in July.

N'GOLO KANTE (France)



Kante hasn't played for his club or his country since August, and Chelsea confirmed last month that the midfielder will miss the tournament while recovering from surgery on a hamstring injury. Widely regarded as one of the world's best midfielders, Kante played a key role alongside Pogba in France's run to the 2018 title.

DAVID ALABA (Austria)



Austria didn't qualify for the World Cup after losing to Wales in the playoffs. Gareth Bale scored two goals in the 2-1 victory that ended his Real Madrid teammate's hopes of appearing at soccer's biggest tournament for the first time. The 30-year-old Alaba, who joined Madrid from Bayern Munich in 2021, captained Austria at last year's European Championship, where the team lost to eventual champion Italy in the round of 16.

LUIS DÍAZ (Colombia)

Díaz's World Cup hopes were over even before he injured his knee while playing for Liverpool because Colombia finished sixth in South American quali-



fying. The 25-year-old Díaz, who instantly became a Liverpool favorite after his transfer from Porto in January, still hasn't played at a World Cup.

GIANLUIGI DONNARUMMA (Italy)



Arguably the best goalkeeper in the world won't be at the World Cup after Italy surprisingly failed to qualify for the tournament — again. Donnarumma was the player of the tournament when he helped Italy win Euro 2020, but he was unable to stop Aleksandar Tra-

jkovski's injury-time winner for North Macedonia in the World Cup playoffs in March. Italy also failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

DIOGO JOTA (Portugal)



Jota said "one of my dreams collapsed" when it was confirmed he will miss the World Cup with a calf injury sustained in Liverpool's 1-0 win over Manchester City on Oct. 16. He had already missed the first month of the season because of injury. Liverpool coach Jürgen Klopp said Jota faced "months" to recover. Portugal teammate Pedro Neto is also out after sustaining an ankle injury while playing with Wolverhampton. (AP)

DPS Srinagar Wins 25 Medals At Thang Ta C'ship

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Delhi Public School (DPS) Srinagar's Thang Ta team brought laurels to the school by securing 25 medals in the J&K UT Level Thang Ta Championship 2022, organised by J&K Thang Ta Association, held between 28th and 30th October. The DPS team won 9 gold, 6 silver, and 10 bronze.

More than 630 players from J&K participated in the championship that took place at Multipurpose Indoor Sports Hall Srinagar. As many as 38 players from the school participated in the championship, with Saira Zahoor, a senior category player from class 12th winning the title "Champion Of Champions" which is

played between senior category gold medallists.

Expressing her delight at the remarkable performance of the students, Principal Ms. Shafaq Afshan said, "The wins again highlight the quality of our training program. At DPS, we ensure that the students are identified for potential, and groomed to shine in the field."

Chairman Vijay Dhar also expressed his delight at the rich haul and noted it as a vindication of the school's attempts to establish a sporting culture to offset the gloom of circumstances.

Other gold medallists include: Ayat Rafiq, Aungbeen Nazir, Ayla Parvaiz, Aaminah Irfan, Ayda Nazir, Sujhat Wani, Zynah Sartaj, Aayat Kirmani.



India Beat Bangladesh By 5 Runs In T20 World Cup



Press Trust of India

ADELAIDE: India defeated Bangladesh by five runs in a rain-curtailed T20 World Cup match here on Wednesday. Invited to bat, Virat Kohli and K L Rahul scored sparkling fifties to power India to 184 for six. The under-fire Rahul returned to form with a 32-ball 50 before Kohli took charge of the innings with an unbeaten 64 off 44 deliveries.

Hasan Mahmud (3/47) was the pick of the bowlers for Bangladesh.

Defending a revised target of 151 in 16 overs following a brief rain interruption, India restricted Bangladesh to 145 for six.

Liton Das top-scored for Bangladesh with a 27-ball 60.

Arshdeep Singh (2/38) picked up two wickets for India.

India moved to top of Group 2 with six points, one ahead of South Africa who have played one game fewer.

Earlier, Zimbabwe's hopes of reaching the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup effectively evaporated following their five-wicket defeat by the Netherlands.

Brief scores:

India 184 for 6 in 20 overs (Virat Kohli 64 not out, KL Rahul 50; Hasan Mahmud 3/47).

Bangladesh: 145 for 6 in 16 overs (Liton Das 60; Arshdeep Singh 2/38).

Asian Boxing C'ship: Hussamuddin Advances To Quarterfinal In 57 Kg Category

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Indian boxer Hussamuddin on Wednesday advanced to the quarterfinal of the Asian Boxing Championship being held in Amman, Jordan after defeating Kyrgyzstan's Seiltbek Uulu in his round of 16 match of 57 kg (Featherweight) category. Hussamuddin defeated his opponent 3-2 in a closely contested match. He will now face Pakistan's Ilyas Hussain in the quarter-final.

