

Prestige Smart Kitchen Stores: Chandigarh: Prestite Exclusive Coco , Sco No. 1113, Ground Floor, Sector 22-B, Chandigarh (Near Aroma Chowk) 8951787413, 01725067135; R.P Delights (India), Zirakpur Sco 5, Balaji Enclave, Patiala Road – Zirakpur 9779351122
 9872860710, Jain Crockery Arcade, Sco 705, Nak Shivalik Enclave, Manimajra, Chandigarh 9468300004; **Patiala:** Kohli Traders, Hindu Public School Market, Tripuri Road, Patiala 9815662256, 8283373417; **Ludhiana** - Virtue Sales, Ludhiana Prestige Exclusive 517-L
 Model Town Ludhiana (Near Pal Hospital) 01621918777, 8146002004; A.N.Crockery House, Ludhiana Shop No.B-2, Old Opera House, Near Akalgarh Market, Chaura Bazaar 01612745791, 9718022310; **Bathinda:** - Ude Chand Satpal, Bathinda Sco 65 Veer Colony, Amritsar
 Singh Road 9873599068, 01642257281; **Palampur:-** Nagpal's The Super Store, Palampur Nagpal Enterprises, Old Bus Stand, 01894233000, 9805433200; **Firozpur:-** Hi Tech Enterprises, Firozpur Bazar Bansan Wala, Near Bank Of Maharashtra, Firozpur City 01632234844
 9501031620; **Amritsar:-** Divyam Enterprises, Amritsar 116300, Green Fields Amritsar 7088393566; **J&K:-** Neey Enterprises, Jammu Kanak Mandi, City Chowk Jammu (J&K) 9419185570, 9419188785; Kitchen Trendz, Anantnag : K.P Road, Near General Bus Stand, Anantnag 9766706760, 9906649879
 Shah Bazaar, Ellahai Bagh Prestige Exclusive, Ellahi Bagh , Opposite Grid Station, Ellahi Bagh, Srinagar 7898948183; Khalq Enterprises, Srinagar Prestige Exclusive New Habba Kadwal Chowk – Srinagar 9796159994, 9797979747

Authorized Dealers- Jammu Province Dealers Narwal:-Shree Ganesh Bhatia & Plastic Store 9419197478, Mir Paras Group 9419234293 **Hari Market-Sat** Pal Vinod Gupta 941911083 , Vardhaman Barton Store 01912560933 **Moti Bazar**-Kewal Krishna Gupta & Sons 9796645108,Fancy Kitchenware 9419185640, Krishna Barton Bhandhar 9419832322, Ganpati Traders 9906205959 **Fauji** Barton 9086144080,Laxmi Gai 9419132544, On Krishna 7006637525 **Ranjinder Bazaar**-Krishna Crockery Store 9716920050,Bharat Glass & Crockery House 9205099999,Surjeet Enterprises 9060289518 **Raj Tikla** Rd-Sun-Com Comex 8803140219, Shukla Pen & Lpg House 96165935,Madhuban Mallam 9419100433 Aditya Enterprises 9795495459 **Gupta** -Krishtan Lal & Sons 9419184252 **Jewel**-Laxmi Barton 9419130326 **Talab Tillo Lane** -Durga Barton Store 9419239255,Rohmtra Enterprises-9086161166,Shivani Electronics 9419113179,Anil Barton 9751742399,**Janipura**-Plastic & Barton 9858143976,Ilgai Enterprises 9906206701 **Roop Nagar**-Mahajan Barton Store 9419185250,Sharma Metal Trader 9797511514 **Sattari Markets**-Saugast Super Market 9419143322,Alpha Collection 9796269571,Varmanni Kayarna Store 9419189656,Monika Super Market 9796263120,Ambika Super Market 9419805212,7 Days Super Market 7066518276, Shree Jain All In One 7006529751 **Akhnoor-Dawar**-Trident Barton Store 7898945010,Rajesh Enterprises 9496916399, Nav Yug Gift 9419146746,Kameshwart Dept Store 9419198865 **Samba** Jai Ganesh Traders 98062188210, **Vijaypur**-Raj Barton Store 9419126494,Salgotra Crockery 9858166360,Chauri Sarni 9419284360, Bal Krishnan & Sons 9793732313**Bhisnah**-Mahavir Barton Store959686604 **Batala** Barton Store 9060161633 **Khatkul** Barton Store 9958140758, Pooja Barton Store 97964554, Ram Aron Barton Store 9419150047,Mohit Raj Rakesh Kumar 786994266, Ganga Shankar 9465371871,Usagi Traders 990626426, Gupta General Store 78959557 **Dyalachak**-Romdh Chohan & Son 941913867**Sudhapur**-Jugal Di Hattia 9906206701, Shri Bhartiya 97967802,Beta 97967802,Manish Sharma 7006647053,Chanda Barton Store 9086161647,Ponch-Aggar Plastic&Crockery Store 98225830 **Bari Brahmna**-Sanjay Kumar & Bro 9419160002 **Nagrota** Gupta Hardware-9469210535,Sagar Electronics 9419285376 **Dealers And Distributors Inquires Solicited For Punjab**, Ph: Contact: Maninder Pal Singh 8146102675, Mohit Sharma 7895215612, Manish Sharma 9451910939 Jagpal Singh 908678078375 Help Line Ph 1800-123-334411. Franchisee Solicited Inquiry, Please Contact Manish Sharma 9451910939.

DIPK-16676/22



KO Extends greetings on the **74th** Republic Day of India to esteemed readers.

Fresh Snowfall Hits Air Traffic, Closes Highway

14 Flights Cancelled At Srinagar Airport, Shooting Stones Kill Driver In Ramban



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Fresh snowfall and incessant rains on Wednesday disrupted air traffic to and from the Kashmir Valley and blocked the strategic Srinagar-Jammu highway, where a driver was killed after his vehicle came under shooting stones.

Light to moderate snowfall was recorded at most places of Kashmir while the higher reaches witnessed heavy snowfall, officials said. They said Gulmarg received 3 ft of fresh snowfall till 1800 hours, Tangmarg 1.5ft, Srinagar 4mm of rain and 1 cm snow, Kokernag 20cm snow, Pahalgam 24cm of snow, Banihal

20mm rain, Batote 25mm rain, Qazigund 15cm, and Kupwra 3.3mm of rain.

Fresh snowfall in most places of Kashmir also brought down visibility to 500 metres, affecting air traffic to and from the Valley.

All flights at the Srinagar airport were delayed. Although snow accumulation was not much at the airport, low visibility -- which was down to 500 metres -- affected flight operations, officials said.

"68 flights were scheduled to operate today. We could operate only 54," officials said, adding, "14 flights were cancelled due to bad weather in the morning."

The flight **More on P11**

Govt Mulling Imposition Of Property Tax In J&K

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: The Union Territory administration is mulling to impose property tax in the urban local bodies (ULBs) of Jammu and Kashmir from April this year, sources privy to the development told Kashmir Observer.

According to sources from the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), serious deliberations are presently going on and a formal notification is expected to be issued in the coming week.

It will be for the first time that such a proposal will be framed where the residents have to pay property tax on residential and commercial establishments.

Pertinently, J&K was the only state in the country which was exempted from property tax. However, post abrogation of Article 370, the central laws were extended to the newly created UT and all the laws became applicable automatically.

It may be noted that in October 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) empowered the J&K administration to impose property taxes through the municipal corporations, municipal councils and municipal committees in the Union Territory.

However, the move was strongly opposed by the regional political parties prompting **More on P11**

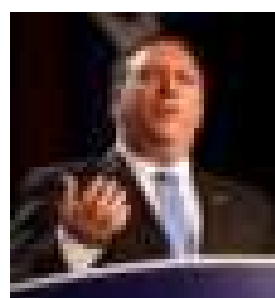
India-Pak Were On Brink Of Nuclear War In 2019: Pompeo

Says His Team Had To Work Through The Night With Both New Delhi And Islamabad To Avert This Crisis

Press Trust Of India

Washington: Former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has claimed that he was awakened to speak to his then Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj who told him that Pakistan was preparing for a nuclear attack in the wake of the Balakot surgical strike in February 2019 and India is preparing its own escalatory response.

In his latest book 'Never Give an Inch: Fighting for the America I Love' that hit the stores on Tuesday, Pompeo says that the



incident took place when he was in Hanoi for the US-North Korea Summit on February 27-28 and his team worked overnight with both New Delhi and Islamabad to avert this crisis.

"I do not think **More on P11**

G20 Ideal Platform To Discuss 'Most Pressing Problems': Prez

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: G20 is an ideal platform to discuss and find solutions to "most pressing" problems such as global warming and climate change which affect the poor most, President Droupadi Murmu said in her maiden address to the nation on the eve of Republic Day.

The President said after a series of initiatives in recent years to transform all aspects of governance and unleash the creative energies of people, the world has started to look at India with a new sense of respect.

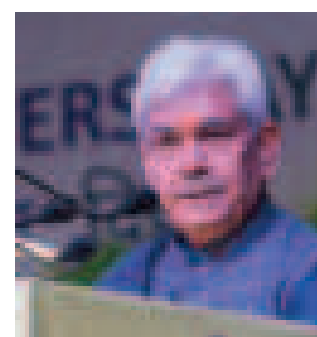
"Our interventions **More on P11**

Golden Chapter Of Employment Boom Scripted In J&K: LG

- Says 75,000 Youth Provided Entrepreneurship Opportunity
- Announces Enhancement Of Group Personal Accident Insurance From Rs 15L To Rs 25L For Govt Employees

Observer News Service

Jammu: Asserting that 75,000 youth were provided with entrepreneurship opportunities during the Jan-Abhiyan programme, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday



'PRI System Has Empowered Common Man'

The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday that the establishment of three-tier PRI system and their participation

that his administration has taken many steps to create supportive infrastructure, schemes and policies to speed up economic development of Jammu and Kashmir. "We have scripted a golden

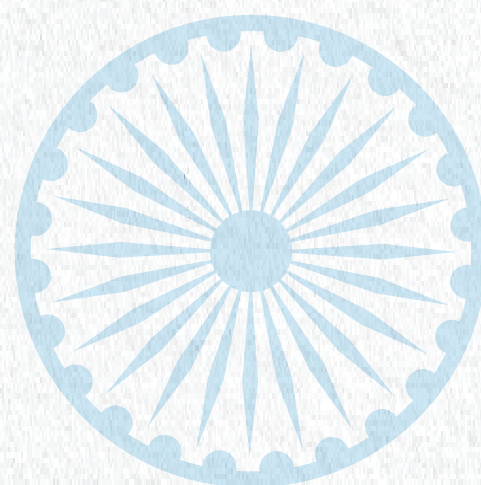
chapter of the employment boom in J&K. It is our commitment to ensure aspirations, creativity & enterprise of every youth is realized. We have been steadfast in our resolve to empower young

generation," the LG said.

He made these remarks while attending J&K Bank's 'Nayi Disha' programme here on Wednesday. He felicitated and handed over certificates to selected youth who have availed the assistance to start their own business venture.

"It is a day of pride for J&K. We have identified youth from every panchayat and town of the UT and more than 75000 youth have been connected with livelihood opportunities. I congratulate J&K bank as it has more than 90% share, extending around Rs 900 crores," the LG said.

"J&K Bank has shed its past image. It is now the common man's bank and significant **More on P11**



Republic Day

Greetings To All Fellow Citizens

Jai Hind

“

We can empower the society and country only by walking on the path of duty. If there is dedication and seriousness towards one's duties, then even a single person can change the future of the whole society.

”

- Narendra Modi



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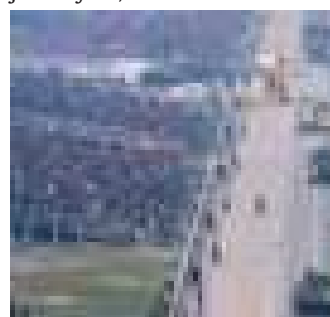
“ **AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT, HE BELIEVED** the Indians were preparing their nuclear weapons for deployment. It took us a few hours - and remarkably good work by our teams on the ground in New Delhi and Islamabad - to convince each side that the other was not preparing for nuclear war.”

Live telecast of Republic Day celebrations from Kartavya Path from 9:00 a.m. onwards on Doordarshan network

Republic Day Parade 2023 - All You Need To Know

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Building on last year's celebrations, in the 75th year of Independence, celebrated as 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Republic Day celebration this year shall witness zeal, enthusiasm, patriotic fervour, and 'Jan Bhagidari', as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi will be the Chief Guest at the parade.

The week-long celebrations commenced on January 23, the birth anniversary of freedom

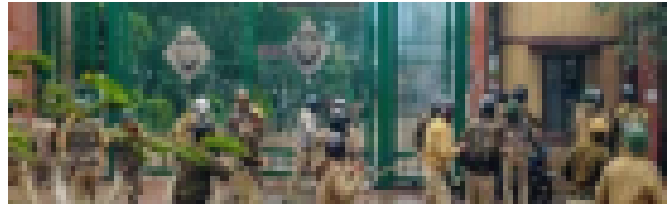
fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. To mark the occasion, a one-of-a-kind Military Tattoo and Tribal Dance Festival 'Aadi Shaurya - Parv Parakram ka' was organised in New Delhi on 23 and 24 January.

The events will culminate on 30th January, which is observed as Martyrs' Day.

The celebrations are marked by attractive performances from Vande Bharatam group of dancers from across the country, tales of bravery by Veer Gatha 2.0 participants,

melodious performances by School Bands at the National War Memorial, the first-ever e-invitations, the largest-ever drone show and 3-D anamorphic projection.

JNU, Jamia Foil Bid To Screen BBC Doc, Internet Cut; Students Held



Press Trust of India

Delhi Police has detained over 70 students who were gathered at Jamia Millia Islamia to protest against the detention of four activists over the proposed screening of a BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Students' Federation of India said.

There was no immediate response from the police.

Heavy deployment of police personnel was seen outside the campus where the students were gathered. Personnel from the Rapid Action Force were deployed at the gate.

Pritish Menon, secretary of the Students' Federation of India's (SFI) Delhi state committee, said the police detained the protestors who had gathered there.

"We were about to begin the demonstration but they were detained before that. They were taken to the police station," Menon told PTL.

The Left-backed SFI's Jamia unit has released a poster informing that the documentary would be screened at the MCRC lawn gate 8 at 6 pm.

The university administration said the screening would not be allowed and that they were taking all measures to prevent people and organisations with a "vested interest to destroy the peaceful academic atmosphere of the university".

"It has come to the knowledge of the university administration that some students belonging to a political organisation have circulated a poster about screening of a controversial documentary film on the university campus today," it said in the statement.

The university had earlier issued a memorandum/circular reiterating that no meeting/gathering of students or screening of any film shall be allowed on the campus without permission from the competent authority.

