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ARTICLE- 370

SC To Consider Listing Of Pleas Against Abrogation



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday said it will take a decision on early listing of petitions challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 which had given special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala took note of the submissions of senior advocate Raju Ramchandran, appearing for one of the parties, that the pleas needed an urgent hearing.

"All right. I will take a call on it," the CJ said.

On December 14, last year also, the pleas for urgent listing were mentioned before the bench by Radha Kumar, an academic and author, who had intervened in pending petitions.

Earlier on April 25 and September 23, last year, a bench headed by the then CJ N V Ramana, since retired, had agreed to list for hearing the pleas challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370. The apex court will have

to re-constitute a five-judge bench to hear the pleas as ex-CJ Ramana and Justice R Subshash Reddy, who were part of the five-judge bench which had heard the pleas, have retired.

Besides the two former judges, Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, B R Gavai and Surya Kant were part of the bench which, on March 2, 2020, had declined to refer to a larger seven-judge bench the batch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 on August 5, 2019.

Several petitions challenging the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which split J-K into two Union Territories Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh were referred to a Constitution Bench headed by Justice Ramana in 2019 by the then CJ Ranjan Gogoi.

By abrogating Article 370, the Central government had revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. NGO, People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUC), Jammu and Kashmir **More on P6**

Centre Considering Issue Of Non-Functional Statutory Panels

The Centre on Friday told the Supreme Court that the issue of allegedly non-functional statutory panels in Jammu and Kashmir, including the human rights commission, is under consideration and sought three weeks to apprise it of developments. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala took note **More on P6**

Development Gap Of 7 Decades Reduced In Last 3 Yrs: LG

'The Dream Of Rail Route From Kashmir To Kanyakumari Is Being Realized'

Observer News Service

Chandigarh: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Friday that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jammu and Kashmir has reduced the development gap of seven decades in the last three years and women and the deprived sections, who had to face discrimination for decades, have gained new confidence.

Addressing an event organized by Rotary Clubs of Jammu and Kashmir City & Patna Mid-town at Zirakpur here on Friday, the LG said that tremendous development is taking place in sectors like industries, service sector, tourism, agriculture in J&K.

"The women, the deprived sections who had to face discrimination for decades, have gained new confidence. Today the youth of Jammu Kashmir have



VILLAGES AND CITIES HAVE A GREATER role in accelerating the development and realizing the vision of India becoming the third largest economy of the world. Youth must be empowered to become the growth engine of the country."

become a major contributor in nation building. One lakh crore rupees are being spent on infrastructure. New roads are being built in every corner of J&K. The dream of a

rail route from Kashmir to Kanyakumari is being realized," Sinha said. Earlier, he said that the Rotary clubs in Jharkhand and Bihar are jointly executing

major public welfare projects in health, sanitation, women empowerment, skill development & strengthening rural communities in the villages.

He also said the Rotary's members across the globe have a common objective of serving others and to create lasting change in the society.

"Our ideal of self-less service, enshrined in age-old tradition and culture, is universal. Public service, happiness of all and human dignity is the edifice of our social values. Rotary Clubs are working with dedication and without any discrimination for the well being of others. Service should be our life's mission," the LG said.

Appreciating the effort of the Rotary Clubs to address society's pressing problems, the LG said that the members, who are also the leaders from the professional, business community, **More on P6**

ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE Admin Reassures Poor Won't Be Touched

Agencies

Srinagar: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Friday reiterated that no poor person would be touched during the ongoing land encroachment drive.

Talking to media persons here, Bidhuri who took over as the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir from P K Pole recently said Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has categorically made it clear that the land encroachment drive is for a particular set of people and no poor people would be touched during the drive.

"There should not be any misconception or misunderstanding what the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had



said", he added. He said protecting state land is the administration's duty.

Anger has been brewing across Jammu and Kashmir over the ongoing demolition drive. A few days ago parts of Kashmir observed a shutdown against the drive.

"I want to convey through the media to the **More on P6**

JKP Gets Corner Shot Pistols Among New Weapons

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Police has for the first time inducted three state-of-the-art weapon systems, including the made-in-India 'Zen ShootEdge' corner shot pistol, to strengthen its arsenal as it counters various security and counter-terror challenges in the Union territory.

Personnel of the force are undergoing training with the newly inducted Tavor X-95 and MP-5 rifles and the 'Zen ShootEdge' pistol, officials said, adding the corner shot pistol facilitates shooting around corners and over the top of walls without exposing the user.

"Recently, three new weapons were inducted into the force. The (police) force got these three weapons in which



there is a corner shot weapon. There was a dearth of such weapons in the force," Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kulbir Singh told PTI here.

He said it is necessary to modernise the force's arsenal to meet and combat greater security and counter-terrorism challenges. "It is always expected that we upgrade our weapons. It has taken place in the past too," Singh said. **More on P6**

Two-Day Wet Spell In J&K From Feb 19

Agencies

Srinagar: The weather department on Friday predicted two-day spell in Jammu and Kashmir from February 19, even as the night temperature further rose at all places in the Valley, barring Pahalgam in South Kashmir.

Deputy Director, Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather would remain mainly dry tomorrow while there is a possibility of light rain and snow at isolated higher reaches of Kashmir on February 19.

With the possibility of light rains, snow at isolated higher reaches of Kashmir, the weather would remain generally cloudy, he said, adding that on February 20th, there is a possibility of light rain in plains and light to moderate rain and snow in middle and higher reaches during 20th late afternoon to early morning of February 21st.

He further informed that from February 21-24th, the weather would remain occasionally cloudy with mainly dry weather. The Meteorological department has also advised people to stay alert and away from avalanche prone areas.

Meanwhile, the mercury continued to show an upward trend with all places in Valley barring Pahalgam recording above sub-zero **More on P6**

Snowslide Claims Life Of Kupwara Youth

Agencies

Srinagar: A youth was killed on Friday after coming under a snowslide in Machil area in North Kashmir's Kupwara district.

26-year-old Aijaz Ahmad Tantray and his wife were walking along Kulbugh in Machil when a snowslide hit the area on Friday afternoon, reports said. While his wife had a narrow escape, Tantray got trapped under the snow.

Instantly, a rescue operation was launched by locals and the army at the site. However, after hectic efforts, Tantray's lifeless body was retrieved. **More on P6**

JKSSRB Okays List Of Selected Candidates For 2300 Govt Posts

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection and Recruitment Board (SSRB) has finalised a list of over 2,300 successful candidates for government posts, which will reduce the staff shortage in various departments including health department, an official said on Friday.

"We have finalised the list of 1,534 candidates for junior assistant posts referred to us by various departments. A notification to this effect will be issued shortly," Chairman of the SSRB Rajesh Sharma told PTI. In addition to this,

the board has also finalised the list of selected candidates for the posts of junior staff nurse (582) and ANM/health worker (202), said Sharma. He said these lists were approved in the 220th board meeting held on Thursday.

The chairman said there was some delay in finalising the list as some of the candidates had gone to the court.

"The court orders on the petitions came recently and we have expedited

the process since then," he said.

On the upcoming recruitments in Jammu and Kashmir, he said, the board will hold examinations for 1,390 posts of Junior engineers in various departments, 1,972 posts finance accounts assistants and 1,395 posts of panchayat secretaries in the months of March and April this year.

Sharma said the board was working on forming a calendar of activities for the recruitment of government jobs.

"We are working on framing a calendar of examinations for six to eight months right now. The annual calendar will help in time-bound and expeditious recruitment process," he added.

Jindal Group Sets Its Footprint In Kashmir

CMD Sajjan Jindal Lays Foundation Stone Of New Steel Processing Unit At Pulwama



Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Chairman and managing director of JSW group Sajjan Jindal laid the foundation stone of a new steel processing unit in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Proud to announce that we have laid the foundation stone for our New Steel Processing (sic) unit in #Pulwama - the heart of #Kashmir!" Jindal wrote on Twitter.

"Contributing to the growth of the beautiful **More on P6**

Govt Terminates Superintendent Jail, Ex-ARTO

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu & Kashmir government has terminated a Superintendent Jail and a former Assistant Regional Transport officer.