"QF SPOT! Keep it up @Hussamboxer #AsianChampionships #PunchMeinHaiDum #Boxing." Boxing Federation of India (BFI) said in a tweet. More

ed Kyrgyzstan's Diushebaev Nurzhigit in his round of 32 match in the 51 kg category on Tuesday. He defeated Nurzhigit by 5-0.

The event will be held in Jordan from November 1 to November 12.

India squad (as per Olympics.com):

Men: Govind Sahani (48kg), Sparsh Kumar (51kg), Ananta Chopade (54kg), Md. Hussamuddin (57kg), Etash Khan (60kg), Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), Amit Kumar (67kg), Sachin (71kg), Sumit (75kg), Lakshya (80kg), Kapil (86kg), Naveen (92kg), Narender (+92kg)

Women: Monika (48kg), Savita (50kg), Minakshi (52kg),



action awaits boxing fans as Sparsh Kumar will take on Kazakhstan's Saken Bibossinov in his round of 16 match of the 51 kg (Flyweight) category tonight. Earlier, Sparsh had defeat-

Sakshi (54kg), Preeti (57kg), Simranjit (60kg), Parveen (63kg), Ankushita Boro (66kg), Pooja (70kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), Saweety Boora (81kg), Alfiya Pathan (+81kg). (ANI)

South Africa Must Bring Their 'A-Game' Against Pakistan: Miller



Reuters

SYDNEY: South Africa batsman David Miller said they will need to bring their "A-game" when they face 2009 champions Pakistan in a Twenty20 World Cup clash in Sydney on Thursday. South Africa are in pole position to take one of the two semi-final spots available from Group 2, but Pakistan, who lost to India and Zimbabwe, still have an outside shot of qualifying thanks to a six-wicket win over the Netherlands.

"We all know every game in

the World Cup is an important game, and against Pakistan you've got to make sure that you're on your A-game as an opponent," Miller told reporters on Wednesday. "... I suppose Pakistan -- it's a must-win game for them, so they're going to be coming and charging, and we're definitely prepared for it."

Miller, 33, scored a fifty as he helped South Africa recover from a poor start against India and seal a five-wicket win on Sunday. "Experience is a really valuable thing, and for example,

in the previous game, we were in a little bit of trouble," he said, adding that in the past they may have "got a little hasty".

Pakistan bowler Naseem Shah said their pace attack had to be firing on all cylinders. "We're all fast bowlers just trying to bowl our best because when you bowl bad anywhere, when you bowl a bad ball, then you are in a struggle," Shah said.

Pakistan will likely be without Fakhar Zaman after the batsman aggravated a knee injury that initially ruled him out of the squad.

SKY Ends Rizwan's Reign As No. 1 T20I Batter

Agencies

DUBAI: India's Suryakumar Yadav has grabbed the top position for batters in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20I Player Rankings after smashing two half-centuries over the past week in the Men's T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia.

Yadav's 51 not out off 25 balls against the Netherlands in Sydney and a valiant 68 off 40 against South Africa in Perth have helped him overtake New Zealand's Devon Conway and Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan. They had held the top spot since 4 September this year.

Yadav is the 23rd player to top

by an Indian, the highest being Kohli's tally of 897 in September 2014.

The latest weekly update, which considers performances in matches completed by Tuesday, sees Sri Lanka spinner Wanindu Hasaranga advance four places to second position among bowlers.

Hasaranga, who became No.1 during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup last year, has moved back towards the top position after winning one wicket against New Zealand and three against Afghanistan. Hasaranga has only three points less than Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan. England seamer Sam Curran, who



the T20I batting rankings and only the second Indian to reach No. 1 in T20 cricket after Virat Kohli, who spent 1,013 days at the top in different periods from September 2014 to December 2017.

Yadav's tally of 863 rating points is also the second-best

grabbed two wickets each against New Zealand and Ireland during this period, is up two places to sixth position while South Africa quick Anrich Nortje has progressed 11 slots to the eighth position after his haul of four for 10 against Bangladesh. (ANI)

Tottenham, Frankfurt Advance In Champions League

Agencies

Tottenham and Eintracht Frankfurt both came from behind to win their respective games and secure a place in the last 16 of the Champions League.

At halftime in the final round of group matches on Tuesday, Marseille and Sporting Lisbon were going through from Group D.