"The university is taking all possible measures to prevent people/organisations having a vested interest to destroy the peaceful academic atmosphere of the university," it said.

Several students, who gathered at the JNU students' union office for a screening of a controversial BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, claimed the varsity administration cut power and internet to stop the event, and staged a protest after stones were thrown on them.

They claimed that they were attacked when they were watching the documentary on their mobile-phones as the screening could not be held. Some alleged that the attackers were members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a charge the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-affiliated student body denied.

Later in the night, raising slogans of 'Inqilaab Zinadabad' and against the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) administration, the protesting students marched to the Vasant Kunj police station to lodge a complaint against the "stone pelters."

Western tanks would 'burn' in Ukraine, says Russia



Agencies

The Kremlin said that if Western countries supply Ukraine with heavy tanks they will be destroyed on the battlefield, as Kyiv awaits a decision from Berlin on deliveries of Leopard 2 tanks.

"Technologically, this is a failed plan. This is an overestimation of the potential that this will add to the Ukrainian

army," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "These tanks burn like all the rest. They are just very expensive."

The Kremlin has offered a variety of responses to plans from Kyiv's allies to support Ukrainian troops with the Leopard model of tanks.

Peskov said earlier this week that any German supplies of tanks to Ukraine would leave a "lasting mark"

on bilateral ties between Moscow and Berlin.

He has previously said Western arms in Ukraine are only prolonging the conflict and ultimately increasing the suffering of Ukrainian civilians.

Berlin was expected later on Wednesday to announce a decision on whether to allow other countries that maintain Leopard stocks to send them to Kyiv.

India, Egypt Decide To Elevate Ties To Strategic Partnership

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India and Egypt today decided to elevate their ties to the level of strategic partnership with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi vowing to broadbase the relations in a time-bound manner in areas of defence and security, trade, counter-terror cooperation and culture.

The two leaders also discussed the cascading impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on availability of food, energy and fertiliser, and called for a "coordinated and concerted" approach to deal with terrorism, including cross-border terrorist activities.

Following the talks between PM Modi and President Sisi, the two sides inked five agreements providing for co-operation in areas of culture, information technology, cyber security, matters relating to youths and broadcasting.

In the talks, the two leaders also decided to take the volume of bilateral trade to USD 12 billion in the next five years from around USD seven billion at present, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said while describing the PM Modi-President Sisi talks as "extremely productive" and "very warm".

The 68-year-old influential Arab leader, who arrived in Delhi on Tuesday on a three-day visit, will grace the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest on January 26.

"Strategic cooperation between the two countries will help in promoting peace and prosperity in the entire region. So in today's meeting, President Sisi and I decided to elevate our bilateral partnership to the level of 'strategic partnership'," PM Modi said in his media statement.

"We have decided that under the India-Egypt strategic partnership, we will develop a long-term framework of greater cooperation in political, security, economic and scientific fields," he said.



litical, security, economic and scientific fields," he said.

The Prime Minister said India and Egypt are worried about the spread of terrorism around the world and the two sides are unanimous in the opinion that it is the most serious security threat to humanity.

"Both countries also agree that concerted action is necessary to end cross-border terrorism. And for this, together we will continue to try to alert the international community," he said.

The Egyptian President echoed PM Modi's views on terrorism and said united efforts are required to deal with the menace.

"We have similar views on dealing with terrorism and extremism," he said.

The prime minister noted that there is immense potential for enhancing security and defence cooperation between India and Egypt.

"We have also decided in today's meeting to further strengthen cooperation between our defence industries, and enhance the exchange of information and intelligence related to counter-terrorism," he said.

"Misuse of cyber space to spread extremist ideologies and radicalisation is a growing menace. We will extend cooperation against this also," PM Modi added.

In his remarks, PM Modi said he and President Sisi held extensive discussions on strengthening the food and

pharma supply chains affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine conflict.

"We also agreed on the need to increase mutual investment and trade in these areas. Together we have decided that in the next five years we will take our bilateral trade to 12 billion dollars," he said.

At a media briefing, Mr Kwatra said the decisions taken during the talks will be implemented in a time-bound manner.

Explaining the elevation of the bilateral ties to the level of strategic partnership, the foreign secretary said the focus would be on expanding cooperation in four key pillars -- political and security, economic engagement, scientific and economic collaboration and wider cultural and people-to-people ties.

On defence collaboration, he said the aim is to boost ties in areas of defence training, military exercises, cooperation in the field of equipment and industrial partnership.

The Egyptian President previously visited India in October 2015 to participate in the third India-Africa Forum Summit which was followed by his state visit in September 2016.

This is for the first time that the President of Egypt has been invited as the chief guest to India's Republic Day celebrations. A contingent from the Egyptian Army will also participate in the Republic Day parade.

Air Passengers To Be Reimbursed For Ticket Downgrades By Airlines From February 15

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Airlines will reimburse 75 per cent of the ticket costs to passengers whose domestic flight tickets have been downgraded, with aviation regulator DGCA putting in place new norms.

For downgrade of international tickets, the reimbursement amount will vary from 30 per cent to 75 per cent of the ticket costs, including taxes,

its Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) pertaining to facilities to be provided to passengers by airlines due to denied boarding, cancellation of flights and delays in flights.

"The amendment will allow the passenger, who is downgraded involuntarily and is carried in a class lower than that for which the ticket is purchased, to be reimbursed by the airline," DGCA said in a statement on Wednesday.



depending on the distance covered by the particular flight.

The new norms will be effective from February 15, a senior official at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said on Wednesday.

The regulator decided to amend the norms against the backdrop of complaints from air travellers about their tickets booked for a particular class being downgraded by airlines.

In December last year, DGCA had proposed that airlines should have to refund the full value of such tickets, including taxes, and also that affected passenger will be flown free of cost in the next available class.

However, those proposals have been modified now in line with international practices, the official said.

The watchdog has amended

For the downgrade of a domestic flight ticket, the passenger concerned will get 75 per cent of the cost of ticket, including taxes, from the airline.

In the case of downgrade of an international ticket, a passenger will receive 30 per cent of the cost of ticket, including taxes, for flights flying 1,500 kilometres or less. Inclusive of taxes, the amount will be 50 per cent if the flight covers a distance between 1,500 and 3,500 kilometres, as per the statement.

The reimbursement amount will be 75 per cent of the cost of ticket, including taxes, for flights covering more than 3,500 kilometres.

The changes have been done to strengthen the rights of air travellers affected by downgrading of their tickets, the regulator said.

Court Okays Marriage Under Hindu Marriage Act Of Bride Below 18: Report

Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: The High Court of Karnataka has held that a marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act cannot be termed void even if the bride is below 18 years of age, Press Trust of India reported.

A lower court had declared a marriage void under Section 11 of the Act but the High Court pointed out that this section does not include the condition of the bride being 18.

According to news agency Press Trust of India, overturning the Family Court order, the High Court Bench of Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice S Vishwajith Shetty, in their judgement, on January 12, said, "Section 11 of the Act deals with void marriages. The Act provides that any marriage solemnised after the commencement of the Act shall be void and the court may on the petition presented by either of the parties thereto, declare the same to be nullity if it contravenes the provisions of Clauses (i), (iv) and (v) of Section 5 of the Act. Thus, it is evident that clause (iii) of Section 5 of the Act, which provides that the bride has to be 18 years of age at the time of marriage, has been omitted from the purview of Section 11 of the Act."

Setting aside the trial court order passed on January 8, 2015, the High Court said, "The trial court has, however, failed to appreciate the aforesaid aspect of the matter."

Sheela from Chennapatna Taluk had approached the High Court in 2015 against the order of the Family Court.

She had married Manjunath on June 15, 2012. After the wedding, Manjunath realised that Sheela's date of birth was September 6, 1995 and she was a minor at the time of marriage. So, he filed a petition before the Family Court to declare the marriage null and void under Section 11 of the Hindu Marriage Act.

The Family Court held that on the date of marriage, Sheela was 16 years, 11 months, and 8 days old and had not completed 18 years of age as was required under Clause-3 of Section-5 of the HMA. It, therefore, declared the marriage void under Section 11 of the Act.

However, her appeal before the High Court was admitted as it found that Clause-3 of Section-5 was not applicable to Section 11 which deals with void marriages.

NEWS MAKERS

Supreme Court Asks CBI, Gujarat Why They Want Activist Teesta Setalvad Back In Jail

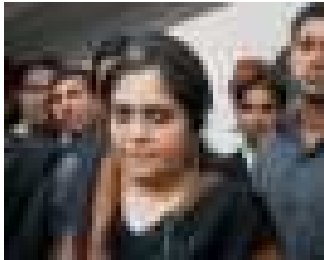
Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court today questioned the CBI and the Gujarat government as to why they want to send social activist Teesta Setalvad and her husband Javed Anand back in jail after they have been out for over seven years on anticipatory bail.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Abhay S Oka and BV Nagarathna said, "Question is how long can you keep someone in custody. Seven years have passed since anticipatory bail was granted. You want to send her back to custody."

Advocate Rajat Nair, appearing for the CBI and the Gujarat government said some additional material needed to be placed before the court with regard to the cases and, therefore, four weeks time may be given.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal



and advocate Aparna Bhat, appearing for Ms Setalvad and her husband Javed Anand, said in one of the proceedings in which the CBI has come in appeal, anticipatory bail was granted following which a charge sheet was filed and after that regular bail was granted to her.

He said since a regular bail was granted, the appeal of the probe agency against anticipatory bail does not survive.

Mr Nair said this had happened in one case but there

are more than one case against her and requested the court to grant him four weeks to place additional material on record.

"A bench of two judges has referred this matter to a larger bench and has framed questions which need to be decided by this court," Nair said.

The bench posted the matter for further hearing after four weeks.

Mr Sibal submitted a note to the bench pursuant to the earlier direction giving details of issues as to which of the appeals survive for consideration and what is the subject matter to be decided as the passage of time may have taken care of some aspects.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas filed by Ms Setalvad, Mr Anand, the Gujarat police and the CBI arising out of three FIRs lodged against the

couple.

On March 19, 2015, the top court had referred to a larger bench the anticipatory bail plea of Setalvad and her husband in the case of alleged embezzlement of funds for a museum at Ahmedabad's Gulbarg Society devastated in the 2002 riots and extended its interim order protecting them against arrest.

It had said the question that arises for consideration is whether liberty on the one hand and fair and effective investigation on the other make out a case for extending the benefit under Section 438 CrPC (anticipatory bail).

In 2014, an FIR was registered against them with DCP, Crime Branch, Ahmedabad, on charges of cheating, breach of trust and under the IT Act in a matter related to the construction of the "Museum of Resistance" in the Gulbarg housing society.

'Pathaan' Opening Day Brings Back Hindi Movie Madness In Theatres, Some Protests Too

Press Trust of India

Shah Rukh Khan's "Pathaan" opened on Wednesday to massive celebrations, bringing back days of hooting, whistling and dancing in the aisles, in packed single and multi screen theatres across the country and also scattered protests. Given the huge response to the film, which opened in 5,000 screens with big cities, including Delhi-NCR and Mumbai, beginning shows at 6 am and 7 am, Yash Raj Films said it had added a post midnight 12.30 am show across the country beginning tonight.

Besides, 300 more screens were added due to high demand, according to trade analyst Taran Adarsh. The film's screen count now stands at 8,500 worldwide, he said.

The film, directed by Siddharth Anand, has been battling calls for a boycott over the



song "Besharam Rang", which features Deepika Padukone in several costume changes, including a saffron bikini.

The success of the film, which is set for the biggest opening for any Hindi film ever, played out in a montage of fan adoration. In Kolkata, the SRK brigade feted the star by feeding chocolate cake to the movie's poster. In Guwahati, some poured milk over "Pathaan" billboards, recalling the frenzy that normally meets a Rajinikanth film.

As security was beefed up in

halls in anticipation of protests, there were many clicking selfies with giant posters and cut-outs of the 56-year-old star.

Beating back boycott calls from a section of politicians and rightwing groups on social media and elsewhere, "Pathaan" could collect Rs 45 crore or more as day one collections, industry insiders said, banking on the action spectacle to pull out Bollywood from the trenches of the pandemic and a string of box-office duds.

While even early morning shows went houseful in several places, some screenings were also cancelled.

In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, morning shows were called off in some theatres in Bhopal, Indore and Gwalior with posters being torn down, noisy protests and also chants of the Hanuman Chalisa being heard outside one hall.

Authorities Announce Traffic Diversions On Republic Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The authorities on Wednesday issued an advisory regarding movement of traffic in Srinagar on January 26.

According to the advisory, various diversions have been ordered in view of the main R-Day function being held at Sher-i-Kashmir Stadium Sonwar here.

It said that no traffic shall be allowed from Panthachowk towards Dalgate and all motorists shall use highway-Nowgam-Natipora-Nowgam-Sanatnagar-Hyderpora Bypass to reach their destinations.

"No traffic shall be allowed from Dalgate towards Sher-i-Kashmir Stadium Sonwar. Motorists shall use Khonakhan-SRTC Bridge-Sangermal Road to reach their destinations," it said,

adding, "No vehicle shall be allowed towards Panthachowk via Dalgate Sonwar route. All motorists shall adopt M.A Road/Residency Road/HSHS/Jahangir Chowk flyover-Rambagh-Natipora or Bhagat-Sanath Nagar route to reach their respective destinations."

It said no vehicle will be allowed from Radio Kashmir, Dalgate, Hotel Lalit, Sonwar and Rajbagh near Bridge towards the venue except for those carrying valid invitation cards and passes.

"General Public/Tourists are requested to adopt alternative routes to reach the Srinagar Airport to avoid any inconvenience," the advisory said, adding, "Commuters are requested to plan their movement diversion will be in place from 06:30 AM till 12:30 PM." However it said, medical emergencies will be facilitated.

City Records 1689 Accidents With 225 Deaths In Last Five Years

Agencies

Srinagar: An average 337 accidents in a year claimed 45 people in Srinagar, showed official data.

According to the figures accessed Srinagar witnessed 1689 accidents with 225 fatalities from 2018 till November 2022.

The official figures state that a total of 1739 people were injured in accidents in Srinagar during the period with June 2022 recording the highest number of fatalities comprising 11 deaths, and 39 injuries in 40 accidents.

The official data showed that 2018 recorded 375 accidents which resulted in 46 deaths and 383 injuries.

The subsequent year, which was marked with lockdown for months together after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, recorded 310 accidents which resulted in the death of 45 persons and

323 injuries.

The year 2020 recorded 275 accidents of which 45 deaths were reported and 275 injuries.

The year 2021 recorded 331 accidents with 40 deaths and 347 injuries while the year 2022 till November witnessed a spike and recorded 398 accidents in which 49 fatalities and 411 injuries were reported.

