

Protests Rock Rajouri After 2 Civilians Shot Dead

Eyewitnesses Accuse Sentry Of Army Camp For Opening Fire, Army Blames 'Unidentified Terrorists'; Police Files FIR

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Two civilians were killed and another was injured in firing outside an army camp in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Friday, leading to massive protests and demands for a fair probe.

While the army said in a tweet that some "unidentified terrorists" had started firing at the camp, eyewitnesses claimed a sentry posted at the gate opened fire at approaching locals, resulting in the casualties.

However, a senior army officer later termed the incident "very unfortunate" and assured action against those involved in it.

"FIR has been registered with regard to the early morning incident. We assure a fair probe in a professional manner. Police were the first to reach the scene after the firing and they shifted the injured to a hospital," Deputy

Inspector General (DIG) of Police Haseeb Mughal told reporters.

Rajouri residents Kamal Kumar and Surindar Kumar, both in their late 30s, were killed and Anil Kumar from Uttarakhand was injured, police said.

Following the incident, locals, carrying their bodies, blocked the Jammu-Poonch national highway for nearly seven hours and demanded a probe into the matter and adequate compensation to the families of the victims.

They relented only after senior administration, army and police officials assured them of action, including registration of FIR.

The bodies were taken to the Rajouri Government Medical College for postmortem and other legal formalities, Mughal said.

Police said the firing took place around 6.15 am when a group of people, who worked as porters, were approaching the 'alpha' gate of the **More on P6**



Traditional markets in old Srinagar are witnessing brisk sale of variety of dried vegetables a winter delicacy in Kashmir. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Cold, Dry Spell To Continue Till Dec 31

Srinagar: Even as Srinagar and Kupwara in north recorded coldest night of the season, the night temperature would likely plummet further across Kashmir Valley as the dry spell is likely to continue till December end. Night temperatures in Srinagar are set to touch -5 to -6 degrees Celsius till the end of the ensuing month.

As per the details available, Srinagar recorded the coldest night of the season at minus 3.6 degree Celsius. Kupwara district in north Kashmir also recorded the coldest night of the season at minus 3.6 degree Celsius.

The night temperature settled below freezing point at most stations of Kashmir amid the persistent dry spell in the Valley. The mercury settled at minus 2.5 degree Celsius at Gulmarg, a world famous ski-resort while in Kokernag, the mercury settled at minus 2.1 degree Celsius.

In Qazigund, the mercury settled at minus 3.4 degree Celsius while Pahalgam was once again the coldest place at minus 5.3 degree Celsius. **More on P6**

Govt Calls For More Steps To Realise Vision Of RTI Act

Observer News Service

Srinagar: J&K administration on Thursday called for more measures in realizing the vision of Right to Information (RTI) Act to "usher in accountability in governance and fuse authority with accountability at all levels."

"The objective of the Right to Information Act, 2005 is to empower citizens by way of promoting transparency and accountability in the working of the Government and eradicating corruption to make democracy work for the people in real sense," the government said in a circular.

"An informed citizen is well equipped to keep necessary vigil on the instruments of governance and make the government more accountable towards the citizens," it said.



All government agencies come under the purview of the Act, and it contains mechanisms devised on multiple levels to ensure that the legislation is followed in letter and spirit, the government said. "Post-reorganization, the Right to Information Act, 2005 was made applicable to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with a view to empower the citizen as a responsible and active

participant in the workings of the Government," it said, adding, "Although significant strides have been made by the various departments, offices and other agencies of the Government in realizing the vision of the Right to Information Act, 2005, more steps need to be taken to usher in accountability in governance and fuse authority with accountability at all levels."

The Act casts important obligations on public authorities so as to facilitate the citizens of the country to access the information held under their control, it underlined.

"It is accordingly enjoined upon all public offices to ensure strict adherence to the provisions of the Act ibid, and facilitate speedy dissemination of information to the information **More on P6**

University Campuses Network Of Ideas, Aspirations: LG

'Need To Inspire Students And Institutions To Promote Science, Technology; Innovation To Bridge Motivational Divide'

Observer News Service

Gujarat: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Friday that the future will belong to those universities which will work with inspiration and motivation with the students from different disciplines to realize the ideas on the ground.

"I believe University campuses are truly a network of ideas and aspirations for an inclusive society. These networks of ideas are creating human capital for nation building and their potential in achieving sustainable development while providing opportunities to all is limitless", Sinha said.

He made these remarks while addressing birth anniversary celebration of Mahamana



Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at the Central University of Gujarat here on Friday.

The LG said that due to environmental, technical-scientific advancement and globalization, rapid changes are sweeping socio-economic landscape.

"We can reshape the future by creating new **More on P6**



INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL PROBE into the killings should be initiated. Civilian killings call for outright condemnation and cannot be condoned on any ground whatsoever."

Two Sisters Held With Heroin Near LoC: Police

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Two school-going sisters were nabbed along with 890 grams of heroin near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, police said on Friday.

The apprehension of the two girls, residents of Deri Dabsi village of Mendhar, in a joint operation by the J-K Police, BSF and Army thwarted the narcotic smuggling bid from across the border, a police official said.

Acting on a lead, a joint team of police and BSF along with the executive magistrate apprehended a girl at village Jaba and seized 400 grams of drugs from her possession, he said. **More on P6**

Encroachment Of State Land Govt Constitutes Panels To Deal With Court Matters

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The government on Friday constituted a District Level Standing Committee(s) for dealing with court matters regarding encroachment of State and Departmental land in Jammu and Kashmir.

