

Row Rages Over Rahul's Entry Into Kashmir Valley

Congress Calls Off Walk Alleging Security Lapse, Police Says Full Security Arrangements Were In Place



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

Khanabal: A major controversy erupted on Friday after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged security lapse and mismanagement of crowds while he was leading Bharat Jodo Yatra into Kashmir

Valley, a charge strongly contested by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Gandhi said he had to cancel his walk for the day because police arrangements by the Jammu and Kashmir administration "unfortunately completely collapsed".

Gandhi, who began his yatra from Banihal in Jammu region, crossed the Jawahar tunnel into the Valley in Qazigund in a bulletproof vehicle but could walk for barely 500 metres after that. He was asked by his security team to stop given the **More on P10**

Full Security Arrangements Were In Place: Police

There was no security lapse at the Bharat Jodo Yatra, a senior Jammu and Kashmir police official said on Friday while stressing that the organisers had not informed the police about a large crowd joining the march from Banihal.

"The Jammu and **More on P10**

I'm The Eyewitness: Omar

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah Friday alleged that the outer ring of security cordon maintained by Jammu and Kashmir Police "simply vanished" as soon as the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra entered the Kashmir Valley. **More on**

Police Issues Traffic Advisory

To ensure smooth passage to the commuters, the traffic police Srinagar here have issued fresh advisory in wake of the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. According to the advisory issued by the office of the Srinagar Traffic Police, it has asked motorists to avoid NH- 44 from peaks towards Galandhar and has asked vehicles to use the old route from Panthachowk- Sempora- Pampore for journey towards Anantnag. **More on P10**

Priyanka, Mehbooba To Join Yatra Today



Observer news Service

Khanabal: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is likely to join the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Kashmir on Saturday, the party's Jammu and Kashmir unit chief Vikar Rasool Wani said.

Speaking at a press conference here on Friday, Rasool noted that the Yatra will start from Chursu in Awantipora area on Saturday, and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti along with a number of women will participate in it.

"A maximum number of women will participate in the Yatra. (PDP chief) Mehbooba Mufti will also participate in it. Our leader Priyanka Gandhi is also likely to be a part of the foot march," he said.

There will be a tea break near the Birla International School, Pampore and the night halt will be at the truck yard in Pantha Chowk in the outskirts of Srinagar, he added.

"On January 29, the Yatra will resume from Pantha Chowk and walk up to Nehru Park on the Boulevard Road. Rahul (Gandhi) ji will address a press conference there," Rasool said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the rally will be held on January 30 and leaders or representatives of 'like-minded' parties will participate.

The Yatra is currently in Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Widespread Rain, Snowfall In J&K From Sunday

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The weather department on Friday predicted mainly dry weather in Jammu and Kashmir during the next 24 hours and isolated to "widespread" light rain and snow for subsequent two days from Sunday.

A meteorological department official here said that mainly dry weather has been forecast for the next 24 hours and light to widespread rain and snow was likely from January 29th night-30 (60%).

He said in the last 24 hours till 0830 hours, Qazigund received 5.0cm of snow, Pahalgam 3.3cm and Kokernag 1.0cm.

Meanwhile, the official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 1.2°C, the same as

on last night's. Today's minimum temperature, he said, was above normal by 2.2°C for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of minus 0.6°C against minus 0.4°C on the previous night and it was 3.5°C above normal for the gateway town of Kashmir.

Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of minus 4.3°C against minus

2.4°C on the previous night and it was 1.8°C above normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Kokernag recorded a low of minus 0.9°C against minus 0.6°C on the previous night and it was 1.7°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 8.6°C **More on P10**

Massive Avalanche Hits Kishtwar

An avalanche hit remote Paddar area of Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Friday, but there was no loss of life or damage to property, officials said. An avalanche warning has been issued by the administration in various areas of Jammu and Kashmir, they said. The avalanche rolled into a river near a hamlet in Mechail belt, but there was no damage. **More on P10**

GULMARG RECORDED A LOW OF MINUS 8.6°C AGAINST MINUS 10.4°C on the previous night and it was 1.1°C below normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

BJY Not To Discuss Political Issues Like Art-370: Ramesh

Press Trust Of India

Khanabal: The ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra will not discuss political issues of Jammu and Kashmir such as the abrogation of Article 370 and the Gupkar Alliance as there will be other opportunities to raise those, the Congress said on Friday.

"There are many political issues in J-K, but we will not discuss those issues during the yatra as the yatra is highlighting the dangers in front of the country because of the Modi government's intentions and policies," Congress general



secretary Jairam Ramesh told a press conference here.

The Centre on August 5, 2019 abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Six mainstream **More on P10**

India Issues Notice To Pak Seeking Modification To IWT

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India has issued a notice to Pakistan for modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in view of Islamabad's "intransigence" in the implementation of the pact, inked over six decades back for matters relating to cross-border rivers, government sources said on Friday.

The notice sent on January 25 through respective commissioners for Indus waters, is set to open up the process for making changes to the treaty that was inked on September 19,



1960, they said.

India and Pakistan signed the treaty after nine years of negotiations, with the World Bank being a signatory of the pact

which sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two sides on the use of waters of a number of **More on P10**

Bulldozer Runs On Ex-Minister's Commercial Complex

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Continuing its ongoing drive to retrieve the state and Kahcharai land from the land grabbers, the Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday ran a bulldozer over a commercial structure belonging to a former minister Ghulam Hassan Khan in South Kashmir's Shopian district.

"A commercial structure belonging to an ex-minister of social welfare was demolished as part of our anti-encroachment drive to reclaim Kahcharai/

state land from unlawful encroachments. No one is above the law," the Shopian district administration posted on Twitter.

Meanwhile, an official spokesperson said that 343 kanal of state and Kahcharai land was retrieved from encroachers in the district on Friday.

Giving more details, he said, the land retrieved from illegal encroachment includes 25 kanal 12 marlas at village Zainapora, 55 kanal 23 marlas at village Nagisharan, 43 kanal 3 marlas in village Berthipora, **More on P10**

Airtel Rolls Out 5G Services In J&K

Agenceis

New Delhi: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Friday announced the launch of its 5G services in Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Akhnoor, Kupwara, Lakhanpur and Khour.

In a statement, Airtel said its 5G services will be available to customers in a phased manner as the company continues to construct its network and complete the rollout. "Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Akhnoor, Kupwara, Lakhanpur and Khour **More on P10**



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





CEO Smart City Tours City Areas, Reviews Progress On Projects

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Continuous monitoring of various projects being carried out under Smart City Project in Srinagar, the Commissioner SMC and CEO Smart City, Athar Amir Khan Friday visited Ghanta Ghar, Residency Road, M.A Road and Polo View to review the works being executed under the prestigious project.

Impressing upon the concerned officials to expedite work on projects on

a war footing basis, CEO Smart City instructed the concerned to complete all the projects being executed in the city in a stipulated time.

He also expressed gratitude to the general public for their full cooperation with the Smart City and Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

The CEO Smart City was accompanied by Chief Engineer Smart city and various senior officials from Smart City and Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

DM Chairs Meeting Of District Registering Authority

Observer News Service

Srinagar: To ensure proper regulation and operationalization of Clinical Establishments in Srinagar District and to contain the mushrooming of Clinics, a meeting of District Registering Authority was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner(DC)/District Magistrate(DM) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad in the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex here on Friday.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Jameel Ahmad, Nodal Officer for Clinical Establishments, Dr Asifa and other concerned were present in the meeting.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was apprised that as many as 294 applications regarding clinical establishments were received through online mode till date of which 114 eligible cases have already been approved in the District.

During the meeting, various cases/application pertaining to the grant of provisional registrations for Clinical Establishments including establishment of Dental clinics, X-ray centre, Eye-care, ECG, laboratories, Childcare Nursing Home,

Cardiac care centre, USG, Sample collection Physiotherapy and Dialysis centre were put forth before the District Registering Authority.

On the occasion, after detailed deliberations and proper screening in consonance with the guidelines, the District Magistrate accorded provisional as many as 41 number of registrations were approved under Clinical Establishment Act, by the District Registering Authority.

As many as 101 cases under Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT)

Act, an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to stop female foeticides and arrest the declining sex ratio were also scrutinized and were cleared on the occasion.

At the outset, the District Magistrate stressed on taking immediate steps to stop mushroom growth of ill equipped pathological and microbiological laboratories and other clinical establishments lacking in infrastructure and technical expertise to ensure up to mark health-care facilities to the patients in the District.

The DC also stressed on intensifying inspections of the clinical establishments in Srinagar to ensure that they are operating their business as per laid guidelines.

Anjuman Auqaf Releases Jamia Masjid Calendar 2023

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Anjuman-e-Auqaf Jama Masjid on Friday launched the annual Hijri calendar for the year 1444-45 AH/2023 at Jama Masjid Srinagar.

The Foundation said that this year the calendar is special. It is curated from a collection of rare manuscripts from Kashmir which illustrate the art of Islamic calligraphy, art of book illumination and book binding. The calendar brings to view various illuminated decorative Quran codices, compositions of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), poetical works in praise of Allah, the Prophet as also on human virtues and ethics dating from thirteenth century to nineteenth century.

It includes some of the oldest surviving manuscripts in Kashmir. Most of these texts are rare and yet to be critically analysed and studied for their scholastic value. They represent an exchange of ideas and knowledge, both intellectual as well as artistic, between Persianate cultures and Kashmir and bring into focus the contribution of Kashmiris to the world of Islamic aesthetics (nizam-i-jamaliyat).

"We at the Foundation look forward to the preservation and wider dissemination of this rich legacy", it added.

These calendars are available at Jama Masjid, Srinagar and at Ali Mohammad & Sons book sellers, Lal Chowk Srinagar. for a Hadiya of Rs 50.



Despite harsh weather conditions, work on the Smart City projects is going on in full swing. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Mutton Dealers, Admin To Hold Meeting Today

Revision of rates, renewal of licenses among other issues to come up for discussion

Agencies

Srinagar: Following sealing of more than 100 mutton shops in the Valley by Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Kashmir to control pricing, stakeholders associated with the trade said they are scheduled to meet divisional administration authorities on Saturday to discuss the future course on the sale of mutton.

Kashmir witnessed a brief shortage of mutton after the officials from the enforcement team of FCS&CA intensified the drive against the erring mutton shopkeepers violating the government rate on mutton.

General Secretary all Kashmiri Mutton Dealers Association Mehrajuddin said that they are scheduled to meet the divisional administrative authorities to discuss the revision of mutton rates and renewal of licenses.

"Last time the rate of mutton was revised in 2021 and the price fixed was Rs 535. Though the order was valid for six months only, it was extended later. Now we have prepared a fresh draft and



are meeting divisional administration tomorrow", he said.

Director Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Kashmir Abdul Salam Mir confirmed that a meeting with mutton stakeholders is scheduled tomorrow regarding the revision of the rate and that they will share further details about the meeting tomorrow.

Refuting the reports of mutton shortage in the market, Director Kashmir FCS&CA said

that there is no mutton shortage in the market, stating that over the past 10 days around 150- 200 trucks of sheep have arrived in the valley.

"Every day on average 10 sheep-laden trucks reach the valley, but due to inclement weather for the last many days there must be a temporary halt in supply. But there is no mutton shortage in the market as the supply is adequate," he said—(KNO)

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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
05 Rajab
1444

PRAYERS

FAJR	6:05
ZUHR	12:43
ASR	4:19
Magrib	6:00
ISHA	7:23

This Day In History

- 1077 - German King Henry IV is absolved by Holy Roman Emperor Pope Gregory VII and invited back to the Church after his penitent Walk to Canossa
- 1099 - 1st Crusaders begins siege of Hosn-el-Akrad Syria
- 1495 - Pope Alexander VI (Roderic Llançol i de Borgia) gives his son Cesare as hostage to Charles VIII of France
- 1521 - Emperor Charles V opens the Diet of Worms in Worms, Germany which lasts until May 25th. Produced the "Edict of Worms" which denounced Martin Luther
- 1573 - Articles of Warsaw Confederation are signed, sanctioning freedom of religion in Poland.
- 1671 - British pirate Henry Morgan captures Panama City from its Spanish defenders.
- 1689 - English parliament resolves that the throne is vacant
- 1724 - The Russian Academy of Sciences founded in St. Petersburg by Peter the Great, and implemented in a Senate decree. Called St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences until 1917.
- 1846 - Battle of Allwal, British beat Sikhs in Punjab
- 1855 - The first locomotive runs from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean on the Panama Railway
- 1860 - Britain formally returns Mosquito Coast to Nicaragua
- 1864 - Battle of New Bern, North Carolina
- 1887 - Work begins on the Eiffel Tower in Paris
- 1909 - US military forces leave Cuba for 2nd time
- 1915 - 1st US ship lost in WW I, William P Frye (carrying wheat to UK)
- 1915 - The United States Coast Guard is created by merging the US Life Saving Service & the US Revenue Cutter Service
- 1915 - US President Woodrow Wilson refuses to prohibit immigration of illiterates
- 1916 - Louis Brandeis is appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States after being nominated by President Woodrow Wilson
- 1916 - German colony of Cameroon surrenders to Britain & France
- 1932 - Japanese forces attack Shanghai.
- 1933 - French government of Paul Boncour falls
- 1933 - German government of Von Schleicher falls
- 1933 - The name "Pakistan" is coined by Choudhry Rahmat Ali and gradually accepted by Muslims in the Indian sub-continent who use it to push for a separate Muslim homeland in South Asia
- 1935 - Iceland becomes 1st western country to legalize abortion

From KO Archives

Shoes Will Greet APHC TEAM IN PAK: Omar

NEW DELHI - Minister of state for commerce and industry Omar Farooq has said that people of Jammu and Kashmir have not given man-date to the Hurriyat Conference to represent them but Hurriyat leaders should be allowed to visit Pakistan and get exposed. By all means give passports, but who has given, them the mandate to represent the people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan, he asked participating in Star TV's Janata Ki Adalat programme. Asked whether the Hurriyat leaders would be welcomed in Pakistan, Omar said ask the Hurriyat people. I suspect they will not only be unwelcome, they will be greeted with shoes.

If Hurriyat Conference represents some segment of Kashmir, we also represent some segment. And what about the representation of Jammu and Ladakh, a press release from the television channel quoted Omar as saying.

Sounding a note of caution on the extension of cease-fire, he said, that National Conference was only saying extend the cease-fire by all means, but plug the loopholes that the militants are taking advantage of as they move from rural areas to urban areas.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 January, 2001)

گامی دروازہ کے میر خاندان کو مدد
ساجی رفیق احمد میر انتقال کر گئے

یہ خبر انجمنی دکن کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ حاجی رفیق احمد میر سا کرمچہ اشرف خان گامی دروازہ سرنگر
مختصر عیال کے بعد 26 جنوری 2023 بروز جمعرات کو اس دار فانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔
اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کی انجمنی فاتحہ خوانی 30 جنوری 2023 بروز سوموار صبح 10:30 بجے ان کے آبائی
مقبرہ واقع خشی باغ متصل سنٹرل جیل سرنگر آباد کی جائے گی۔

سوگواران: میر خاندان
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نوٹ: خواتین سے التماس ہے کہ وہ کوئی بیوی نہیں رہے ساتھ دلائیں۔

Israeli Jets Bombard Gaza One Day After Jenin Massacre



Agencies

Israel carried out several air-strikes on the besieged Gaza Strip in the early hours of 27 January, just a day after Israeli troops committed a massacre that left ten Palestinians dead in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin.

According to local sources, Israeli jets bombarded the Al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza with around 15 missiles. The Israeli military claimed it targeted an "underground" rocket-making facility under the refugee camp. Property damages were reported, and the strikes caused a power outage in the area, according to Wafa news agency.

"The attack will lead to significant harm to Hamas efforts to build up its arms," an Israeli military statement read.

The military statement also claimed that "one of the most significant" Hamas bases in the northern Gaza Strip was targeted by Israeli jets.

The Zaitoun neighborhood south of Gaza City was also struck, as well as an open field east of Beit Hanoun.

Witnesses claimed that before the jets carried out the strikes, Israeli drones fired missiles at several targets. So far, there has been no report of casualties, and the besieged enclave has returned to a state of relative "calm."