Srinagar has been witnessing a spike in bike stunts by youngsters, underage driving besides other traffic violations. Srinagar Traffic Police said that they started a series of awareness programmes to sensitize youth towards adhering the traffic rules.

Last week, the Traffic Police authorities said that they are conducting a study on accidents in Srinagar and have so far identified some 'black spots' witnessing frequent mishaps. The report will be submitted to DC Srinagar—

(KNO)



Movie goers wait in a queue to get tickets for Shah Rukh Khan Starrer Pathan at INOX cinema on Wednesday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Nearly 65,000 Voters Added In Revised Photo Electoral Rolls In Srinagar: DC

'333 kanals state land retrieved in city, will follow LG's directions meticulously'

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Alijaz Asad Wednesday said that nearly 65,000 new voters have been registered in the revised photo electoral rolls in Srinagar city as part of the special summary revision-2022.

DC said the district administration had received a total of 80,000 forms for inclusion of fresh voters into the revised electoral rolls while 15,000 forms had been received for deletion purposes.

"We had received a total of 80,000 forms for addition during recently concluded Special Summary Revision-2022, while 15,000 forms were received for deletion. A total of nearly 65,000 fresh voters have been registered in the revised electoral rolls in Srinagar city," DC Srinagar told the media here.

Pertinently, the Special Summary Revision of photo electoral rolls was held in Jammu and Kashmir last year, first time after the abrogation of special constitutional position of the erstwhile state in 2019.

On the ongoing anti-en-

croachment drive to free State land from encroachers, Asad said that a total of 333 kanals illegally occupied land has been retrieved in Srinagar till date.

DC said the administration has clear-cut directions from the Lieutenant Governor

not to touch 'landless or poor' people during the ongoing drive. He said people have been supporting the government in retrieving state land from the encroachers.

"A total of 333 kanals of illegally occupied land was retrieved in Srinagar city so far. Interestingly, people have been supporting the government in retrieving the state land, in fact registering complaints vis-à-vis encroachments. We are grateful to the people for supporting the administration," he said, adding landless or poor will not be touched.

He said the administration follows LG's directions not to harass poor people in letter and spirit as the drive has been initiated against the influential having encroached huge tracts of state land in parts of the UT.

"As the LG is on record to say that the poor will not be touched, administration meticulously follows his directions. People came forward and appreciated the government during the anti-encroachment drive in Eidgah and central Shalteng areas recently," he added.

A total of 333 kanals of illegally occupied land was retrieved in Srinagar city so far. Interestingly, people have been supporting the government in retrieving the state land, in fact registering complaints vis-à-vis encroachments

2 Day Integrated Communication And Outreach Program Concludes

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The two day long Integrated Communication and Outreach Program (ICOP) under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) organised by the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothibagh Srinagar concluded on Wednesday.

The outreach programme which also included a photo exhibition on the freedom struggle of India, was organised for mass awareness about Amrit Mahotsav and dif-

ferent welfare schemes of the government.

Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jameel Ahmad presided over the proceedings on the concluding day which was dedicated to the awareness about various initiatives being implemented by the departments of Health and Youth Affairs. Addressing a gathering of health workers, ASHAs, students, volunteers from Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) and Civil Defence, Dr. Jameel in his address appreciated CBC for organising the outreach programme. He presented an overview of various programmes under implementation by the department of health.

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited Impaired Assets Portfolio Management Department (IAPMD) Zonal Office Srinagar M.A. Road Srinagar, Kashmir-190001

Possession Notice

Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (i) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002.

Whereas Mr. Javaid Rashid, as the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 19.12.2019 thereby calling upon the Borrower namely Mr. Imran Ahmad Daryal to repay an amount of Rs.15.11 Lac (Rupees Fifteen Lac And Eleven Thousand Only) being the balance outstanding as on 01.12.2019 in the accounts of the Borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized officer of the J & K Bank Ltd. has taken possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on 19th of January-2023.

The said borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount in aggregating to Rs.20,57,491.15 Dr. (Rupees Twenty Lac Fifty Seven Thousand Four Hundred Ninety One And Paise Fifteen Only) together with future interest thereon from 01.01.2023 and other charges incurred or to be incurred.

The borrowers attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

Land measuring 01 Kanal falling under khasra no. 626/35 of khata no.116 of khewat no. 78 situated at Owanta Bhawan Tehsil Srinagar standing in the name of Mr. Khurseed Ahmad Daryal S/O Ghulam Nabi Daryal R/O Bagiyas Chattabal Srinagar.

Dated: 12.01.2023 Place: Srinagar

Registered office : Corporate Headquarters, M.A.Road, Srinagar 190001, Kashmir, India CIN: L65110JK19385GCC000048 ; T : +91 (0)194 2481 930-35 ; F : +91 (0)194 248 1928 ; E : info@jkbank.com ; W : www.jkbank.com

DIPK-NB-6146/22 DATED: 25-01-2023

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
Jammu and Kashmir Power Transmission Corporation Ltd
Office of the Executive Engineer Transmission Line Maintenance Division-I (TLMD-I), Bemina, Srinagar
Ph. No. 0194-2492427, 9419181913; Email: tlmd1tech@gmail.com

TENDER NOTICE

e-NIT No: 17/JKPTCL/TLMD-I/SGR/2022-23; Dated: 16.01.2023

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu& Kashmir, e-tenders (in Two Covers) from reputed, experienced and financially sound Electrical Contractors/Firms fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in the standard bidding documents are invited for the works detailed below. The detailed e-NIT and Standard Bidding Document (SBD) containing General, Commercial and Technical terms, conditions and specifications shall be kept available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

S. No.	Scope of Work	Qty	Tender Fee	Earnest Money Deposit	Time of Completion
1.	Up-gradation/Replacement of 33kV underground cable system with new overhead conductor for evacuation of power on 33kV Zakura Feeder emanating from 150MVA, 132/33kV Habbak Grid Substation as per the Detailed Technical Specifications, BOQ and General Terms and Conditions as laid down in the Standard Bidding Document	As per BOQ	Rs.200/-	Rs. 7800/-	01 Month

The information regarding schedule of downloading of the tender document, seeking of clarifications and submission dates thereof is as per the table below:

CRITICAL DATES	
1.	Issue of NIT
2.	Downloading of bidding documents (Start)
3.	Last date for submission of Hard Copy of e-Bid
4.	e-Bid submission (start) date& time (uploading of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF formats)
5.	e-Bid submission (end) date &time(Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF formats)
6.	Online Techno-Commercial e-Bid opening date and time.
7.	Venue of opening of Techno-Commercial-Bids
8.	Cost of e-Bid document
9.	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit

- Only the bidders possessing the qualifying criteria as mentioned in the SBD should participate in the bidding process.
- Clarifications can be sought from the office of the under signed (Phone No. 9419181913) or on e-Mail address: tlmd1tech@gmail.com
- Before participating in the bids, the bidder shall visit the site of work, have firsthand assessment of the tendered job and acquaint himself with the site of work and local conditions. The bidder shall make first hand assessment of the expenses involved with the actual execution of the contract at site and accordingly quote the prices.
- The Corporation (JKPTCL) reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

No: TLMD-I/TS/17A/3747-51
DIPK-NB-6173/22
DATED: 25-01-2023

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Transmission Line Maintenance Division-I
Transmission (Kashmir), JKPTCL,
Bemina

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS
SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
BIJBERA: 01932-228243
PAMPORE: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

PRAYERS

FAJR	6:06
ZUHR	12:42
ASR	4:17
Magrib	5:58
ISHA	7: 21

HIJRI CALENDAR
03 Rajab
1444

This Day In History

- 1531 - Lisbon hit by Earthquake; about 30,000 die
- 1589 - Job is elected as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia
- 1654 - Portuguese troops conquer last Dutch base on Recife
- 1666 - France declares war on England & Munster
- 1697 - Isaac Newton receives Jean Bernoulli's 6 month time-limit problem, solves problem before going to bed that same night
- 1699 - Venice, Poland & Austria sign Treaty of Carlowitz with Ottoman Empire
- 1748 - Britain, Netherlands, Austria & Sardinia sign anti-French treaty
- 1797 - Russia, Prussia and Austria sign treaty
- 1862 - Lincoln issues General War Order #1, calling for a Union offensive, General George McClellan ignores order
- 1905 - World's largest diamond, the 3,106-carat Cullinan, is found in South Africa
- 1934 - Nazi Germany & Poland sign 10-year non-aggression treaty
- 1939 - Francisco Franco's troops conquer Barcelona
- 1940 - Nazis forbid Polish Jews to travel on trains
- 1942 1st US force in Europe during WW II go ashore in Northern Ireland
- 1945 - Soviet forces reach Auschwitz concentration camp
- 1952 - At least 20 people have been killed and 100s injured during riots in Cairo against the British
- 1956 - Porkkala military base returned to Finland by USSR
- 1958 - H Laskow replaces Moshe Dayan as Israeli minister of Defense
- 1958 - Japanese ferry Nankai Maru capsized off southern Awaji Island, Japan, 167 killed.

From KO Archives

LoC Flare Up Leaves 19 Dead

Observer News Service

PALANWALA- Some 17 Pakistan soldiers and two Indians were killed in one of the worst border flare-ups since a bloody battle fought by the two armies last year in Kargil, officials said on Saturday.

A frontline Indian commander said the fighting erupted at the Chamb sector late Friday, shortly after Pakistan thrashed India in a cricket tournament in Australia.

Brigadier Jasbir Singh told reporters a junior officer and a soldier of the Indian army were killed when they came under heavy firing and shelling. "Just as soon as the match got over, which Pakistan won, the Pakistanis started attacking our post. We then began, attacking them Singh said. "Until then the border was very quiet."

Brigadier Singh said his troops in retaliation destroyed a Pakistan army bunker across the border in the Chamb sector and killed at least 15 Pakistani soldiers:

Army spokesman Colonel Sruti Kant in New Delhi said 25 Pakistanis launched the raid which sparked the fighting, among the worst since the 10-week clash that claimed 1,000 lives on both sides in Kashmir between May and July last year.

Two other Pakistani soldiers were shot in a separate clash in Sunderbeni, which is located close to Palanwala in Kashmir's southern region, Kant said. Palanwala is on Kashmir's border with Pakistan and is located 85 kilometers (53 miles) northwest of Jammu, the state's winter capital.

Singh said the Indian troops had seized identity cards and Pakistani currency from the dead soldiers and that shelling was going on at Palanwala in an area nearly 10 kilometers (6.25 miles) long.

"We have also seized mortar launchers, medium machine guns and 20 boxes of ammunition from the Pakistani side. The identity cards show the dead Pakistani soldiers are from the Baluch regiment." (KASHMIR OBSERVER, 26 January, 2000)

KASHMIR OBSERVER

Thursday | 26-01-2023

Dialogue In Offing

In a surprise development, India has invited Pakistan foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) foreign ministers' meeting in Goa being held in May. According to reports, the invite was sent through the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Last week, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in an interview to an Arab television channel that his country had learnt its lesson from three wars with India and wanted to live in peace with its neighbour. The invite to Bilawal is an attempt to build upon Sharif's overtures and see if relations with Pakistan can be normalized. No Pakistani foreign minister has visited India since 2011 and if the neighbouring country accepts the invitation, it can go a long way in improving their relations.

The relations between the two neighbours have fallen to their lowest since New Delhi withdrew Article 370 in August 2019. Before Sharif made his conciliatory remarks, there was an acrimonious exchange between the foreign ministers of the two countries at the United Nations with Bilawal using uncharitable words against the prime minister Narendra Modi. After the bitterness of the exchange, it seemed hardly possible that the neighbours could reach out to each other let alone institute a dialogue. But here we are again. New Delhi has reached out to Islamabad despite Bilawal's intemperate comments. And we can all keep our fingers crossed about the direction, the relations between the two countries takes from hereon.

True, there have been attempts by the two countries to engage over the last three years. They reportedly talked on the back-channel and went back to observing ceasefire along the Line of Control since February 2021 which has since been holding. According to the defence ministry figures, only three minor incidents of "violations" have been recorded along the LoC since then. In comparison, 4,645 ceasefire violations were recorded during its peak in 2020.

The LoC truce holds out a hope that the two countries are in a position to resume their long-stalled dialogue. However, it won't also be easy. Pakistan wants to only discuss Kashmir and also seeks a reversal of the withdrawal of Article 370 which is not going to happen. India desires normal neighbourly relations with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility, and violence. The positions of the two countries have thus become too irreconcilable to start a dialogue. But it is still possible that PM Modi and Sharif could take steps to break ice. In the interest of regional peace, the two neighbours need to transcend their differences and talk to each other. This alone will change the situation in the region for the better.

OTHER OPINION

Time To Learn

On January 19, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced on social media that the state government will grant menstrual leave for female students in all state universities under the Department of Higher Education. The announcement came shortly after the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) decided to provide menstrual leave to all its female students after a representation made by the students' union. Vijayan has described the government's decision as part of its "commitment to realising a gender-just society". The government's claim should inaugurate a wider conversation.

Making period leave available to students — and, going forward, to women in the workforce, perhaps — would be an important step towards acknowledging and addressing the often debilitating pain and discomfort that so many are often forced to work through. Instituting period leave would help create workplaces and classrooms that are more inclusive and more accommodating. Yet, the context within which such policy decisions are taken matters. In a traditional society like India, where menstruation remains a taboo topic, it is possible that a special period leave could become another excuse for discrimination. The examples of similarly traditional societies like South Korea and Japan are not encouraging: Both countries have laws granting period leave, but recent surveys showed a decline in the number of women availing of it, citing the social stigma against menstruation. There is also the risk of medicalising a normal biological process, which could further entrench existing biases against women, as well as the possibility that the perceived financial and productivity cost of mandatory period leaves could make employers even more reluctant to hire women.

What is not in doubt is the necessity for a sustained conversation around menstrual leave — and menstrual health in general. There are some encouraging signs that governments have recognised this. In 1992, Bihar introduced period leave for working women, while the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Menstrual Hygiene Scheme, first implemented in 2011, seeks to increase access to sanitary napkins for adolescent girls in rural areas. The stigma around menstruation remains a challenge — the Menstruation Benefits Bill, first introduced in Parliament in 2017 and then in the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly in 2022, was withdrawn from the latter because the subject was deemed unsuitable for discussion in the "holy" institution. The task for governments would be to negotiate such obstacles while ensuring that the goals of gender justice and equality are met.