The 4-member committee comprises Deputy Commissioner (concerned) as Chairperson and its members include Superintendent of Police, Representative of the concerned Department and Representative of Director Litigation.

"The Committee shall



finalize the draft objections to be submitted by the concerned Officer in Charge (OIC) Litigation within a period of 15 days within receipt of the draft objections by the concerned

Department," reads a government order, adding, "The draft objections so finalized shall be thereafter submitted to the appropriate office within a period of 15 days thereof."

The Deputy Commissioner shall take periodic review of all pending cases, on monthly basis, preferably on second Monday to expedite the draft objections, it said.

"It is further ordered that the Deputy Commissioner shall nominate the senior-most officer of the concerned Department as Officer-In-Charge (OIC) for each case."

Amid New Measures To Ensure Fair Selection SSB Recruitment Process Back On Track

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Hit by scandals in the recent past, the recruitment process in Jammu and Kashmir is back on track with the Services Selection Board introducing new measures, including third-party audits and low-frequency jammers to ensure transparency and fairness.

In July, the Jammu and Kashmir administration headed by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha cancelled the exams conducted for the posts of police sub-inspectors, junior engineers

and finance account assistants (FAA), following allegations of paper leak and other malpractices.

The CBI, which is investigating the sub-inspector recruitment scam after registering a case on August 3 on a reference from the J&K administration, has already filed a charge sheet on November 12 against 24 people, including a BSF commandant, arrested for alleged involvement in the scam.

"After a hiatus of several months, we started conducting the written examination after putting in **More on P6**

Visa Fraud: CBI Carries Out Searches In J&K

Searches Also Conducted In New Delhi, Punjab

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The CBI on Friday searched six locations in Delhi, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir after registering an FIR against several people, including two former workers in the French Embassy here, for alleged visa fraud, officials said.

The agency has alleged that Shubham Shokeen and Aarti Mandal, both former workers at the embassy's visa department, committed the fraud in conspiracy with others between January and May.

"It was further **More on P6**

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

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SKUAST-K Conducts 64th Research Council Meeting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: SKUAST-Kashmir conducted its 64th Research Council Meeting on Friday. The meeting is held twice a year to discuss and deliberate upon the Research programmes of the University. The 64th Research Council Meeting assumes importance in light of the comprehensive Policy for Holistic Development of Agriculture in the UT of J&K being developed by Agricultural Production Department.

The Meeting was chaired by Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-K and attended by Sh. Atal Dulloo Financial Commissioner/Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Production Department, Dr. N.S. Rathore former Vice-Chancellor MPUAT, Udaipur Rajasthan as expert member, Directors and Deans of University, Heads of Development Departments of Agriculture and allied fields, HODs of subject Matter Divisions of SKUAST, Scientists and the representatives of farmers and agro-industries.

Prof. Sarfaraz Wani, Director Research presented an overview of Research activities during 2022 and the R&D issues identified and the strategies proposed to address the issues. Overview of 29 projects approved by UT level Apex committee was also presented.

Dr. N.S. Rathore, Former Vice-Chancellor MPUAT and DDG Education ICAR highlighted the need for research

in frontier areas, good agricultural practices, innovations and digital technology with a human touch. He expressed concern about depletion of soil, natural resources and bio-diversity.

Atal Dulloo in his remarks appreciated the role of farm Universities in development of DPRs for holistic development of agriculture. He highlighted certain projects that are central to development of agriculture and allied structure that includes strengthening the seed multiplication chain, promotion of niche crops, farm mechanisation, marketing strategies, processing and value addition and innovative extension approach.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nazir A. Ganai SKUAST-K in his remarks highlighted the paradigm shift in approach towards organizing Agricultural Research wherein Farm Universities and Development departments together will plan and execute the Research and Development Programmes. He stressed upon reducing the production cost through better resource and water use efficiency, mechanisation automation and deployment of other smart solutions.

He also highlighted the need of processing and value addition to increase the returns from Agriculture and allied activities.

Later during the day various projects approved by APEX Committee were discussed and deliberated upon and strategies for effective implementation and monitoring of projects were proposed.

DC Reviews Progress Of Works Under District Capex Plan 2022-23

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to take first hand appraisal about physical and financial status of the works taken up under District Capex Plan 2022-23 in the District, a meeting of all Sectoral/District Officers was held under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed review of funds released and expenditure incurred under R&B, PHE, Education, Health, RDD, NRLM, ICDS and other sectors, besides progress of works taken up under DDC, BDC and PRI grants were also discussed in threadbare.

The DC after taking sector wise review of all works directed the officers to ensure 100 percent expenditure in the set time line by accelerating the pace of the works scheduled for completion during the current year.

The DC stressed on achieving 70 percent physical/ financial target of total allocated funds/works taken up for current fiscal by December 31.

He directed the officers to work in coordinated manner with line Departments to achieve development goals well in time keeping in view the limited working season.

The DC asked all the line departments to ensure timely

submission of works bills to concerned Treasuries.

On the occasion, the DC was apprised that under District Capex, total 682 works were taken up out of which nearly 400 works have been completed while rest of works are going on.

It was informed that against the approved budget an expenditure of 48 percent has been made for year 2022-23.