In two separate orders, the government has ordered termination of Saleem Ahmad Beig, Superintendent Jail, presently posted at district jail

Jammu, and Abdul Majid Bhat, the then I/C ARTO Shopian, presently under suspension.

According to the orders, the review committee constituted by the Government observed that these officers have not performed their duties efficiently and their conduct remained doubtful/unsatisfactory and their cases falls under broad criteria as laid down in Article 226(2) of The Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations as amended vide S.O. 324 dated 22.10.2020.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

S H O R T T A K E S

DC Budgam Suspends Tehsildar

The deputy Commissioner Budgam has suspended a first class magistrate after finding him absent in Khansahib area in central Kashmir. Quoting an official, news agency Kashmir Dot Com reported that during a weekly visit of DC Budgam, Fakhuridin Hamid to Khansahib SubDivision, Tehsildar Abdul Gani was found absent and thereafter report was sought from SDM and he in turn informed that the Tehsildar is absent from 13th February till date. It was further reported that Tehsildar was

Govt Bans J&K Ghaznavi Force

The Centre on Friday banned the Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF), which has been formed with cadres from militant organisations such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. According to a notification issued by the Union Home Ministry, the JKGF has been involved in infiltration bids, narcotics and weapon smuggling, carrying out terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, and regularly issuing threats to security forces. The outfit has also been using various social media

2 TRF Militants Held In Srinagar: Police

Two militants of the Resistance Front (TRF), a shadow outfit of Lashkar-e-Taiba, were arrested here on Friday, police said. "2 militants of TRF arrested by Srinagar Police namely Zubair Gul S/o Gh Mohd Bhat R/o Zoonimar (Category C) & Mohd Hamza Wali S/o Md Yousuf R/o Safakadal (Hybrid)," Srinagar Police tweeted. They were involved in many militant incidents in Srinagar, they said. "One Pistol, one grenade and other material were recovered from their possession," a police official said, adding an FIR has been **More on P6**

3.6 Magnitude Quake Hits Katra

An earthquake of 3.6 magnitude hit the Katra belt of Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Friday, officials said. There was no casualty or damage to property reported from anywhere, they said. The quake struck at 5.01 am at a depth of 10 km, the National Centre for Seismology said. The epicentre was 97 kilometers east of Katra. The latitude and longitude of the earthquake were found to be 33.10 degrees and 75.97 degrees respectively. The location of quake **More on P6**

Fit India Movement Ambassador Meets LG

Danish Manzoor, Indian Taekwondo Team Athlete and Fit India Movement Ambassador called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhavan here on Friday. Manzoor accompanied by his coach Atul Pangotra expressed gratitude to the Lt Governor for the unprecedented support and assistance being provided to the sportspersons of Jammu Kashmir, an official spokesperson said Friday. Later, Abhishek Jamwal, International Wushu Player also met the Lt Governor. Besides them, the spokesperson said, Tript Kumar Sharma, Chairman, **More on P6**

LG Greets People On Mahashivratri

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has extended his greetings to the people on the eve of Mahashivratri. In a message, the Lt Governor said: On the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri, I convey warm greetings and good wishes to all. The festival, which is celebrated as 'Herath' by the Kashmiri Pandit community, is a harbinger of peace, prosperity and happiness. May Lord Shiva guide us on to the path of justice, truth and wisdom and strengthen our faith in the goodness of mankind, prayed the Lt Governor.

Shab-E-Meraj: Traffic Police Issues Advisory

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The traffic police Srinagar has issued a route advisory for devotees (zayireen) coming from different areas towards Ziyarat Dargah Sharief Hazratbal.

A large number of devotees are expected to assemble at Asari Sharief Hazratbal for the celebrations of Mehraj-ul-Aalam falling on intervening night of 18th February and 19th February 2023 and Friday following on 24th of February 2023.

Vehicles coming from North Kashmir carrying devotees after reaching Shalteng have been asked to adopt Parimpura -Qamarwari - Cement Bridge - Noorbahg -Sekidafar - Eidgah - Aalimasjid -Sazgaripora -Hawal -Alamgari Bazar -Mill Stop -Molvi Stop (Lal Bazaar) -Botshah Mohallah -Kanita route and enter University Parking from Sir Syed Gate.

Vehicles carrying devotees (Zayireen) from South Kashmir after reaching Pantha Chowk are advised to adopt Panthachowk -Stone

Quarry (Athawajan) -Batwara -Sonwar Bazar -Ram Munshi Bagh -Gupkar -Grand Palace -Zethiyar Ghat Nishat -Fore-shore Road -Habak Crossing route to enter Naseem Bagh Parking.

Vehicles carrying devotees (zayireen) coming from Budgam and adjoining areas advised to adopt Hyderpora -Tengpora -Bemina Bye Pass -Bemina Crossing -Qamarwari -Cement Bridge -Noorbahg -Sekidafar -Eidgah -Aalimasjid -Sazgaripora -Hawal -Alamgari Bazar -Mill Stop -Molvi Stop (Lal Bazaar) -Botshah Mohallah -Kanita route to enter NIT parking.

Vehicles from Lalchowk will adopt the Lal Chowk -SRTC Bridge -Ikhwan Crossing -Police Station Khanyar -Bohri Kadal -Rajouri Kadal -Gujwari Chowk -Hawal -Alamgari Bazar -Mill Stop -Molvi Stop (Lal Bazaar) -Botshah Mohallah -Kanita route to enter NIT Parking.

From Ganderbal the vehicles are asked to drive through Nagbal -Zakoora -Habbak to enter Naseem Bagh Parking.



Dal Lake's Area Never Changed: VC, LCMA

Agencies

Srinagar: The Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) on Friday said that the area of the world famous Dal Lake has never changed, claiming that the lake covers an open space area of 20.3 square kilometers.

Vice Chairman, LCMA, Bashir Ahmad Bhat said that the area on which the lake is spread has never changed as it always remained constant at 25 square kilometers.

"Three years ago, the open space at lake was just 13 kilometers as nearly seven square kilometers of the lake was infested with Lilly and other things," he said, adding that the open

space of the lake was increased as all Lilly was removed from the lake, taking the open space of the water body to 20.3 square kilometers.

He further said that space would be increased further as many patches of land have been identified, where dredging has been started.

The Vice Chairman also said that navigation channels have also been restored previously, which were closed earlier, it helped to increase the circulation of water, adding that the main aim is to expand Dal Lake as much as possible without infringing any other thing.

"It is a live lake; almost all of the areas have vegetation. Infestation of the vegetation had in-

creased till two years ago, a substantial portion was occupied by Lilly, it would have turned into land mass, but all such infestations have been removed and currently, the open space has been increased to 20.3 square kilometres," he added.

Asked about the reports showing the lake squeezing from 21 square kilometres to 12.5 square kilometres from 1950 to 1998, he said that these reports are not based on facts. "The fact is since the survey conducted by Sir Walter Lawrence, nothing has changed. It was in fact 18.3 sq kilometres then, but now the open space has increased further. There were some hamlets, they were dredged out and helped to expand the lake sur-

No Firing Took Place In City: Police

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Police on Friday clarified that there was no firing incident in Qamarwari area of Srinagar yesterday as is being reported by several media houses.

In a statement, a spokesperson said there is still confusion in some quarters of the media about the incident in Qamarwari yesterday morning and it is clarified that no incident of firing on any individual took place anywhere in Srinagar.

"There was a sound heard after which a search opera-

tion was launched which is routine in suspicious circumstances. Some media houses are quoting an unverified mischievous claim on telegram channel wherein name of one revenue official is mentioned," reads the statement.

It added during in-depth investigation it came to fore that neither any such person works in revenue department nor any such firing incident took place.

"Investigation in the case is in full swing and miscreants involved in creating panic in the area will be caught soon," it said.

Youth Found Dead In Karan Nagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The body of a 27-year-old youth was found on Friday in Gole Market area of Karan Nagar here, officials said.

Officials said that a

27-year-old youth identified as Adil Nazir Bhat resident of Noorbahg was found unconscious in a washroom of Masjid at Gole market.

He was shifted to SMHS hospital here where doctors declared them brought dead.

Prof. Farhan Rana From Cornel University Delivers Lecture At NIT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The 2nd edition of 5-day Short-Term Course (STC) on Semiconductor began at PG Department of Physics, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar in a virtual mode.