Indian Express

The State Of The Opposition
And Bharat Jodo Yatra

Syed Faizan Bukhari

In a recent column for the Indian Express, Pratap Bhanu Mehta reiterated a guiding maxim of democratic politics: "The fate of democracies often rests on the quality of the political Opposition." Ever since BJP assumed the reins of government in 2014, India's Opposition has been characterised by a conceptual and ideological chaos. It has been running around its tail because its intellectual capacities and political imaginations have been unable to process the explosion of uncontrolled forces unleashed by BJP's spectacular triumphs. Its response to BJP's onslaughts has been an odd mixture of reactionary politics, calculated expediency and, at times, uncomfortable quiescence. The Congress has been forced to recede into an unending winter of political irrelevance.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra is the first serious attempt by the Congress to arrest its decline. Currently in the last leg of its journey, the yatra will end on 30th January in Srinagar where it has invited twenty-one "like minded" parties, perhaps as a show of strength.

Since long, Rahul Gandhi, the scion of India's grand old party, has been reeling under the burden of his inheritance. Castigated by BJP as a privileged and indecisive politician, bereft of the common touch of his political adversary, Gandhi has struggled to steer his party out of troubled waters. The once mighty Congress has seen its prospects diminish in the face of high ranking defections, messy scandals and infighting.

During the course of the yatra, Rahul Gandhi has complained that the government has used all its institutional power to disadvantage the opposition and has pushed them out of platforms where they can reach the masses

In the face of this dour context, the Bharat Jodo Yatra is an innovative attempt to create a fresh political space. It seeks to invent a new language of political engagement suffused with a vocabulary of empathy, love and harmony. It seeks to contemporize a forgotten political truth — fraternity — a political ideal that has been summarily emptied out of "New India's" zeitgeist.

Detractors of Rahul Gandhi, along with cynical political pundits, have looked at the Bharat Jodo Yatra merely as the last-ditch attempt to revive the fortunes of the Congress party and to bolster its weakening national image. However, no political outfit should be expected to shun the considerations of realpolitik. In fact, linking party politics to politics in the larger sense is a rare sight in the Indian political theatre.

Through an unrelenting campaign, Modi's BJP has been peddling its own worldview as the only legitimate form of national self-identification. Quite inventively, the yatra is being styled as a national movement, dissociated from immediate political calculus, to recapture a sense of collective identity amid plurality.

In India, politics is often reduced merely to a periodic exercise of popular authorization. To the yatra's credit, it is expanding the category of the "political" beyond the electoral and opening space for new possibilities for the articulation of dissent and the creation of new axes of mobilisation in a political context dominated by sharp divisions, growing hate and rising inequalities.

The act of reaching out to citizens and not voters is aimed towards widening social reach. In this context, the Bharat Jodo Yatra, seen as an act of political improvisation, holds the potential to create new forms of self-identification that are egalitarian and inclusive rather than exclusivist.

While it is audacious to not reduce politics to elections, to restrict it to a moral pursuit is plain naivety. Whether we like it or not, the fate of India as a multiparty democracy is inextricably tied with the fate of the Congress party.

As of now, it seems that the momentum generated by the yatra has reenergized the comatose carders of the Congress. Will this newfound energy be enough to make a difference

in the electoral calculus? This question will remain salient because any new idiom of resistance cannot remain indifferent to electoral outcomes if it seeks to transform into a durable and alternative brand of politics. The logic of numbers is structurally woven into the systemic fabric of electoral democracies. Will the yatra then, rejuvenate the Congress?

The yatra has managed to put some wind in Congress's sails. It is already witnessing a reversal of fortunes in its favour, at least in Jammu and Kashmir. Many founding members of the Democratic Azad Party have jumped ship again and re-joined the Congress where they have been welcomed back with open arms. The return of the defectors is indicative of the positive change in

cloud of doubt.

Having said that, the success of the yatra must not be judged on the endorsements of other political parties alone. It must also be assessed from the new refrains that it inserts into the discursive space.

BJP's uncontested triumphs and Modi's imprint on India's political culture is so deep that its idiom has become the default language of political engagement. India's social and political climate has metamorphosed under Modi. Standards of acceptable discourse in public and social life have significantly deteriorated over the years. The line in the sand between popular authorization and majoritarianism has become faint with the passage of time. The opposition has watched helplessly as the imposing wave of strongman

politics that is decent, sobering and reciprocal — a welcome change from the shouting matches that define the soundscape of our public discourse. But there are reasons to worry.

The Congress and the liberal anglophone commentariat often respond to the crisis of our present moment by seeking comfort in the mythical certainties of a past that never was. During his long march, Rahul Gandhi has raised pertinent issues that adversely affect the quotidian lives of people — inequality, unemployment and inflation. But neither him, nor his party, make any attempts to figure out why the crisis of democracy emerged against the backdrop of obscene inequalities, unchecked liberalisation and an ever-expanding precariat at a time when cold numbers suggested a



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra', at Nagrota in Jammu district, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023. (PTI Photo)

Since long, Rahul Gandhi, the scion of India's grand old party, has been reeling under the burden of his inheritance. Castigated by BJP as a privileged and indecisive politician, bereft of the common touch of his political adversary, Gandhi has struggled to steer his party out of troubled waters

the party's perceptions as a political force to be reckoned with.

But the Congress's ailments are too serious to be fixed by the nostrum that is the Bharat Jodo Yatra. After Indira Gandhi's centralization and personalization of power, the party has acquired a top-down pyramidal decision-making structure that has weakened its organisational capacities. The lack of internal democracy within the party has resulted in crippling factionalism and incoherence. The brisk traffic of defectors from the Congress to the BJP is an indication of the absence of a comprehensible ideological framework. This is perhaps why the future of the Congress as the fulcrum of opposition unity remains under a

politics has crested over India's democracy.

While opposition parties have sometimes gained lost ground in legislative assembly elections, they have continued to fail at stalling the rise of the BJP because they have not been able to get a grip on the national discourse. They have miserably failed at steering a national conversation that provides an alternate vision for India. Instead, they have, at their best, blurted incoherent ad-hoc reactions. At their worst, they have helplessly remained silent.

It is possibly for the first time in many years that the ruling party isn't setting the narrative but responding to the one designed by the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Using the political thrust of the yatra, Congress needs to rediscover itself and fashion its own voice. It needs to invent a durable language in which it can meaningfully offer a healthy expression to the immense reserve of resentment harboured by those who have been pushed to the margins of India's stumbling growth story. It must carry forward the momentum and energy from the yatra to cure the deep-seated blight within its organisation. It needs to invent an ideological repertoire for itself, and for the perusal of other parties opposed to the BJP, so that they can draw from its reserves to present a national counterpoint to the politics of the current regime. If the yatra's impact manages to enhance the Congress's capacity to facilitate the unity of the opposition, it will have achieved more than it had set out to do.

The greatest achievement of the yatra so far has been that Rahul Gandhi has decimated the tag of "pappu" stuck on his back by his detractors to paint him as an ignoramus dynast. He has proven that he isn't an entitled political dilettante and that he means serious business. His well-crafted videos that appear on our social media timelines seem to suggest that he practices a style of

healthy economy. The link between the two is conspicuously missing in the opposition's worldview.

The criticism of the pre-2014 Congress as a coterie of disconnected technocratic elite isn't entirely misplaced either. After all, we did not arrive here in a day. All political parties — including the Congress — must share the responsibility of ushering in a socio-cultural order that created an insatiable appetite for a strongman to emerge. Parties on the centre, and towards the left of the centre on India's political spectrum, emptied out of our zeitgeist a vocabulary through which the marginalised could make sense of their dispossession. They left the discontent of furious majorities unaddressed who felt betrayed by liberal India's failed promise of general prosperity. A nation shaped by the Congress set the stage for BJP's grand entry. As long as the Congress party and its allies don't look back at history with greater honesty, they will find themselves running on a political hamster wheel.

The task that lies ahead is to find a more acute diagnosis of the crises of our present moment. The Bharat Jodo Yatra must resist being frozen into a moment in India's political timeline. It has to continually strive towards transforming itself into a movement. The arduous work of translating the moral and ideological critique into sustainable politics will begin after the yatra ends on 30th of January. Until then, all eyes must remain on Srinagar.

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

Syed Faizan is a New Delhi based columnist

Antibiotics and The Next Big Danger

Manjit Singh and Michael Hodin

India has a rapidly growing economy and a strong corps of trained scientific researchers, which it can leverage to spur antimicrobial development. To help achieve this, the government should create a national innovation fund, modeled off the successful CARB-X and AMR Action Fund programs

As India struggles with the growing Omicron wave of COVID-19, another pandemic is gathering force that could someday be equally lethal. While India — and the rest of the world — was caught flat-footed by COVID-19, there is still time to prepare for this looming public health threat, if political and healthcare leaders act now.

Antibiotics have been hailed as the wonder drugs of the last century, helping nations conquer infections that once killed people in the millions. Yet over time, bacteria build up resistance to these wonder drugs, rendering them less effective and making new infections more deadly — a biologically dictated race for survival that leads to antimicrobial resistance or AMR.

How serious is the problem? According to a new Lancet report, AMR kills an estimated 1.27 million people every year. The same report found there were nearly 22 AMR-attributable deaths per 100,000 annually in South Asia, the second highest of all the regions examined. Already, more than 58,000 newborns in India succumb to neonatal sepsis each year. By 2050, the total annual death toll from AMR could hit 10 million globally, nearly double the number of COVID-19 fatalities since the pandemic began nearly two years ago.

Historically, new antibiotics were developed to protect people from mutating bacteria and the resulting infections. Today, the pipeline for antibiotics is nearly empty, a result of poor government policy, lack of awareness and skewed marketplace incentives.

Inappropriate use and overuse of antibiotics accelerate this process, making it harder and harder to defend against infections. Between 2000 and 2015, consumption of antibiotics more than doubled in India. Further, there are concerns that without appropriate policy action, global usage is projected to continue to increase by 2020, especially in LMICs. A report by the Public Health Foundation of India found that many prescriptions are handed out for illnesses that can't be treated by antibiotics at all. Even worse, antibiotics are routinely sold over the counter in India without a valid prescription.

A recent report by the Global Coalition on Aging found that India still has room for improvement when it comes to addressing AMR. Beyond the misuse of antibiotics, the report also cites a lack of funding both for AMR research and for implementation of India's National AMR Action Plan (NAP), which expired at the end of 2021.

There are, however, several important steps India can take to alleviate the deepening AMR crisis and position itself at the front of tackling the AMR challenge.

First, the Indian government needs to fully fund the core plans of the NAP and ensure the plan is being properly implemented. As part of this effort, the government must improve plan oversight, promote greater coordination among stakeholders, and strengthen antibiotic stewardship programs to limit inappropriate use. Further, as only three states (Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and New Delhi) have developed standalone action plans to date, the national government should compel all state governments to develop their own AMR action plans. In the coming year, India should also continue its work to develop its new National Action Plan, ensuring the new document is robust and comprehensive, yet practical and actionable.



Second, the government should build on current efforts to raise awareness by running large-scale campaigns to educate both care providers and patients about the growing danger of AMR. By educating providers about the dangers of overprescribing and the tradeoffs associated with inappropriate prescribing, and by informing patients about the need to use antibiotics more judiciously, India can make important strides in helping to optimize existing antimicrobials, while also curbing rates of resistance.

Third, India must work to strengthen infection prevention and control by improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and behavior, particularly in rural areas. Antibiotic waste from inadequately treated sewage (from human, veterinary, agricultural, manufacturing, and other sources) presents another serious concern that could also exacerbate AMR, and India should work to formulate a more effective regulatory framework to manage these issues.

Further, to play their part, more Indian manufacturers could consider adopting the AMR Industry Alliance's recently published AMR standard, a framework for good environmental management of the production of antibiotics, and science-based discharge targets. Additionally, the government should

integrate environmental criteria, including AMR-relevant considerations, into its process for evaluating vendors and suppliers for contracts and tenders, to encourage sustainable manufacturing practices more in line with Nordic countries. Finally, Indian judicial bodies, like the National Green Tribunal, can continue to compel state and federal agencies to enforce existing manufacturing and discharge standards.

In the coming years, India also has the opportunity to show its global leadership in one area critical to fighting AMR: antibiotic innovation. India has a rapidly growing economy and a strong corps of trained scientific researchers, which it can leverage to spur antimicrobial development. To help achieve this, the government should create a national innovation fund, modeled off the successful CARB-X and AMR Action Fund programs. The government can also pass regulatory reforms to expedite approval of newly developed antibiotics. Moreover, the Indian government can continue to pursue AMR research partnerships — like the one recently forged with the United Kingdom — to develop the next generation of treatments to defeat drug-resistant infections.

AMR has the potential to rival COVID-19 in terms of death and devastation. But this future path is not inevitable. India should act now to curb overuse of current antibiotics and restock the pipeline with new innovations that could emerge as the wonder drugs of the 21st century.

Manjit Singh is the director of Corporate Sustainability at Centrient Pharmaceuticals and a member of the AMR Industry Alliance. Michael Hodin is Ph.D. is CEO of the Global Coalition on Aging

Learn To Value Yourself And Do It Your Way

If you structure your days around people who are active and inspiring, then you may find it easier to engage and connect with meaningful work

Shilpa Bhasin Mehra

Last weekend we took a trip to Ras Al Khaimah. On the way, I saw sand dunes and the magic of the desert. I was immediately reminded of my sister's trip to the Thar desert. It was a thrilling driving expedition, full of adrenaline rush. This leisurely drive and stay at a fancy hotel was my desert expedition. It got me thinking about why we need to do things our own way and how the experience can be liberating.

Why is it that we seek "perfect" advice from others rather than trusting ourselves and finding a way that is right for us? I think we do this because we've been told that other people know better, that they have the expertise and have it all figured out. We haven't been taught to listen to ourselves and because of that, we lack the confidence to trust ourselves. We place so much value on reading self-help books and following "influencers" that we have forgotten how to tap into our own intuition. My take is this: Learn to value yourself. Do it your way.

I'm not saying ignore what others have to say. Of course, there is value in seeking support and ideas. But, trusting others more than ourselves only feeds our insecurities and feelings of failure. We all have heard of the best way to eat, drink, morning routine, meditate and the list goes on. What works for one doesn't have to work for the other. And just because it is not working for you, you don't have to feel like a failure.

I realized that when I tried to do a task based on someone else's idea, I didn't enjoy it. Because I didn't enjoy it, it was hard for me to stay motivated. The lack of motivation made me stop and



that led to feelings of failure.

We need to start designing a plan that works for us and meets our needs! Take the parts from the expert that fit you, leave out what doesn't. Adapt and modify as you go. For me, this has become what I call intuitive self-care. Every morning when I wake up, I check what I need. I have a "menu" of options that I've created to choose from and I meet my daily morning needs rather than sticking to a schedule that was created by an "expert".

Don't try to suppress what truly makes you

happy. You can certainly work to become the best possible version of yourself, but don't waste energy trying to become someone else. You likely aren't finding your way in complete isolation. Think about who you're spending your time with, and consider how they might be impacting your purpose. If you structure your days around people who are active and inspiring, then you may find it easier to engage and connect with meaningful work. Surround yourself with people who help you grow.