But instead it was their opponents who progressed as a stoppage-time winner from Pierre-Emile Højbjerg saw Tottenham beat Marseille 2-1 to top the

The top two finishers in the other groups on Tuesday had already been decided, although not necessarily the order.

Porto beat Atlético Madrid 2-1 to snatch top spot in Group B after Club Brugge was held to a 0-0 draw at Bayer Leverkusen.

Napoli kept hold of first place in Group A despite dropping its first points in the Champions League this season in a 2-0 loss at second-place Liverpool.

Bayern Munich did manage to progress with a perfect record as it beat Inter Milan 2-0 to make it six wins out of six. The four



group and Frankfurt won by the same score in Lisbon to secure second spot on its Champions League debut.

places in Group C had already been decided with Inter having secured second spot ahead of Barcelona. (AP)

Iran Raises Red Flag; Is It Declaration Of War

Agenceis

What caused the Red Flag to be raised in a Holy Shrine in the City of Shiraz remains unclear. The last time the Red Flag was raised was when the famous General Qasem Soleimani was killed in 2020.

As the "Wall Street Journal" writes, Saudi Arabia has handed over intelligence to the United States about an "imminent attack" by Iran.

The United States, Saudi Arabia and a number of other countries in the region have raised the level of combat readiness of their armed forces, according to the sources.

According to the American newspaper, Saudi officials announced that Iran will allegedly



attack Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. Tehran is allegedly doing this "in an attempt to divert attention from internal protests," the article said.

In turn, U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said Washington is in constant contact with Riyadh regarding threats in the region and is ready to act to protect its interests and allies.

26.85 Lakh WhatsApp Accounts Banned In India In September



Agenceis

Instant messaging firm WhatsApp banned 26.85 lakh accounts in India in September, including 8.72 lakh accounts which were barred proactively before being flagged by users, the company said on Tuesday.

The number of accounts blocked in September were 15 per cent more than the 23.28 lakh accounts the messaging platform banned in August.

"Between 1 September, 2022 and 30 September, 2022, 2,685,000 WhatsApp accounts were banned. 8,72,000 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users. An Indian account is identified via a +91 phone

number," Whatsapp said in its 'User Safety Report' for the month of September.

The tougher IT rules, which came into effect last year, mandate large digital platforms (with over 50 lakh users) to publish compliance reports every month, mentioning the details of complaints received and action taken.

Big social media firms have drawn flak in the past over hate speech, misinformation and fake news circulating on their platforms. Concerns have been flagged by some quarters time and again over digital platforms acting arbitrarily in pulling down content, and 'de-platforming' users.

The government last week announced rules for setting up

a grievance appeal mechanism against arbitrary content moderation, inaction, or takedown decisions of big tech companies.

According to the latest WhatsApp report, the platform received 666 grievances in September but took action only against 23.

"In addition to responding to and actioning on user complaints through the grievance channel, WhatsApp also deploys tools and resources to prevent harmful behavior on the platform. We are particularly focused on prevention because we believe it is much better to stop harmful activity from happening in the first place than to detect it after harm has occurred," the company said.

Elon Musk Says Those Banned On Twitter Will Not Be Allowed Back Until...



Agenceis

San Francisco: New Twitter owner Elon Musk said Wednesday that it will be "a few more weeks" before any banned accounts — such as that of former US president Donald Trump — may be restored on the platform.

Twitter users have been watching closely to see whether Musk will reinstate Trump, banned for inciting last year's attack on the Capitol by a mob seeking to overturn the results of the 2020 election, and other de-platformed users.

The potential reinstatement of such accounts banned for violating the site's content moderation rules has been seen as a bellwether of where Musk, a self-described "free speech absolutist," wants to take the site he describes as a global town square.

But on Wednesday the South African billionaire said the wait will have to continue a little longer.

"Twitter will not allow anyone who was de-platformed for violating Twitter rules back on platform until we have a clear process for doing so, which will take at least a

few more weeks," he tweeted.

That means after crucial November 8 midterm elections in the United States, which will determine control of Congress. Trump, once a prolific tweeter, retains a powerful hold on his Republican Party, and has reopened his 2020 playbook by questioning the integrity of the upcoming election. Since Musk took Twitter private last week, Trump has suggested he would be happier sticking with his own Truth Social messaging platform.

But the former president's network has financial issues and many political strategists believe he would find it hard to resist the mass audience and influence offered by a return to Twitter, where he was once one of the site's biggest global draws.

The announcement comes only days after the world's wealthiest man took sole control of the social media giant in a contentious \$44 billion deal, vowing to dial back content moderation.

Musk was tweeting in response to a post from the company's head of safety, Joel Roth, on Twitter's efforts to combat disinformation ahead of the elections.

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