The theme of the course is "Journey of Semiconductor Physics to Smart Devices to Intelligent Automation, which coincides with the syllabi module of both UG and PG programs, the motivation behind conducting the course.

He said that the government started work last year in Septem-

Defunct Pipe Making Dal Lake Dumping Ground

Agencies

Srinagar: Most of the sewage coming out of the houseboats gets dumped into Dal Lake, polluting the famous water body in Srinagar. The government says that the work on laying the sewerage system is already going on and the project is likely to get completed by March 2023.

The sewage coming out of the houseboats is presently getting dumped in the water body, which is further deteriorating the quality of water at Dal Lake. "Most of the sewage from the houseboats presently gets dumped into Dal Lake only, but after the completion of the sewerage system, the sewage will be shifted to the treatment plant, which will ensure quality water in the lake," General Secretary of Kashmir Houseboat Owners Association (KHOA), Abdul Rashid Kolu said.

He said that the government started work last year in Septem-

ber to lay the sewage pipelines and other related things, adding that the work was started soon after the Chief Secretary gave directions to come up with the sewerage system, which is coming up at the cost of Rs 13.5 crore.

"The pipelines have been laid at several places, but the process has been completed yet," he said, adding that the work was started in September last year, but is presently at halt for the last two months.

Chairman of the association, G R Siea said the sewerage system at Dal Lake for houseboats is much-needed and welcome steps, but the work at present has been stopped probably due to winters.

However, he said that the poles have been erected at many places and it is expected that the work in this regard will be started soon. "The work in Nigeen has been completed, the weather has forced the suspension of the work and we are expecting

that the work will be started from March again," he said.

He added that the sewerage system is the best thing to prevent the sewage coming from the houseboats.

Superintending Engineer of Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA), Syed Muhammad Hidayat Ullah, said that a Delhi-based company has already been hired for the work and the work was stopped following the snowfall.

"The contractor has been persuaded and has been brought back after the improvement in the weather conditions. The work will be started soon and it is expected that the work will be completed by the end of March," he said.

Pertinently, the government had said that it is opening 20 navigation channels in Dal Lake, which will help to improve the quality water and free movement of locals and tourists into the interiors of the lake— (KNO)



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS



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

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5:52
ZUHR	12:45
ASR	4:37
Magrib	6:19
ISHA	7:41

This Day In History

- 1930- US astronomer Clyde Tombaugh discovers Pluto
- 1932- Japan declares Manchuria independent
- 1951- Nepal becomes a constitutional monarchy
- 1965- The Gambia becomes independent from the United Kingdom
- 1974- NASA launches Italian satellite San Marcos C-2 (235/843 km)
- 1977- Space Shuttle above a Boeing 747 goes on its maiden flight
- 1979- NASA launches space vehicle S-202
- 1979- President Zia ur-Rahman's National Party wins elections in Bangladesh
- 2003- Comet C/2002 VI (NEAT) makes perihelion, seen by SOHO.
- 2003- Nearly 200 people die in the Daegu subway fire in South Korea
- 2004 - Up to 295 people, including nearly 200 rescue workers, die near Neyshabur in Iran when a run-away freight train carrying sulfur, petrol and fertiliser catches fire and explodes.
- 2014 - Ukrainian Revolution of 2014 begins as protesters, riot police and unknown shooters take part in violent events in the capital, Kiev, culminating after five days in the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich
- 2016 - Pope Francis questions US Presidential hopeful Donald Trump's Christianity over his call to build a wall on the Mexican border

Earthquakes: A monster is lurking beneath Kashmir, say experts

Shafa'at Rasool

Srinagar - Kashmir may not always be a spectator to the anger of the Earth, as meteorological experts believe that we may witness a massive earthquake, registering above 8 on the Richter scale, in future. Nobody knows when it can be tomorrow or after a hundred years. But contrary to the locally held belief that Koh-i-Sulaiman and other hills of volcanic origin may erupt, the danger is mainly due to the tectonic activity in the entire Himalayan region; from the Hindukush in the west to Sadiya hills in the east.

Irwin Meteorological Department has already placed central and south Kashmir in the high risk zone 6 of the seismic map of India. This signifies an extremely high probability of earthquakes of very high magnitudes. These dangers arise from the fact that the Indian peninsular plate is pushing itself in to the Eurasian plate at a rate of 6 cm per year and this is build-up pressure in the entire Himalayan region, thus provoking tectonic activity. Earthquakes in this region are primarily the release of this pressure caused by the movement of plates deep within.

The point of worry is that the entire Himalayan region barring Kashmir and western Nepal has experienced major earthquakes, thus releasing some of the tension. Experts say that an earthquake measuring 8 on the Richter scale is due in these two regions. Seismologists call an earthquake of above 8 magnitudes as 'great'.

But no one knows when this will happen as there is absolutely no reliable forecasting method available at this time. "Although we have minor earthquakes here, as the one last year of 6.2 magnitude whose epicentre was in the Hindukush, but we have not experienced any great one in the last 160 to 900 years. By hypothesis and statistical prediction we can say that Kashmir may witness a severe earthquake. But nobody knows when", says Surinder Paul, senior meteorologist and Deputy Director Indian Meteorological Department, Srinagar.

Experts dismiss as myths the views about current volcanic activity in Kohi-Sulaiman and other hills in the valley. Prof. Muhammad Ismail Bhat, head of the geology and geo-physics department in University of Kashmir clarifies: "These public fears have no basis, we do not face any danger from these hills nor is there any question of some volcanic activity going on inside them". Studies have revealed that these hills came into being some 280 million years ago because of volcanic eruptions, and remained active for another 100 million years. They have shown no activity for the past 180 million years.

The extensive media treatment of the causes behind earthquakes (after the Gujarat quake) has made terms like 'tectonic plates' and 'Richter Scale' almost household words, and public awareness about earth's temperament has increased substantially. The fact that earthquakes cannot be predicted with pinpoint accuracy, leave alone prevented, is being accepted with philosophical stoicism. One point of comfort has emerged from this deluge of specialised information, and experts have put it across with admirable clarity: 'Earthquakes do not kill people, buildings do.' There lies the hope for people in regions prone to earthquakes, if governments wake up in time, that is.

(Kashmir Observer, 18 February, 2001)

اردو نیوز ایگزیکٹو انجینئر ڈیویڈ ہڈن سرینگر

اطلاع عام

ایگزیکٹو انجینئر ڈیویڈ ہڈن سرینگر اطلاع دیتے ہیں کہ دودھ گاؤں ڈیپارٹمنٹ پلانٹ پر دو لاکھ چوبیس ہزار (2,25,000) گلیٹن گنجانش والے سرسوں ریڑروانتر (Service Reservoir) کی صفائی کے پیش نظر مورخہ 21 فروری 2023ء بروز منگل صبح 9 بجے سے شام 9 بجے تک مندرجہ ذیل علاقہ جات میں پانی کی فراہمی متاثر ہوگی جس کے لئے حکم معذرت خواہ ہے۔ صارفین کرام سے استدعا ہے کہ وہ قبل ازیں پانی کا مناسب ذخیرہ کر کے حکم سے تعاون کریں۔

علاقہ جات:

کرالپورہ، موچیہ، باغ مہتاب، وان پبل، راولپورہ، صنعت نگر، بیرباغ، حیدرپورہ، باغات، برزلہ، مولک، ہفتہ چنار، مگرل باغ، آلوچی باغ و ملحقہ علاقہ جات۔

لینڈلائن نمبر 0914-2452047, 0194-2477207

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No: WWD/ 7742-50
DIPK-17588/22
Dated: 17-02-2023

ایگزیکٹو انجینئر ڈیویڈ ہڈن سرینگر

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE
(G&P) DEPARTMENT KASHMIR
Tel-0194-2474234 Fax -2482032 – email:- kashflori@rediffmail.com

CANCELLATION OF e-NIT's

Subject: - Outsourcing of Entry Ticketing System of Gardens/Parks of Floriculture Department Kashmir – Cancellation thereof.

Reference: - i). Minutes of the Meeting held on 04.11.2022 issued under endorsement No. DFK/GS-624/2916 Dated.04.11.2022 and
ii). Minutes of the Meeting held on 23.01.2023 issued under endorsement No. DFK/GS-662/220 Dated.23.01.2023.