Somebody should tell us, right at the start of

I'm not saying ignore what others have to say. Of course, there is value in seeking support and ideas. But, trusting others more than ourselves only feeds our insecurities and feelings of failure. We all have heard of the best way to eat, drink, morning routine, meditate and the list goes on

our lives, that we are not here forever. So live life to the full every minute of every day. Do what you have to, now. There are only so many tomorrows.

Don't live by someone else's master plan and standards. Why follow or be part of a crowd when you can chart your own way?

Khaleej Times

Bad Weather Halts Rahul's Yatra In Ramban



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Bad weather and landslides on Wednesday led to the cancellation of the second leg of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra that was scheduled to start this afternoon in the nearby highway town of Banihal.

Amid incessant rains, Gandhi resumed the march from Ramban Wednesday morning but inclement weather forced its suspension. The march will now resume on Friday as tomorrow is a rest day.

The journey from Ramban to Banihal along the 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway - the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country -- is the most challenging due to several problematic stretches, including Panthiyal, Mehar and Magerkote which are prone to shooting of stones from the hillocks overlooking the arterial road.

Traffic on the highway was suspended Wednesday morning after heavy rains triggered shooting of stones at a few places in Ramban district that left a truck driver dead and two others injured.

"Due to poor weather conditions and landslides in the area, the afternoon leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra in Ramban & Banihal has been cancelled. Tomorrow is a rest day and the Yatra will resume day after, January 27th at 8 am," Congress General Secretary and in-charge communication Jai Ram Ramesh tweeted.

Earlier in the day, J-K Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson Jahanzaib Sirwal said the yatra resumed around 9 am from Bathi after an hour-long delay due to heavy rains and completed the first leg on day 131, covering the old alignment road via Maitra in Ramban town.

Gandhi, who started the march wearing his trademark white T-shirt, later donned a black raincoat. Enthusiastic

Congress workers and supporters carrying the tricolour turned up in large numbers despite the rains to receive the Gandhi family scion.

Jammu and Kashmir Congress Chief Vikar Rasool Wani, who hails from Banihal and represented the assembly constituency twice in the past two elections, was seen moving alongside Gandhi and introducing him to various delegations as they cover the five-km stretch.

"We covered about six km in Ramban and were scheduled to restart the Yatra two km ahead of Banihal town after crossing the landslide prone area in vehicles this afternoon. The district administration, both civil and police officers, advised against moving ahead due to the high risk of rolling stones and therefore, the yatra was suspended for the day," Wani said.

He said Gandhi waited for three hours for the weather to improve and get clearance from authorities but since the road was closed, the yatrists were asked to stay back for the second night halt at Ramban.

"The Yatra is having a break day on Thursday and it will resume from Banihal on Friday and will enter Kashmir," the Congress leader said.

According to officials, a few inches of snow had accumulated in Lamber, where Yatra was scheduled to spend the night camping in Banihal. The weather office has forecast heavy snowfall over middle and higher reaches and rains in plains during the day.

The march started from Kan-yakumari on September 7 and entered Jammu and Kashmir via Punjab on Thursday.

The marathon march will culminate with Gandhi unfurling the national flag at the party headquarters in Srinagar and addressing a grand rally at the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium on January 30.

ADGP Security Calls For Proper Security For BJY

SRINAGAR: Additional Director General of Police, Security, Jammu and Kashmir, S D Singh Jamwal on Wednesday directed officers to ensure proper security for the Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra in the city.

Jamwal chaired a meeting of officers of the police, Army, CAPF and the civil administration at Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium here to finalise the arrangements for Republic Day celebrations.

He also reviewed security arrangements for the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the G20 event to be held here.

With reference to Congress' foot march, Jamwal emphasised upon the officers that the security for the Yatra should be taken care of in coordination with all sister agencies and stakeholders.

He stressed that nodal officers from all security and police agencies should coordinate the arrangements as per the

guidelines.

The ADGP also directed the officers to make necessary security arrangements for Republic Day celebrations.

He stressed on proper and intensive foot-patrolling, surveillance of the area in and around the Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Stadium.

Jamwal directed for conducting anti-sabotage checks at the place of the venue and emphasised on a comprehensive security plan.

Similar briefings were also given by him in a meeting of officers held at M A Stadium, Jammu, officials said. The ADGP Security also reviewed security arrangements with regard to the G20 event in a meeting held at Central Pool Kashmir.

The SSP Security, Kashmir, presented a powerpoint presentation with regard to the preparations and planning of security for such a high-profile event, the officials said.

Security Measures In Place Along Highway: CRPF

SRINAGAR: Security forces are on alert and have put in place all measures along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway for the safety of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, officials said on Wednesday, a day before it is scheduled to reach Kashmir.

CRPF Deputy Inspector General (Operations), South Kashmir, Alok Avasthi said the force is anyway always on alert.

"We are more alert as far as the Bharat Jodo Yatra is concerned. Otherwise also, we are alert always. Whoever travels on the highway should feel safe, we have taken all security

measures," he told reporters in Pulwama.

Asked about the security measures for Republic Day, Avasthi said any intelligence about attempts to vitiate the peace here will be acted upon strongly.

"We are fully alert. If there are intelligence inputs of any element trying to disrupt peace, we will destroy those elements," the CRPF officer said.

Earlier, the CRPF distributed sewing machines among beneficiaries who had approached the CRPF helpline 'Madadgaar'.

Security on Maximum Alert In Kashmir Valley On R-Day

Officials Says They're Confident About 'Incident Free' Official Functions

SRINAGAR: Security across Jammu and Kashmir was put on maximum alert on Wednesday on the eve of January 26 functions.

Police and paramilitary forces carried out random searches in and around Lal Chowk and adjoining areas here amid inclement weather, officials said.

Security arrangements were even tighter around the Sher-e-Kashmir cricket stadium, the main venue for the official celebrations in the valley, as well as in other districts of Kashmir, the officials said.

Frisking of commuters, checking vehicles entering the city and setting up mobile and static checking points were some of the security steps taken to ensure a peaceful function in Jammu city, they said.

While Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha shall preside over the function and take salute on the main R-Day function at the M.A. Stadium, Jammu on January 26. According to a government order, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar,



Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor shall preside over the function and take salute at the main function at Srinagar. "Further, DDC, Chairperson shall preside over the functions at respective district headquarters and take salute on the Republic Day (26th January, 2023)."

BDC, chairperson/president Municipal Council/Committees shall take salute at respective Block Headquarters and Municipal Block at Respective Headquarters.

"In case block headquarters and municipal headquarters are the same, two separate

functions shall be organised," it reads, adding, "SDM/Tehsildar/Senior Most Civil officers (shall take salute) at respective Sub Divisional/Tehsil Headquarters, in case BDC Chairperson/President Council / Committee is not available."

A senior police officer here told GNS that the situation was under control and expressed confidence that official functions will be held "incident-free".

He said a multi-layered security cover has been put in place while domination and surveillance of areas are being undertaken 'vigorously'.

R-Day: Army On High Alert Along LoC

JAMMU: The Army has intensified its vigil along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri and Poonch districts to thwart any attempt by terrorists to infiltrate into this side to disturb the Republic Day celebrations, taking advantage of low visibility, officials said.

The border security grid along the 220-km LoC, starting from Sunderbani sector in Rajouri and ending at Saujiyan in Poonch, was maintaining the highest alert due to inclement weather for the last five days, the Army officials said.

They said there was intermittent rainfall in the entire stretch for the last five days coupled with foggy conditions and low visibility.

"The possibility of infiltration attempts by terrorists to disturb Republic Day, taking advantage of the low visibility remains there. So we are alert to foil their nefarious designs," an Army officer said.

He said though the troops

guarding the LoC always remain on high alert round the clock, extra alertness is maintained on several occasions like national events to foil any attempt to disturb the celebrations.

"We maintain high alert in every possible manner through manual surveillance and technical means. It is more necessary during inclement weather so that the enemy forces are not able to infiltrate into this side and carry out attacks on forward locations," the officer said, referring to the notorious activities of Border Action teams, composed of Pakistani regulars and terrorists.

Referring to the recent infiltration attempt in Poonch district when security forces shot dead two infiltrators, the officials said the foggy conditions during winter are a major challenge as the terror launch pads get activated to push armed terrorists into this side.

In the past, it has been

seen that terrorists had made attempts to do something nefarious on national events like Republic or Independence days and "we are keeping this apprehension in mind while maintaining high alert on the LoC," the officer said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Rajouri, Mohammad Aslam said besides the strengthening of the border security grid, the forces across the district are on high alert to ensure a peaceful Republic Day.

"In hinterland, police and other security forces are working in close coordination and all arrangements have been put in place in connection with Republic Day," he said.

The SSP said police are also working closely with the Army and other security agencies and are maintaining close surveillance all along, especially in the border villages which are notorious infiltration routes.

Govt Orders Creation Of 20 Posts For Setting Up TMG

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday ordered creation of 20 posts in different categories for setting up Terror Monitoring Group (TMG) to take action against hardcore sympathisers among government employees, including teachers for providing overt or covert support to militancy in the Union Territory.

According to an order, the sanctioned posts for TMG include that of a Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), six posts each of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySps), Inspectors and Head Constables besides one post of follower.

The creation of TMG comes

over a year after the government formed State Investigation Agency (SIA) within the Jammu and Kashmir Police for speedy investigation and prosecution in militancy-related cases as well as coordinating with central agencies.

In early 2019, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, G. Kishan Reddy informed Lok Sabha about the constitution of TMG to ensure synergised and concerted action against terror financing and terror-related activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

The group comprises representatives from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Intelligence Bureau, CBI, NIA, and

Income Tax Department.

The terms of reference of the TMG include, "taking action against hardcore sympathisers among government employees including teachers etc providing overt or covert support to such activities".

The MHA also charges the TMG with action against all registered cases related to militancy, militant financing and militancy-related activities and bring them to a logical conclusion.

It is also tasked with the work of "identify all key persons including leaders of the organisations who are involved in supporting (terrorism) in any form and take concerted action against them.

2 J&K Residents Awarded Padma Shri

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Two Jammu and Kashmir residents are among 91 Padma Shri Awardees, whose names were announced on Wednesday after the approval from the President of India on the occasion of Republic Day 2023.

According to a handout of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Mohan Singh and Ghulam Muhammad Zaz have been conferred with the Padma Shri Awards this year.

As per the handout Mohan Singh has been conferred the Padma Award in the field of Literature and Education, while Ghulam Mohammad Zaz has been conferred the award in the field of Art.

Padma Awards, one of the

highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year. These Awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March or April every year.

For the year 2023, the President has approved conferment of 106 Padma Awards including 3 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one).

This year the Awardees include 6 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 91 Padma Shri Awards.—(KNO)

J&K Govt Freezes Boundaries Of All Administrative Units

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday ordered freezing of boundaries of all administrative units in the Union Territory till completion of census 2021.

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause (iv) of rule 8 of the Census Rules, 1990 and in supersession of all notification issued in this

behalf, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir hereby freezes the boundaries of Districts/Tehsils, Municipalities, Towns, Revenue villages and other Administrative units in the whole Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir w.e.f 1st July, 2023 till completion of Census 2021", reads the notification issued by the Planning Development and Monitoring Department.

Authorities Demolish Outer Wall Of NC Leader's House



Majid Nabi

SRINAGAR: Authorities in Kashmir on Wednesday demolished an outer wall of the residence of National Conference general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar near the airport here, claiming it was built on state land.

Officials said the outer wall and the main gate as well as the entry of the guard room of Sagar's residence in the Humhama area on the outskirts of the city were demolished as part of the administration's action against the encroachment on state land.

Sagar, a former minister, or his family were not present in the house at the time of the demolition, the officials said.

The National Conference condemned the action, saying it smacks of political vendetta.

"JKNC condemns the dismantling of the outer wall at Party General Secretary @ AlimSagar's house at Humhama. Such actions of the government clearly smack of political vendetta, and the misuse of government machinery for the same," the party said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, Sagar turned the demolition drive as 'unjustified' and warned to take the matter to the court.

The former minister alleged that the administration did not serve any notice to him before demolishing his Humhama residence.

He said the structure, which was demolished, was constructed after proper permission from the concerned departments and that the land was his personal property and not the 'state owned' as was alleged.

"I have been left with no option but to approach the court of law; they demolished my residence without serving any notice or seeking explanation from me in this regard. This is sheer hooliganism on the part of the administration," Sagar told Kashmir Observer.

He alleged that a posse of police and paramilitary troopers was deployed around his residence before carrying out demolition. Sagar said such pressure tactics will not muzzle the opposition and that the government will be held answerable before the court of law.

"Structure, which was demolished, was not constructed on state land as the whole property belongs to my wife and we have purchased the land after paying proper stamp duty. Let the government come up with proof that the land was illegally occupied," he added. (With PTI inputs)

Govt Warns Employees Against Non-Submission Of APRs

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday issued a reminder to its employees for filling details of annual property return as well as action over its non-submission by the end of this month.

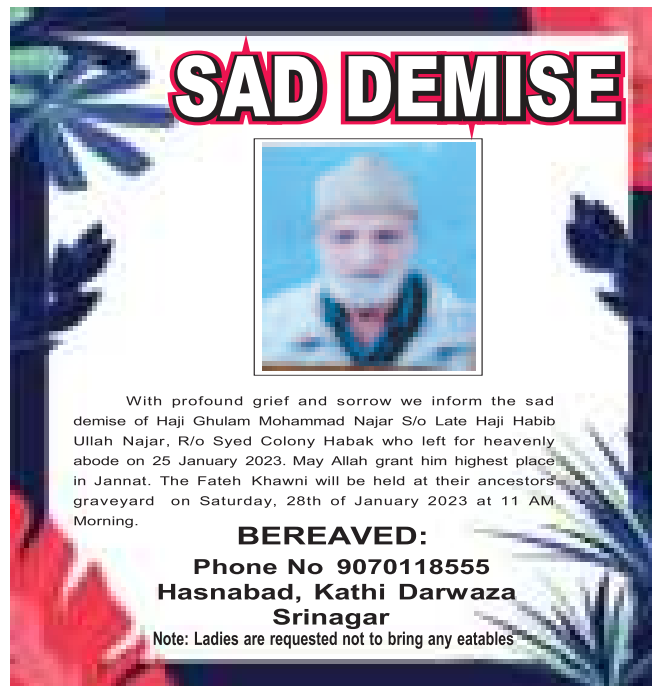
"Vide Circular No. 52-JK(GAD) of 2022 dated 22.12.2022, all the employees working under Jammu and Kashmir Government have been advised to file their property returns for the year 2022 on the PRS portal, which is accessible on <https://prs.ik.gov.in> from 1st of January, 2023 to 31 of January, 2023," reads a fresh government circular.

However, the circular noted that a "sizeable" number of

employees are yet to submit their property returns.