The Israeli strikes came in response to two rockets fired by

the resistance towards the settlement of Ashkelon at around midnight, which were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome system.

Shortly before the strikes were carried out, the Israeli mayor of the city of Ashkelon said: "I call on the government to respond firmly and forcefully against the Gaza Strip." This coincided with reports that the Egyptian government was trying to mediate to ease the tensions. During this time, Israeli Channel 14 news referred to the situation as Benjamin Netanyahu's "first test," adding that Israel will "wait and see the quality of the response."

As the fighter jets approached Gaza to carry out the strikes, resistance air defense systems fired toward them.

On the morning of 27 January, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that he ordered the army to "prepare for action with a range of offensive means aimed at quality targets, in case we need to continue until quiet is restored for the citizens of Israel."

Gallant added that the resistance suffered a "severe" overnight blow. At around 4:00 am, two more rockets were fired from Gaza toward Israel.

Israel's actions in Jenin yesterday were seen as nothing less than an unprovoked massacre. As a result, the Palestinian Authority (PA) announced the suspension of security coordination with the occupation.

Non-Veg Sale Banned Within 10 Km Of Bangalore Aero India Show Venue



Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: The Bengaluru civic body on Friday ordered closure of meat stalls, non-vegetarian hotels and restaurants from January 30 till February 20, in view of the Aero India Show.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in its public notice said that there will be prohibition on serving and sale of non-vegetarian dishes within 10 km of the Yelahanka Air Force Station. The Aero India Show will be conducted from February 13 to 17.

The BBMP said, "It is to the notice of general public and proprietors of meat stalls, non-vegetarian hotels and restaurants for closure of all meat/chicken/fish shops and prohibition of serving/sale of non-vegetarian dishes within 10

km radius of Air Force Station, Yelahanka from January 30 to February 20".

Any violation of this will attract punishment under the BBMP Act-2020 and the rule 91 of the Indian Aircraft Rules 1937, it said.

According to the BBMP officials, the decision was taken as the non-veg food littered in public places attract lots of scavenger birds, especially kites, which can cause mid air mishaps.

Aero India in its website stated that a total of 731 exhibitors have registered -- 633 Indian and 98 foreign -- for the airshow.

According to officials, Aero India has carved a niche for itself globally as one of the premier aerospace exhibitions with 13 successful editions organised in Bengaluru since 1996.

India-China Border Row: Document Warns "Skirmishes Would Also Get Frequent"

Agencies

NEW DELHI: A security assessment by Indian police in the Himalayan region of Ladakh says there could be more clashes between Indian and Chinese troops along their contested frontier there as Beijing ramps up military infrastructure in the region.

At least 24 soldiers were killed when the armies of the Asian giants clashed in Ladakh, in the western Himalayas, in 2020 but tensions eased after military and diplomatic talks. A fresh clash erupted between the two sides in the eastern Himalayas in December but there were no deaths.

The assessment is part of a new, confidential research paper by the Ladakh Police that was submitted at a conference of top police officers held from January 20 to 22 and has been reviewed by Reuters.

The report said the assessment was based on intelligence gathered by local police in the border areas and the pattern of India-China military tensions over the years.

The Indian army did not respond to a request for comment but the assessment as-



sumes significance as it was submitted at a conference attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The defence and foreign ministries also did not respond to requests for comment.

The Chinese foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

"Given the domestic compulsions ... in China and their economic interests in the region, the PLA would continue to build up its military infrastructure and skirmishes would also get frequent which may or may not follow a pattern," the paper said, referring to China's People's Liberation Army.

"If we analyse the pattern of

skirmishes and tensions, the intensity has increased since 2013-2014 with an interval of every 2-3 years," it said.

"With the massive infrastructure build up by PLA on Chinese side both the armies are testing each other's reaction, strength of artillery and infantry mobilisation time".

The report also said India has been slowly losing ground to China in Ladakh as the border has been pushed inside Indian territory through the creation of buffer zones.

India and China share a 3,500 km (2,100 miles) border that has been disputed since the 1950s. The two sides went to war over it in 1962.

"Sikkim, Arunachal Stable But...": Top Army Officer Amid LAC Tensions

Agencies

KOLKATA: Amid India-China border tension, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) Eastern Command RP Kalita on Friday said that the situation in both Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh is stable now but unpredictable because of the boundary issue.

The Eastern Command takes care of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim sectors.

Addressing a press conference, GOC-in-C Eastern Command Kalita said, "There are different perceptions about LAC which leads to friction, however, the situation in both Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh is stable now but unpredictable because of the absence of delineation of borders."

He further said that India is continuously monitoring the activities that take place across the border and we are prepared to beat any kind of emerging challenges.

"Eastern Army is responsible for maintaining territorial integrity on eastern borders and the task has been executed by our units and formations with utmost professionalism and dedication. We are continuously evolving and aware of oncoming operational challenges," said GOC-in-C Eastern Command.

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had told in parliament that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops tried to transgress the LAC in the Yangtse area of Tawang Sector in Arunachal Pradesh



and unilaterally change the status quo but they went back to their locations due to timely intervention of Indian military commanders.

Talking about the increase of Chinese troops in India-China border areas, he said, "We have read that gradually there has been an increase in deployment of troops opposite our sectors along with infrastructure being carried out by People's Liberation Army (PLA) across the down borders."

GOC-in-C Eastern Command said that it is difficult to quantify the number of Chinese troops deployed in these areas.

"But we are continuously and closely monitoring the developments in these areas," he added.

When asked about measures being taken to protect Siliguri Corridor, Kalita said, "Siliguri Corridor is geo-strategically extremely important to us. All our mechanisms are in place to ensure there are no disruptions in connectivity in the northeast."

He further said that PLA started infrastructure devel-

opment post-2017 Doklam issue within their own territory.

"On our side, to mirror those activities, infrastructure development has been carried out to ensure better response from us in case we're required to do it," he added.

He said that Arunachal Pradesh comprises seven valleys so movement is extremely difficult and it is difficult to make roadways.

When asked how it feels when the man in uniform is questioned over the operation and political leaders ask for proof, he said, "This is the national issue as well as a political issue so I would not like to comment much but this much I can say those who raising question they should trust the Indian Army and their operations."

The GOC Eastern Command said, "The year gone by witnessed profound changes in geopolitical dynamics in the form of security and economic fallout from the Russia-Ukraine war, the gradual shift of power centre to the Indo-Pacific region that saw sudden key developments in our neighbourhood."

Pak Currency Plunges To 262 Against Dollar Amid IMF Aid Uncertainty

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Cash-strapped Pakistan's currency depreciated to its lowest against the US dollar on Friday in the interbank and open market and closed at 262.6 rupees.

At one stage the currency depreciated to 265 rupees in the open market and 266 rupees in the interbank before making a slight recovery by the end of the day.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, when the market opened on Friday the currency fell by 7.17 rupees or 2.73 per cent from Thursday's close.

The Pakistani rupee's value has devalued by 34 rupees since Thursday in the interbank, the largest depreciation in both absolute and percentage terms since the new exchange rate system was introduced in 1999.

The Pakistani rupee has depreciated sharply after the government removed an unofficial cap on the USD-PKR exchange rate to revive the stalled International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan programme. The government decision came on Thursday after the exchange companies announced the removal of a self-imposed rate cap in the open market.

The country needs to complete the ninth review of a \$7 billion IMF programme that would not only lead to a disbursement of \$1.2 billion but also unlock inflows from friendly countries and other multilateral lenders.

The IMF conditions include a market-based dollar-rupee exchange parity and high-interest rate and imposition of a 17 per cent general sales tax on diesel and petrol within a week. The first two conditions have already been met.

According to data given by the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (Ecap), a substantial amount of remit-



tances started flowing into the country through official channels on Friday.

A financial analyst, Hameed Khokar with CX investments, expected the flow of remittances to increase in the coming days and felt it would cross \$2.5 billion per month again to gradually reach close to \$3 billion in the coming months.

He said that remittances from exports will also improve in the next few months.

Khokar said the biggest challenge facing the government was to support the foreign reserves and improve the currency market so that currency parity is stabilised and import goods are stuck at the port.

More than 9,000 containers are also stuck at the Karachi ports waiting to be paid for clearance of dues including those having essential commodities, petroleum products, LNG and soybean among others.

Other financial analysts have also supported the government's decision to remove the cap on the dollar and felt if this had been done earlier, the country would not have had to pay a huge inflation cost in the coming months and lose \$6 billion on various counts.

Director of financial data and analytics portal Mettis Global, Saad bin Naseer also said that after the removal of the cap remittance inflows including export proceeds had again started coming again through the official channels.

BBC Series On PM Screened At Jadavpur University In Kolkata

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: More than 100 students at Jadavpur University have reportedly watched the controversial BBC documentary on 2002 Gujarat riots, with a Left student's body having arranged its screening. The Centre has recently issued directions for blocking multiple YouTube videos and Twitter posts sharing links to the documentary 'India: The Modi Question', which claims to have investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 riots when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of the state.

The Student Federation of India (SFI), a Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s arm, said the police or institute authorities did not interfere with the screening at Jadavpur University on Thursday.

SFI state unit assistant secretary Subhagit Sarkar said that the student's body will hold another screening at Presidency University on Friday.

Authorities at Presidency are yet to give a formal nod, but "we will still go ahead with the show", he said.



Mr Sarkar, a former Presidency student, also claimed, "The varsity has effected a power cut at the badminton court, where the screening was supposed to be held. We will now use the common room for the show." An official at the university, however, said the power cut happened due to technical reasons.

He stated that no such documentary was being shown on the university premises.

Meanwhile, All India Students' Association (AISA), another Left body, said it will hold another screening of the documentary at Jadavpur University on Friday.

The Centre also ordered YouTube to take down copies of the document.

NEWS MAKERS

On Holocaust Remembrance Day, Putin Blasts 'Neo-Nazis' In Ukraine

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday repeated a claim that neo-Nazis were committing crimes in Ukraine -- an allegation Moscow has used to justify its military intervention -- as the world marked Holocaust Remembrance Day.

"Forgetting the lessons of history leads to the repetition of terrible tragedies," Putin said.

"This is evidenced by the crimes against civilians, ethnic cleansing and punitive actions organised by neo-Nazis in Ukraine. It is against that evil that our soldiers are bravely fighting," he said in a statement. Supporters of Putin's military operation allege Ukraine's treatment of Russian speakers in the country is comparable with the actions of Nazi Germany.

One reason Putin gave for launching a "special military



operation" in Ukraine was to "de-Nazify" it.

The claims have been contested by the Ukrainian government and the country's Jewish community.

The Soviet Union's victory over Hitler's army -- long a symbol of patriotic pride for Russians -- has taken centre-stage since the beginning of the military intervention.

Putin said that "attempts to revise the contributions of our country to the Great Victory (against Hitler) actu-

ally equates to justifying the crimes of Nazism and opens the way for the revival of its deadly ideology."

Friday is the 78th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp built by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland -- a date that has become Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The Auschwitz museum did not invite Russian representatives to the ceremony marking 78 years since the Soviet Red Army liberated the Nazi camp because of the offensive in Ukraine.

"Russia will need an extremely long time and very deep self-examination after this conflict in order to return to gatherings of the civilised world," Piotr Sawicki, a spokesman for the museum at the site of the former camp, told AFP.

UK Teen Jailed For 11 Years For Far-Right Videos Linked To US Killings



Agencies

LONDON: A judge on Friday sentenced a British teenager to more than 11 years in prison for videos promoting racist violence that have been linked to two mass killings in the United States. Judge Patrick Field at Manchester Crown Court in the north of England sentenced 19-year-old Daniel Harris to 11.5 years with a further three years of supervised probation, calling him "highly dangerous".

Minister's Son Accused Of Killing Farmers In UP Released On Bail

Press Trust of India

LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP): Ashish Mishra, the son of Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra, was released from jail on Friday after the Supreme Court had granted him interim bail in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case.

Senior superintendent of the Kheri district jail Vipin Kumar Mishra told PTI, "He (Ashish Mishra) has been released from the jail. We have got the release order from the sessions court." The Supreme Court on Wednesday had granted eight-week interim bail to him in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence which claimed eight lives.

A bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice J K Maheshwari directed that Ashish Mishra shall not stay in Uttar Pradesh or Delhi during the interim bail period.

On October 3, 2021, eight



people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri district's Tikunia where violence erupted when farmers were protesting against the then deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area.

According to the Uttar Pradesh Police FIR, four farmers were mowed down by an SUV in which Ashish Mishra was seated.

Following the incident, the driver of the SUV and two BJP workers were allegedly lynched by angry farmers. A journalist also died in the violence.

Ashish Mishra was arrested on

October 9, 2021. He was released on bail on February 15, 2022 following a high court order.

On April 18, 2022, the Supreme Court cancelled the bail granted by the Allahabad High Court to Ashish Mishra and asked him to surrender in a week's time.

On April 24 last year, Ashish Mishra surrendered.

It remanded back the bail application to the HC for fresh adjudication within three months "in a fair, impartial and dispassionate manner, and keeping in view the settled parameters".

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court had on July 26 last year rejected Ashish Mishra's bail plea. He had challenged the high court's order in the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra was not in Lakhimpur Kheri district on Friday.

Vaishno Devi Shrine Sets Up Dedicated Network Of Over 700 Cameras

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The cave shrine of Vaishno Devi atop Trikuta hills in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district has put in place e-surveillance through a dedicated CCTV network of over 700 cameras, officials said on Friday.

A record of over 91.25 lakh devotees paid obeisance at the shrine in 2022, the highest in the past nine years, they said.

"Safety and security of pilgrims is the top priority of shrine board," Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), Anshul Garg said.

For the purpose of real-time

"The system of RFID tracking of pilgrims includes e-surveillance through a dedicated CCTV network of over 700 cameras with proper end-to-end MIS reporting on a real time basis," the CEO said.

The arrangement will also check the flow of pilgrims strictly as per the holding capacity of the track, area and location, he said.

Garg underscored various ongoing infrastructure development projects to facilitate pilgrims and those that are in the pipeline. "These include the completion of a five-storey Durga Bhawan by Chaitra Navratras which has provisions to accommodate 2,500 pil-



tracking of pilgrims on the track, ensure proper crowd management and manage registration of the pilgrimage in a seamless and hassle-free way, the board has started the issuance of free RFID-based yatra access cards.

grims on a daily basis," he said.

Besides, the construction of a 200-metre-long skywalk at the bhawan with wooden flooring conceptualised by the board to overcome the problem of multi-directional flow of the yatra, the official added.

Multiple Avalanches Block Kishanganga River In Gurez



Agencies

GUREZ: Multiple Avalanches have blocked the Kishanganga river flowing the Tulail valley in northern Kashmir's Gurez sector, officials said here on Friday.

"Some avalanches have blocked the Kishanganga river at some places including chakwali and Angikoot in Tulail Tehsil of Gurez," but there's no report of any damage yet, an official said. He said that these areas are prone to avalanches due to its mountainous terrain.

Following the incident, the official said that several teams from administration have been deputed to these areas to assess the situation.

He said that the administration in Gurez has also advised people living around the river

to take necessary precautions to ensure their safety.

Similarly, another avalanche hit remote Paddar area of Kishtwar district, but there was no loss of life or damage to property, an official said, that the avalanche rolled into a river near a hamlet in Machil belt, but there was no damage caused as the village was away from the area.

Meanwhile, the JKDMA said that an avalanche with medium danger level is likely to occur above 2500 metres over Bandipore, Baramulla, Ganderbal in the next 24 hours.

"General public is advised to restrict movement to only carefully selected safer routes with extreme care and Evacuate from unprotected settlements near the avalanche path," it said—(KNO)

DAK Calls For Widespread CPR Training To Save Lives

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With increase in the number of sudden cardiac deaths in Kashmir valley, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday called for widespread cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training that would save lives.

"Everyone should be trained for CPR regardless whether or not they work in the medical field," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

"CPR should even be taught as a part of school curriculum so that more and more people get acquainted with this life-saving skill," he said.

CPR is an emergency life-saving technique which involves chest compressions at a rate of 100 to 120 a minute.