Due to poor response, following e-NIT's, floated for outsourcing of entry Ticketing System of Gardens, Parks of Directorate of Floriculture, Kashmir are hereby cancelled ab-initio: -

01. Iqbal Park, Srinagar invited vide e-NIT No.13 of 2022 Dated.07.06.2022 under Tender Id.No.2022_FLOD_173159_1.
02. Akad Park, Pahalgam invited vide e-NIT No.08 of 2022 dated.30.05.2022 under Tender Id No.2022_FLOD_171372_1.
03. Mughal Garden, Cheshmashahi, Srinagar invited vide e-NIT No.04 of 2022 Dated.26.05.2022 under Tender Id No.2022_FLOD_171016_1.
By Order

Sd/-
Accounts Officer
Member Secretary

No: DFK/GS-631/469-75
DIPK-17605/22 Dated: 17/02/2023

Kashmir's War on Drugs

Efforts are being made behind the scenes in the valley today to save young and restless from becoming victims of the substance abuse. But even as the syndicate of Samaritans is working tirelessly, the deep influx of drugs is only making it a tough task at hand.

By Swati Joshi

Surging drug menace in the area had enforced a new order. In nearby schools, the girl students were quietly dropping out. "Due to presence of drug addicts, movement of people especially females is hindered," Andrabi said. "If some elderly persons try to stop youth from consuming drugs, it results in a scuffle."

Mood turned militant in the back and winding alleys of Downtown Srinagar's Makhdoom Sahab locality in the recent past when the community members doubled as street vigilantes. Armed with sticks, they fortified their lanes to keep the sneaky drug-peddlers at bay. The self-styled street patrolling was perhaps one of the first conspicuous community mobilization efforts in the recent years and a shot in the arm in Kashmir's 'war on drugs' drive.

For years, the unruffled path passing through their residences would be frequented by unassuming addicts and 'dope-men'. The alleged "drug cartel"—purportedly used as a votebank by some local unionists—nearby has remained a "pain in the neck" for locals and the civil society members.

The vigilantes acted on "credible reports" that felons come in luxurious vehicles after sundown to supply drugs like heroin, brown sugar, cannabis and recreational drugs like Diazepam, Alprax and among others.

"Some people living in Sheikh Colony have been identified who are part of the deep-rooted nexus," Syed Basharat Andrabi, general secretary of Mohalla Makhdoom Sahab welfare committee—that decided to go for social boycott of these families—had alleged.

Surging drug menace in the area had enforced a new order. In nearby schools, the girl students were quietly dropping out. "Due to presence of drug addicts, movement of people especially females is hindered," Andrabi said. "If some elderly persons try to stop youth from consuming drugs, it results in a scuffle."

Streets to Surveys

The community campaign came when cops are everyday seizing contrabands and sending the peddlers behind the bar across the valley.

Reports say the number of addicts visiting Drug De-addiction Centre of Government Medical College in Srinagar has gone up to 5000, from earlier 500, patients annually.

According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), around 70,000 people in Kashmir consume drugs.

Another survey done by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) in February 2019



found out that 600,000 people of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir use opioid drugs, while 80 percent of the drug addicts in Kashmir use heroin and morphine.

A study done by the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) found out that the number of drug addicts in Srinagar and Anantnag districts has increased to 17,000. Roughly, the study says, Rs 3.7 crore is spent every day on drugs by addicts in these two districts.

Of late, these growing numbers and cases have prompted the community response, to "separate the grain from the chaff". This approach has already activated multiple counseling centres in the valley today.

Inside Counselling Centre

Mir Zubair could clearly tell an upsurge in dope cases in Kashmir when even 9-year-old Kashmiri child walks in for an emergency counseling session along with his distraught family members. He terms such cases as an 'innocence gone wrong'.

As a counselor at Concerned About Universal Social Empowerment (CAUSE), the non-government organization "working for the betterment of society", Zubair along with his welfare body has been organizing drug de-addiction awareness programs at Srinagar's Central Jail for four years.

"When we started working around 2010, there was denial at the administration as well as ground level on drug de-addiction," Zubair told Kashmir Observer. "But now the scenario

has changed. There's more awareness amongst people in Kashmir."

The holistic reason for drug addiction in the valley is the social-political disturbance. "I usually receive patients in the age group of 12 and 25 years," he continued. "But at times, when a nine-year-old walks in for counseling, it takes everybody by surprise."

Why Do they Drug

For Arif, it all started with peer pressure. The trader taking trips to other cities would take heroin with his friends until one day his daughter saw him consuming it. She was shattered and started crying which triggered him to visit a drug de-addiction centre in Srinagar.

He was admitted for two months there, and started showing improvement, Aatira Ahad, who was intern at the centre that time, told Kashmir Observer. "We provided him medication and emotional therapy which motivated him to leave heroin."

Like Arif, when Junaid, 23, started taking drugs, he didn't know that it would be difficult to give it up. He resorted to drugs due to peer pressure, and when he thought of quitting, the withdrawal symptoms didn't let him do it.

Unsuccessful in getting positive results from therapists in Kashmir, he went outside to seek help but there was no relief.

His parents lost hope and started suspecting him of finding reasons to

use drugs, but the corporate employee was actually struggling with the withdrawal symptoms.

When Junaid finally visited Dr. Arif Maghribi, a Srinagar-based mental specialist, he first talked about his family's 'no drug history'.

Dr. Maghribi wasn't surprised by his statement, since for many people it's a stigma in the valley to talk about drug addiction. The mental specialist treated him and also talked to his family about the issue.

"He was quite reluctant to bring his family in the initial days," Dr. Maghribi told Kashmir Observer. But after some days when the family realized that Junaid was working hard to give up his addiction, they accompanied him to the mental specialist.

Currently, Junaid is working with a multinational company (MNC) and is living outside India. "His case makes it clear that family counseling is very important in a drug abuse case," Dr. Maghribi said.

But unfortunately, the mental specialist said, many parents lock their children in rooms with a religious book to de-addict them. The outcome of such steps, he warned, may adversely impact the addict and even result in his death.

"People may start drugs due to peer pressure, depression, loss of loved ones, but once they become addict it is very tough to get out of the cycle," the doctor said.

"It's like, first you consume drug, then the drug consumes you."

Beyond Makhdoom Sahab

What started in Makhdoom Sahab hasn't remained confined there only.

As awareness about drug and its destructive consequences is growing, many localities in Kashmir are acting as community watchmen.

"As a community, we can't behave like ostriches that bury their heads in sand to avoid problems," said Ghulam Hasan Khan, a resident of Galwanpora village in Budgam district.

A month before the abrogation of J&K's special status, Khan along with others held a massive protest against the rampant "drug trafficking" in their village. The protestors alleged that the drugs are being cultivated on over twenty kanals of land and is being sold out to even minors.

"We can't let drugs to devour our children," Khan said. "We must come together to spread the message that there's no hope in dope."

As a witness to the rise and fall of different artistic dynasties, an old dusky tree at the iconic Zero Bridge in Srinagar sends down its leaves, swirling onto the wet deck of the bridge to carpet its dull lurid floor. The pitiless frosty air born out of the bosom of Jhelum sways everyone clicking selfies and those sitting on the dilapidated benches made of oak tree.

Among many others, Zameer Ashai, dressed in discreetly dark and baggy jacket, drab pants running straight into his long suburban black boots, amiably looks at the river Jhelum with his sullen eyes reminiscing his lost legacy holding a chilled cup of tea. He doesn't empty the cup peculiarly as it remains his lone companion through his stay at the bridge during these days.

"I hardly see any of my colleagues here," says Ashai, a renowned Kashmiri TV artist, in a sober voice. "Currently, they're busy searching work to make ends meet."

The quintessential Zero Bridge has always been a parallel universe in a sense that over the time it has proven to be an aisle of creativity. The bridge brought together outrageously rich names of bedraggled DD Kashmir who in early 2000 would enthrall people with their characters whose voices would reverberate in every Kashmiri home.

Reminiscing the evenings wherein Zero Bridge would turn into a warm bed of swaying tales and juvenile laughter as his comrades would confabulate and traverse through diverse issues pertaining to their lives satirically.