The meeting was further informed that under NRLM, 100 percent, ICDS/Mid-day meals over 98 percent and JJM, 95 percent, target has been achieved in the District so far.

While reviewing the Health sector, the DC asked the CMO Srinagar to expedite the process of face lifting and infrastructure upgradation of Health Centres in Srinagar including PHC, Zeevan, PHC Mujgund. He also asked him to take up works for making the ground floor of the new building of PHC S R Gunj operational so that the present makeshift health centre is shifted to that new building.

The DC also asked the PWD Engineers to evolve a mechanism to avoid resurfacing of roads during macadamization.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of works achieved under the Area Development Plan.

Besides, Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Yaseen Lone, the meeting was attended by all District/Sectoral Officers, Engineers and other concerned.

NIT Gets 'Engineering Educational Excellence Award' From IEI

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar has received a Certificate of Appreciation under the Engineering Educational Excellence Award category from 'The Institute of Engineers India among all Engineering Institutions including NITs and IITs in India.

The award was given during the 37th Indian Engineering Congress hosted by The Institute of Engineers Tamil Nadu State Centre in Chennai. NIT Srinagar got a "Certificate of Appreciation" under the Engineering Educational Excellence Award category by The Institute of Engineers India.

The certificate was awarded by Dr. K Ponmudy, Honourable Minister of Higher Education, and Padmabhusan Dr. A S Pillai,

Founder CEO & MD of Brahmos Aerospace to Dr. Harveer Singh Pali, Nodal Officer Institute Rankings NIT Srinagar at Chennai on 16th December 2022.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Sehgal congratulated the faculty, research scholars, and staff. "NIT Srinagar has done well in the Engineering Educational Excellence Award and it was a joint effort and all have performed well," he said.

Prof. Sehgal also commended the work put in by Dr. Harveer Singh Pali, who was the Nodal Officer for Institute rankings. He said there is a lot more to do and such results are encouraging.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Syed Kaiser Bukhari extended his greetings to all faculty colleagues and stated that NIT Srinagar has performed well in all parameters.



Six Houses Damaged In Habba Kadal Blaze

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: At least six residential houses were partially damaged in a fire incident at Gudood Bagh locality of Habbakadal Srinagar.

Sources said that a fire broke out from a residential house Friday evening and soon after spread to several other houses in the vicinity.

Amid chaos, the Fire and Emergency Department called in more men and machinery to contain the spread of fire at the site.

Joint Director F&ES De-

partment Bashir Ahmed Shah said that six residential houses were partially damaged in a fire incident in Gudood Bagh and the timely action of their men prevented the fire from spreading to the neighboring structures.

"Crowds of people visiting the site hindered our work to douse the flames. We had called fire fighting tenders from other stations as well which helped in restricting it" Bashir said.

Meanwhile, concerned over the steep spike in fire-related incidents, Srinagar po-

lice on Friday urged citizens to keep basic fire safety equipment handy and also advised them to only use authentic heating appliances.

"There are many incidents of fire being reported in Srinagar district daily. Citizens are advised to keep basic fire safety equipment handy & also to only use authentic heating appliances", Srinagar Police tweeted.

"Legal action will be taken as per law against shopkeepers selling fake & duplicate equipment", the tweet reads further.

"No Ban On Photography" Clarifies Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid

Permission needed for clicking pictures for professional purposes

Agencies

Srinagar: Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar said that there was no ban on the photography inside the masjid but permission is needed for clicking pictures for professional purposes.

Anjuman Auqaf also in the statement issued clarified

being a place of worship visitors are requested to respect its sanctity as a mosque and observe decorum while visiting the mosque.

"It is not a public park or a recreational facility. So while clicking photographs visitors both local and outsiders should keep this in mind. For professional purposes permission needs to be

sought from Anjuman Auqaf before taking any pictures or video of Jama Masjid."

People should refrain from carrying food items to the mosque, and worshippers both men and women, should use their specific spaces while praying in the mosque, designated for both the genders, the statement added.(KNO)

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
22 Jumad al-Awwal
1444

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5:58
ZUHR	12:25
ASR	3:46
Magrib	5:27
ISHA	6:52

This Day In History

- 1638 - French and Swedish troops occupy Breisach on the Rhine
- 1788 Russian army of Grigory Potemkin occupies Ocharov
- 1790 - Aztec calendar stone discovered in Mexico City
- 1885 - France declares Madagascar a protectorate
- 1893 - Russia ratifies Double Alliance with France
- 1908 - In Turkey the new parliament convenes with reformist Young Turks as the majority
- 1912 - Albania's de facto independence from the Ottoman Empire is recognized at the London Conference of Ambassadors
- 1918 - A conference of workers' and soldiers' councils take control of German government in Berlin, until elections in January selects new national assembly
- 1920 - Japan receives League of Nations mandate over Pacific islands
- 1920 - South Africa receives League of Nations mandate over SW Africa
- 1922 - Last British troops leave Irish Free State
- 1925 - Soviet Union & Turkey sign non-aggression pact
- 1925 - Sultan Abdulaziz Ibn Saud conquers Jeddah, the last major stand of the Hashemites against the Saudis
- 1927 - US submarine S-4 sinks after collision killing all 34 aboard
- 1938 - Discovery of nuclear fission using uranium by Otto Hahn and his assistant Fritz Strassmann
- 1939 - German pocket battleship Graf Spee scuttled by its crew off Uruguay
- 1940 - British troops occupy Sollum, Egypt
- 1941 - Dutch & Australian troops land on Portuguese Timor
- 1941 - German submarine U-31 sunk
- 1941 - World War II: Beginning of the Siege of Sebastopol.
- 1942 - Allies in London sentence German war criminals
- 1944 - US Army announces end of excluding Japanese-Americans from West Coast, detainees released
- 1944 - US destroyers sink in storm off Philippines, 790 killed
- 1947 - British industrial company BTH receives a patent for holography, invented by Dennis Gabor in their development lab
- 1954 - 1st fully automated railroad freight yard (Gary, Indiana)
- 1957 - US successfully test-fires Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile

From KO Archives

Gul Shah Up In Arms Against Farooq

Observer News Service

Srinagar- Ghulam. Mohammad Shah, the former chief minister of the state today urged the leading militant groups in the state to help him in ousting the state's present chief minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who is also his brother-in-law.

In an across the board appeal, Shah urged militant groups, Hurriet Conference and mainstream opposition parties to join him in ousting the present govt which he called inefficient and ineffective.

Shah who heads Awami National Conference was addressing an impressive gathering of over one thousand workers at a party meet in Srinagar today. The groups and parties from which ANC head sought help include Harkatul Ansar Hizbul Mujahedin, JKLF Hurriet Conference, Congress, BJP and Communists.

The former chief minister, thanked militants for raising the "dead Kashmir issue through their sacrifices." He said the time has come to start a political battle against the corrupt rule of Farooq Abdullah. Praising the role of militants, Shah said, "I salute all of them. It is they who have highlighted and revived the issue at local, national and international level." He said Kashmir is now a serious debate. He, however, said the gun was not the ultimate solution. "Issues are finally settled and resolved through vote and across the table," he said.

He said fighting elections is a part of political battle. "We can raise the Kashmir issue in our elected assembly and decide our future ourselves". "If that fails," Shah said, "We will choose some other course."

Shah said Kashmir is a dispute and "both India and Pakistan should recognise that it is the people of the state of J&K who are the principal party to the problem." "The legitimate and true representatives of the state of Jammu and Kashmir will, therefore, have to be consulted for a just, equitable, honourable and a practicable solution to the problem," he said, while his workers applauded.

He further said, "Election is not an alternative to plebiscite till the Kashmir is resolved according to the wishes and aspirations of the people of the State, participation in elections is necessary to relieve the people of the untold miseries and difficulties being faced by them."

(Kashmir Observer, 17 December, 1998)

The Rise of Superbugs

The World Health Organization says antimicrobial resistance is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity today and calls superbugs a global health threat requiring urgent action

Javaid Iqbal

According to an ICMR study, many patients in India may no longer benefit from carbapenem, a powerful antibiotic administered mainly in ICU settings to treat pneumonia and septicemia, as they have developed antimicrobial resistance. Resistance to Imipenem used to treat infections caused by the bacteria E Coli, has increased from 14% in 2016 to 36% in 2021. Things are so worrying that only 43% of the pneumonia infections caused by one pathogen in India could be treated with the first line of antibiotics in 2021, down from 65% in 2016

The average life expectancy in the early 20th century was 47 years in the industrialized world. There was no treatment for smallpox, cholera, diphtheria, and pneumonia. Something as simple as a scratch could get infected and lead to death.

Out of the 10 million soldiers killed in World War I, about half died not from bombs or shrapnel but rather from untreatable infections from often relatively minor wounds and injuries. During World War 2, penicillin production became the War Department's No. 2 priority after the Manhattan Project's drive to build a nuclear bomb. Antibiotics changed the course of human history, and they were rightly called miracle drugs for their ability to cure people.

But now, these miracle drugs are giving rise to superbugs. Antimicrobial resistance or drug resistance happens when organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites change in ways that cause the medicines used to cure the infections they cause to be ineffective. When the microorganisms become resistant to most antimicrobials, they are often called "superbugs." These superbugs are a significant concern because a resistant infection may kill, spread to others, and impose huge costs on individuals and society. Each time we use antibiotics, we allow the few superbug bacteria that can survive the antibiotic to thrive. Over time, the entire population of bacteria is made up only of these superbugs, and our antibiotics no longer work. Every time an antibiotic is used, it contributes to developing resistance and diminishes that drug's effectiveness.

Globally, drug-resistant infections caused due to antimicrobial resistance contribute to about 700,000 deaths annually and, without effective intervention, are projected to cause 10 million deaths and a global economic loss of US\$100 trillion by 2050. By 2030, antimicrobial resistance could see up to 24 million people in extreme poverty. In the United States alone, antibiotic-resistant microbes cause more than 2.8 million infections and over 35,000 deaths annually. But recent research from Pew and the CDC shows that nearly 1 in 3 antibiotics prescribed at doctor's offices and other outpatient settings is unnecessary. That's some 47 million unnecessary prescriptions a year, all contributing to antibiotic resistance.

Researchers feel that with the increasing number of drug-resistant bacteria, they will be forced to stop organ transplantation, chemotherapy, or even the most minor surgeries. They don't expect this to happen in a decade but within a few years. For example, bacteria causing Typhoid fever are becoming increasingly resistant to some of the most important antibiotics for human health, according to a study published in The Lancet Microbe journal.