Dr Hassan said people must understand that CPR is a simple but vital skill everyone should learn and then put into practice in emergency situations.

"Though CPR is one of the most important life-saving techniques, unfortunately most

people in Kashmir do not know how to perform CPR," he said.

"So when people experience cardiac arrest in public, in their homes or workplaces, there is simply no one around who knows how to help them."

The DAK President said most of the cardiac arrests in Kashmir occur outside the hospitals.

"And they don't survive because they don't receive CPR from bystanders," he said.

Dr Nisar said chances of survival in people who go into cardiac arrest increase if more people know how to administer CPR.

"In communities where widespread CPR training has been provided, survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest have been reportedly as high as 49% to 74%," he said.

"CPR is much more likely to be successful when started promptly and the victim of cardiac arrest will almost certainly die if the bystanders do not intervene immediately," he added.



PEOPLE WAITING IN LARGE NUMBERS to have a glimpse of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Banihal on Friday morning.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Artistic Wealth Should Benefit People Of J&K: LG

- Addresses 'Akhil Bhartiya' Kavi Sammelan At University Of Jammu
- Says Such Events Strengthen The Spirit Of Patriotism And Essence Of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Asserting that his administration is making efforts to restore cultural glory of Jammu and Kashmir the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday reiterated his commitment to ensure that the people of Union Territory are benefited from the artistic wealth & knowledge economy to build a prosperous & peaceful society.

"J&K's official language status to Dogri, Kashmiri and Hindi is a significant step towards the renaissance of art, culture & language," Sinha said.

The LG made these remarks while addressing 'Akhil Bhartiya' Kavi Sammelan at General Zorawar Singh Auditorium, University of Jammu here on Friday. The event was organized by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages to celebrate the 74th Republic Day.

The LG said that the endeavours like 'Akhil Bhartiya' Kavi Sammelan as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav will strengthen the spirit of patriotism and essence of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

"Poetry explores and expresses diversity of our linguistic heritage. It brings us close to the roots of our culture and tradition. It has the immense power to stir the inner consciousness. Our country has



been blessed with outstanding poets and they are integral part of our history, culture and continue to inspire the society," Sinha said.

He said that the poets through their creation and experiences give continuity to our ever-evolving culture.

"I consider poetry to be a bridge between the visible and the invisible. In our journey, we come across many creative expressions and among those poetry has a different time and space", he added.

On the occasion, Sinha also remembered the invaluable contributions of Rabindranath Tagore, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Padma Sachdev, Kalhan, Lal Ded, Bhawanidas Kachru, Habba Khatoon, Nund Rishi, Master Zinda Kaul, Dinanath Nadim, Dattu, Gangaram, Pandit Hardutt, Rahman Rahi, and Laxman Bhatt, towards strengthening the foundation of rich, intense and diverse civilization.

"In our ancient culture and

tradition, it is said that only poets can reach closest to sages and philosophers. It is the poet who can fill new colors in the consciousness of people," the LG said.

"Poetry is not just arrangement of letters and sentences. Poetry is more than words. With a bag full of alphabets, we can write very good prose and an article. But whenever something has to be said beyond words, then poetry is born," he added.

Highlighting the efforts being made to restore cultural glory of J&K, the LG reiterated the government's commitment to ensure that the people of Jammu Kashmir are benefited from the artistic wealth & knowledge economy to build a prosperous & peaceful society.

Sinha also appreciated the endeavour of the JKAACL to provide a platform to the young talent of J&K to share the stage with veteran and acclaimed poets of the country to hone their creative proficiency.

LG To Head Revamped UT Forest Development Agency

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Government on Friday ordered the constitution of 'Revamped Union Territory Forest Development Agency, UT Level Executive Committee, UT Steering Committee and District Steering Committee(s) for effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the National Mission for Green India (GIM) in the Jammu and Kashmir.

The Revamped UT Forest Development Agency will be headed by Lieutenant Governor and members include Chief Secretary, J&K, Administrative Secretary, Department of Forests, Ecology and Environment, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Wildlife Warden, Nodal Officer (Forest Conservation), Chairman, Executive Committee, all FDAs (CFs), Member Secretary, Executive Committee,

all FDAs (Hq DFOs (T)), Nodal officer (State CAMPA), Representative of three "eminent" NGOs of the UT— Representative of WWF- India Nazir be Nazir, National Society for protection of Water Resources, Wetlands & Forests (NGO) and Nadeem Qadri, Wildlife Conservation Fund, (NGO)— as well Nodal Officer, GIM, Chief Conservator of Forests, (Planning & Projects).

Its terms of reference among others include to provide for overall guidance for the Mission in achieving Mission goals and objectives, according to a government order. It has been also tasked to oversee implementation of the board policy framework in achieving Mission goals and objectives. "The committee shall meet at least once a year."

Union territory Level Executive Committee shall be 12-member and will be head-

ed by administrative Secretary, Department of Forests, Ecology and Environment, as per the order.

Its terms and conditions include preparation of UT APO and its submission to UT Screening Committee for finalization; Technical approval of District level APOs; Preparation of the annual reports of the UT GIM; Ensuring programmatic convergence at the L1 landscape level and Providing technical guidance for implementation of GIM The committee shall meet at a frequency to be decided by the UT Government but at least twice in a year.

The UT Steering Committee comprises 14 members and would be headed by Chief Secretary. The District Steering Committee, comprising eight members and headed by respective District Magistrate. (GNS)

JKMEGA Extends Wishes To Principal Secretary PWD

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The J&K Mechanical Engineering Graduates Association (JKMEGA) on Friday congratulated the entire team of PW(R&B) department for receiving the award for Meritorious Public Service on Republic Day.

The team extended special wishes to Shailender Kumar, Principal Secretary PWD, Govt of J&K

In a statement issued here JKMEGA said, "under the administration Kumar, the department has realized its potential to the fullest in various fields".

The statement further added, "be it online billing mode via JKPWDOMAS, regularization at various levels in engineering cadre, restructuring of the system by bringing more transparency and accountability, Re-organization".

While extending wishes to the Principal Secretary the statement added, "It is a superlative demonstration of the leadership and dedication towards the service of society, public deliverance and for engineering cadre that we are witnessing today under the leadership of Kumar.

The statement issued by JKMEGA further thanked Kumar and his entire team of HRM for

We Never Questioned Surgical Strikes, Never Will: Omar

Agencies

RAMBAN: National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah today said that his party never raised questions on surgical strikes.

"I don't have any say in this. This is an internal matter of Congress.

We never questioned surgical strikes and we will never do this," Omar Abdullah said while speaking to media persons in Banihal.

Mr Abdullah's statement has come in the backdrop of Congress leader Rashid Alvi's remarks wherein he asked the Centre to show the video of the surgical strike.

"Government says it has a video (of a surgical strike) so what is wrong with Digvijaya Singh asking the government to show it? We are not asking for proof (of strike) but the government should show the video it claims it has," Rashid Alvi said while speaking to ANI on Friday.

Mr Alvi's reaction came days after the party's senior leader Digvijaya Singh remarked on the surgical strike and said on Monday (January 23): "They (government) claim to have killed so many people but no proof is given."

Congress leader Rashid Alvi said that the country has confidence in the security forces but can't trust the BJP government. "We have faith in our security forces but can't trust the BJP government," he added.

Rashid Alvi further raised questions about various ministers' statements surrounding the surgical strike.

"Sushma Swaraj, who was a minister in the government, had

said that the air strike was done at a place where there was no possibility of anyone getting

killed. Amit Shah claims that more than 300 terrorists were killed in the air strike. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claims that more than 400 terrorists were killed in the air

strike," Mr Alvi pointed out.

Citing the above statements, Congress leader Mr Alvi said that it varies and therefore if the government claims to have video proof it should be shown.

"These contradictory statements raise questions as to what exactly happened in the surgical air strike. That's why the government if it claims that it has the video evidence of the air strike should make it public," Rashid Alvi demanded.

Congress leader Mr Alvi further sought an apology from the Centre in case it does not have video proof.

"If they do not have any video evidence to prove its claims, then the government should apologize," he added.

In strong disapproval of Digvijaya Singh's remarks on surgical strikes, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said the party leader had stated a "ridiculous thing" and he disagreed with Singh's views.

"I do not agree with what Digvijaya Singh said. We have full trust in our Army. If Army takes action, there is no need for proof. I disagree with his (Digvijay)'s statement and Congress' official position is also that this is his opinion," Rahul Gandhi said.

The party had officially also distanced itself from Digvijaya Singh's remarks on Monday.

Govt Confers JK Awards 2023

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government has conferred J&K Govt Awards 2023 in different fields to several personalities from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Deepak Kumar (Posthumously), son of Rajinder Kumar of Dhangri, Rajouri and Saroj Bala, wife of Late Rajinder Kumar of Dhangri, Rajouri have been awarded for Achievements in the field of Bravery.

Dhian Singh (Writer), Rajeshwar Singh Raju (Hindi/Dogri writer), Dr Neelam Sarin (Hindi/Dogri writer) Ghulam Nabi Haleem (Kashmiri author) and Nisar Rahi (Pahari writer) have been selected for the Award for Achievements in the field of Literature.

Cricketer Umrin Malik, Footballer Ishan Pandita, Tennis player Ankita Raina, Inshah Bashir (Basketball-Wheel Chair player), Ayeera Hassan Chisti (Wushu), Soham Kamotra (Chess), Rahul Jangral (Mountaineering), Muskan Rana (Gymnastics), Kritarthi Kotwal (Fencing) and Manan Choudhary (Volley ball) are among those selected for Award for Outstanding Sports Persons.

Daily Excelsior Special Correspondent Nishikant Khajuria; Tejinder Singh, Editor News18; Sominder Koul, Bureau Chief ANI and Emmad Makdooimi from Greater Kashmir are conferred with the awards of Outstanding Media Persons.

In the category of Performing Arts, Vidyut Jamwal (Film actor), Aditya Dhar (Director), Mir Sarwar (Film Actor) and Noor Mohammad (Kashmiri Folk Singer) have been selected for the Government Award.

Sculptor Ravinder Jamwal has been awarded for Excellence in Arts & crafts while Ravinder Pandita (Save Sharda Committee) has been awarded for Social Reforms & Empowerment.

Award for Lifetime Achievements has gone to Bashir Bhaderwahi (Kashmiri/Urdu writer), Ustad Mohammad Yaqoob Sheikh (Kashmiri Sufi classical Maestro) Vijay Kumar Sambhal (Indian classical Maestro) and Ramesh Hangloo (Founder/Director, Radio Sharda).

Award for Meritorious Public Service has gone to Finance Department, General Administration Department, PW(R&B) Department, Revenue Department, Information Technology Department, Department of Forest, Ecology & Environment; Tourism Department; Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Dept; J&K Public Service Commission; J&K Sports Council; District Administration, Shopian; District Administration, Kupwara; District Administration Ganderbal; District Administration, Pulwama; District Administration, Jammu; District Administration Udhampur; District Administration, Doda and District Administration, Dooru-Verinag.

Patwari Falls In ACB Net

GANDERBAL: The sleuths of Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday arrested a revenue official for demanding and accepting a bribe from a man in this Central Kashmir district.

Tariq Ahmad Shah, posted as Patwari Halqa, Hathbura, Ganderbal was caught red-handed by the sleuths of ACB while accepting a bribe of Rs 50000 from the complainant at 'main

town here, reports said. The bribe amount was recovered from the revenue official in presence of the independent witnesses. The accused Patwari was arrested on the spot.

Meanwhile, ACB in this regard has registered a formal case vide FIR number 01/2023 under section 7 of the Prevention of corruption act, 1988.(as amended in 2018).

"initiating the process of eradicating the menace of adhocism in the department."

JKMEGA futher requested that the ongoing re-organization of the R&B Department, that "due consideration be given to the demands put forth by the JKMEGA for proper utilization of mechanical cadre and paving way for budding mechanical engineers to embrace the government service".

"The mechanical engineering being the catalysts for development and main component of establishment of incubation centers across different sectors has tremendous requirements in health, horticulture, agriculture, ropeway projects, hydro power projects, transportation, material testing, electro-mechanical machinery and and its allied sectors which highlights the critical role played by the community."

“Was it because people don’t understand the enormity of this feat or that we don’t want to celebrate the stories of scholarship, of learning and research, of academic excellence and that we have conditioned ourselves to celebrate the posts and exams which bring with it power and prestige?”

Amir Suhail Wani

The results of the coveted and prestigious administrative service exams (JKAS) were declared recently, and as is a norm, the results have stirred a cascade of reactions on social media, ranging from hyper-glorification of such exams to the outright dismissal. This issue has multiple layers and a number of facets which deserve proper understanding before we reach any conclusion and make sense of the comments being made on either side of the divide and in the vast spectrum in between.

Let me start with a personal experience I had almost a year ago. It was the cold night of January and I had been struggling against the cold and sleeping to continue my studies and at one point I decided to come down from my study and take rest. But before I could have yielded to sleep, I cursorily happened to visit Facebook and to my great joy discovered that a Kashmiri girl had secured the prestigious Chevening scholarship. The news filled me with such enthusiasm that I threw my quilt away and rushed back to my study – maintaining my vigour and enthusiasm till dawn. But equally appalling was the phenomenon that barring two or so news portals, the news had not hit the headlines, neither was there any widespread celebration on social media and nor was the girl congratulated and celebrated the way we celebrate UPSC/PSO qualifiers.

Between Inspiration and Insults

Do KAS Qualifiers Deserve the Flak They Get?



“It seems very probable that the very posts and privileges, which our Facebook warriors keep fighting and commenting against, if they are offered without efforts and endeavours, will not wait for a blink to accept the same. The only thing that provokes disdain in most of the cases is inability and not the difference rooted in ideology or principle

Was it because people don’t understand the enormity of this feat or that we don’t want to celebrate the stories of scholarship, of learning and research, of academic excellence and that we have conditioned ourselves to celebrate the posts and exams which bring with it power and prestige? I believe that all these factors augment in shaping our reactions and responses to these episodes and I shall be explaining the same in what follows. But we need to caution ourselves of another extreme which has popped up out of this nexus and some people have swung to the extreme of downplaying these examinations, robbing them of their sheen and glory, pitting these exams against others to bring down the qualifiers, make them look

as “others” and sometimes demonising to the extent where we leave the standards of civility and humanity far behind. Let’s then try to understand what to make of these results.

Nobody denies the historicity of Public Services and it is well known that the model was introduced by the British imperialists to keep India running on the pattern that suited their (nefarious) designs. After independence, the model was found fit for recruiting men who run the administrative machinery and this gave birth to the entire panorama of Civil Service Exams. But is this historicity, the historicity which claims that these exams, even today, smack of master-slave mentality and in the recess of this hierarchy are to be

found elements of colonial and imperial mindset, justified in giving a bad name to these exams? We need to remember that the origin of this doesn’t and can’t rob them of their merit and decor, but it is the ends which they serve and strive to that determine the respect and regard they command and demand.

Having said that, we need to see these exams not as something which is a leftover from the colonial period but as a suitable and relevant mechanism for recruiting people into Civil Services. In Kashmir, owing to certain ideological differences, the exams like IAS/JKAS are perceived the same way in which the Civil Service Exams used to be perceived when the British conducted them in India

– with suspicion and scorn. The feeling continues to persist in Kashmir on various grounds and it is very difficult to decide in favour of or against this opinion in itself, for this opinion stems from certain ideology, the details of which are beyond the contours of the present piece.

Facebook and twitter are filled with posts condemning these young qualifiers, making this exam seem as if it carries no weight and water and anybody who sits in it will make it through. This is notwithstanding the rigor of the exam, the patience and consistency it needs, the encompassing nature of the syllabus which it covers and the multiple stages a candidate must pass through before he is declared successful or qualified. There is a class of people who have taken to Facebook to celebrate how they never cared about exams like JKAS and decided to do something “greater”. On closer scrutiny, this “greater” turns out to be nothing more than posting on Facebook sickening comments about the success of others and in the heart of hearts wishing for the same posts and privilege which they happen to condemn in public for their lack of ability to reach the same by means of hard work and efforts. It seems very probable that the very posts and privileges, which our Facebook warriors keep fighting and commenting against, if they are offered without efforts and endeavours, will not wait for a blink to accept the same. The only thing that provokes disdain in most of the cases is inability and not the difference rooted in ideology or principle.