"We would blow all of our frustrations in laughter sharing each other's sorrows as well as happiness," Zameer adds while catching sight of white cup of tea.

But now, whenever Zameer passes by the same spot, a razor-sharp sense of yearning overtakes him as he seats himself on a fusty wooden bench candidly facing Jhelum cogitating the golden moments that he had spent here with his friends.

"I remember giving autographs to people. But

Tragedy of Kashmiri Thespians

Asif Khan, Arbeena Shah

now, we all are left in shambles to fend our own fate," he says with a deep sigh.

Christened as Kashmir's Dilip Kumar, Ashai recalls the time when he would be surrounded by locals who were avid viewers of DD Kashmir. His fame may have faded but he still remains to be loved more than Dilip Kumar by his fans.

"Though personally I don't like such analogies because Dilip sahab is a much bigger actor than me, however, you can't stop people from calling you with different names," Ashai says humbly.

The actor didn't disappoint his audience when he reappeared on cinema with Imtiyaz Ali's Laila Majnu, back in 2018 and displayed a gripping performance. He once again created magic with his austere acting.

But now, after two years, the said actor like many others is facing arduous times and suffering to make ends meet as DD Kashmir continues playing with the career of budding as well as veteran artists by serving absurd content to the people of Kashmir.

Back in 2000s, when the channel was launched, Kashmiri people would keep their eyes glued to their TV sets, especially on the eve of Eid and New Year. There would be legendary actors like late Shadi Lal Koul whose comedy would act as a stress buster for Kashmiri populace along with some local singing sensations who would momentarily uplift gloom in Kashmir.

Initially, introduced as programmes of interest for the people of J&K and to counter what

As OTT revolution continues to expand its territory throughout the globe, opening a wide spectrum of opportunities for the aspiring artists, DD Kashmir continues telecasting outdated and outsourced programmes leaving the local artist fraternity in disarray as they struggle for their survival.

authorities saw as "Pakistani propaganda", DD Kashmir was supposed to promote the talent within Kashmir to bring a sense of togetherness among people and authorities.

"As per the pledge taken while bringing DD Kashmir into existence, the locals would be engaged and given livelihood," Ayash Arif, another veteran actor of DD Kashmir, says.

"But post 2010, there were some unauthorized programmes which created rift between us and the authorities."

The dramatic duo of Ayash Arif and late Shadi

Lal Koul was known to bring laughter to Kashmiri homes. But the advent of cable TV allied with dull as dishwasher attitude from DD Kashmir did wonders for its great fall.

It was indeed overwhelming for the people seeing the local talent on their TV sets. But today, when OTT platforms are even swaying away the Cable TV audiences, DD Kashmir has been pushed into a state of defunct and its artists in despair as they struggle to make ends meet.

Behind its fall and gradual fading from public memory is its old-school model, says Aijaz Rah, a local singing sensation and a prominent figure of DD Kashmir.

"It could've done wonders till now but it has gone in a reverse direction," Rah says. "They don't hire new artists and on being asked they throw the entire weight on the absence of suitable budget."

Director DD Kashmir, GD Tahir, didn't respond to repeated queries from Kashmir Observer on the stringent and incongruous attitude of the channel culminating fatal results for the artist community who once earned their bread from it.

And now, they're left dry pocketed. As alleged by many they are still awaiting the release of their payments.

"We're in deep distress as many of the families of our artist community are in starvation," Rah continues to voice the artistic anguish.

Though Kashmir has throughout the course of its history been a political theatre, but it is now taking a toll on the lives of the artists who remain clueless about their future.

"Many of our jobless and distressed artists are bedridden today," Bashir Dada, a legendary artist who had worked with DD Kashmir, says.

DD Kashmir artists have been knocking the doors of the court incessantly to get their problems heard and resolved.

But their unending struggle is only creating multitude of problems for them, laments Kashmir's Dilip Kumar at Zero Bridge.

Meet The Man Behind Kashmir Angel Network

Aashiq Hussain Andrabi

Inside his Jawahar Nagar office, Shabir Handoo is finally living his dream. The ex-banker whose media proficiency and income-tax vocation made him insightful about the fraught startup landscape of the valley is now running a promising network of angels—unlike the televised sharks—boosting the brainchild of many Kashmiri self-starters.

Handoo is a suave man, whose work-in-progress—a study on the role of Alternate Financial solutions in augmenting financial inclusion in J&K—is about to shape up as a telling treatise.

Before wearing the hat of an executive dealing with ideas, the Srinagarite studied Media, Interest-free Banking & Insurance and Mid-Career professional courses in Direct taxes and allied laws.

Back in the tumultuous 1990, he worked in the J&K Bank for over a year, before joining Income Tax Department till the year 2021, when as Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax he voluntarily opted out of the Government service to explore opportunities beyond his comfort zone.

“The few skillsets that I acquired over the period of time come handy while dealing with modern professional challenges,” he says. “My core area interests are in the fields of Alternate Finance, regulatory compliances and business planning.”

As an Associate Fellow with the London-based Institute of Interest-free Banking & Insurance, Handoo terms Kashmir Angel Network or KAN a cohort of highly experienced members who have excelled in their own domains.

“That is the edge which provides unique insights and access to resources for startups and also helps us to identify the startup that others may overlook,” he says.

“We are getting a huge response from all over the valley, wherein every query and comment encourages us to work harder and support them in every little way we can. We have been quite successful in a short period of time in creating a buzz around entrepreneurship and raising expectations of youth who hitherto thought of entrepreneurship as a leftover choice if other career options exhausted.”

KAN provides funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities to early-stage companies, helping these startups grow and develop into successful businesses and creating job opportunities and driving economic growth in the region.

In a detailed discourse with Kashmir Observer, CEO KAN talks about startups, self-starters, stimulus and sponsors in context with the valley.

LET'S BEGIN WITH THE CLICHÉ: WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO LAUNCH KASHMIR ANGEL NETWORK?

As a co-founder and chairman of Kashmir Angel Network, I always try to learn something of everything. And therefore, after my educational pursuits and professional services, I could identify potential business gaps across various sectors of local economy. It was also visible that remarkable business ideas could not take off for want of professional mentorship, critical business strategy and financial planning, requisite financial assistance and dependable support in regulatory compliances.

So, a group of friends, who are experts in their own domains, and having similar experiences joined in. This joint venture led to the birth of Kashmir Angel Network (KAN).

CAN YOU GIVE US AN IN-DEPTH OVERVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF SERVICES AND SUPPORT OFFERED TO ENTREPRENEURS AND STARTUPS BY KAN?

Though the main focus of KAN is to provide investment and funding support to startups, however, in order for startups to succeed, we provide support in a range of areas, including, regulatory compliances, registrations support and advisory, business strategy and financial planning, valuation services, financial and

legal structuring, support through mentoring as well as in technology development. KAN consulting services help with these areas and provide handholding to early-stage startups.

WITH SO MANY STARTUPS VYING FOR ATTENTION, HOW DO YOU MAKE THE CRITICAL DECISION OF WHICH ONES TO INVEST IN AND PROVIDE MENTORSHIP TO?

In line with its mission KAN is primarily committed to support aspiring entrepreneurs and early-stage startups turn their business ideas into reality. It also supports validated startups to scale up their business. Moreover, KAN is sector agnostic, thus opening up doors for every disruptive business idea. However, it doesn't mean that each and every startup qualifies to be on-boarded without going through the process of due diligence. The standard process that is applied for filtration looks for disruptive ideas which are technology driven, properly researched through TAM, SAM and SOM analysis. Other factors like scope for scalability, properly researched USPs, business strategy and financial model; how much clarity and passion the team members carry are key areas which are considered before onboarding a startup. Moreover, we have to discount red flags, if any, present in the aspiring startups.

WHAT SETS YOUR APPROACH TO STARTUP SELECTION APART FROM OTHERS IN THE MARKET?