The World Health Organization says antimicrobial resistance is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity today and calls superbugs a global health threat requiring urgent action.

According to an ICMR study, many patients



in India may no longer benefit from carbapenem, a powerful antibiotic administered mainly in ICU settings to treat pneumonia and septicemia, as they have developed antimicrobial resistance. Resistance to Imipenem used to treat infections caused by the bacteria E Coli, has increased from 14% in 2016 to 36% in 2021. Things are so worrying that only 43% of the pneumonia infections caused by one pathogen in India could be treated with the first line of antibiotics in 2021, down from 65% in 2016. During the chaotic treatment of Covid-19, patients were treated with antibiotics, resulting in more adverse effects. Last year, an ICMR study of 17,534 Covid-19 patients in Indian hospitals found that more than half who acquired drug-resistant infections died.

The US Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics, and Policy have developed the Drug Resistance Index (DRI) tool, which maps out the efficacy of antibiotics for particular pathogens in a specific location. In a 2019 study, India was found to have the lowest DRI among 41 countries, indicating that the country has high levels of resistance to the most commonly consumed antibiotics. Other countries with extremely low DRI scores include Ecuador, Thailand, and Venezuela. Conversely, wealthy countries such as Sweden, Canada, and Denmark were the best stewards of antibiotics.

The researchers determined that a total of 16.29 billion doses of antibiotics were sold in India in 2020, slightly less than the amounts sold in 2018 and 2019. However, when researchers focused on adult doses, usage increased from 72.6% in 2018 and 72.5% in 2019 to 76.8% in 2020. Yet another factor is that many drugs are expensive, especially the higher class of antibiotics. For example, if amoxicillin, a type of penicillin, costs about 100 for a strip of 10,

meropenem can cost 2,500-3,000. The high costs often prompt patients to discontinue their medicines midway through a course when the symptoms of the disease have disappeared. But the bacteria remain in the body and are not killed when the same antibiotic is administered later.

Due to the rise in multi-drug-resistant infections. By 2032, it is predicted that it will not be possible to treat 85 percent of TB cases in India with common drugs. According to government statistics, resistant infections already claim the lives of 700,000 Indians annually – and some experts say this is an underestimate due to poor healthcare surveillance across the country.

There are also quality concerns over many of the antibiotics used. In 2019, more than 47 percent of antibiotics consumed had not been approved by the country's official pharmaceutical regulatory body. Doctors also routinely prescribe antibiotics for patients without ascertaining whether they are genuinely warranted, partly because medical diagnostic services such as blood tests are expensive, and the infrastructure is scarce outside big cities. For instance, antibiotics do not cure viral infections, but the drugs are often prescribed anyway.

Antibiotic resistance leads to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and increased mortality. Without urgent action, we are heading for a post-antibiotic era, in which common infections and minor injuries can once again kill.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author Javaid Iqbal is a Health Economist

Wading through the 18,000-word transcript of an hours-long meeting that President Vladimir Putin took with the "soldiers' mothers" last Friday in Moscow, one gets the impression that the fighting in Ukraine may continue well into 2023 – and even beyond.

In a most revealing remark, Putin acknowledged that Moscow blundered in 2014 by leaving Donbass an unfinished business – unlike Crimea – by allowing itself to be lured into the ceasefire brokered by Germany and France and the Minsk agreements.

Moscow took some time to realise that Germany and France connived with then leadership in Kiev to scuttle the implementation of Minsk accord. Then Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko admitted in a series of interviews with western news outlets in recent months, including on Germany's Deutsche Welle television and Radio Free Europe's Ukrainian unit, that the 2015 ceasefire was a distraction intended to buy time for Kiev to rebuild its military.

In his words, "We had achieved everything we wanted, our goal was to, first, stop the [Russian] threat, or at least to delay the war – to secure eight years to restore economic growth and create powerful armed forces."

The so-called Steinmeier Formula (proposed by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier back in 2016 when he was foreign minister) on the sequencing of the Minsk agreement, had called for elections to be held in the separatist-held Donbass territories under Ukrainian legislation and the supervision of the OSCE; and, if the OSCE judged the balloting to be free and fair, then a special self-governing status for the Donbass territories would be initiated and Ukraine's control of its easternmost border with Russia restored.

Putin admitted that Russia accepted the Minsk agreements ignoring the wishes of the Russian population in Donbass. To quote him, "We sincerely went to this. But we didn't fully feel the mood of the people, it was impossible to fully understand what was going on there. But now it has probably become obvious that this reunion [of Donbass] should have happened earlier. Maybe there wouldn't have been so many losses among civilians, there wouldn't have been so many dead children under shelling..."

For the first time, perhaps, an incumbent Kremlin leader admitted making mistakes. The above poignant passage, therefore, becomes a touchstone for Putin's future decisions, as the Russian mobilisation approaches the final stage and by end-December, an estimated 4 lakh additional Russian troops will have been deployed in forward positions.

The bottom line is that Putin slammed the door shut on another Minsk-like hodgepodge of modern

What To Expect In Russia's Winter Offensive In Ukraine

M. K. BHADRAKUMAR

furniture and antiques. How does this translate as political reality?

First and foremost, much as Moscow is open for dialogue without preconditions, Russian negotiators will be bound by the recent amendments to the country's Constitution, which incorporated Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson, and Zaporozhye regions as part of the Russian Federation.