When a teacher is recruited, we never hear something like, “he will misguide children tomorrow”, when a doctor qualifies medical entrance, nobody says, “he will prescribe spurious drugs and will put the lives of patients at risk.”

Can we not learn from the hard work, the persistence, the dedication and discipline of these students who burn themselves out to achieve their goals? Shall we for all times remain in the web of our failure psychology and the hatred it generates for others’ success? Do we have the courage to appreciate and celebrate the success of others without necessarily agreeing with their ideology? Has our education, the books that pile in our rooms, the articles we keep reading and sharing, the sermons we keep playing and the lofty ideals we so often preach, trained us to celebrate the differences, to give people the respect where it is due and to see the light where it is?

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

The author is a Srinagar-based columnist

A Lesson From West Bengal

KAUSHIK BASU

“It is true that the school has capitalized on ideas for education from around the world, perhaps most importantly from Finland. But another explanation has to do with India’s ongoing struggle with teacher apathy and absenteeism in public schools

The world has reached a major turning point. As artificial intelligence increasingly edges out traditional labor, it becomes clear that the future belongs to countries that can adapt to the changing nature of work. But adaptability requires an education system that nurtures creativity. This is particularly true in countries like India, where the growing digital divide threatens to widen existing inequalities.

I have been on the road in India over the past month, interacting with people engaged in education and research. I happened to arrive in Delhi just as the 2022 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), the most important source of information on schools and education in rural India, was released.

This year’s report, the first to rely on in-person interviews since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, is based on the accounts of volunteers who visited more than 17,000 schools across the country. Given the four-year gap, this report provides the first meaningful glimpse of the pandemic’s devastating effect on learning outcomes for Indian children. It also provides crucial insights into the experience of millions more pupils in other developing and emerging economies.

The report shows that Indian children’s basic reading skills have dropped to pre-2012 levels across all ages, reversing the slow improvement that was achieved before the pandemic began. For example, the share of third-grade students who can read at a second-grade level dropped from 27.3% in 2018 to 20.5% in 2022.

One area where India did make progress is in public-school enrollment. While the share of children aged 6-14 enrolled in government schools had been dropping steadily between 2006 and 2014, the trend has reversed. In 2018, 65.6% of children in that age group were enrolled in public schools; in 2022, this figure increased to 72.9%.

Current initiatives to reform education in India, if adopted and fully implemented, offer cause for optimism. During my journey, what encouraged me the most was the progress made in one poor region, the Purulia district, a tribal hinterland in West Bengal that is home to a large number of Santals, an Austro-Asiatic tribe that moved into India from Southeast Asia some 10,000 years ago.

I arrived at the Filix School, located in the middle of this impoverished rural area, to give some lectures to tenth-grade students on game theory. The Filix School is an ambitious experiment that aims to provide modern, English-language education covering mathematics, science, and the humanities – the full range of subjects that a child would learn at a top school in New York City or New Delhi. Established in 2014, the school now has more than 500 students, almost half of them girls. Most of the pupils come from households below the official poverty line, a disproportionate number of whom are Santals.

Purulia is quite remote. To get there, I had to fly from Bangalore to the Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport in Durgapur. From there, we drove on the highway crossing the Damodar River before veering off to narrow country roads that meander through ramshackle villages and fields. After more than two hours, we arrived at the school.

The lecture itself turned out to be a revelation. The bright-eyed students took in every word, were troubled by the Prisoner’s Dilemma, delighted by the Surprise Test paradox, and argued with me about my logic before playing an animated game of Hex on the blackboard. They seemed to me to be significantly ahead of their peers in other schools.

An ongoing statistical study by C-DRASTA, a research group in Kolkata, appears to confirm my intuition. The Filix School’s success is now being emulated via the Education for All program in schools for poor children in the jungles of the Sundarbans and the foothills of the Himalayas in northern West Bengal. But what is it that makes this school’s model a success?

It is true that the school has capitalized on ideas for education from around the world, perhaps most importantly from Finland. But another explanation has to do with India’s ongoing struggle with teacher apathy and absenteeism in public schools. In their efforts to address this problem, economists typically focus on financial incentives, such as monetary penalties and rewards. While such measures can

help, my four-day stay and earlier visits to Purulia convinced me that instilling professional pride among educators matters as much, if not more. As economists, we underplay the power of self-monitoring. The truth is that innate pride in the work is a more powerful motivator than financial sanctions.

The Filix School is a case in point. In their efforts to export their model to other regions, the school’s teachers reached out to their community and asked for the support of the local police, taking advantage of the unique civic police volunteer force that was started in 2012. One cannot generalize this to all, but the police officers who are helping the teachers set up learning centers in the remote tea gardens of northern West Bengal are exemplary in terms of enthusiasm and a sense of mission.

This type of anecdotal evidence suggests that employees’ pride in their work and personal identification with its mission are critical sources of product quality. The Greek military leader and historian Xenophon made the case powerfully when he famously noted that Socrates not only did not charge fees to his students, but he enjoyed teaching so much that he would have been willing to pay to give his lessons.

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

The article was originally published by Project Syndicate

Is Private Sector's 'Optics of Opportunity' Dispiriting Kashmiri Youth?

Despite The Fact That The Government Sector Has Always Been Favoured In Kashmir Because Of All The Benefits And Stability It Offers, The Private Sector Was Largely Viewed As A Safety Net — But, Not Anymore.

Asma Majid

It was one of those D-Days when tables could've turned in her favour, and therefore there was no room for dragging her feet.

Bisma made sure to rise early and offer dawn prayer—pretty aware of how important it was to get through the interview. Despite certain about her calibre, she was mindful of the eleventh-hour twists rendering merit redundant in Kashmir.

On reaching her destination, she saw a huge building with several floors. It was no less than an opulent mansion with expansive grounds, a sight enough to instil the realisation in Bisma that this opportunity of turning her career was akin to the grandiosity of the building itself and that she would have to give her best to grab it. Excited as she was to prove her worth in the interview, she was at the same time grappling with a hunch, a sense of foreboding lest she might suffer the same fate that one of her friends Mariya had suffered.

Mariya had submitted an application a few months prior for a position at one of the prestigious private sector organisations in the city's centre. After completing all the necessary formalities, she was even summoned for delivering duties for the said organisation on the pretext of due selection. But, a few days later, Mariya, a witness to a full-fledged recruiting procedure, was astounded to learn that the entire process had been a charade and that the applicant picked for the position had already been selected.

This wasn't the only incident that gave Bisma a sense of impending doom. She had heard stories from her family, friends, and acquaintances about people getting turned down for jobs for trivial reasons, such as being too young, inexperienced, or new to the work to qualify, or not having the flair for language while having all the necessary qualifications.

Bisma moved in the direction of the building's gate while shaking her head to dismiss all the negativity.

As she entered the premises, she saw the garden of the institution ablaze with flowers in full bloom: roses and chrysanthemums, the largest and the most fragrant she had seen or smelt for a long time. Bright red salvias and golden marigolds lined the borders. The interior was equally spectacular, adorned with majesty, grandeur, and dignity. An instance of brief teleportation ensued, letting Bisma enjoy the bliss of already working as a teacher in such a splendid place after having qualified the interview. The delusion of peace and quiet was shattered by two people calling out to her simultaneously. Bisma had to grab her wandering mind by horns to civilize it into getting accustomed to the current scenario.

"Hey, Bisma, come here!", "Where are you lost?" Bisma was overcome with delight when she heard two old pals calling out to her.

After submitting her CV to the receptionist, Bisma joined her friends in an over-crowded hall of some 120 candidates. She kept waiting for her name to be called out while as many as 80 individuals from various disciplines were interviewed.

The format of the interview was interesting. In the room where the panellists were seated, all the candidates who applied for one subject were gathered together, and each interviewee was called on to answer the questions one by one. This way, all the other applicants could observe every interview that was going on.

The air-conditioning broke down and it was sweltering inside. Half-way through the day, a tired Bisma went out to have some fresh air af-



other applicants being interviewed, and none of them had received the same acclaim and admiration for their witty repartee as she did.

Bisma felt optimistic about her selection for she was the best qualified of all the candidates in her subject and had performed admirably well in the interview. In the following days, she was on the edge of her seat, cooling her heels for the glad tidings to come. But no news ever arrived.

The passage of a month and more convinced Bisma and a few others who had been in constant contact with each other that some dubious business was brewing. To ensure the same, a bundle of candidates, confident of having performed better than the others, gathered to visit the institution to dress them down.

After running into a dispassionate receptionist, the group of hopefuls was allowed to talk to a low-key official whose only response after hearing them all was, "Nothing can be done now! There are already choices in place."

The enraged candidates requested to examine the selection list and accused the institution of drastically distorting the reality, but were lambasted by another official, a skinny man with a deep voice for violating the order. "The crux of the matter is that we don't owe you any explanations. Why create a ruckus now?" The offhand office-bearer who had just come out of his chamber was shouting with apoplectic rage. "Please leave," he blurted, pounding the door shut as he entered his room muttering something. Disgruntled by the shabby treatment, the wrecked bunch had no choice but to disperse.

The door of opportunity slammed shut on their faces disheartened the candidates. Later that day, in a local eatery, where they assembled for some refreshment, they talked about their doomed job prospects in a place plagued by an exacerbating unemployment rate. Handpicking in the puny private sector—their only hope amid the jinx of joblessness—further disappointed the young learned tribe of the valley.

The unemployment rate in India rose to 8.30 per cent in December 2022, the highest in 16 months, according to the recently released data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). While Haryana has taken the front seat among all the Indian states in the said data with an unemployment rate of 37.4 per cent, the Jammu & Kashmir has registered itself at the 6th position in the list with an unemployment rate of 14.8 per cent.

An experienced economist from the valley, Tahseen Makhdoomi, expresses his concern about the possibility of horrible days ahead with regard to the afore-mentioned data. "These are hectic times," he says. "We shouldn't be exhaling in relief just because J&K has managed to avoid the front row this time by recording a decrease in the unemployment rate. J&K has even figured at the top of the list according to the data from earlier months."

The economist goes on to say that the unemployment statistics over the last two years have exposed the underbelly of India's economic health.

"We must recognise that the unemployment rate is still fluctuating and that stability is still a long way off," Makhdoomi warns. "Testing times await us ahead if proper economic growth is not ensured."

Considering the fiscal circumstances of the

last few years, one might attribute the pandemic's lack of economic activity as a catalyst to the increased unemployment.

Ceyda Oner, Assistant Director and Mission Chief for Columbia at the IMF (International Monetary Fund), analyses unemployment as being highly dependent on economic activity. "Growth and unemployment can be thought of as two sides of the same coin: when economic activity is high, more production happens overall, and more people are needed to produce the higher amount of goods and services," she says. "And when economic activity is low, firms cut jobs and unemployment rises."

Despite the fact that employment hinges around economic growth, new findings have shown yet another facet of the growing unemployment rate that warrants greater worry than all the other characteristics combined. The reported instances of Mariya and Bisma, along with the undisclosed cases of several other candidates of Kashmir provide a hint as to the malversation—corrupt behaviour in a position of trust, especially in public office—that has

processes for commercialization in the market.

Binte Fajar, a PhD candidate working on the topic of unemployment and related issues, discusses her research experiences thus far. She emphasizes how discouraging backdoor hiring practices by the underqualified and undeserving are for qualified job applicants who are already discouraged and dispirited by the fierce competition and lack of employment opportunities in the valley.

"The pre-determined illegal appointments in the garb of a proper appointment process are a hideous excrescence on the face of our beautiful society," the scholar states. "Transparency is the key to fair employment."

Aware of their merit and the intents of the recruiting authority, some struggling individuals may find it difficult to handle the strain of being repeatedly rejected for no apparent reason. Thus, a variety of mental illnesses begin, with instances from Kashmir again increasing dramatically.

Clinical psychologist Dr. Sumeen Mujtaba emphasizes the issue of social alienation as op-



seeped into the private sector.

The recent explosion of private educational institutions in the valley's business hubs had given optimism to the young people searching for employment solutions. However, many reckon, the situation for young people's aspirations has gotten worse as a result of the use of Machiavellian strategies and dishonest means by these institutions to rule the roost.

Although people's pursuit of professional degrees has opened up opportunities for employment in the private sector, some insiders say, the corruption that has infiltrated is impenetrable.

Despite the fact that the government sector has always been favoured because of all the benefits and stability it offers, the private sector has always been viewed as a safety net.

But now, many candidates lament, it has changed — prompting experts to voice a concern that it's dreadful to dash the dreams of applicants by using duplicitous sham recruiting

posed to individual and familial estrangement as the root of mental health issues in young people.

"When capable youth feel as though they are falling behind due to a lack of employment opportunities or when others are able to advance through shady means while they are unable to, it creates a kind of social alienation which, if not addressed at the appropriate time, leads youth to engage in drug use and other risky behaviours," the mental health specialist warns.

Dr. Mujtaba has even dealt with situations where young people have frazzled to the breaking point owing to repeated rejections and persistent unemployment.

To break the jinx, Bisma was alert despite her cellphone ringing with morning alarm. Putting it on snooze that day was out of question. She had to be careful to get ready well in time. Before leaving her residence, she gave herself a long stare in the mirror, simpered and wished herself good fortune. Bisma was all set to face another interview.



ter getting a confirmation from the receptionist that her interview still had a lot of time left to commence.

It was one of those sultry dog days where the oppressively hot roads are paralyzed by inaction. Nevertheless, a worn-out Bisma decided to take a stroll in the shade of the trees for a quick rejuvenation.

A little while later, Bisma was interviewed. Her wait had been a long one for she was the last one in her lot to be summoned. She didn't mind it though as this allowed her to see all the

Novel Microneedle Bandage Could Save Lives By Stopping Blood Loss From Wounds

ANI

A soldier suffers a serious gunshot wound on a remote battlefield or a machinist has a work accident and gets stuck in traffic on the way to the hospital. Secondary, uncontrolled bleeding from traumatic injury is the leading cause of death of Americans from ages one to 46.

Amir Sheikhi, assistant professor of chemical engineering and of biomedical engineering at Penn State, has a plan to change that with a novel microneedle patch that can immediately stop bleeding after injury.

He laid out his prototype in a new paper that will be published in the May issue of Bioactive Materials, available now online.

“Excessive bleeding is a serious challenge for human health,” Sheikhi said. “With hemorrhaging injuries, it is often the loss of blood — not the injury itself — that causes death. There is an unmet medical need for ready-to-use biomaterials that promote rapid blood coagulation.”

The hemostatic microneedle technology developed by Sheikhi can be applied like a typical adhesive bandage



to quickly stop bleeding. The biocompatible and biodegradable microneedle arrays (MNAs) on the patch increase its surface contact with blood and accelerate the clotting process. The needles also increase the adhesive proper-

ties of the patch via mechanical interlocking to promote wound closure.

“In vitro, the engineered MNAs reduced clotting time from 11.5 minutes to 1.3 minutes; and in a rat liver bleeding model, they reduced

Poor Literacy Linked To Worse Mental Health Problems: Study

Press Trust of India

People with poor literacy face more mental health problems such as loneliness, depression and anxiety, according to a review of studies which used data from nine countries, including India.

The research, published in the journal Mental Health and Social Inclusion, is the first to look at the global picture of literacy and mental health.

The researchers from the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the UK found that little or no literacy disproportionately affect women, who account for two thirds of the world's illiterate.

“Despite rising literacy rates over the past 50 years, there are still an estimated 773 million adults globally who can't read or write,” said Bonnie Teague from UEA's Norwich Medical School.

“Literacy rates are lower in developing countries and those with a history of conflict, and women are disproportionately affected,” Teague said.

The researchers noted that people with more literacy tend to have better social outcomes in terms of things like finding employment, being paid well, and being able to afford better food and housing.

Not being able to read or write holds a person back throughout their life and they

often become trapped in poverty or more likely to commit crime, they said.

“We also know that lower literacy is related to poorer health, chronic diseases and shorter life expectancy,” Teague said.