Frankly speaking, we are the only ones in the private sector in J&K for the time being. But that doesn't make our job any easy. It in fact is a challenge. While we indulge in the core business activities, our engagement also extends to building an enabling ecosystem around the growth of startups, creating awareness towards modernised entrepreneurship and digitalization. Nevertheless, our approach is thoroughly professional in following the due process as per industry norms. We conduct research from our side regarding the relevant startup relates to, call for the meet up with founders, evaluate the team and their pitchdeck, check the business model and the financial streams, conduct due diligence and review their business plan and take a call ahead. May I point out that the KAN represents a network of highly experienced members who have excelled in their own domains. That is the edge which provides unique insights and access to resources for startups and also helps us to identify the startup that others may overlook.

INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY ARE CRITICAL IN ANY INDUSTRY. CAN YOU HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE VALUES IN YOUR NETWORK'S INVESTMENT DECISIONS AND INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF UNDERREPRESENTED ENTREPRENEURS?

Inclusivity and diversity are critical for any industry to thrive and grow. In fact, it fosters innovation, productivity and profitability. In the context of startups, we understand that underrepresented entrepreneurs face significant hurdles to entry, such as lack of access to capital, mentorship, and networks. With this realisation, our initiatives primarily focus on handholding, imparting knowledge and making entrepreneurs aware of the opportunities and challenges in the market. We value the business idea, passion and vision of the team, and their commitment to the idea for us to team up with them. In this pursuit we have started a series of discussions at KAN, by the name KANversations, aimed at providing education, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Recently, we have tied up with Wadhvani Foundation, Bangalore, an important entity working for fostering startup ecosystem, to provide the entrepreneurs based in Kashmir a platform to scale up their ideas. Both these programmes are fully sponsored in order that the goal of inclusivity can be achieved.



WHAT STEPS DO YOU TAKE TO EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL OF A PROSPECTIVE INVESTOR, AND WHAT KEY CRITERIA DO THEY NEED TO MEET IN ORDER TO BE ACCEPTED INTO THE NETWORK?

An investor can get onboarded by registering on our website. There is a process in place for enrolment of an investor whose aspirations and ideas meet with ours. The investors are charged a nominal enrolment fee. Any investor who can invest annually with a minimum ticket size of Rs. two lakhs, and can be substantiated through his/her income tax return statements can become a member by submitting his KYC details along with requisite forms.

LET'S DIVE A LITTLE DEEPER INTO THE BENEFITS THAT ANGEL INVESTORS CAN EXPECT WHEN THEY JOIN YOUR NETWORK.

Angel investors can trust the due diligence made by an investor committee of KAN before they are given opportunity to invest in a particular startup. This process benefits the investors as their risk gets minimised. Members are provided a comprehensive pre and post investment support documentation, monitoring and portfolio management services. The investors get opportunity to invest in the best scalable startups which are shortlisted through a process-driven approach.

KAN also helps create opportunity to interact with other angel investors and meet individuals experienced in working with young companies. Members also have access to in-depth reviews, video recordings, and legal and financial due-diligence reports of shortlisted companies. We understand that the startup ecosystem is an ever-changing reality which demands updating of knowledge and timely access to opportunities. Through various efforts, we indulge in active learning, investing and networking opportunities for our members.

HOW HAS YOUR INITIATIVE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STARTUP ECOSYSTEM OF THE VALLEY?

We are getting a huge response from all over the valley, wherein every query and comment encourages us to work harder and support them in every little way we can. We have been quite successful in a short period of time in creating a buzz around entrepreneurship and raising expectations of youth who hitherto thought of entrepreneurship as a leftover choice if other career options exhausted. But now many people see it as promising as a career like any other. By providing funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities to early-stage companies, help these startups grow and develop into

successful businesses, creating job opportunities and driving economic growth in the region.

MEASURING SUCCESS IS CRUCIAL IN ANY BUSINESS. CAN YOU SHARE WITH US THE KEY METRICS YOU USE TO EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR INVESTMENTS?

If you are referring to the commercial returns for investments, then it is too early to delve into quantification in the initial period of investments. You know that angel investments are prone to risk as against debt finance from a bank or an institution. There are no guaranteed returns in equity-based investment that includes early-stage seed investments. However, the key performance indicators are definitely identifiable pointing towards success of an investment. It all depends upon the inherent scalable potential of the relevant startup which in turn depends upon its USP, sales strategy and success of the pilot launch/ MVP. Having accepted high risk, Angel investors usually expect their investments to grow a minimum of 3x to 5x if the startup lives upto its promise.

WOULD YOU MIND SHARING SOME INSPIRING SUCCESS STORIES OF STARTUPS THAT HAVE THRIVED UNDER YOUR GUIDANCE AND INVESTMENT PROGRAM?

Some really promising startups with disruptive and high potential of growth are onboarded with KAN which have been groomed and made investment ready. They have reached tipping point in their growth after intervention by KAN. Their mentorship sessions are being conducted by domain experts some of whom are sitting across the country. Investments in these startups are already happening. However, Non-disclosure clauses in our incubation agreements do not allow me to disclose the name of these startups.

BALANCING THE NEEDS OF STARTUPS IN YOUR PORTFOLIO WITH THE EXPECTATIONS OF INVESTORS CAN BE A CHALLENGE, CAN YOU DISCUSS HOW YOU NAVIGATE THAT BALANCE AND WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THAT ROLE?

It is indeed a challenging task to balance between the needs of startups and expectations of investors. But when you have a clear communication and transparency with both the parties involved; when expectations are set as such that both the parties understand the risks and the rewards of the investment, coupled with understanding of the startups SWOT, and maintaining regular communication are some important steps to maintain the balance between the needs of startups and expectations of investors.

FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS SEEKING FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR BUSINESSES, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THEM IN TERMS OF WHAT THEY SHOULD LOOK FOR IN AN INVESTMENT NETWORK AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR THAT PROCESS?

This question is pertinent as it relates to the mission of KAN. The startups are in need of money and would normally accept wherever it comes from. But the angels that they look for should be experienced and transparent in declaring their investment goals. Startups must know in advance the terms of investment including the share of control that the angels are looking for and the return on investment that they expect. With this knowledge in possession, a startup could breathe easy while dealing with a potential angel investor network.

Our basic endeavour is to make the startups investment ready. Therefore, we would like that the aspiring startups should prepare a competitive and comprehensive pitch deck that clearly explains their business idea, the problem or the business gap they have identified, its solution in quantified terms, market opportunity, and clear projections of their growth. They should be mindful of their business and financial model. It is important for the team to be receptive, open to suggestions, willing to learn and build relationships. We would like them to be actively involved in building their network. They must attend events like KANversations that are being organized for this purpose. It will help them to get an insight into the procedure and workings of the ecosystem and the culture.

They need to be sure of the funds they seek and should be ready with a satisfactory explanation about the purpose for which the funds are sought. Lastly, their proposal should be backed with projections.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STARTUP INDUSTRY IN YOUR REGION?

KAN is backed by passionately driven professionals working across the globe in various leadership roles. Our mission is to be recognized as the trusted and resourceful angel investment network locally and nationally. So as to say, our goal is to expand our network of investors sitting over transnational boundaries, and reaching out to new geographies, create new programs (like the one we have tied up with Wadhvani Foundation) or better resources to cater to the needs of startups.

We would like to create the first private sector incubation centre in the Valley as also to create an angel investment fund in the near future to improve the quality and reach of our operations and make

it easy to cater to the funding needs of the startups in J&K.

CAN YOU WALK US THROUGH THE PROCESS OF HELPING STARTUPS ACHIEVE SCALE AND VALUE FOR THEIR VENTURES?

Angel networking is a tedious job but not when driven by passion and a team of likeminded domain experts who invest their time, energies, and expertise. When the team is driven by an urge to help startups in their journey to success, there is no looking back. Thankfully, this is our story so far.

We believe that the startups need to have a solid foundation which includes a clear vision and a properly researched business plan to achieve long term success; to better understand their target market and their competition to achieve their goals. They need resources which they have no access to. This access and support is being provided by the Angel network. We help them to refine and execute their business strategy, connect startups with investors, help them track key performance indicators (KPIs) and assess their progress over time. It is very crucial to measure progress to find the gaps and shortcomings if any and fix them in real time. When this process moves as per the laid down plans, startups can achieve promised scale for their ventures.

CHALLENGES ARE INEVITABLE, BUT THEY CAN ALSO BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH. CAN YOU SHARE ANY CHALLENGES YOU FACED AS THE FOUNDER OF AN ANGEL INVESTOR NETWORK AND HOW YOU ROSE ABOVE THEM?