"The last date for filing of property returns is fixed for 31st of January, 2023, beyond which the Portal would automatically not accept the submission of the property returns and moreover, no manual submission shall be accepted in any case," it said, adding, "It is clarified that non submission of property returns shall invite action against such defaulting employees under relevant provisions of law and shall result in denial of vigilance clearance as well."

Accordingly, the government directed all the employees who are yet to submit their annual property returns for the year 2022 to submit the same immediately, well before the specified timeline of January 31.



Digital Currency To Further Bolster Digital Economy, Says RBI

Press Trust Of India

CHANDIGARH: Digital currency will further bolster the digital economy, make payment system more efficient, reduce cost involved in physical cash management and also contribute to further financial inclusion, RBI Executive Director Ajay Kumar Choudhary said on Wednesday.

Choudhary was addressing an outreach seminar on 'Central Bank Digital Currency: The India Story' organised by the Reserve Bank of India. The event was organised ahead of a two-day International Financial Architecture Working Group meeting of G20 slated to take place on January 30 and 31 here.

The RBI has already launched pilots of CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency) in wholesale and retail segments last year.

Choudhary said the CBDC is just a digital form of the physical currency and will have all its characteristics.

It is non-remunerative that is it does not carry any interest like any currency, noted Choudhary, adding, "E-rupee is also expected to offer features of physical cash like safety and settlement of transactions."

Asserting that the digital currency is aimed to complement rather than replace the current



forms of money, he said, "it should not be construed as a step to replace any of the existing bouquet of payment which are already available with us."

He said the key motivation for exploring the issuance of CBDC in India among others include moving to a digital economy, reduction in production and operation cost involved in physical cash management, which is huge even if suppose 10-15 per cent reduction, fostering financial inclusion, adding efficiency in the settlement system, boosting innovation in a cross-border payment space.

"Supported by the state-of-the-art payment system of India that is affordable and accessible, convenient, efficient, safe and secure, the CBDC can further bolster the digital economy, make the monetary and payment system more efficient and contribute to further financial inclusion," he asserted.

Every One In Four Indians Surveyed Concerned About Threat Of Job Layoff: Survey



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Every one in four Indians is concerned about the threat of job layoff while three out of four are worried about rising inflation yet half of them believe that the country's economy will grow in 2023, according to a survey by marketing data and analytics firm Kantar.

In its second edition of India Union Budget survey, Kantar found that consumers expect an announcement in policy changes with respect to income tax, with increasing basic income tax exemption limit from current Rs 2.5 lakh being the most common expectation.

"At a macroeconomic level, most have a positive outlook -- 50 per cent believe that the Indian economy will grow in 2023 as against 31 per cent, who feel there will be a slowdown. Non-metros at 54 per cent are more optimistic as compared to metros," Kantar said.

However, it said the global economic slowdown and a potential resurgence of COVID-19 are key areas of worry for Indians.

"Three out of four people are worried about the rising inflation and want the government to introduce decisive measures to tackle the same," it added.

Further, Kantar said, "Every one in four Indians is also concerned about the threat of job layoff. This is relatively higher in the affluent (32 per cent), older 36-55 year-olds (30 per cent) and salaried classes (30 per cent)." In terms of expectations from the upcoming Budget, the survey found that consumers expect an announcement in policy changes with respect to income tax.

"Increasing basic income tax exemption limit (from current Rs 2.5 lakh) is the most common expectation among consumers followed by the increase in the threshold limit of highest tax slab rate of 30 per cent (from current Rs 10 lakh). The former is notably higher amongst the salaried segment (42 per cent) while the latter is expected more by businessmen/self-employed (37 per cent) and older 36-55 year olds (42 per cent) segments," according to the survey.

LG Lauds J&K Bank's Contribution In Job Creation During B2V4, MTMP 2.0 Programmes

'J&K Bank has become common man's Bank'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lauding J&K Bank for reaching out to common people and help them realize their aspirations, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Wednesday reemphasized Bank's systemic importance in the progress of the UT calling it backbone of J&K economy. He also praised the Bank for its instrumental role in making UT government's flagship programmes 'Back to Village 4' & 'My Town My Pride 2.0'- Aspirational Panchayats & Aspirational Towns-a success by facilitating self-employment opportunities for aspiring youth across J&K through tailor made credit schemes.

"On behalf of people of J&K, I wholeheartedly express my gratitude to J&K Bank and its management for playing leading role in facilitating self-employment among youth during the Government's flagship B2V4 and MTMP2 programs, wherein 75000 aspiring and energetic persons have benefited by availing a range of Government sponsored schemes besides tailor-made products of the Banks. 75000 is a huge number and I am sure creating job opportunities for so many people in such a short span of time is unprecedented. And what is heartening to see is the fact that 16% of beneficiaries are women", Lieutenant Governor said this to a gathering during an event- Aspirational Panchayats & Aspirational Towns- held at Convention Center Jammu after launching 'J&K Bank Instant Loan' facility besides rolling out other initia-



tives of the Bank in presence of Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Bank's MD & CEO Baldev Prakash and other senior government functionaries, management executives and officers of the Bank.

On the occasion, he commended the Bank for its recent performance and congratulated the management for sustained improvement in institutional functioning. While lauding the Bank's initiative to enhance GPA Insurance of J&K UT Government employees from Rs 15 lacs to Rs 25 lacs, LG Manoj Sinha - who was the Chief Guest on the occasion - also felicitated 14 entrepreneurs from across Jammu Division who have availed finance and successfully established businesses under UT Government's Aspirational Panchayats and Aspirational Towns program.

Wishing all the beneficiaries well for their future endeavours, LG Manoj Sinha expressed hope that J&K Bank will maintain the momentum of self-employment generation in the UT to ensure that national vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat is realised in J&K.

"J&K Bank has become common man's bank and I commend its management for steering Bank through tough times taking it to the zenith of success by booking record profits, reducing NPAs and most importantly helping last man standing realise their entrepreneurial dreams," he said of Bank's recently declared quarterly financial results.

Besides handing over keys of an Ambulance to Registrar Govt. Psychiatric Hospital, Jammu, the LG gave a cheque of Rs 7 lacs to the representative of Bhartiya Shiksha Samiti under the Bank's CSR for establishment of a computer lab meant to educate children from poor and marginal backgrounds at Bhartiya Vidya Mandir, Udhampur.

Calling J&K Bank strategic asset of J&K and common man's Bank, Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, on the occasion, congratulated J&K Bank for its December Quarter results and appreciated Bank's contribution in the overall development of J&K economy especially its exemplary efforts in extending hassle-free credit to the aspiring youth of the UT.

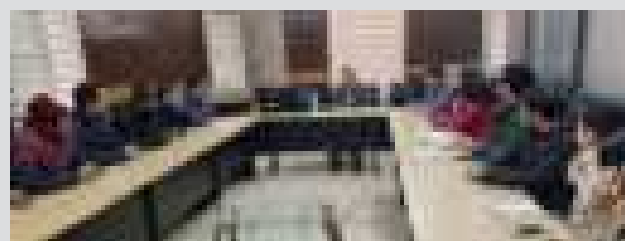
J&K Needs To Create A Thriving Startup Ecosystem: Dir JKEDI

Observer News Service

JAMMU- Director, Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (IAS) on Wednesday chaired a review meeting at the Institute's Bari Brahmana campus.

The Director also informed the officials that the Government is revising the Guidelines of J&K Startup Policy in order to make it more startup-friendly. This will boost the startup ecosystem of the UT and will help the innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs in J&K. "We need a robust startup ecosystem in the UT. We have to nurture the innovation and passion of our youth in a positive direction," said Ajaz Ahmad Bhat.

The Institute is in the process of starting short-term courses in entrepreneurship for school and college students. "The aim behind starting such courses is to enable young minds to develop an entrepreneurial mindset at an



early stage and equip them to counter the challenges of building a new venture. Such efforts will pay dividends in the long run and will prove a booster for the economy of the UT," added Ajaz Ahmad Bhat.

In addition to discussing the Institute's functioning, the status of recovery and repayment under various schemes implemented by the Institute across the UT of J&K was extensively discussed. During the meeting, the Director exhorted upon all the In Charges and District Nodal Officers to double their efforts and make the process of recovery result oriented. He directed the officials to intensify the awareness campaign

regarding various schemes of the Government available to the unemployed youth.

He urged them to reach out to the beneficiaries who have availed soft loans from JKEDI under different schemes and update their contact details. The officers of JKEDI must stay connected with the beneficiaries and ensure proper monitoring. This will enable the Institute to understand the problems faced by them and will help in addressing the issue on time, which will in turn result in less default rate, he added.

The meeting was attended by Senior Faculty members and all District Nodal Officers of JKEDI.

Dulloo Reviews Progress On Linkage Of J&K Mandies With E-National Agriculture Market

Over 12,000 farmers, 1800 traders availing benefits from online linkage

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo, reviewed the status of linkage of mandis of Jammu and Kashmir with e-National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) in a meeting held at Civil Secretariat here today.

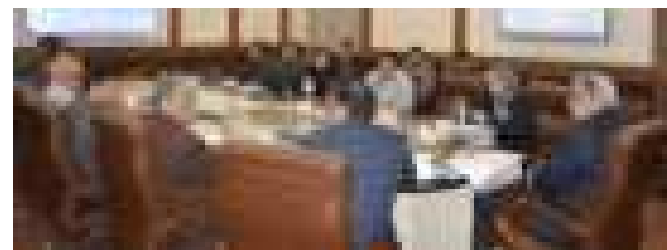
Under e-NAM, Mandis or Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) are provided an online pan-India electronic

efits from this online linkage.

ACS was also apprised of thirty seven inter-state trade transactions being facilitated by e-NAM.

Pertinently, eNAM has successfully achieved trade figures of over Rs. 30 crore as well as fostered encouraging outcomes in interstate trade.

ACS enquired about the facilities being provided to the registered members and instructed the officers to ensure that trade volume



trading portal.

In a PowerPoint Presentation given by Director Horticulture (P&M), Vikas Sharma, it was revealed that 9 mandis were onboarded in August 2022 in addition to the already onboard mandis of Narwal and Parimpora. He informed that DPRs have been submitted for adding more mandis.

ACS had a detailed information regarding breakup of number of farmers, traders, commission agents and FPOs registered with the individual mandis. He was apprised that over 12 thousand farmers and more than 1800 traders are availing ben-

efits from this online linkage.

ACS also had deliberations with the officers regarding the process of identification of suitable land in coordination with the District Administration for creation of new mandis at Kishtwar, Bandipora, Samba and Reasi for overall development of the agriculture sector.

It was noted that all CA stores and warehouses can be declared as sub market yards and that this process would be fast-tracked in the coming month. Also, it was decided that e-auctioning of the unallotted shop sites in various Mandis will be done.

Pak Economic Crisis: 10% Cut In Govt Employees' Salary Under Consideration

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is considering different proposals, including slashing the salaries of government employees by 10 per cent across the board, according to a media report on Wednesday, amidst the looming economic crisis in the cash-strapped country.

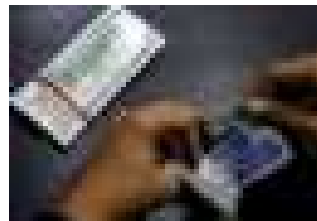
Pakistan is grappling with one of the country's worst economic crises in recent years amid dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

The National Austerity Committee (NAC) constituted by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is considering different measures, including cutting down the salaries of government employees by 10 per cent across the board, Geo News reported.

The NAC is also considering cutting down expenditures of ministries/divisions by 15 per cent, reducing the number of federal ministers, ministers of state, and advisers from 78 to 30 only while the remaining should work on a pro bono basis, the report said.

The recommendations would be finalised on Wednesday and the committee will send the report to prime minister Shehbaz.

The government is finalising recommendations on austerity as it seeks another International Monetary Fund (IMF) tranche but



the government is reluctant to implement the conditionalities.

This hesitation created a deadlock for the last two and a half months with the IMF.

Cash-strapped Pakistan revived a stalled USD 6 billion IMF programme last year which was initially agreed upon in 2019 but is finding it hard to meet the tough conditions of the Washington-based global lender.

There are reports that the IMF may not release more funds under the programme until the pledges made by the government are met.

The IMF board in August approved the seventh and eighth reviews of Pakistan's bailout programme, allowing for a release of over USD 1.1 billion.

Islamabad is waiting for the 9th review of a loan arrangement that the previous government signed with the IMF. The review would lead to the release of the next tranche of funds to Pakistan which has been pending since September.

SHORT TAKES

Govt To Sell 30 Lakh Tonnes Of Wheat From Buffer Stock

NEW DELHI: The government will sell 30 lakh tonnes of wheat in the open market from its buffer stock to control rise in prices of wheat and wheat flour (atta), sources said.

The average prices of atta have risen to around Rs 38 per kg. The food ministry will offload 30 lakh tonnes of wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS), they said. Wheat stocks will be sold to flour millers and traders among others.

On January 19, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra had said the retail prices of wheat and wheat flour (atta) have increased and the government will soon take measures to control the rising rates.

Under the OMSS policy, the government allows state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) to sell food grains, especially wheat and rice, at pre-determined prices in the open market from time to time to bulk consumers and private traders. The purpose is to boost the supply during the lean season and moderate the general open market prices.

Even the flour millers have demanded the government to offload wheat stocks from the FCI.

"We are finding that there is an uptick in the prices of wheat and atta. We are aware of the issue. Various options are being explored by the government and very soon we will come up with our response," Chopra had told reporters last week. **PTI**

Govt Raises Rs 8,000 Cr Via Maiden Auction Of SGrBs

MUMBAI- The first tranche of Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) worth Rs 8,000 crore was subscribed fully on Wednesday.

As per the auction details provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), SGrB 2028 maturing in 2028 will have a coupon rate of 7.10, while SGrB 2033 maturing in 2033 will carry a rate of 7.29 per cent.

Coupon rates of Sovereign Green Bonds are very much in line with the G-Sec.

As announced in the Union Budget 2022-23, the central government as part of its overall market borrowings will be issuing SGrBs for mobilising resources for green infrastructure.

The second auction of another Rs 8,000 crore will be conducted on February 9.

SGrBs will be issued through uniform price auction and 5 per cent of the notified amount of sale will be reserved for retail investors, the RBI said, adding these papers will be reckoned as an eligible investment for SLR purposes.

These bonds will be eligible for trading in the secondary market.

The proceeds from the green bonds issuance cannot be used for extraction, production and distribution of fossil fuels or where the core energy source is fossil-fuel based, and nuclear power projects. **PTI**

Air India Offers Nearly 98 Crore Shares To Employees

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI- Air India has offered around 98 crore shares of the company to its permanent employees as part of a stock option scheme. The shares are also being offered to the permanent staff of Air India Express as part of the Employees' Share Benefit (ESB) Scheme 2022, according to a document.