Second, Friday's meeting has been, by any reckoning, an audacious initiative by Putin – risky, politically speaking. His interlocutors included mothers drawn from far-flung regions, whose sons are either actively fighting on the war-front, or have experienced the tragedy of sons hav-

our people can't provide our soldiers with hot meals, I, as a master of sports and a shooting CMC, would love to go there, to the front line to cook."

Putin replied gently, "It would seem that the issues have already been mostly resolved... it means that not everything is normal..."

What stands out in such frank exchanges is Putin's massive political capital, derived out of the great consolidation he has mustered in getting the nation to rally behind him. The overall mood at the meeting was one of commitment to Russia's cause and the confidence in ultimate victory. Of course, this strengthens Putin's hands.

This is where the analogy of the 1962 Cuban

For the first time, perhaps, an incumbent Kremlin leader admitted making mistakes. The above poignant passage, therefore, becomes a touchstone for Putin's future decisions, as the Russian mobilisation approaches the final stage and by end-December, an estimated 4 lakh additional Russian troops will have been deployed in forward positions

ing been killed in the fighting, or seriously wounded and need prolonged rehabilitation.

They were strong-willed women, for sure, and yet, as one of them from the small town of Kirovsk in Luhansk told Putin while recalling the death of her son Konstantin Pshenichkin on the frontline, "My heart bleeds, my soul freezes, gloomy memories cloud my mind, tears, tears, and suddenly my son asks me: "Mom, don't be sad, I'll see you – you just have to wait. You will go through this life for me, and in that life, we will be together again."

Putin claimed openly – highly unusual for a Kremlin leader – that he went prepared for the meeting. But he still had surprises in store. Such meetings are impossible to be choreographed as pent-up emotions are in play in front of TV cameras.

Thus, Marina Bakhilina from Sakha Republic, mother of three sons (one of whom is a highly decorated soldier from the elite Airborne Forces, 83rd Brigade and recipient of the Order of Courage) complained that there's no hot food on the frontline. She told Putin: "Do you understand what's going on? If

Missile Crisis comes unstuck. Public opinion wasn't a key factor 60 years ago. In a nutshell, common sense prevailed in 1962 as realisation dawned that any failure to take into account the rival power's security interests could have an apocalyptic outcome.

The difference today is that while President Joe Biden has insulated himself and is not accountable for his dogged pursuit of a Russian defeat on the battlefield in Ukraine and an ensuing "regime change" in Moscow, Putin insists on holding himself accountable to his people. Will any western "liberal" politician in power dare emulate Putin's extraordinary meeting with the "soldiers' mothers"?

If economic hardships lead to social unrest and political turmoil in western Europe, the politicians in power will be at a disadvantage. Putin is fighting a "People's War," while western politicians cannot even admit that they are fighting Russia. But how long can it be hidden from the public view in Poland or France that their nationals are getting killed in Ukraine's steppe? Can the western politicians

pledge that their "volunteers" didn't die in vain? What happens if a refugee flow out of Ukraine into western Europe begins as winter advances?

In military terms, Russia enjoys escalation dominance – a markedly superior position over its NATO rival, across a range of rungs as the conflict progresses. The accelerating Russian operation in Bakhmut is a case in point. The deployment of regular troops in the recent days shows that Russia is on the escalation ladder to wrap up the 4-month old "grind" in Bakhmut city in Donetsk, which military analysts often describe as a lynchpin of Kiev's defence in the eastern Donbass region.

A New York Times report on Sunday highlighted the enormous scale of losses Ukrainian forces suffered in recent weeks. Evidently, the Wagner Group of Russian military contractors who were doing the fighting pinned down the Ukrainian forces in defensive position, estimated in the region of 30,000 troops including crack units "that have been worn down by nonstop Russian assaults."

The Times report admits, citing a US defence official, that the Russian intention could have been to make Bakhmut city "a resource-intensive black hole for Kyiv." This paradigm will repeat elsewhere, too, except that the Russian forces will be much stronger, far superior in numbers and vastly better equipped and will be fighting from heavily fortified positions.

Putin made it clear at Friday's meeting that vanquishing the neo-Nazi Banderites will remain a firm objective. Although regime change in Kiev is not a stated purpose, Putin will not settle for a repetition of the ceasefire and peace as in 2015, which left an anti-Russian, proxy regime of the US in power.

That said, Putin underscored that "despite all the issues related to the special military operation, we do not change our plans for the development of the state, for the development of the country, for the development of the economy, its social sphere, for national projects. We have huge, big plans..."

Taken together, all these elements define Russia's so-called winter offensive. Putin's hand-picked theatre commander in Ukraine General Sergei Surovikin is not in the mould of Patton or MacArthur. Basically, he holds the compass of the special military operations, while incorporating the experience accruing through the past 8 months of NATO involvement in the fighting. But never once did Putin use the expression "war" to characterise the conflict.