“There has been some re-

search examining the potential association between literacy and mental health but this is the first study looking at the issue on a global scale,” he added.

The team reviewed data from 19 studies that measured both literacy and mental health. These studies took place across nine different countries -- US, China, Nepal, Thailand, Iran, India, Ghana, Pakistan, and Brazil, and involved almost two million participants.

The researchers used information relating to mental



had greater mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression,” said Lucy Hunn, who completed the review as part of her Doctorate in clinical psychology training at UEA.

“We can't say for sure that poor literacy causes poor mental health, but there is a strong association,” Hunn said.

The researchers noted that there may be multiple factors impacting on mental health which also impact literacy such as poverty or living in an area with a history of conflict.

‘Poor Sleep Quality Linked With Multiple Sclerosis Risk In Teens’

Press Trust Of India

Failure to receive at least seven hours of quality sleep during the teenage years is associated with the subsequent risk of developing multiple sclerosis (MS), according to a study.

The research, published in the Journal of Neurology Neurosurgery & Psychiatry, suggests that clocking up enough hours of restorative sleep while young may help to ward off the condition.

MS is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors, including smoking, teenage weight (BMI), Epstein-Barr virus infection -- one of the most common human viruses -- sun exposure, and vitamin D, the researchers said.

Shift work has also been linked to a higher risk of the condition, particularly at a young age, but whether sleep patterns -- duration, body clock disruption, and sleep quality -- might affect this risk has not been fully assessed, they said.

The researchers from Stockholm University and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden used



Shift work has also been linked to a higher risk of the condition, particularly at a young age, but whether sleep patterns -- duration, body clock disruption, and sleep quality -- might affect this risk has not been fully assessed

data from a population-based case-control study, the Epidemiological Investigation of Multiple Sclerosis (EIMS), comprising 1670-year-old Swedish residents.

People with MS were recruited from hospital- and privately-run neurology clinics and matched for age, sex, and residential area with two healthy people randomly

selected from the national population register between 2005 and 2013 and 2015 and 2018.

The researchers focused particularly on sleep patterns during the ages 15 to 19, and the final analysis included 2,075 people with MS and 3,164 without the condition in this age group when recruited to the study.

The study partici-

pants were asked about their sleeping patterns at different ages: length of sleep on work or school days, and at weekends or on free days.

Short sleep was defined as less than seven hours per night; adequate sleep as 7-9 hours; and long sleep as 10 or more hours.

Study participants were also asked to assess sleep quality during dif-

ferent age periods using a 5-point scale, where 5 equalled very good. The average age at which MS was diagnosed was 34.

Sleep length and quality during adolescence were associated with the risk of an MS diagnosis, which increased in tandem with fewer hours and poorer quality of sleep, the researchers found.

Compared with sleeping 7-9 hours per night during the teenage years, short sleep was associated with a 40 per cent increased risk of subsequently developing MS, they said.

However, long sleep, including at weekends or on free days, was not associated with a increased MS risk, according to the study. Similarly, subjectively assessed poor sleep quality during this period was associated with a 50 per cent higher risk of developing the condition, the researchers said.

The researchers caution that their findings should be interpreted cautiously on account of potential reverse causation -- whereby poor sleep could be a consequence of neurological damage rather than the other way around.

(GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR) Office Of The Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Srinagar

Short term Tender Notice No.181 of 2022-23/R&B

Dated: 24.01.2023

For and on behalf of The Lt. Governor of Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir sealed tenders affixed with 5/- rupees revenue stamps are invited for the below mentioned works from approved and eligible Electrical contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other state / Central Govt. as per specification and detailed mentioned in the BOQ.

S.No	Name of Work	Amount in lacs	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Class Of Contractor	Time of Completion	Cost of tender document
01	Repairs to electric fittings at various vital Govt installations of District Anantnag coming under the Jurisdiction of R&B Division Khanabal from 01.04.2022 to 25.04.2022	0.369 lacs	1150.00	"A" Class	05 days	200.00
02.	Electrification of 10 roomed double storey building at Model BHSS Bijbehara (Part-B)	0.855 lacs	2600.00	"A" Class	05 days	200.00

- The tender should be addressed to the Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Srinagar and should reach in the office by or before 29.01.2023 upto 4.00 PM. The tenders / bids will be opened on the same day or any other day convenient to tender opening authority in presence of the contractors who may like to be present. In case the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a holiday /Hartal /curfew day the tenders will be received on next working day.
- The tender document shall be issued by this office from 24.01.2023 upto 29.01.2023 against receipt of treasury challan received from the eligible Electrical contractor and should enclose following documents Viz: valid registration with latest renewal certificate, Pan Card, valid GST registration with latest GST clearance certificate, valid contact No/E-Mail ID in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Srinagar. (Tender inviting authority).
- The successful /1st Lowest bidder has to submit earnest money @ 3% of adv. cost.
- The bidders shall be at a liberty to send their bids either in person or through registered post but shall super scribe the following in front of the envelopes.
- i.) Name of work ii) cost of work iii) Full name of contractor with contact No .iv. Date of receipt of tenders v) Ref. to NIT No.
- The bidder Should enclose CDR/FDR
- The bidder should sign each page of tender document enclosed with their bid.
- All other Terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in PWD form 25.

Executive Engineer
(R&B) Electric
Division
Srinagar

NO:- ERB/5396-5403
DIPK-16722/22 Dated:- 27.01.2023

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Jammu And Kashmir Project Construction Corporation

Telefax:-01933-222273, Email ID:-dgmmechsrinagar@jkpcc.com

Gist of e-NIT No: JKPCC/MU/K/ 97 of 2022-23 Dated:- 18-01-2023.
Issued under endorsement No: Mech/K/3419-23 Dated: 18-01-2023.

For and on behalf of Managing Director Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation Ltd, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Original equipment manufacturers of Lifts or their authorized dealers/ representatives or Registered/ reputed and experienced firms for the following works-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	EMD/Bid Security @ 2% (In Rs.)	Time of completion (in months)	Technical sanction No.	Position of AAA/ funds
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of one no (G+2) 20 passenger Bed lift & one no (G+2) 16 passenger geared Lift including electrification of lift shaft at District Hospital Ganderbal, Kashmir.	53.80	2360.00 (Incl. of GST @ 18%)	107600.00	4 Months	Under Process	Available

- Downloading of Bids: - The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from 20-01-2023 , 12:00 PM downloaded from the departmental website www.jk-tenders.gov.in from 20-01-2023 , 12:00 PM.
- Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 20-01-2023, 12:00 PM to 29-01-2023 (1200 hrs) in two (02) covers.
- Opening of Bids: - The bids received up to due date and time shall be opened on 30-01-2023, at 1500 hrs or any other date convenient to the department in the office of Dy. General Manager Mechanical Unit JKPCC Ltd Srinagar.

DIPK-NB-6188/22
dated: 27-01-2023

(Er. Sajad Rasool Hakim)
Dy General Manager,
Mech. Unit JKPCC Ltd
Srinagar

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Jammu And Kashmir Project Construction Corporation

Telefax:-01933-222273, Email ID:-dgmmechsrinagar@jkpcc.com

Gist of e-NIT No: JKPCC/MU/K/ 95 of 2022-23 Dated: 18-01-2023
Issued under endorsement No: Mech/K/3397-3401, Dated: 18-01-2023

For and on behalf of the Managing Director of J&KPCC, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Original equipment manufacturers of Lifts or their authorized dealers/ representatives or Registered/ reputed and experienced firms as detailed in the tender document for the following work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	EMD/Bid Security @ 2% (In Rs.)	Time of completion (in months)	Technical Sanctions No.	Position of AAA/funds
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Three no's (G+4) 13 passenger gearless lift at Govt. Medical College Baramulla	72.00	(Incl. of GST @ 18%)	144000.00	4 Months	Under Process	Available

- Downloading of Bids: - The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from 20-01-2023 (1200hrs) downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 20-01-2023 (1200 hrs).
- Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 20-01-2023 (12.00 hrs) to 29-01-2023 (1200 Noon) in two (02) covers.
- Opening of Bids: - The bids received up to due date and time shall be opened on 30-01-2023 at 1500 hrs or any other date convenient to the department in the office of Dy. General Manager Mechanical Unit JKPCC Ltd Srinagar.

DIPK-NB-6186/22
dated: 27-01-2023

(Er. Sajad Rasool Hakim)
Dy General Manager,
Mech Unit JKPCC Ltd Srinagar

Dulloo Reviews PM Gati Shakti-National Master Plan For Agriculture, Allied Sectors

Discusses proposed plans for framing of Comprehensive Export Promotion Policy



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department (APD), Atal Dulloo Friday chaired a meeting to review implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti-National Master Plan for agriculture and allied sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dulloo expressed satisfaction over the progress on implementation of PM Gati Shakti in APD while asking the concerned heads of the departments to further improve data by identifying missing links. He directed the Head of Departments to complete the lists within shortest time and submit it to the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG) for uploading on the portal.

Managing Director, J&K Agro Industries Corporation Limited, Arun Kumar Manhas, delivered a presentation regarding implementation of PM Gati Shakti in agriculture and allied sector. He

briefed the meeting about the present status of the scheme saying that different departments have been asked to submit the data layers for uploading on PM Gati Shakti Portal.

He told the meeting that out of 56 data layers, which were asked from different departments under APD, 44 data layers have been uploaded on the Portal, so far. Later, the ACS chaired a meeting of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to discuss proposed plans for framing of 'Comprehensive Export Promotion Policy (CEPP)'.

During the meeting, TWGs gave their respective presentations sharing the strategies, mapping of given commodity's resources, approaches for export promotion, international export destinations etc.

Dulloo suggested quantification coupled with interventions containing rough costs and multi-stakeholders' consultation before final approval of respective plans for export promotion of commodities from J&K.

Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0

EPFO Organises District Outreach, Awareness Program in J&K, Ladakh

Scores of grievances resolved facilitating stakeholders



Observer News Service

JAMMU: The "Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 - the District Outreach and Awareness Program" was organized in the districts of EPFO, Jammu, Jammu (R.S. Pura), Samba, Kathua, Srinagar and Ganderbal for the stakeholders of UT of Jammu-Kashmir and in the Districts of Leh today from 10:30 AM.

EPFO Jammu, Srinagar and Ladakh took this opportunity to provide handholding support to the stakeholders at the respective venues besides hearing them (their suggestions, inputs, and grievances).

Issues and problems faced by the Organizations in implementing the EPF & MP Act, 1952 were heard and necessary actions were taken accordingly. UAN Activation, Bank & Aadhaar Seeding, filing of online claims, filing of e-nominations, e-sign, filing ECR were explained with hands-on demonstration in the programme.

Regional P F Commissioner-I,

J&K and Ladakh had a word with Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and necessary official communications were made with all concerned authorities, who facilitated the programmes in respective Districts.

"Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 District Outreach Program" were addressed by Sanjeev Kumar EO/AO, Bipin Kumar EO/AO, Pramod Kumar Singh EO/AO, Ankur Janghu EO/AO, Suhail Khan, EO/AO and Kanchana Khatarkar, SSSA under the supervision of Regional P. F. Commissioner-I, Rizwan Uddin. Suhail Khan, District Nodal Officer called on the DC, Ganderbal who also welcomed the initiative.

Anuradha Gupta, DC Samba was present at the inaugural session of Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 and thanked CPFC for such a novel initiative. Devia Nanda, BDO RS Pura, Prem Singh, DIC Kathua, P L Thapa, CEO Kathua, DEO Kathua, and representatives of Establishments also participated in the program.

Adani Slammed By \$48 Bln Stock Rout, Putting Share Sale At Risk

Reuters

MUMBAI: Shares of India's Adani Enterprises (ADEL.NS) plunged on Friday after a scathing report by a U.S. short seller triggered a selloff in the conglomerate's listed firms, casting doubts on the success of the company's record \$2.45 billion secondary share sale.

Seven listed companies of the Adani conglomerate - controlled by one of the world's richest men Gautam Adani - lost a combined \$48 billion in market capitalisation, with U.S. bonds of Adani firms also falling after Hindenburg Research flagged concerns in a Jan. 24 report about debt levels and the use of tax havens.

The rout led to a near 20% fall in shares of Adani Enterprises, the group's flagship company, well below the offer price of its secondary sale. As bidding started on Friday, the issue was subscribed around 1%, raising concerns over whether it would be able to proceed.

"The news cycle in the past few days has clearly impacted the share sale and you can clearly see that in the subscription levels, especially the low retail participation," said Narendra Solanki, fundamental research head at domestic brokerage Anand Rath.

The Adani Group was concerned but prepared to wait it out for now as the share sale continues until Jan. 31, two people with direct knowledge of the situation said.

India's capital markets regulator is studying the Hindenburg



report as it may help its own probe into offshore fund holdings of Adani Group, two other sources said. Spokespersons for the regulator and Adani had no immediate comment.

Adani Group dismissed the Hindenburg report as baseless and said it is considering whether to take legal action against the New York-based firm.

With a net worth of \$96.6 billion, billionaire Gautam Adani is now the world's seventh richest man, according to Forbes, slipping from the third position due to the stock rout.

The 60-year-old hails from the western state of Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India's main opposition Congress party has often accused Adani and other billionaires of getting favourable policy treatment from Modi's administration, allegations the billionaire denies.

The Adani Group was established in 1988, beginning with commodities trading. The conglomerate's business interests

now extend from ports and airports to mining and renewable power.

The anchor portion of the share sale that began on Friday saw participation from investors including the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and Maybank Securities on Wednesday.

Shares of the listed Adani firms that plummeted on Friday include Adani Transmission Ltd (ADAI.NS), Adani Total Gas (ADAG.NS) and Adani Green Energy (ADNA.NS) sinking 20% each - marking their worst day ever - while Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSE.NS) fell 16.3%.

At the end of the first day of the share sale, investors, mostly retail, had bid for around 470,160 shares in the Adani Enterprises share sale, compared with 45.5 million on offer, according to Indian stock exchange data. The share sale is being managed by Jefferies, India's SBI Capital Markets, and ICICI Securities among others.

The firm has set a floor price of 3,112 rupees (\$38.22) a share and a cap of 3,276 rupees. But on Friday the stock ended at 2,761.45 rupees - well below the lower end of the range.

Anand Rathi's Solanki said "with the current market price below the share sale offer price, it further puts doubts on issue subscription."

Investors' worries extended to Indian banks with exposure to Adani debt. The Nifty Bank index (.NSEBANK) fell over 3%, while the broader 50-share Nifty index (.NSEI) ended down 1.6%.

For Hindenburg Research, Adani Group Is A 'Man-Made Disaster' In The Making

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI- In 1937, a hydrogen-powered German airship flying into New Jersey caught fire and crashed, killing 35 passengers on board. It was sort of a man-made disaster as some 100 people were loaded on to a balloon filled with the most flammable material in the universe. The airship was named Hindenburg.

Eight decades later, in 2017, a graduate of international business management from the University of Connecticut founded a "forensic financial research" firm to specialise in spotting wrong-doings and frauds, or what it calls "man-made disasters", at companies around the globe and take market bets against them. Founder Nathan (Nate) Anderson named his firm Hindenburg Research after the doomed airship.

This week, Hindenburg ignited a fierce firestorm that threatens to singe Asia's richest man, Indian tycoon Gautam Adani, who presides over a sprawling

empire that now spans from ports and airports to energy, cement and data centres.

On Wednesday, it released a report that alleged the Adani Group had "engaged in a brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades". The disclosure sparked a USD 51-billion sell-off in shares of his group companies over two trading sessions, pushing him four places down on the world billionaire index.

Worse, it came ahead of a Rs 20,000-crore follow-on share sale in Adani Enterprises. The share sale could get subscribed up to a meagre 1 per cent on the opening day, Friday, when Adani Enterprises shares fell 18.5 per cent, slipping below the offer price.

Adani group has since rubbished the report as a "malicious combination of selective misinformation and stale, baseless and discredited allegations". That, however, hasn't stopped investors from selling off.

On Friday, shares of Adani Group companies continued

their losing streak for the second day with Adani Enterprises dropping a massive 18.5 per cent and Adani Ports & SEZ 16 per cent, taking the broader benchmark index - the Sensex - down by 874.16 points or 1.45 per cent.