Angel network as a concept was hard to sell. The name resonates with one broker company and it took a lot of effort to make this distinction visible. Actually, the idea of a private player creating a platform for startup ecosystem was totally alien in our geography. Lack of awareness, insufficient technical expertise and mentors was another major challenge. Thereafter aggregation of resources was another. However, we got over these challenges by bringing together stakeholders working in different states as also as a result of relentless reach out.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE FUTURE OF ANGEL INVESTING IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR, AND HOW IS YOUR NETWORK POSITIONING ITSELF TO ADAPT AND EVOLVE WITH THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE?

With every response that we get every day from the people of J&K and beyond the valley, be it on social media, or via calls, we feel that we have been successful thus far in creating our impact and influence on the business community and aspiring youth. Since angel investment is new to the Valley, a major challenge is to build trust around it by showcasing success stories in due course of time. This concept being new to the valley, people need to get awareness about its essence and its benefit. We are trying our best to reach out to most of the people/startups to help them. This will go a long way in fostering the entrepreneurship culture and help in creating jobs thereby adding vital value to the economy of scale. We see ourselves in the next five years as being recognised as pioneers of angel investing in Jammu & Kashmir.

LASTLY, WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND INVESTORS?

“Dare to dream” and let the things around you conspire to turn your dream into reality. Dreamers are those who can plan to act. Therefore, smart planning, dedication, conviction and passion are the virtues that take you across the line. For entrepreneurs I would like to say KAN is and will be rooting for you always, we are here for you. You start working on the disruptive ideas, you dare to dream, we are here to help transform your dreams into reality; and to investors, I would like to inform that our youth has got enormous potential, what they require from you and us is support and handholding. Come forward and join this initiative for the symbiotic benefits.

Men Found Charred In Car: Rajasthan Police Detains Half A Dozen People, Searching For Bajrang Dal Leader

Agenceis

Jaipur/Gurugram: The Rajasthan Police has detained half a dozen people and is searching for a Bajrang Dal leader and his associates in connection with the death of two Muslim men from the state whose charred bodies were found in a car in Haryana after they were allegedly abducted by cow vigilantes, police said on Friday.

It is being investigated whether the deaths were a fallout of cow vigilantism, they said.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot condemned the incident and said police have been directed to take strict action in the matter.

Nasir (25) and Junaid alias Juna (35), both residents of Ghatmeeka village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, were allegedly abducted on Wednesday and their bodies were found inside a burnt car in Loharu in Bhiwani on Thursday morning.

The families of the deceased alleged in their police complaint that the people who abducted the two men were from the Bajrang Dal.

Half a dozen people have been detained and are being interrogated. Those named in the FIR are associated with the Bajrang Dal but whether they were involved in the crime or not is yet to be ascertained," Inspector General of Police, Bharatpur range, Gaurav Srivastava told PTI.

Junaid had a criminal record of cattle smuggling. Five cases were registered against him at different police stations, the officer said.

One of the key accused in the case is Mohit Yadav alias Monu Manesar, the Gurugram district president of Bajrang Dal and a member of a self-proclaimed cow protection team. He was earlier named in an attempt to murder case registered at Pataudi police station in Gurugram on February 7.

The police forces of Rajasthan and Haryana are trying to nab him. "Our crime unit and police station teams are searching for accused Monu. We hope he will be arrested soon," said Manbir Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police of Manesar.

While on the run, Manu Manesar released a video message claiming his innocence in the latest case.

"My colleagues and I have no role but Rajasthan Police registered a case against me and my group members. I don't even know the deceased," he said.

"At that time of the incident, I was in a hotel in Gurugram with my team members. I also share the CCTV footage of the hotel which showed our presence in the hotel. We were booked by the Bharatpur police wrongly and it is only a conspiracy to

defame my team and my organisation," he added.

Superintendent of Police of Bharatpur Shyam Singh said an FIR has been registered at Gopalgarh police station against five people -- Anil, Srikanth, Rink Saini, Lokesh Singla and Monu -- on the basis of a complaint lodged by the victims' family members and teams have been formed to nab the accused.

The accused have been booked under sections 143 (unlawful assembly), 365 (kidnapping), 367 (grievously hurt after kidnapping) and 368 (wrongfully keeping in confinement) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), he said.

Asked about the involvement of cow vigilantes in the incident, the SP said it is a matter of investigation.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Friday demanded a CBI probe into the matter and alleged that the Bajrang Dal's name was being dragged into the case due to "political bias".

Bajrang Dal is the youth wing of the VHP.

Reacting to the allegation, VHP joint general secretary Surendra Jain said, "It seems that without preliminary investigation, the Rajasthan Police have assumed that the names taken by the smuggler's brother are responsible for the incident." The VHP leader termed the incident "extremely unfortunate" and demanded that a CBI probe be ordered into the case, saying "the society in the state doesn't expect justice from the Rajasthan government which suffers from political bias." The Congress is in power in Rajasthan.

VHP leaders in Gurugram held a press conference and strongly condemned the registration of the case against the Bajrang Dal members.

Taking to Twitter, Gehlot condemned the killing.

"The killing of two residents of Bharatpur's Ghatmeeka village in Haryana is condemnable. Rajasthan and Haryana police are coordinating with each other for the probe... Rajasthan Police has been directed to take strict action," the chief minister said.

Education Minister Zahida Khan reached Ghatmeeka village to take stock of the situation.

On the victims' families alleging the Bajrang Dal's role in the killings, the Rajasthan BJP said it is not justified to malign an organisation before the investigation is completed.

"Whether the accused have links with the Bajrang Dal or are cow vigilantes, it is a matter of investigation. It is not justified to malign any organisation. It will be better if the police take action against those who are guilty," state BJP spokesperson Ramlal Sharma told reporters.

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Speed! Thrill! Adventurous train journey! A perfect example of Aatmanirbhar Bharat! A new Dawn in the history of comfortable and safer train journey experience! Well! No words can describe the aura of the majestically beautiful all new Vande Bharat Express Trains.

However, the train journeys are one of the most memorable journeys in a person's life! They are the ones which are cherished lifelong by anyone. Providing the rail passengers with a class apart train travel experience has always been the utmost aim and vision of the Railways.

In this direction, the introduction of Vande Bharat Express Trains is a perfect example of the Ministry's concern.

With the introduction of the New Vande Bharat Express Trains, the Railways have achieved a leap towards taking the train journeys to the newer heights. The Trains well-equipped with the latest and advanced technologies, provide you with one of the best in class train travel experiences. They are indeed a new Dawn in the history of the best in class train journeys. They have completely changed the way people used to travel in the trains in the earlier times.

Taking a step forward and going some extra miles for the rail passengers' convenience, the Northern Railway also initiated the all new

Vande Bharat Express Train between Himachal Pradesh's Amb Andaura - New Delhi. It is indeed set as a trademark for the Zone that always strives to serve the rail passengers with a world class train travel experience. However, the initiation of the Vande Bharat Express Trains between the two States is a clear reflection of the Zone's Tagline also that states - "Serving the Customers with a Smile".

Having the capacity of achieving the speed of 160 Kms. per hour in just 0 to 52 Seconds, the Train has taken the train journey experience to a newer height. Cutting down train travel time between the two States to around 5:30 hours only, the Trains are here to write a new chapter of best in class train travel in the history of Railways.

Fully air-conditioned trains are well-equipped with all the latest and modern technologies. The recliner Seats help you to have a more relaxed and comfortable journey. Besides this, the trains are fitted with the L.C.D. T.V.s that not only provides you with all the travel-related necessary information; but, also gives you a perfect dose of "Entertainment on the Go".

When it comes to the facilities, then the trains are Divyangians friendly too! In order to help the differently-abled passengers, the trains have smooth ramps that help them to easily board and

de-board the trains with ease and hassle-free. Also for enabling the visually-impaired Divyangians, the trains' seat numbers are engraved with the Braille Scripts.

The spacious Gangways provide you an easy access through one Coach to another and for boarding & de-boarding the trains with comfort.

Having the ability of gaining its speed of upto 100 Kms. per hour in just 0 to 52 Seconds, the trains are also fitted with the latest and advanced safety technology - "Kavach" that ensures the rail passengers' safety during the train travel time.