The Tata group took over the control of Air India and Air India Express from the government on January 27, 2022.

An airline official told PTI that around 8,000 employees will benefit from the scheme.

"In accordance with the share purchase agreement signed as part of the disinvestment process, Air India has initiated the Employee Share Benefit Scheme for eligible employees who were in service with the airline on the date of privatisation.

"We will be working with the relevant employees to help them understand the long term benefits and avail of the same," an Air India spokesperson said in a statement.

Those who were permanent employees at the two carriers -- Air India and Air India Express -- at the time of the takeover will be eligible to participate in the scheme where the share is offered at a price of 27 paise apiece, as per the document sent to the staff.

A source said the price is at a discount compared to the book value of 87-90 paise per share at the time of acquisition. **PTI**

Sensex, Nifty Tumble More Than 1% On F&O Expiry

MUMBAI- Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tanked more than 1 per cent on Wednesday due to heavy selling pressure in banking and financial shares amid unabated foreign capital outflows.

The 30-share BSE barometer plunged by 773.69 points or 1.27 per cent to 60,205.06 as 22 of its scrips declined while eight advanced.

The index opened lower and later fell nearly 900 points during the day to touch a low of 60,081.36 as investors closed their positions on the last day of derivatives expiry.

The broader Nifty of the National Stock Exchange declined sharply by 226.35 points or 1.25 per cent to close below the 18,000 level at 17,891.95. As many as 35 of its scrips ended in the red and 15 gained.

"Indian equities witnessed a significant sell-off as the market appeared apprehensive ahead of the upcoming Union Budget and Fed meeting next week," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

"Sentiments were dampened by persistent FI selling, where funds are being shifted to other EMs as a result of attractive valuations. Furthermore, a weak economic growth outlook that stoked recession fears pulled down global markets," Nair said. **PTI**

'India Should Consider Reducing TDS Rate On Crypto Trade'

NEW DELHI: India should consider lowering the 1 per cent TDS on cryptocurrency trade as a high rate is causing a flight of capital and users to platforms in foreign jurisdictions and the grey market, a report said on Tuesday.

The 'Impact Assessment of 1 per cent TDS on VDAs' report by Chase India and Indus Law said the crypto platforms/exchanges must also perform customer due diligence which can help uncover any potential future risk.

"The existing 1 per cent TDS on crypto trade, combined with the absence of comprehensive regulations, is causing a flight of capital and users to platforms in foreign jurisdictions and the grey market," it said.

The government, from April 1 last year, has brought in a 30 per cent income tax plus surcharge and cess on transfer of virtual digital assets (VDAs), including cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin, Ethereum, Tether and Dogecoin.

Also, to keep a tab on the money trail, a 1 per cent TDS has been brought in on payments over Rs 10,000 towards virtual digital currencies.

It also suggested that for the purpose of safety and oversight, the government must ask all crypto exchanges/platforms to conduct a detailed e-KYC authentication on all investors/traders in line with the Aadhaar rules. **PTI**

Women's Premier League: BCCI Earns Rs 4669.99 Crore From 5 Teams

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: The BCCI on Wednesday earned a Rs 4669.99 crore wind-fall for the sale of five teams in the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL) with Adani Sport-sline shelling out a massive Rs 1289 crore for the Ahmedabad team, which emerged the most expensive franchise.

IPL team owners Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Delhi Capitals made successful bids of Rs 912.99 crore, Rs 901 crore and Rs 810 crore respectively to enter the WPL.

Capri Global Holdings got the Lucknow franchise for Rs 757 crore.

"Today is a historic day in cricket as the bidding for teams of inaugural #WPL broke the records of the inaugural Men's IPL in 2008! Congratulations to the winners as we garnered Rs.4669.99 Cr in total bid," BCCI secretary Jay Shah tweeted.

Earlier this month, the BCCI sold

the media rights of the Women's Premier League to Viacom18 for Rs 951 crore, getting a Rs 7.09 crore per match value for five years.

Adani Group, which had failed to buy an IPL team when the Lucknow and Ahmedabad franchises were up for sale in 2021, has made its official entry into Indian cricket by securing a women's team for WPL.

Many were already calling the league Women's IPL but BCCI secretary revealed the name on Wednesday.

"The BCCI has named the league - Women's Premier League (WPL). Let the journey begin."

"Today is a historic day in cricket as the bidding for teams of inaugural #WPL broke the records of the inaugural Men's IPL in 2008. This marks the beginning of a revolution in women's cricket and paves the way for a transformative journey ahead not only for our women cricketers but for the entire sports fraternity. The #WPL will bring



necessary reforms in women's cricket and would ensure an all-encompassing ecosystem that benefits each and every stakeholder," Shah said in a series of tweets. The eight franchisees in the men's IPL were sold for USD 723.59 million before the maiden edition in 2008.

The WPL player auction will take place next month with the first edition to be played in March.

The BCCI on Monday had cleared 17 technical bids for the closed door bidding that was held in a five star hotel here on Wednesday. As many as seven IPL franchisees were in the race and the ones to miss out were Punjab Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad. Among the outsiders, multinational sweets and snacks company Haldiram's too had sub-

mitted its bid on Monday. The BCCI had not set any base price for the sale of teams.

A total of 22 games will be played in the inaugural season with the top-ranked team in the league stage qualifying directly for the final. The second and third placed teams will battle out for a place in the title clash.

Each team will have a purse of Rs 12 crore at the players' auction next month and will need to buy a minimum of 15 players and maximum of 18. Up to five overseas players, including one from associate, will be allowed in the playing eleven. "India's women cricketers have always made the nation proud in the global sporting arena - be it the World Cup, Asian Cup or the recent Commonwealth Games! "This new Women's League will once again shine a global spotlight on the talent, power, and potential of our girls. I'm sure our Women's MI team will take the Mumbai Indians brand of

fearless and entertaining cricket to a new level altogether," said Mumbai Indians owner Nita Ambani.

Mumbai Indians also have their presence in the ongoing ILT20 in UAE and SA20 in South Africa.

The Diageo-owned RCB franchise said it was patiently waiting to become part of women's cricket.

"At the core of Diageo, is the value of gender inclusivity that embraces diversity in the broadest possible sense and this enterprise champions us to welcome and celebrate women's cricket for who they are and the value they bring in the journey of this sport, Cricket. "Therefore, it is a fitting asset in the right direction for Diageo India owned franchise. "We held back all our investments in overseas teams to own a team that aligns with this philosophy and core value, and it gives us immense pleasure to have marked this accomplishment positively," said RCB chairman Prathmesh Mishra in a statement.

Baramulla Cricketer Succumbs After Fatal Fall



Agencies

BARAMULLA: A 25-year old well-known cricketer from Baramulla district breathed his last on Wednesday after he fell off from second story of his

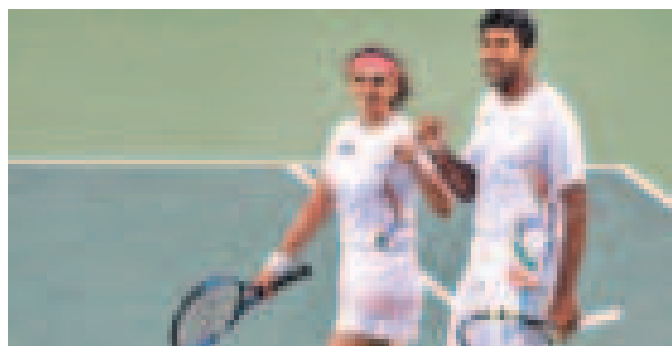
house.

Two days after he fell, the youth succumbed to his injuries at SK Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) on Wednesday morning, officials said.

The youth identified as Tahir Ahmed Lone son of Haji Ghulaam Ahmed Lone was a well known cricketer of Baramulla was injured after he fell off from the second story of his house in Watergam in Rafiabad on last Saturday.

He was shifted to a nearby hospital where from he was referred to SKIMS Srinagar for advanced treatment, they said. However, the injured youth succumbed to his injuries today at SKIMS Soura, they added. (KNS)

Sania-Bopanna Advance To Australian Open Final



Agencies

MELBOURNE: Playing the last Grand Slam tournament of her career, Sania Mirza earned the chance to win her seventh major title by reaching the Australian Open mixed doubles final with compatriot Rohan Bopanna in Melbourne on Wednesday.

The unseeded Indian pair knocked out third

seeds Desirae Krawczyk and Neal Skupski 7-6(5), 6-7(5), 10-6 in a gruelling semi-final that lasted one hour and 52 minutes.

Sania, 36, has won three women's doubles and as many mixed doubles titles in her career while Bopanna, 42, has won one mixed doubles title. Sania has announced that the WTA event in Dubai in February will be her swansong.

Djokovic Mows Rublev To Reach Australian Open Semis



Agencies

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic delivered another masterclass at the Australian Open on Wednesday to thump fifth seed Andrey Rublev 6-1 6-2 6-4 and reach the semi-finals at Melbourne Park where he is bidding for a record-extending 10th crown and 22nd Grand Slam title.

It marked the 44th time that Djokovic reached the last four at the Grand Slams, leaving him six ahead of Rafa Nadal and only two behind his other great rival and 20-times major cham-

pion Roger Federer.

"I can't be happier with my tennis, I was solid from the back of the court. I love these conditions, this court, it's definitely special for me," Djokovic said.

"If I have to sum up the important shots, I found my best tennis," Djokovic said. "Obviously he (Paul) doesn't have much to lose being in the semi-finals for the first time. He has been playing terrific tennis in the last 15 months."

"I have to be ready for the match mentally and not approach it differently. If I play this way, I have a good chance to go through."

Sticking To Plans, Holding Nerves Key To India's Consistency



Press Trust of India

INDORE: India captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday admitted that the upcoming big-ticket Test series against Australia won't be easy but said the hosts are "up for the challenge" against the world number one side.

After upstaging Sri Lanka 3-0 in the preceding ODI series, India continued their fine form and blanked New Zealand by the same margin following a 90-run win in the third and final match in Indore.

"Honestly, we don't talk too much about rankings. It's about winning games and it won't be different when we

play the Tests against Australia. It won't be an easy challenge but we're up for it," Rohit said at the presentation ceremony.

"In the last six games we've done most things right in ODIs. We're consistent in our approach with the bat and ball."

India rested the pace duo of Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami for the match and replaced them with Yuzvendra Chahal and Umran Malik.

Rohit said despite putting up 385 for nine on the board, it was not safe on the batting-friendly Holkar Cricket Stadium. New Zealand finished on 295 in 41.2 overs.

"Without Siraj and Shami we wanted to give opportuni-

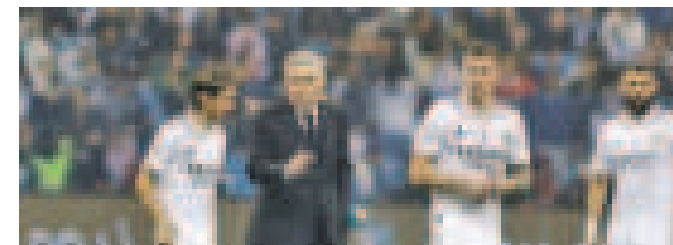
ties to other guys on the bench. We wanted to bring Chahal and Umran in the mix, put them under pressure. We had runs on the board, but on this kind of ground no total is safe," he said.

Rohit praised Shardul Thakur, who was India's best bowler on the day, registering figures of 3 for 45 from six overs.

"We stuck to the plans, held our nerves. Shardul has been doing this for a while, so some people call him 'Magician'."

"Every time I've given Kuldeep the ball, he brings wickets. Just need to give him more games under his belt, because wrist spinners get better as they play more."

Real Madrid A Team In Transition, Says Ancelotti Ahead Of Cup Derby



Agencies

MADRID: Real Madrid are going through a transition period, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Wednesday, adding that a big part of his work this season has been managing the expectations of his players.

After the departure of Casemiro to Manchester United and midfield stars like Luka Modric, 37, and Toni Kroos, 33, entering the final stages of their careers, Ancelotti has been mixing up his lineup compared to last season in which Real won LaLiga and the Champions League. However, the Italian has a selection dilemma ahead of Real's Copa del Rey quarter-final clash against city rivals Atletico Madrid on Thursday with French midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni still recovering from a leg injury.

Either he brings in Modric and Kroos or keeps faith with Dani Ceballos and Eduardo Ca-

mavinga who played in the recent LaLiga wins over Athletic Bilbao and Villarreal, helping Real keep in touching distance of leaders Barcelona. "We are going through a period of transition in our first team and everyone needs to understand that," Ancelotti told a news conference on Wednesday.

"It's understanding from the veterans and patience from the youngsters. Last season this mentality was essential for us to maintain a good atmosphere in the changing room, because everyone understood that it was the best thing for the team."

Ancelotti maintained this unity was key for Real to win silverware this season, but said that it would not be easy to overcome a resurgent Atletico.

"We are facing a special opponent in a special match on Thursday. It is an important opportunity and we want to win a title," the coach said.



Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)
Ministry of Science & Technology
Government of India

— Inauguration of —

YOUNG STARTUP CONCLAVE

KATHUA

28th - 29th January, 2023

by

Dr. Jitendra Singh

Hon'ble Union Minister of State (I/C) for Science & Technology,
Minister of State (I/C) of Earth Sciences,
Minister of State in the PMO, Ministry of Personnel, Pensions,
Public Grievances & DoAE, Department of Space and Vice President, CSIR

Venue: Government Degree College, Kathua
Date: 28th January, 2023 at 12.30 PM



Cong Begging Regional Parties For Crowds For BJY In J&K: DAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu: Alleging that the Congress is "begging" for crowds from regional parties for the success of the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir, the Democratic Azad Party (DAP) headed by Ghulam Nabi Azad on Wednesday said the local leadership of the national party are misleading Rahul Gandhi on the ground reality.

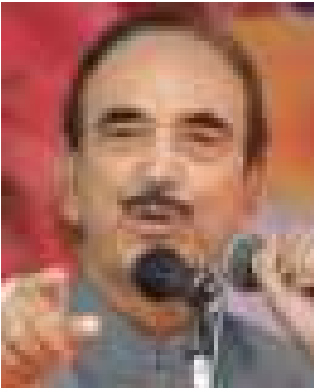
The DAP's remarks came a day after Gandhi said 90 per cent of Azad's colleagues have returned to the Congress fold and now he has been left alone.

"The Congress leader is misled by the people surrounding him about the facts and ground situation. The reality is that the DAP has white washed Congress in J-K," DAP general secretary and former minister R S Chib said in a statement here.

Referring to former deputy chief minister Tara Chand and former MLA Balwan Singh who returned to the Congress, Chib said they, along with former minister Manohar Lal Sharma, were expelled from the party by the DAP chairman.