WHAT DOES HINDENBURG RESEARCH DO Hindenburg engages in activist short selling, which involves selling borrowed stocks in hopes of buying at a lower price later. If prices fall expectedly, short sellers make a killing. Hindenburg, which invests its own capital, takes such bets based on its research, which looks for "man-made disasters" such as accounting irregularities, mismanagement and undisclosed related-party transactions.

It especially looks for "accounting irregularities; bad actors in management or key service provider roles; undisclosed related-party transactions; illegal/unethical business or financial reporting practices; and undisclosed regulatory, product, or financial issues" in companies.

J&K Tourism Participates In Spain Festival

Observer News Service

MADRID (SPAIN): The 43rd edition of FITUR, one of the largest tourism fairs in the world, got started here with King Felipe VI of Spain inaugurating the event.

J&K Tourism Department is participating in the five day event as an important stakeholder and part of India's official tourism delegation.

The King visited the Incredible India Pavilion at the fair after the inauguration.

The J&K stall at the India Pavilion featured images about the beauty of J&K. Visual and print publicity material was displayed and distributed by the Tourism Department at the venue among the visitors. Videos regarding the events organized by the Department and beauty of J&K were played on the LED screens at the pavilion. The presentation regarding offbeat destinations was also given to the visitors at the pavilion.

The J&K Tourism team in-

teracted with the visitors and other participant stakeholders and briefed them about J&K's tourism potential, investment opportunities and investor friendly policies.

Ambassador of India to Spain Mr. Dinesh Patnaik also visited the J&K stall and complimented the Department for its efforts to boost tourism. In his interaction with members of the J&K delegation, he said he was happy to see J&K Tourism participating in the event. He also assured full support to J&K Tourism in organizing road shows and other promotional events in future in Spain. He encouraged J&K tourism to participate in all the major events.

The Indian Tourism delegation to the event was led by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Deputy Secretary, MoT whereas the team from J&K Tourism comprised Director, Tourism, Jammu, MD, JKTDC, and Director, Tourism, Kashmir.

Worst Of Inflation, Growth And Currency Crisis Behind Us: RBI Governor

Press Trust Of India



MUMBAI: Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das today said the latest datapoints on growth, inflation and currency volatilities indicate that the worst for the financial markets and the world economy is behind us and that high interest rates for a longer period looks a distinct possibility going forward.

Though the global economy is projected to contract significantly in 2023, the worst, both in terms of growth and inflation, seems to be behind us. Lately, with some ebbing of Covid-related restrictions and cooling of inflation in various countries, though still elevated, central banks have started what appears to be a pivot towards lower rate hikes or pauses, Das told the annual meeting of the Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (Fimmda) and the Primary Dealers Association of India (PDAI) held in Dubai on Friday.

But he put a caveat saying at the same time, central bankers continue to emphatically reiterate their resolve to bring inflation down closer to their respective targets. At the same time, high policy rates for a longer duration appear to be a distinct possibility, going forward.

On the growth front, projections are now veering around to a softer recession as against a severe and more widespread recession projected a few months back.

On the domestic front, he said, in this hostile and uncertain international environment, "our economy remains resilient", drawing strength from its macroeconomic fundamentals.

"Our financial system remains robust and stable. Banks and corporates are healthier than before the crisis. Bank credit is growing in double-digits. We are widely seen as a bright spot in an otherwise gloomy world. Our inflation remains elevated,

but there has been a welcome softening on November and December. Core inflation, however, remains sticky and elevated," the governor said.

On the domestic financial markets, Das said since the 1990s, "we have come a long way in developing the financial markets".

"The journey of our financial markets through the last decade has been a story of steady progress with stability. Going forward, greater challenges will emerge as the footprints of our banks increase in offshore markets, the range of products expand, non-resident participation in domestic markets grows and as capital account convertibility increases.

"Market participants will have to prepare themselves to manage the changes and the risks associated with globally integrated markets. The achievement of desired outcomes is contingent on financial institutions and market participants taking forward the reform agenda so that we have more vibrant and resilient financial markets," he said.

On the external front, he said de-globalisation and protectionism are gaining ground as witnessed during the recent global supply-chain shocks. It is thus necessary to build and strengthen bilateral trade relations to deal with such challenges. Accordingly, the government recently signed bilateral trade agreements with the UAE and Australia and more such pacts are in the offing.

SHORT TAKES

JKEDI Holds One Day EAP At Rajouri

RAJOURI: To nurture an entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking among youth, Jammu and Kashmir entrepreneurship development institute (JKEDI) today organized a day-long entrepreneurship awareness programme (EAP) in coordination with Himalayan Degree College at Rajouri.

Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, Director, JKEDI attended the event as the chief guest. He is on a tour to twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch.

In his address, he commended the initiative of Himalayan Degree College, Rajouri for imbuing a spirit of leadership among the students. "This spirit acts as a guiding philosophy for the holistic development of students," the director said, discussing his experience of the overall entrepreneurial scene in J&K.

With a special emphasis on his tenure in the Industries and Commerce Department and Horticulture Department, he spoke about the learning he gained from his service career. He elucidated how the various policies of the UT Government have encouraged the spirit of entrepreneurship. He added that the need of the hour was to generate consciousness among parents to foster entrepreneurship culture in children.

The Director also enumerated the benefits of the term loan scheme under National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) and how this initiative of the Government is generating self-employment amongst the minority community. **ONS**

Stock Market Investors Lose More Than Rs 10.73 Lakh Cr

NEW DELHI: Investors' wealth eroded by more than Rs 10.73 lakh crore in just two trading sessions as the market slumped and benchmark BSE Sensex slid 1,647.85 points.

For the second straight session on Friday, the 30-share Sensex tumbled 874.16 points or 1.45 per cent to settle at 59,330.90 points. During the day, the key index plunged 1,230.36 points or 2.04 per cent to 58,974.70 points.

On Wednesday, the BSE barometer plummeted 773.69 points or 1.27 per cent to 60,205.06 points. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 10,73,957.29 crore to Rs 2,69,65,965.18 crore during these two trading days. Stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Republic Day.

Massive selling in the Adani group stocks also added to the overall bearish trend in the equity market. Adani group stocks fell for the second straight session on Friday and tanked up to 20 per cent, losing over Rs 4.17 lakh crore from the combined market valuation of all its listed firms, after the US-based investment research firm Hindenburg Research made damaging allegations.

The sharp slump in the Indian market was triggered by an unfavourable research report on Adani group companies. This is also affecting the banking stocks, especially PSU banks due to their high exposure to the group, Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said. **PTI**

'Jio, Airtel Up Mobile Subscribers Tally In Nov'

NEW DELHI: Telecom operators Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel cumulatively gained nearly 25 lakh mobile subscribers in November even as troubled Vodafone Idea lost nearly 18.3 lakh customers, according to data by sector regulator TRAI.

India's largest telco Reliance Jio cemented its lead in the market adding 14.26 lakh net subscribers in November, whereas Airtel added 10.56 lakh users.

At the end of November 2022, Jio's mobile subscriber tally stood at 42.28 crore, the levels rising from 42.13 crore during the previous month.

Bharti Airtel's subscriber gains pushed up mobile user count of the Sunil Mittal-led company to 36.60 crore in November.

In sharp contrast, cash-strapped Vodafone Idea lost 18.27 lakh subscribers during the month in reference, tempering its subscriber base to 24.37 crore in November.

As per TRAI data, the total broadband subscribers increased to 825.38 million at the end of November 2022 with a monthly growth rate of 0.47 per cent. Top five service providers constituted over 98 per cent market share at the end of November 2022.

The list included Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (430.18 million), Bharti Airtel (230.56 million), Vodafone Idea (123.48 million), and BSNL (25.85 million), amongst others. **PTI**

rupee Rises 2 Paise Against US Dollar

MUMBAI: The rupee appreciated 2 paise to close at 81.59 against the US dollar on Friday amid a firm American currency against major rivals overseas.

However, heavy selling pressure in the domestic equity markets and unabated foreign fund outflows restricted the gains in the local currency, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened strong at 81.51 to a dollar. The local unit moved in the range of 81.50 to 81.67 during the day.

It finally settled at 81.59, up 2 paise against the previous close of 81.61.

According to experts, investors are looking for cues from the US Federal Reserve's policy decision early next week and the upcoming annual Budget.

"The markets await cues from Fed's desk on policy due on 1st Feb'23, a first in the new year, with anticipation of an already priced 0.25 bps hike, but forward commentary kept as a vigil eye by traders. Rupee shall also take cues from Budget due on 1st Feb'23 as the expense and income path from the government shall give cues for rupee strength," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities. On Wednesday, the rupee had slipped 2 paise against the US dollar. The currency markets were closed on Thursday on account of Republic Day. **PTI**

Sebi Bans 19 Entities From Securities Market

NEW DELHI: Capital markets regulator Sebi has barred 19 entities from the securities market for indulging in fraudulent trading in the shares of Superior Finlease Ltd (SFL) and impounded unlawful gains worth Rs 3.89 crore.

The investigation conducted by Sebi led to the collection of various pieces of evidence corroborating the fraudulent activities of these players and such evidence was primarily found from the sources, such as oath statements, bank account statements, trade details, call data records, audio call recordings and Whatsapp chats.

In this case, shares of SFL were first purchased from the market platform and eventually, with the help of the persons operating Telegram Channels, a false recommendation message to buy shares of SFL was floated on such channels, thereby inducing the subscribers there to buy the shares of SFL; and in the whole process, the shares owned by the perpetrator of the scheme through his front entities were dumped and huge profits were earned, Sebi revealed in its order.

"Any person indulging in spreading misinformation or false and misleading information through the use of social media messaging applications like Telegram, Whatsapp etc., which are being used by millions of people can cause irreparable damage to the integrity of the securities market within a short span of time like a forest fire, thereby eroding the confidence of the investors in the securities market in a matter of no time," Sebi noted. **PTI**

Turkey Summons Danish Envoy Over Quran-Burning Protest



Agences

Istanbul: Turkey summoned the Danish ambassador on Friday over reports that an anti-Islam activist would be allowed to burn the Quran during a series of protests in Copenhagen.

Rasmus Paludan, a far-right activist who holds both Danish and Swedish citizenship, infuriated Turkey by staging a Quran-burning protest in Sweden on January 21. He told Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet that he would replicate the protest in front of the Turkish Embassy in Copenhagen every Friday until Sweden is admitted into NATO. Reports said he would first burn the Quran outside a mosque in Copenhagen, then stage the same demonstration in front of the Turkish and Russian embassies.

Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency said the Danish ambassador was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry where Turkish officials strongly condemned the permission given to this provocative act which clearly constitutes a hate crime.

The ambassador was told that Denmark's attitude is unacceptable and that Turkey expected the permission to be revoked, according to Anadolu.

Paludan's action last week caused fury in Turkey, which criticised Swedish authorities for allowing the demonstration

to take place outside the Turkish Embassy. Turkey's president cast serious doubt on NATO's expansion, warning Sweden not to expect support for its membership bid in the military alliance.

Turkey also indefinitely postponed a key meeting in Brussels that would have discussed Sweden and Finland's NATO membership, saying such a meeting would have been meaningless.

Sweden and Finland abandoned their longstanding policies of military non-alignment and applied for NATO membership after Russian forces launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

NATO-member Turkey, which is pressing the two countries to crack down on Kurdish militants and other groups it considers terrorists, hasn't yet endorsed their accession, which requires unanimous approval from all existing alliance members.

A lawyer, Paludan established far-right parties in both Sweden and Denmark that have failed to win any seats in national, regional or municipal elections. In last year's parliamentary election in Sweden, his party received just 156 votes nationwide.

"This is Erdogan's fault. Now that he doesn't want to let Sweden into NATO, I have to teach him about freedom of speech until he does," Paludan told Aftonbladet.

Chaos at DU, Ambedkar University As Students Attempt To Screen BBC Docu; Police Scuttle Move



Press Trust of India

New Delhi: A commotion erupted at Delhi University and Ambedkar University here on Friday as students attempted to screen the controversial BBC documentary on the 2002 Godhra riots, even as the police and the varsity administration intervened to scuttle the move.

As many as 24 students affiliated with the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) were detained from Delhi University's Arts Faculty and heavy police deployment was maintained in the North Campus.

The university claimed 'outsiders' were trying to screen the documentary and the police was called to maintain law and order.

Police were seen dragging students away as they had gathered outside the Arts Faculty building to protest against not being allowed to screen the documentary. Inside the Arts Faculty, the university's security personnel were also seen clashing with the students.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said 24 students were detained from DU's Arts Faculty and the situation is

now back to normal.

"Around 4 pm, some 20 people came outside the Arts Faculty gate to screen the banned BBC documentary. As it could cause disturbance of peace and tranquility in the area, they were asked to disperse from there.

"When they did not, they were peacefully detained. A total of 24 people were detained," he said.

The documentary screening at the two universities was called by different students groups.

At Delhi University, the call was given by NSUI, the students wing of the Congress. While at Ambedkar University, the Left-affiliated Students Federation of India (SFI) organised the proposed screening.

Notably, SFI was also involved in organising the screening at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI).

The SFI alleged that the screening at Ambedkar university could not be held as the Delhi government-run university disconnected power supply, but a QR code with a link to the short film was shared with students so that they could watch it on their personal devices.

The protesting students

at Ambedkar University accused the varsity of calling the security personnel. The police officials, however, said they were visiting all college and university campuses in the district to ensure peace and tranquillity in the area.

The action comes days after a similar ruckus at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia over the documentary's screening. Jamia Millia Islamia became the centre of a kerfuffle on Wednesday after the SFI's plans to organise a screening of the documentary were thwarted by the varsity and the police.

JNU also witnessed a ruckus and protests over the screening on Tuesday.

The Centre had last week directed social media platforms Twitter and YouTube to block links to the documentary "India: The Modi Question". The Ministry of External Affairs has trashed the documentary as a "propaganda piece" that lacks objectivity and reflects a colonial mindset.

The two-part documentary claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state.

Gauhati HC Junks PIL On Police Encounters In Assam, Says Govt Probing Cases

Press Trust of India

Guwahati: The Gauhati High Court on Friday dismissed a PIL on a series of police encounters since Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma assumed power in May 2021, while saying that no separate probe is required as the state government is already conducting separate investigations on each case.

A division bench comprising Justice Suman Shyam and Justice Susmita Phukan Khaund said the petition was filed by advocate Arif Md Yeasin Jwadder "without properly verifying the complete facts".

Citing a government affidavit in the case, the court said 56 people have died, including four custodial deaths, while 145 others were injured in 171 incidents between May 2021 and August 2022.

"...accordingly, 171 separate FIRs have been registered in connection with the said incidents. It appears that the process of enquiry in connection with all these cases of police action is still in progress.

"What would be significant to note herein is that there has been no attempt on the part of the official respondents either to deny the occurrence or to suppress any fact from this court," the order said.

Advocate General Devajit Saikia also assured the court that appropriate action will be taken against all guilty persons, including the erring police officials, after the enquiry is over and it cannot be stated that no action has been initiated by the state in these cases of police action.

"... it appears that having read some media reports on police actions leading to death/injury of some accused persons in police custody, the petitioner has rushed to this court by filing the present petition, without properly verifying the complete facts," the order read. The possibility of the petitioner

approaching the court "merely seeking some publicity" cannot be entirely ruled out, it said.

The Bench also rejected the petitioner's prayer for constitution of an SIT or hand over the probe to CBI, saying that this will happen only when a proper case is made out from the facts to demonstrate that the state government has not taken proper action in the matter or there is a deliberate attempt to shield the culprits.

On another prayer in the petition regarding setting up of human rights courts in Assam, the HC noted that 12 such courts have already been set up in different districts.

Jwadder claimed in the PIL that more than 80 "fake encounters" between Assam Police and the accused have taken place since May 2021, when Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma took charge, resulting in deaths of 28 people and injuries of more than 48 others.

The people killed or injured were not dreaded criminals and the modus operandi of police has been the same in all the encounters, the PIL said.

Jwadder sought an enquiry by an independent agency like CBI, SIT or any other police team from other states under the supervision of the court.