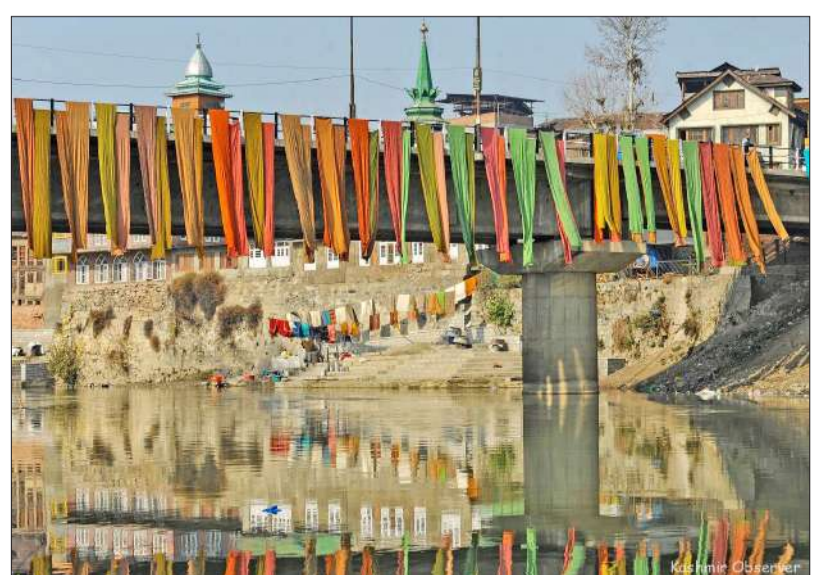
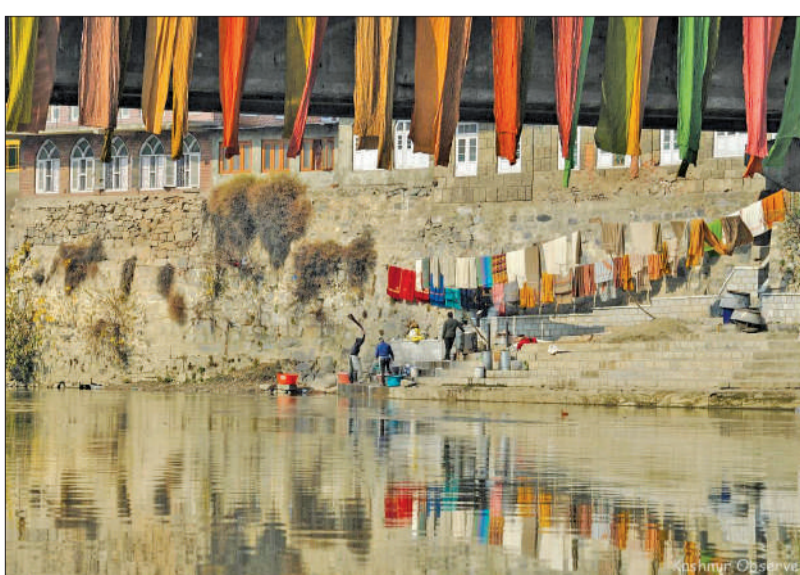
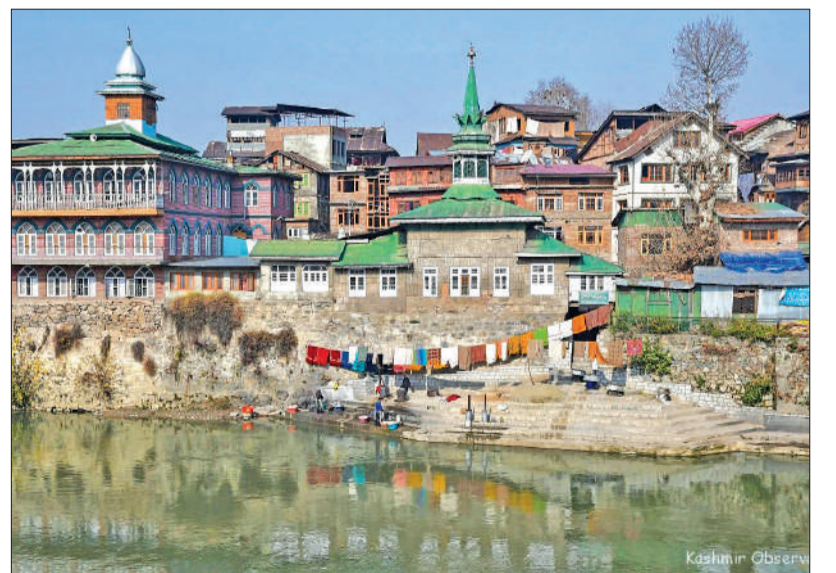
Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by India Punchline

Rainbow of Shawls

THE STRIKING SIGHT OF AALI KADAL

Abid Bhat

It's a frigid December morning and the men with stacks of bundled shawls have arrived at the ghats of river Jhelum for another cleaning outing. Much waters have already passed before their eyes and yet they remain constant witness of shifting sands of Aali Kadal – one of the seven iconic bridges of old city dotted with heritage structures and primary faithful centre. As pivotal members of Kashmir's craft community, these washermen ensure the final sanitised touches to the iconic shawl before it graces some big global shelves. For now, as they wash, the rainbow of Kashmir's craft colours only uplift the withered-wintery mood of the place.





JKFA Meet CS Mehta, Departmental Teams' Issues Raised

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Football Association (JKFA) on Thursday evening held a meeting with Chief Secretary J&K Dr Arun Kumar Mehta at Synthetic Turf TRC to discuss issues regarding football's development in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Chairman Election Committee, JKFA Wasim Aslam and General Secretary JKFA Bashir Ahmad Shah, who put forth the demands of various departmental football teams. CS Mehta also inaugurated "Nation First Winter Sports Festival", organised by J&K Sports Council (JKSC) and JKFA, on the occasion.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir P.K. Pole, Secretary JKSC Nuzhat Gul and Secretary J&K Tourism and Youth Services Sports Sarmad Hafeez and few other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

"Thousands of young footballers from numerous sports teams and academies had gathered from all across the valley of Kashmir region. Nuzhat Gul appreciated the efforts of Wasim Aslam for his contribution towards making the festival a success," a JKFA statement said.