"While one (Sharma) who holds the constituency later rejoined the DAP, the remaining two have no political constituency," he claimed.

Chib said the desertions in the Congress after the formation of the DAP has rattled the grand old party at the core and is now working in damage control mode. "Ever since the Bharat Jodo Yatra entered Jammu and Kashmir, the local



leadership (of Congress) has been begging for the crowds to local political parties. They have lost their ground in Jammu and Kashmir and that is the reality."

Accusing Gandhi of faking his love and sympathy for the people of J-K, Chib said the Congress is maintaining a "deliberate silence on issues like Article 370 abrogation, land, jobs and the recent terror strikes in Jammu and Kashmir."

"Even he is walking alongside the leaders who spoke against the Indian Army. Taking along such anti-national elements reflects the mindset of the Congress towards the nation," the DAP leader, apparently referring to Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Digvijaya Singh who triggered a controversy by questioning the surgical strikes.

Gandhi himself had snubbed Singh, termed his comments "ridiculous" and said the armed forces are doing their job "exceptionally well" and do not need to give any proof.

Substantial Increase In Project Completions: CS

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta today remarked that J&K has come a long way in improving both the quality and magnitude of expenditure in the last couple of years which has resulted in five fold increase in number of projects completed.

He made these remarks while speaking in a meeting to review the expenditure out of Capex budget 2022-23 by different departments.

The meeting was attended by the Administrative Secretaries, Directors of Finance and other concerned officers from different departments.

Srinagar based officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the Administrative Secretaries to look out for the projects that are nearing completion so that funds are provided for their early culmination. He urged them to accelerate the pace of expenditure so that no part remains to be unspent before the given period.

Dr Mehta maintained that J&K has improved on many indices continuously from the last few years. He gave out that the developmental curve has seen an upward trend with enhanced focus on both quality and quantity of work done on ground.

The Chief Secretary stressed on continuing this pace and momentum of development and reforms in



administration so that the objective of less government more governance is achieved effectively. He enumerated that the UT has been successful in moving up the ladder on number of developmental parameters. He elucidated that whether it is digitization of land records, construction of roads under PMGSY, tourist arrivals, sports infrastructure or activities, industrial Investments etc, J&K happens to be an example in fast tracking development.

In terms of reforms, he observed that the UT has done a transformative job. He stated that a year or so before, it was unimaginable to think of Digital J&K, which is a reality today. He reiterated that no goal fixed ever has remained too far for J&K to achieve. He stated that the reforms taken by the LG administration had been first of their kind in the history of J&K.

He said that be it District Good Governance Index, Departmental Deliverables, saturation of individual beneficiary programmes, Aspirational blocks,

Aspirational Panchayats, introduction of e-office or other measures, J&K has attained a distinction in moving towards a more vibrant, responsive, transparent and accountable system in these years.

The Chief Secretary urged the officers to make preparations for effectively implementing the next year budget. He advised them to have ambitious targets and achieve them efficiently. He made out that each of these set targets should be followed dedicatedly by all of them. He directed for conducting monthly meetings to assess the progress at apex level besides departmental meetings regularly by the respective Administrative Secretaries to achieve the targets efficiently on time.

The Chief Secretary also said that number of projects likely to be completed in 22-23 is likely to be around 65,000 which shall be more than seven times of number of projects completed in 18-19, reflecting the emergence of new work culture in J&K.

Devotees Rejoice As Wait For Snow Ends On Kanchoth Festival In Bhaderwah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhaderwah : The wait for snow-fall in this picturesque valley of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district ended on Wednesday, coinciding with the local 'Kanchoth' festival -- a symbol of the ancient Nag culture.

Believing it to be a good omen for humanity in general and their community in particular, women devotees dressed in their colourful best thronged temples in the snow and, as per tradition, broke their fasts.

The festival is celebrated by Nag devotees across the Chenab Valley -- Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts, besides some parts of Udhampur and Kathua districts in the Jammu region and Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district.

Followers of Lord Vasuki Nag believe that on this day of 'Gouri Tritiya', Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati got married and the latter insisted on a throne made of snow as a wedding gift. As a result, snow during the festival is considered a good omen.

The main programmes were reported from Mathola, Ghata, Khakhhal, Gupt Ganga, Chinnote, Jatani, Katyara, Hanga and Chinchhora where women prayed for long lives for their husbands, officials said.

"The occasion has great significance in the life of every married woman. The day is considered pious for women as they can pray to Goddess Gauri for the long and healthy lives of their husbands," said a local priest.

Kanchoth is essentially a one-day event but the



festivities continue for a week.

"During the first three days, women go to the neighborhood to offer 'Thel' (respect) to everyone -- irrespective of creed, caste, age and sex. In return, they are blessed with 'Suhagan Bho' (live long your husband)," the priest said.

The women gather, sing and dance during the night while their husbands manage the kitchen for three days, he added.

Expressing her excitement, Sonica Sharma of Mathola Bhaderwah said, "I got married a few years back and my mother-in-law and other elderly women of the village taught me the traditions."

Rani Devi (74) said it was her 45th Kanchouth and expressed hope that the coming generations would keep its rich tradition alive.

"We seek the blessings of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati for the long life of our 'suhag' (husband). We also prayed for humanity," she said.

Local residents have long demanded that this unique and colourful festival be included in the tourism calendar by the Bhaderwah Development Authority and the Union Territory administration's Tourism department.

CONTD. FROM 3RD PAGE

Fresh Snowfall

operations started after the visibility improved, they added.

Incessant rains also triggered shooting stones at a few places in Ramban district leading to the closure of the vital highway.

An official of the traffic department said the shooting stones from the hillocks overlooking the highway at a couple of places between Charkote and Banihal forced suspension of traffic.

Shooting stones rolled down at Magarkote area of the Ramban district during wee hours, hitting a tanker (JK02BL-8177) and truck (JK18A- 6968), the official said.

He said that the driver of the truck identified as Muneeb Tak of Supat Kulgam died on the spot. The two injured persons were immediately evacuated to Sub district hospital Banihal.

They were identified as Gopal son of Bayant Lal of Peera Ramban and Rajinder Kumar son of Prem Singh of Batote Ramban. One of them is the driver of the oil tanker, the official said.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperatures improved across the Valley.

The mercury in Srinagar settled at a low of zero degree Celsius -- up from minus 2.3 degrees Celsius. Qazigund, the gateway to the Kashmir Valley, registered a low of minus 0.2 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

According to the traffic department, there were some incidents of shooting stones amid rains at some places along the Srinagar-Jammu national highway, but the traffic was through.

It also advised people not to take the highway between Nashri and Banihal till the Congress' Bharat Jodo Yatra passed through.

"In view of the Bharat Jodo Yatra from Ramban towards Banihal, no vehicular movement shall be allowed from Qazigund towards Banihal-Ramban and from Nashri towards Ramban-Banihal," the traffic department said.

Kokernag in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 0.7 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature in Kupwara settled at minus 0.6 degrees Celsius.

In Gulmarg, the minimum temperature was minus 4.6 degrees Celsius up from minus 9.5 degrees Celsius. It was the coldest place in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum temperature of minus 2.6 degrees Celsius, up six notches from the previous night.

Meanwhile, the meteorological department forecast a brief spell of rain and snowfall on Thursday morning and mainly dry weather on January 27 and 28.

"On January 26, the weather is expected to be generally cloudy with the possibility of a brief spell of light rain and snow in the morning hours," a MeT official said.

He said on January 27-28, mainly dry weather (80%) was expected while there is possibility of light to moderate snow/rain likely from 29th night -30 (60%).

The MeT department urged people living or commuting in snowbound areas not to venture out, unless in an emergency. He said there are possibilities of avalanches as hilly areas of J&K and Kargil district of Ladakh have already received very heavy snowfall.

G20 Ideal Platform

in various world forums have started making a positive difference. The respect that India has earned on the world stage has resulted in new opportunities as well as responsibilities," she said.

President Murmu said India holds the Group of 20 (G20) presidency this year, which is an opportunity to promote democracy and multilateralism and the right forum for shaping a better world and a better future.

"Under India's leadership, I am sure, G20 will be able to further enhance its efforts to build a more equitable and sustainable world order," she said.

The President said G20 represents about two-thirds of the world population and around 85 per cent of the global GDP, and it is an ideal forum to discuss and find solutions for global challenges.

"To my mind, global warming and climate change are the most pressing among them. Global temperatures are rising and incidents of extreme weather are increasing... Unfortunately, the poor bear the brunt of global warming more than others," she said.

The President said that India is faced with the dilemma of lifting more and more people out of poverty which is possible through economic growth but that also comes from fossil fuels.

She said one of the solutions to the conundrum is promoting the use of alternative energy sources.

"India has taken a commendable lead in this direction by giving a policy push to solar energy and electric vehicles. At the global level, however, emerging economies need a helping hand from advanced nations in the form of technology transfer and financial support," Murmu said.

Murmu, the first President from the tribal community, said to balance development and the environment, we have to look at the ancient traditions with a new perspective.

"We need to reconsider our basic priorities. The scientific aspects of traditional life-values have to be understood. We must, once again, rekindle that respect for nature and humility before the vast universe," she said.

The President said Mahatma Gandhi was a true prophet of our times, as he foresaw the calamities of indiscriminate industrialisation and cautioned the world to mend its ways.

Golden Chapter

partner of J&K's developmental journey. Several initiatives have been taken to ensure financial inclusion where every citizen, irrespective of socio-economic status, is empowered to participate in the new age economy," he added.

The LG said that his administration has taken many steps to create supportive infrastructure, schemes and policies to speed up economic development of Jammu Kashmir and to meet the aspirations of young people.

"Mission Youth, JKRLM and other government agencies along with J&K Bank are helping thousands of new entrepreneurs to set up businesses. The drive during Back to Village and My Town My Pride created a new record enabling 75,000 young entrepreneurs to start a new chapter of their life while celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav," he added.

He added that the administration is fully committed to youth entrepreneurship and ensuring self-employment opportunities.

Speaking on the potential of youth of J&K, the LG said that from service sector to agri-entrepreneurs & start-ups, our youth have achieved unprecedented success.

"Pulwama has set a new record by providing opportunities to 7324 youth to set up their own business venture. J&K setting up maximum number of manufacturing units in PMEGP in

the country last year and also generating maximum number of employment is a testimony to our commitment to youth," he said.

"In all the newly started business ventures, 15% of the entrepreneurs are our daughters who have started their entrepreneurial journey in sectors like training institutes, boutiques, handicrafts etc," he added.

Sinha said that the women are driving the socio-economic transformation in Jammu Kashmir and termed them the backbone of the society.

"It is indeed a privilege for J&K Bank to contribute in this campaign of women empowerment," he said.

"Financial assistance worth thousands of crores rupees have been provided to lakhs of account holders through J&K Bank for better business arrangements and handholding of small entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

The LG further made valuable suggestions for working in a focused manner to accelerate the development process and making a larger impact on the lives of the people.

"Agriculture & allied sectors, education and healthcare, information technology, infrastructure and self-reliance of every citizen, are the five core competencies that should be taken forward with an integrated action plan for the rapid development of Jammu Kashmir," he said.

"The banking sector will have to play a pivotal role for the rejuvenation of the agriculture & allied sector. By taking banking services to common man, SHGs, village industries and innovative start-ups can create a competitive economy in Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

On the occasion, the LG also launched various initiatives of the J&K bank including enhancement of Group Personal Accident Insurance from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 25 lakh for J&K UT Government Employee and instant loan disbursement for J&K Government employees.

An MoU between J&K Bank and Jammu Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) was also signed in presence of LG

'PRI System

in Jammu and Kashmir's developmental journey has truly empowered the common man.

Sinha made these remarks during an event organised at Convention Centre here to celebrate the 13th National Voters' Day.

The LG said that the objective behind this celebration is to encourage our voters to participate in the democratic process.

"Active participation of people in electoral process is key to healthy democracy. Congratulations to the young voters who have enrolled recently," he added.

The LG said that this year's 'theme of National Voters' Day, "Nothing like voting, I vote for sure" reminds every citizen of their solemn duty towards the nation and democratic principles.

"On this occasion, let us take a pledge to keep the national interest paramount and rededicate ourselves to strengthen the democratic system," he added.

Sinha said that exercising the 'Right to Vote' is the expression of one's opinion which holds high value in the democracy. He called for upholding the democratic traditions of the country and the dignity of free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections.

"The Election Commission of India has gained global recognition for a strong & transparent system. The Election Commission is

continuously enriching and strengthening the electoral process by using IT tools, conducting free & fair elections, educating voters and also sharing its expertise with other countries," the LG said.

"Despite all the challenges, as the world's largest democracy rooted in democratic values, we have developed a robust structure which has strengthened inclusive development and fulfilling hopes & aspirations of the people," he added.

The LG also appreciated the election officials for their invaluable contribution in efficiently improving voter registration, enhancing voters' participation, educating and motivating voters.

Lauding the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the LG said that establishment of three-tier PRLs system and their participation in J&K's developmental journey has truly empowered the common man.

He urged all remaining eligible citizens in the UT of J&K to enrol themselves in the Electoral Rolls and exercise the rights bestowed by the Indian Constitution.

The LG also administered the National Voters' Day pledge and distributed electronic voter ID cards to newly registered voters.

Earlier, Sinha administered the National Voters' Day Pledge to the officials of the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat and Special Security Force's (SSF) personnel at Raj Bhavan.

Govt Mulling

the J&K government to keep the proposal on hold.

In an order, Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla issued several amendments in the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Act, 2000 and Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000 carried through the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020.

The National Conference and the People Democratic Party (PDP) were earlier up in arms about the Centre's decision. Following the controversy, LG Manoj Sinha stated that the government will not levy any property tax in the Union Territory.

"Speculations are rife that property tax will be levied from people of Jammu and Kashmir. I am assuring you in clear terms that no such tax would be levied in J&K by the UT administration," he told reporters in Baramulla.

However, sources said the government has finally decided to go ahead with the policy and that a proper SRO will be issued shortly.

"There are a number of centrally sponsored schemes that are meant for states and UTs, however they aren't applicable to those regions where the property tax is not collected. So the government has decided to impose the Act now," said an official, wishing not to be named.

He said that the tax of residential and commercial properties will be different which will be decided by the government in the SRO.

"Ofcourse the tax on commercial building will be high than residential building," he said, adding "The officials from the revenue department will decided after evaluating the rates of the land and the property of the area,"

He further said that the Government will be imposing property tax through urban local bodies (Municipal Corporation, Committees) in their respective areas across Union Territory.

Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Dheeraj Gupta did not respond to repeated calls from the reporter.

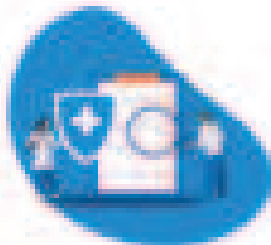
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