The petition elaborated that as per police statements published in newspapers, the accused tried to snatch service revolvers of the police personnel and in self-defence, police had to retaliate and kill or injure the alleged criminal.

Jwadder cast doubt on the contention and said that as the injured or dead persons were not militants, they were not trained to use pistols and it cannot be the case that all the accused could snatch a service revolver from a trained police officer, whose pistols are normally tied to a rope to their waist belt.

CONTD. FROM 3RD PAGE

Row Rages Over

absence of police personnel to manage the large crowd that had gathered to receive him.

"Police personnel who were supposed to manage the crowd were nowhere to be seen," the former Congress president told reporters here in a brief statement.

He was supposed to walk 11 km to Vessu before halting for the night at the Khanabal dak bungalow in Anantnag district.

"It's the Jammu and Kashmir administration's responsibility to provide security... I hope security will now be ensured for remaining days of the yatra. I don't know why it happened but tomorrow and day after tomorrow it should not happen,"

Gandhi said in the unscheduled meeting with reporters.

However, he did not take any questions, saying that interaction would be reserved for Sunday.

"I had to call off my walk because I can't go against my security people," the Congress leader, who started his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Kanyakumari in September and ends it in Srinagar on January 30, said.

Gandhi, after reaching Qazigund, started to walk towards Vessu in South Kashmir as per the plan but the Congress workers suddenly found that the outer cordon, which was to be managed by Jammu and Kashmir police, had disappeared, Congress leaders alleged.

Terming the incident a "big security lapse", his party colleague Jairam Ramesh said Gandhi's security team is holding discussions with the Jammu and Kashmir administration to ensure that everything goes off smoothly for the next few days.

"Politics has its place but by playing with Rahul Gandhi's security in Jammu and Kashmir, the government has stooped to its lowest level," the Congress general secretary added in a tweet in Hindi.

India, he said, has already lost Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi and any government or administration should desist from playing politics on such issues.

Several party leaders echoed his concern, accusing the government of withdrawing security personnel around Gandhi and demanding action against those responsible for the alleged breach.

"The sudden withdrawal of security personnel from the D-area has caused a serious security breach at the Bharat Jodo Yatra at Banihal, Kashmir. Who ordered this?" Asked AICC general secretary KC Venugopal. "The authorities responsible must answer for this lapse and take appropriate steps to prevent such incidents in future," he said on Twitter.

Jammu and Kashmir's AICC in-charge Rajni Patil said "the security lapses indicate unfair and unprepared attitude of the UT administration".

"Due to security reasons, we had to stop the yatra temporarily as there was crowd mismanagement along the yatra route approved by the security apparatus," a senior Congress leader said.

Gandhi's security insisted that he stop the walk immediately and he drove instead to the guesthouse in Khanabal.

The morning started early with National Conference leader and former Jammu and

Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah joining Gandhi for the walk. Both leaders were dressed in similar white T-shirts in the 7 degrees Celsius chill.

Gandhi's white T-shirt look, even in north India's severe winter days, has been the subject of much debate and discussion.

They had walked for about three kilometres in the morning and drove through the 2.85 km Jawahar tunnel. After crossing the tunnel, party leaders accompanying Gandhi found there were no policeman to provide security at the scheduled halt.

Gandhi's security team did not allow him to step out of the car.

The Congress leader will resume his journey on Saturday from Awantipora, 33 km from Srinagar. (with PTI inputs)

Full Security

Kashmir police was not consulted before the Bharat Jodo Yatra was discontinued. We will provide foolproof security (to the yatra)," Additional Director General of Police Vijay Kumar, who is in charge of security in Kashmir Valley, said in a statement.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said he had to call off his walk on Friday because police arrangements "unfortunately completely collapsed" when the yatra crossed Banihal into Qazigund in the Valley through the Jawahar tunnel.

"Only authorised persons as identified by organisers and frisked crowd were allowed inside towards the route of the yatra. Organisers and managers of the BJY did not intimate about large gathering from Banihal joining the yatra," Kumar said.

Crowds, he said, were thronging Qazigund. "Full security arrangements were in place... JK Police was not consulted before taking any decision on discontinuation of the yatra," he added.

"The rest of the yatra continued peacefully. There was no security lapse at all," Kumar said in the statement.

I'm The Eyewitness

The march was stopped on Friday near Qazigund, the gateway to the valley, after the Congress alleged breach of security and mismanagement of crowd by the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

"I'm witness to this. The outer ring of the cordon which was maintained by the Jammu and Kashmir police simply vanished within minutes of Rahul Gandhi starting to walk," Abdullah said in a tweet.

"We had just crossed into Kashmir from Jammu and were looking forward to the 11-km walk but unfortunately it had to be cancelled," he said.

Police Issues

"Motorists intending to travel to Pulwama should use Pohru- BK Pora road. The vehicular traffic will be allowed to move on NH-44 only after the Yatra reaches truck terminal Panthachowk," reads the advisory.

The advisory has requested people, including tourists to adopt alternative routes to avoid any inconvenience, however, it has asked that medical emergencies will be facilitated.

Widespread Rain

against minus 10.4°C on the previous night and it was 1.1°C below normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at minus 3.7°C against minus 1.7°C on the previous night and it was above 1.2°C below normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 5.5°C against 6.3°C on the previous night. It was 3.2°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal recorded a low of 0.6°C (below normal by 0.4°C), Batote minus 0.1°C (below normal by 1.8°C), Katra 6.0°C (0.9°C below normal) and Bhabarwah minus 0.4°C (0.4°C below normal).

Ladakh's Leh recorded a low of minus 11.2°C, the official said.

Massive Avalanche

caused as the village was away from the area, they said.

BJY Not To

political parties, including the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, formed the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration and has been demanding its restoration.

Ramesh's press conference was the first media interaction of the yatra in Kashmir Valley. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also addressed the media briefly.

"I know you will have many questions like what about Article 370 or Gupkar Alliance. There will be separate opportunities for all these political issues," Ramesh told reporters.

Today, the Congress general secretary said, the focus is on the Bharat Jodo Yatra through which Rahul Gandhi is meeting people to understand their pain and difficulties so that whenever he gets the opportunity, he will raise them in Parliament.

Ramesh said the yatra has no relation with elections.

"What will its impact be on the elections in J-K or other states or in 2024 (Lok Sabha polls), we will think about all these questions later. We have not thought about these issues during the Bharat Jodo Yatra," he said.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7. It 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.

India Issues Notice

cross-border rivers.

"The objective of the notice for modification is to provide Pakistan an opportunity to enter into intergovernmental negotiations within 90 days to rectify the material breach of IWT. This process would also update IWT to incorporate the lessons learned over the last 62 years," said a source.

It is learnt that India issued the notice in view of Pakistan's "intransigence" on a solution to the differences over the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects. The notice was sent as per provisions of Article XII (3) of IWT.

India has always been a steadfast supporter and a responsible partner in implementing IWT in letter and spirit, sources asserted.

"However, Pakistan's actions have adversely impinged on the provisions of IWT and their

implementation, and forced India to issue an appropriate notice for modification of the pact," said another source.

In 2015, Pakistan requested the appointment of a neutral expert to examine its technical objections to India's Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects (HEPs).

In 2016, Pakistan unilaterally retracted this request and proposed that a Court of Arbitration adjudicate on its objections, the sources said.

They said this "unilateral action" by Pakistan is in contravention of the graded dispute settlement mechanism envisaged by Article IX of IWT.

Accordingly, India made a separate request for the matter to be referred to a neutral expert.

"The initiation of two simultaneous processes on the same questions and the potential of their inconsistent or contradictory outcomes creates an unprecedented and legally untenable situation, which risks endangering IWT itself," the source said.

"The World Bank acknowledged this itself in 2016, and took a decision to 'pause' the initiation of two parallel processes and request India and Pakistan to seek an amicable way out," it said.

According to sources, despite repeated efforts by India to find a mutually agreeable way forward, Pakistan refused to discuss the issue during the five meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission from 2017 to 2022.

They said that at Pakistan's continuing insistence, the World Bank has recently initiated actions on both the neutral expert and Court of Arbitration processes.

The sources added that such parallel consideration of the same issues is not covered under any provision of IWT.

"Faced with such violation of IWT provisions, India has been compelled to issue a notice of modification," the source cited above said.

Under the Indus Water Treaty, all the waters of the eastern rivers -- Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi -- amounting to around 33 million acre-feet (MAF) annually are allocated to India for unrestricted use.

The waters of western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab - amounting to around 135 MAF annually have been assigned largely to Pakistan. India is permitted to construct the run of the river plants on western rivers with limited storage as per criteria specified in the treaty.

Under the provisions of Article VIII(5) of the Indus Waters Treaty, the Permanent Indus Commission is required to meet at least once a year.

J&K Govt Creates

of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir to the Union territory of Ladakh."

"In 2021, the School Education Department has transferred 1284 Non-Gazetted posts including 1083 supernumerary posts of Teacher Grade II and III, to the Union territory of Ladakh and after considering list of posts provided by Union territory of Ladakh, 1756 additional posts including 221 gazetted and 1535 non-gazetted were transferred to Union Territory of Ladakh," it reads.

The JK government also said, "General Administration Department of Union Territory of Ladakh in 2021 shared revised list of

additional 104 Gazetted and 382 non-gazetted posts for detailed listing and also requested to transfer regular 1083 Teacher Grade II and III posts instead of supernumerary posts."

It said that the JKGAD was further intimated that if the posts were not available in a particular department, the posts from other departments with similar nomenclature and pay levels shall be considered and if no such posts are available, then posts of similar pay levels may be apportioned to Union Territory of Ladakh

The government said that a High-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Union Home Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India was held on November-16-2022 and it was decided that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir shall get the remaining posts created including the 1083 supernumerary posts of Teacher Grade-II and III and list the same for transfer to Union Territory of Ladakh."

"The Finance Department vide has conveyed concurrence to the creation of 486 posts including 104 gazetted and 382 non-gazetted for transfer and listing in favour of the UT of Ladakh in terms of SO 339 and accordingly, the administrative Council in January-2023 has approved creation of 104 gazetted and 382 non-gazetted and 1083 substantive posts of teachers for transfer to the UT of Ladakh in terms of SO 339," it reads.

JKGAD also said, "Now therefore, sanction is accorded to the creation 104 gazetted and 382 non-gazetted posts in the pay levels indicated for transfer to the UT of Ladakh. Further, sanction is also accorded to creation of 1083 posts of Teacher Grade-II and III in applicable pay levels as per the relevant recruitment rules for transfer to UT of Ladakh with immediate effect."

Bulldozer Runs

85 kanal in village Chitragram , 28 kanal in village Vedapora , 12 marlas in village and 105 kanal 5 marlas in village Mahandpora.

The anti-encroachment drives, the spokesperson said, were conducted under the supervision of Tehsildars of respective Tehsils.

"These drives shall continue till the entire encroached land is retrieved from the encroachers," the spokesperson said.

The action against the former minister comes two days after the administration in Budgam district demolished the outer wall, main gate as well as the entrance of the guardroom of the former minister and National Conference General Secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar's residence in the high-security Humhama area near Srinagar Airport .

Airtel Rolls Out

get ultrafast Airtel 5G Plus services in addition to Jammu and Srinagar cities," the company said in a statement.

Adarsh Verma, Chief Operating Officer of Bharti Airtel, Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh said: "Connectivity to our customers in the Valley is in line with our commitment to bridge the digital divide and connect communities who need it the most".

"We are in the process of lighting up the entire Union territory which will allow customers to enjoy superfast access to high-definition video streaming, gaming, multiple chatting, instant uploading of photos and more," Verma added.

New Zealand Outplay India By 21 Runs In First T20I

Press Trust of India

RANCHI: Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell conjured up fluent and fiery half-centuries before the spinners choked the hosts as New Zealand outplayed India by 21 runs in the opening T20I to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series in Ranchi on Friday.

Asked to take first strike, opener Conway continued his purple patch with a 35-ball 52, while Mitchell smashed a 30-ball unbeaten 59, which included a last-over thrashing of Arshdeep Singh for 27 runs, to power the Black Caps to a challenging 176 for six.

The Kiwi bowlers, led by Mitchell Santner (2/11) and Michael Bracewell (2/31), then spun a web around the home batters, restricting India to 155 for 9 in 20 overs.

India had a disastrous start to their chase with both Ishan Kishan (4) and Rahul Tripathi (0) sent back to the pavillion by the third over.

While Ishan was bamboozled by Bracewell, pacer Jacob Duffy (1/27) induced a fine edge off Rahul's blade. Shubman Gill (7) too perished soon after being deceived by Santner as India slumped to 15 for three.

Suryakumar Yadav (47), however, looked in good touch as he picked up two boundaries before picking one off his hips for a six off Lockie Ferguson (1/22).

Santner then bowled a maiden as



India reached 33 for three in the powerplay overs.

With the pitch offering grip and turn, New Zealand spinners controlled the proceedings keeping it flat and mixing the length even as Hardik unleashed a drive over extra cover to ease the pressure.

Suryakumar too brought out his range of sweep shots to keep the scoreboard ticking. When Blair Tick-

ner was introduced, he played a square cut and then sent another one through backward point for successive fours as India reached 74 for 3 in 10 overs.

Leg-spinner Ish Sodhi was then sent inside out over extra cover for a maximum but New Zealand struck twice in next five balls to remove both the set batters.

While Surya chipped one off Sodhi

to Finn Allen at long on, Hardik was caught and bowled by Bracewell as it all went downhill after that with India slipping to 85 for five.

Deepak Hooda smacked one over the rope before being stumped. Santner then ran out Shivam Mavi. Ferguson bowled a wicket maiden, removing Kuldeep.

Washington Sundar smashed a fighting 28-ball 50 but it was too late.

Earlier, Indian bowlers struggled to get their line and length, allowing New Zealand to get off to a good start.

Allen (35) smashed Hardik for successive boundaries, while a juicy half volley from Arshdeep was hit straight to the boundary.

Conway, who had scored 138 in the third ODI in Indore, also punished the left-arm pacer for a wishful ball as

New Zealand put up 23 in two overs.

Sundar, however, got a lot of purchase from the wicket and soon saw the back of Allen and Mark Chapman (0) in the space of five deliveries to reduce New Zealand to 43 for 2.

Conway, however, kept it going with two fours and a six off Umran Malik, who bled 16 runs in his only over.

Hardik brought himself back and tried to mix his bowling, using more cutters and slower deliveries as New Zealand reached 79 for 2 in 10 overs.

Conway used the slog sweep and his feet to pick up boundaries off Kuldeep and Hooda as New Zealand crossed the 100-mark in the 13th over.

Kuldeep then struck with a googly as Glenn Phillips went for a slog, only to be holed out by Surya at deep mid-wicket.

Daryl Mitchell then joined Conway and, after surviving two video referrals for a caught behind and an LBW, blasted Hardik for two maximums.

Conway, on the other hand, completed his fifty in the 16th over but was sent packing soon by Arshdeep with Hooda taking the catch at long-off.

Ishan Kishan then ran out new man Bracewell (1) and Shivam Mavi had Santner (7) caught by Rahul Tripathi as India seemed to have pulled things back. However, Arshdeep conceded 27 runs in the last over, with Mitchell clobbering him for three sixes and a four.

3rd National Winter Games: Advisor Bhatnagar Reviews Preparation



Observer News Service

GULMARG: Advisor to LG, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, on Friday visited famous tourist destination Gulmarg and chaired a meeting at Golf Club here to review arrangements for the upcoming third edition of 'Khelo India National Winter Games'.

The third edition of 'Khelo India National Winter Games' is being held under Khelo-India Sports Initiative of Union Government from 10th to 14th February 2023.

Addressing the officers during the meeting, Advisor maintained that the games will not only promote sports activities in Jammu and Kashmir but will also go a long way in attracting the tourists, both domestic and foreign.

While reviewing arrangements for the event, Advisor Bhatnagar emphasized upon the district administration and concerned private agencies to put in place all arrangements well in advance for successful

conduct of this mega sports carnival. He delved upon officers and different stakeholders to maintain close coordination and synergy for smooth conduct of the event.