"Wasim Aslam briefed Chief Secretary regarding various important matters and different grievances pertaining to football. All the departmental football teams, such as SRTC, JK Forest, Food and Supplies, PDC, Roads and Buildings, gave representation to the Chief Secretary through Chairman JKFA."

"The Chief Secretary gave a patient hearing and promised that in coming days people will see positive response from the J&K UT administration," the statement concluded.

Gill, Pujara Tons Help India Set Bangladesh 513-Run Target

Press Trust of India

CHATTOGRAM: India set Bangladesh a massive victory target of 513 after declaring their second innings at 258 for 2, riding on maiden Test hundred from young Shubman Gill and the 19th ton from veteran Cheteshwar Pujara on third day of the opening match of the series.

In the morning, Bangladesh were dismissed for 150 with left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav taking a career-best 5 for 40.

Skipper KL Rahul didn't enforce the follow-on and Gill (110 off 152 balls) and Pujara (102 not



out off 130 balls) scored a century after nearly four years.

The hosts finished day three on 42 for no loss, still needing 471 to pull off what would be a record chase. Bangladesh openers Najmul Hossain (25) and Zakir Hasan (17) survived 12 overs without being separated but India look primed for a 1-0 lead in the two-test series.

Morocco & Croatia Play For 3rd Place At Qatar World Cup Today



Press Trust of India

DOHA: To some, it's little more than a meaningless exhibition match. To others, it's a chance to become "immortal." The third-place playoff at the World Cup can be a confusing concept.

"You are so disappointed, you've just lost a semifinal and then two days later you have to go back out there," Morocco coach Walid Regragui said Friday.

Regragui's history-making team — the first African nation to reach the World Cup semifinals — will play Croatia on Saturday at Khalifa International Stadium.

"It's like the booby prize," Regragui said. "I am sorry for speaking like this. I understand that it should be important, I understand that it is better to

finish third than fourth, but for me my takeaway is that we just didn't get to the final."

Morocco's run to the semifinals in Qatar provided the most improbable story of the tournament. The team was also the first Arab nation to go so far in soccer's biggest event, generating an outpouring of pride among Arab countries.

The atmosphere from the Croatian side has been more upbeat. The runners-up from the last World Cup in Russia lost to Argentina 3-0 in the other semifinal match, but their players have spoken of the importance of winning another medal.

Forward Andrej Kramaric described it as the chance to "become an immortal hero in your country." Luka Modric, who is likely

playing in his last World Cup, had similar thoughts.

"We need to leave everything to win the bronze medal and let our fans celebrate one more time," he said.

To finish second and third in back-to-back World Cups would further secure the legacy of a golden generation for Croatia.

"Saturday's match is not a small one for us, but a big final, a fight for third place, for a medal," Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic said. "We have to prepare in every sense. It's a big thing if we take the bronze medal, that would be great."

"The difference is being third or fourth in the world, we will do everything to do that." Morocco and Croatia have already played each other at this year's World Cup, a 0-0 draw in the group stage.



Gurez Gears Up For Winter Games On Frozen Snowfield

Agencies

GUREZ: To attract the attention of tourists and to promote winter sports, the Bandipora Administration in collaboration with local youth in the remote valley of Gurez is planning to organise several sports tournaments including cricket, football and other on a frozen snowfield in winters.

An official told news agency KNO, that the remote valley has a great potential for winter sports as it remains covered under heavy snow during winters, and the locals, like every year, start several sports activities including cricket and football tournaments, besides Snow Ski-

ing course on a frozen snowfield. Notably, the cricket on the frozen grounds over the years has become popular among the residents of Gurez as the place has the potential to become a hotbed of winter sports.

The residents said that the main objective behind organising these tournaments is to attract the attention of the government to the region, as Gurez has great potential for winter sports activities.

Meanwhile, an official said that adequate arrangements are being made for the successful conduct of the several sports activities during winter in the valley. (KNO)

Sydney Thunder Bowled Out For 15, Lowest In Senior T20

Agencies

Sydney Thunder crumbled in remarkable style on Thursday against Adelaide Strikers as they recorded the lowest score ever seen in a men's professional T20 cricket history. Playing a match in the Big Bash League, Henry Thornton and Wes Agar bowled sensational spells and ended up picking five wickets and four wickets respectively.

Sydney Thunder lost a couple of early wickets due to some brilliance in the field by the Strikers fielders, but Thornton and Agar

ripped them apart thereafter. Harry Nielsen ended with five catches and the Thunder batters literally had no answers against the new ball.

Only 5.5 overs were needed to bowl out Thunder, the men's T20 innings had never been shorter. They lost by 124 runs against Strikers, who had won the toss and chosen to bat first amassing 139 for 9.

Between them, Thunder's hitters recorded five ducks, with fast bowler Brendan Doggett leading the way with 4, thanks to an inside edge that raced to the rope.

Bun Maska



Chai

Chai Ka Chaska With Bun Maska



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