Advisor further said that the approach of the Government is to promote tourism at full scale and therefore we should utilise this opportunity for exploiting and boosting the tourism potential of our UT.

During the meeting, accommodation for participants, traffic management, identification of additional parking slots, snow clearance, security, transport facilities, media coverage, maintenance of slopes, electricity, water, health care facilities and other related issues were also discussed in detail.

It was given out that this year around 2000 athletes from different parts of the country will converge on the snow-bound slopes of Gulmarg during the event to compete in different categories of sports.

Title Eludes Sania In Last Grand Slam After Losing In Mixed Doubles Final

Press Trust of India

MELBOURNE: Trailblazing Indian tennis star Sania Mirza capped off her glorious Grand Slam career with a runners-up finish alongside 'best friend' Rohan Bopanna in the Australian Open mixed doubles final here on Friday.

Pairing up with her first-ever mixed doubles partner Bopanna, the unseeded Indian duo went down 6-7(2) 2-6 to the Brazilian pair of Luisa Stefani and Rafael Matos in the final at the Rod Laver Arena.

"If I cry, these are happy tears. That's just a disclaimer. I'm still going to play a couple of more tournaments but my journey of my professional career started in Melbourne," an emotional Sania said as she struggled to hold back tears.

"Rohan was my first-ever mixed doubles partner when I was 14 and we won the nationals, it was 22 years ago and I couldn't think of a better person, he's my best friend and one of my best partners to finish my career," Sania said, thanking Bopanna, who has one French Open mixed doubles title to his credit.

The 36-year-old, who earlier announced that the WTA event in Dubai next month will be her swansong, is India's most accomplished woman tennis player, having won six Grand Slam title, including three mixed doubles trophies.



She had won the mixed doubles titles at the 2009 Australian Open and the 2012 French Open with Mahesh Bhupathi and the 2014 US Open with Brazilian Bruno Soares.

The Rod Laver Arena has been a happy hunting ground for the Hyderabad. She has a women's doubles and mixed doubles title each and has finished runner up four times at the Australian Open.

"It started in 2005 when I played Serena Williams in the third round as an 18-year-old and that was scarily enough 18 years ago. I have had the privilege to come back here again and again, win some tournaments here and play some great finals amongst you all."

"Rod Laver Arena has really

been special in my life and I couldn't think of a better arena to finish my career at in a Grand Slam," Sania said.

The presence of her son Ishaan, alongside family and friends made the occasion sweeter.

"I never thought I'd be able to play in front of my child in a Grand Slam final, so it's truly special for me, to have my four-year-old here and my parents here, and Rohan's wife, my trainers, my family in Australia who made me feel like home away from home."

"Cara Black who is my best friend and one of my first partners, it's been truly special I wouldn't be able to achieve anything without you all," Sania said.

Djokovic Shrugs Off Dad Drama To Reach 10th Australian Open Final

Agencies

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic shrugged off controversy involving his father to reach a record-extending 10th Australian Open final on Friday and set up a blockbuster decider with Greek trailblazer Stefanos Tsitsipas and a battle for the world number one ranking.

Nine-times champion Djokovic maintained his perfect semi-final record at Melbourne Park with a 7-5 6-1 6-2 win over outgunned American Tommy Paul at Rod Laver Arena, where his father Srđjan was a conspicuous absentee. Earlier on centre court, Tsitsipas saw off Russian 18th seed Karen Khachanov 7-6(2) 6-4 6-7(6) 6-3 to become the first Greek to reach the title match in a city boasting the biggest Greek population outside the southern European nation.

Srđjan Djokovic created a distraction for his son ahead of the semi-final after a video emerged showing him with fans holding Russian flags, which were banned at Melbourne Park early in the tournament. Amid calls from the Ukraine embassy and media pundits for Djokovic Sr to be



banned from the tournament, he declined to attend the semi-final, saying he wanted to avoid "disruption" for his son.

Djokovic defended his father, saying he had been "misused" by Russian fans and that media had misinterpreted the video as a show of support for Russia's war in Ukraine.

"As my father put in a statement, we are against the war, we never will support any violence or any war. We know how devastating that is for the family, for people in any coun-

try that is going through the war," Djokovic, who grew up in Serbia during the wars in former Yugoslavia, told reporters.

Djokovic said he hoped his father could return to his players' box for the final on Sunday, though Tennis Australia declined to comment when asked whether Srđjan would be welcome. A year on from being deported from Australia on the eve of the tournament due to his lack of COVID-19 vaccination, drama has found Djokovic again at Melbourne Park.

Real Kashmir Lose 2-0 To RoundGlass Punjab In I-League

Press Trust of India

PANCHKULA: RoundGlass Punjab increased their lead at the top to four points following a 2-0 win against Real Kashmir in an I-League match at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Panchkula on Friday.

In-form Spaniard Juan Mera curled a free-kick in the first half to score his fifth goal in three games, while Brandon Vanlalremdika added the second just past the hour mark to complete another comprehensive win for RoundGlass Punjab.

Staikos Vergetis' side remain unbeaten at home with seven wins and a draw.

was no different on Friday.

Six minutes from half-time, Vanlalremdika was fouled by Richard Agyemang on the edge of the penalty area. The Ghanaian centre-back was shown a yellow card for his challenge, and Juan Mera stood behind the dead ball, ready to display a moment of brilliance.

The Spaniard curled his free-kick around the wall and into the top corner as goalkeeper Subhashish Roy Chowdhury remained rooted. Just when a one-goal lead started to look bleak for the hosts, Vanlalremdika doubled the advantage.

In the 62nd minute, Khaiminhang Lhungdim crossed



The difference between the two sides was apparent from the word go. RoundGlass Punjab looked like a well-oiled machine, while Real Kashmir lacked confidence.

Poor link-up play and lack of defensive awareness have been a problem for Real Kashmir over the past few weeks, and it

the ball for Majcen at the far post. Real Kashmir's Justin George was caught napping as the Slovenian rose above him to head the ball towards the goal. Although goalkeeper Roy Chowdhury managed to save the header, the rebound fell to Vanlalremdika, who tapped the ball into an open net.

United Can't Be Complacent Against Reading: Ten Hag

Agencies

Manchester United expect Reading to be highly motivated for Saturday's FA Cup meeting and will not take their second-tier opponents lightly, manager Erik ten Hag said on Friday. United have won five out of their seven games in 2023 and are fourth in the Premier League standings on 39 points.

They have also reached the semi-finals of the League Cup and the Europa League's knockout stage, and are favourites to beat Reading in their FA Cup fourth round clash on Saturday.

"Football is not decided on paper. We have to be ready for every game. Every opponent will be tough, especially in the FA Cup. For them it is a perfect chance. We have to be on the front foot and fully focussed," Ten Hag told reporters.

"We want to win every game. We play every game fully. The next one is always the most important. "We always have selection issues, but I think tomorrow we will have a strong selection for this game, we have a good squad, we can cover things."

United will play nine times between Jan. 28 and Feb. 26, starting with the FA Cup game against Reading before taking on Nottingham Forest in the second leg of a League Cup semi-final and facing Barcelona twice in the Europa League.

Ten Hag said he was happy with the depth of his squad, and when asked if fringe players like Facundo Pellistri could go out on loan, the Dutchman said, "some players we are open for loans and some we are not because they have to develop in our environment."



'Tiger Of India' Bags Gold At Sqay Nationals



Agencies

SHOPIAN: A 19-year-old athlete from Shopian has bagged a gold medal at the 23rd National Sqay Championship 2023 held in Jammu.

Faizan Ayoub Khan of Pinjora village in Shopian, who is pursuing BPE in Nagpur, has won three gold medals in martial arts at international level so far.

Faizan said that he was happy to win the gold medal at the national level in martial arts once again as it gives him more confidence to perform at the international level as well.

He said that he has been interested in martial arts since his childhood and started his journey when he was just 13 year old and has been giving training to interested youth.

He said that it was a great learning experience and will work hard to perform well in upcoming events.

"I am very happy to win this medal and am trying to work hard and further excel and perform well at the mega stages. So far I have won three gold medals at international level and these tournaments were played in Nepal, Bhutan and Thailand. I have won 30 gold medals at national level and five times a grand Champion trophy winner as well," he added.

He said that authorities have named a cricket stadium Faizan Ayoub Sports Stadium at Lant-hoor for his achievements.

For winning gold medals at national level for consecutive years, the Sqay Federation of India has given him the title "Tiger of India". (KNO)

PM Advises "Technology Fasting" To Children During Pariksha Pe Charcha

Agenceis

New Delhi: "Don't consider your gadget to be smarter than you" is the advice Prime Minister Narendra Modi has for students to avoid addiction to online games and social media which result in distraction.

"Technology fasting" at regular intervals and a demarcated area as a "technology-free zone" in every household will lead to the enhanced joy of life and help children come out of the clutches of slavery of gadgets, the prime minister suggested.

The words of wisdom were shared during his sixth annual interaction called "Pariksha Pe Charcha" with students, teachers and parents on exam stress related issues.

Giving his own example that he is rarely seen with a mobile phone, PM Modi stressed that one should not avoid technology but restrict oneself to the things of utility as per one's need. The prime minister said the first decision is to decide whether you are smart or your gadget is smart.

"The problem starts when you start to consider the gadget as smarter than you. One's smartness enables one to utilise the smart gadget smartly and treat them as instruments that help in productivity," he said responding to a question.

Dipesh Ahirwar, Aditabh, Kamakshi and Manan Mittal asked questions about the addiction to online games and social media and resulting distractions.

Quoting a study, the prime minister said the average screen time for an Indian is up to six hours.

"In such a situation gadget enslaves us. God has given us free will and an independent personality and we should always be conscious about becoming slaves to our gadgets," he said.

"I am rarely seen with a mobile phone despite being very active. I keep a definite time for such activities. One should not avoid technology but restrict oneself to the things of utility as per one's need," he added.

The prime minister suggested "technology fasting" at regular intervals. He also suggested a demarcated area as a 'technology-free zone' in every household.

"This will lead to the enhanced joy of life and you will come out of the clutches of slavery of gadgets," he said.

A record 38 lakh students registered this year for participation in "Pariksha Pe Charcha".

The number of registrations is at least 15 lakh more than last year, according to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The first edition of the prime minister's interactive programme with school and college students was held on February 16, 2018. The prime minister also gave the example of the loss of capability for table recital among students.

"We need to improve our capabilities without losing our basic gifts. One should keep testing and learning in this era of artificial intelligence in order to preserve one's creativity," he said.

1,325 Trekkers Brave Inhospitable Conditions To Trek Frozen River In Ladakh



Leh/Jammu: Sixty-two foreigners were among 1,325 trekkers who braved inhospitable conditions to trek the frozen Zaskar river at a height of 11,150 feet in the Union Territory of Ladakh, officials said.

The Chadar trek or the Zaskar gorge trek is a winter trail over the frozen Zaskar river.

The 100-kilometre trail reopened this year after a two-year pandemic-induced break. It started on January 8 and concluded on Thursday, an official told PTI.

"A total of 1,325 tourists, including 62 foreigners, took part in this year's trek organised by the Ladakh administration," he said.

Sixteen trekkers were rescued and evacuated at different instances by the Disaster Response Force and the Mountaineering Group of Ladakh, the official said.

They usually carry out rescue operations whenever the trekkers face unavoidable medical emergencies and cannot complete the extreme weather trek, he added.

Trekkers have to brave inhospitable conditions, including average day temperatures of minus 10 degrees Celsius and night temperatures between minus 20 to 25 degrees.

Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures are put in place every year for the safety and security of those undertaking trek.

The trek of the Zaskar river in the Himalayas, which is frozen between January and February, is one of a kind. It takes at least seven days to complete the trek with the trekkers crossing frozen waterfalls, caves and ice slides on the way.

US Has Way Too Many "Top Secrets"

Agenceis

Washington: The discovery of classified documents at the homes of Donald Trump, Joe Biden and Mike Pence has rekindled a debate about an old habit of the US government -- slapping millions of documents every year with labels of "secret," "top secret" and other confidential designations.

Nuclear secrets, names of spies, diplomatic cables: governments everywhere carefully protect information that could compromise security, names of agents or relations with other nations.

But in the United States, the machinery of secrecy works overtime.

Every year, some 50 million decisions are made on whether to mark government documents as "confidential," "secret" or "top secret," according to several experts.

However, "an awful lot of classified documents are not that sensitive," Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer currently at the Brookings Institution think tank, told AFP.

"To classify military plans for Ukraine is legitimate," Riedel added. But "it's much more questionable (to classify) for a State Department cable reporting the secretary of state's arrival in Israel on Monday" when the news has already been reported by the media.

In 2016, a congressional report lamented that "50 to 90 percent of classified material is not properly labeled."

When old documents are declassified, they can bring amusement, such as when the CIA lifted the secrecy on nearly century-old documents in 2011 that explained how to create invisible ink.

Riedel blames "bureaucratic inertia" for the tendency to over-classify: "It's the safe thing to do bureaucratically. If somebody asks why information got into the public domain, you can say it was 'leaked.'"

A flawed system

A "confidential" stamp limits the number of people allowed to view records and the secure conditions -- sometimes free of all electronics -- under which they are given access. Storage rules for classified material are strict, and violators can be prosecuted.

When former president Trump left Washington, he took with him entire boxes of records, including highly classified documents, which led to a search of his Florida home last summer.

Recently, a handful of classified documents were also found in the homes of Trump's former vice president Pence, and also of President Biden, dating to the time when he was vice president under Barack Obama.

"Some might conclude that the procedures in place for handling classified information are too lax. But that's not the case," according to Elizabeth Goitein, a national security expert at the Brennan Center for Justice.

"The protections for classified information are rigorous and extensive," Goitein wrote in The Nation magazine.



Adani Slips To 7th Spot On Richest List Amid Stocks Rout

Agenceis

Srinagar: Asia's and India's richest billionaire- Gautam Adani's fortune fell sharply on Friday and his ranking in the global rich list came down to the seventh spot following a rout in the Adani Group stocks post Hindenburg's report. According to Forbes World's Real Time Billionaires List, Adani's wealth fell by USD 22.6 billion on Friday, taking him to the 7th spot on the list.

Hindenburg on Wednesday



had alleged group companies to be involved in stock manipula-

tion, money laundering and accounting fraud. Adani Group on

Thursday had said that it was evaluating relevant provisions under US and Indian Laws for remedial and punitive action against Hindenburg Research.

Shares of Adani Group's seven listed companies crashed for the second straight day on Friday. Adani Transmission and Adani Total Gas sank nearly 20 per cent in their biggest daily drop since mid-March 2020.

Adani Enterprises, Adani Green and Adani Ports also tumbled 18 per cent, 20 per cent and

16 per cent respectively. Shares of recently acquired Ambuja Cements witnessed their biggest intraday fall since 2006, with the share price dropping 17.33 per cent to Rs 380.45 apiece on the NSE.

Hindenburg Research in a report on January 24 accused Adani of stock market manipulation, called the share prices of its seven listed companies 'overvalued', and questioned the role of close family members -- two among many serious allegations.



ATTENTION NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

The Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Government of Jammu & Kashmir is inviting applications for Accreditation of News Media Representatives (Journalists, Camera Persons, Technicians)

Who can apply?

News Representatives

Working Journalists (Correspondents/Camera man and other categories except freelance) as defined in the Occupational, Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 engaged in news gathering/news bureau of the news organization

Freelance Working Journalists not employed by any news media organisation
Veteran Journalists
 -having attained the age of 65 years.
Technicians (Electronic Media)

News Organizations (Print Media)

Newspapers (Daily)
 Newspaper (Weekly/Fortnightly)
 Periodicals/Magazine

News Organisations (Electronic Media)

Satellite Channels (News Current Affairs)

News Agencies

Print and Electronic (including photo service)

Digital News Publisher

News websites

Eligible Media Representatives can download the detailed prescribed format which includes conditions of eligibility etc from the official website of DIPRJK (<https://jkdirinf.jk.gov.in>) or its Official Social Media handles

Applications complete in all respects alongwith required documents should reach DIPR office Jammu/Srinagar by or before 27-02-2023

**Directorate of Information and Public Relations
 Government of Jammu & Kashmir**

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