The introduction of the train services between Amb Andaura - New Delhi is going to be a real game changer for boosting the regional economic and tourism sectors of both the States. In this direction, if we say that the Trains will be a perfect example of confluence of the vivid cultures and traditions of both the States, then it will definitely be true in the real sense.

Along with this, the Ministry of Railways also has a plan to run the Semi-High Speed Vande Bharat Express Trains in almost every cities of the country. Also, the Ministry has a perfect plan to run Vande Metro Trains for the short distance cities in the near future.

The Vande Bharat Express Trains have travelled a total distance of 23 Lakh Kilometers till date that clearly reflects its popularity among the rail passengers.

Museum On Partition Coming Up Soon At Iconic Dara Shikoh Library In Delhi

Agenceis

New Delhi: Work is underway to convert the Mughal-era Dara Shikoh Library building in Delhi into a museum themed on the Partition, which will tell the story of the 1947 tragedy through interactive media.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia visited the museum site on Friday and inspected the progress of the project.

His office said in a statement that building of the historic library, built in 1637, is being converted into a 1947 Partition Museum by the Delhi government under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"The second such museum in India, it will have seven galleries to explain the events leading up to the Partition, and Independence, migration, refugees, rebuilding homes, art, relationships and will also have a gallery of hope and courage," it said.

The museum will also feature a "virtual reality experience", donated belongings of people who witnessed the Partition, and a souvenir shop. The library will also serve as a cultural hub with exhibitions on different aspects of the city and its history. The museum is due to be opened soon, the statement said.

During his visit, Sisodia interacted with curators who provided him with a rundown of the work that had been completed on the project.

Sisodia said historical buildings located across Delhi symbolise the country's evolution over a period of time, adding the city government has "prioritised restoration" of these landmarks to help current generations understand the country better.

There could not have been a better place than the Dara Shikoh Library building to house the Partition museum, he said. The Delhi deputy chief minister said that the museum would endeavour to depict the memories of the 1947 Partition as experienced by people.

The period transformed Delhi significantly and major parts of the national capital, including areas like Lajpat Nagar, CR Park and Punjabi Bagh, were established after the Partition, he added.

The museum's opening will also coincide with the 76th anniversary of India's independence, he said.

The museum would feature seven customised galleries designed to explain all aspects of India's Partition and the struggle for Independence to visitors. Witnessing the same rail coaches, ancient havelis, and replicas of refugee camps would be exciting and nostalgic for many, the statement said.

Sisodia further said that to



provide better experience to visitors, many people who witnessed the Partition, donated items such as clothes, utensils, books as well as belongings from refugee camps to the museum.

It will also have a special gallery dedicated to Sindh, the statement said.

Sisodia said the museum would also include a 'Gallery of Hope and Courage' which would display photographs, mementos, and experiences of people revisiting their ancient properties and places in Pakistan, decades after the Partition.

He also said in addition to the museum, the Dara Shikoh Library building would be converted into a hub for curated cultural experiences. It will display narratives and exhibitions on different aspects of the city and the individuals associated with it. Along with the museum, the building would have a cafeteria, souvenir shop, small library and a reading area, he added.

The Dara Shikoh Library building was originally built in 1637 by Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. After the death of Shikoh, this mansion was handed over to Bahadur Shah I, heir apparent of Aurangzeb, the statement said.

"Sometime after his ascension, the property was handed over to Juliana Dias da Costa, a lady of Portuguese descent who played a prominent role in his court. Abul Mansur Mirza Muhammad Muqim Ali Khan (Safdarjung) bought the property very cheaply from the descendants of Juliana Dias da Costa and made it his residence," it added.

Under the British rule, it served as a British Residency for David Ochterlony, Archibald Seton and Charles Metcalf. In the 20th century, the property was also used as a school, a polytechnic and lastly as the offices of the Delhi State Archaeology Department, it said.

Thereafter, the Arts And Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT) was entrusted the building under the 'Adopt A Heritage' scheme by the department of art, culture and language, to set up the Partition museum, the statement said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

SC To Consider

High Court Bar Association, and an intervenor had sought referring of the matter to a larger bench on grounds that two judgements of the apex court -- Prem Nath Kaul versus Jammu and Kashmir in 1959 and Sampat Prakash versus Jammu and Kashmir in 1970 -- which dealt with the issue of Article 370 conflicted each other and therefore, the current bench of five judges could not hear the issue.

Disagreeing with the petitioners, the bench had said it was of the opinion that "there is no conflict between the judgements".

Centre Considering

of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submissions that the issue raised in the PIL is being considered at an "appropriate level".

The top court also directed petitioner, Pune-based lawyer Asim Suhas Sarode, to also make the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh parties to the PIL.

"List after three weeks," the CJ said. He added that the Centre will apprise the bench about developments in the matter on the next date of hearing.

On November 28 last year, the top court had taken note of Sarode's PIL, which alleged the statutory panels were not functional in the union territory after the abrogation of Article 370 in the then state, and sought the solicitor general's assistance to deal with the issues raised.

The bench had asked Sarode to provide a copy of his petition to the law officer.

The PIL said various statutory panels such the State Information Commission, the human rights body and the consumer panel in the UT are not working.

Sarode has made the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training), National Human Rights Commission and the Law Commission of India parties to the PIL.

In August 2019, the Centre bifurcated Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories and abrogated the provisions of Article 370 of the

Constitution which accorded special status to the erstwhile state.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 5, 2019 and passed the same day. The Lok Sabha cleared it the next day.

Development Gap

have made an invaluable contribution in promoting peace, harmony, literacy and community development.

"Seva- Service is important in our cultural & spiritual traditions. Our social values teach us to be compassionate, caring & sensitive to others. Non-governmental organisations have a greater role in expanding & deepening these values and infuse sensitivity into public service," he said.

The LG said it was important to work for societal transformation by lifting others.

"It is essential for social groups and individuals to come together and make contributions with values in the service of the people," he said.

"Villages and cities have a greater role in accelerating the development and realizing the vision of India becoming the third largest economy of the world. Youth must be empowered to become the growth engine of the country," he added.

On this occasion, the LG also called upon Rotary members to work with dedication against drug addiction.

Two-Day Wet

level minimum temperature on Friday.

Srinagar recorded a low of 2.8°C against the previous night's 1.3°C, a meteorological department official said. Today's minimum temperature, he said, was above normal by 2.7°C for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 1.8°C against 0.5°C on the previous night while Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 0.9°C against minus 1.9°C on the previous night.

Kokernag recorded a low of 0.6°C against minus 0.8°C on the previous night and it was 1.5°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 0.2°C against minus 2.0°C on the previous night and it was 7.0°C above normal for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 0.6°C against minus 0.8°C on the previous night and it was 0.8°C above normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 12.9°C against 11.2°C on the previous night. It was 2.4°C above normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal, he said, recorded a low of 5.2°C (above normal by 3.9°C), Batote 5.8°C (above normal by 5.8°C), Katra 12.2°C (4.1°C above normal) and Bhandarwah 6.4°C (6.1°C above normal).

Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of minus 2.1°C and minus 6.6°C respectively, the official said.

Admin Reassures

people that the land being recovered would be used only for the people living here", Bidhuri said and added "I would like to assure all that no poor person would be touched during the anti-encroachment drive".

Regarding preparations underway for the upcoming G-20 meeting to be held in Srinagar, he said necessary works are on at various places and all arrangements would be made before the schedule time.

He said a little bit of inconvenience has to be borne by the people because of the ongoing construction work at various places in the city.

"Let all the construction works complete and the G-20 summit would also be held satisfactorily", he assured.

He urged the people to use online services of the government for the sake of transparency.

JPK Gets Corner

"With these weapons... the efficiency and accuracy is very high and pinpoint. You can achieve your target within a few shots (in anti-terror operations)," the SSP said.

The corner shot weapon will protect members of anti-terror operation parties from coming in line of direct fire from terrorists in close-combat situations, which mostly take place in congested and populated areas of Kashmir, he said.

"When you have to go for a shot in a room (in a close-combat situation in anti-terror operations), you have to save yourself and neutralise or shoot (terrorist). There was a great need for this type of weapon," the officer said.

The officials said training on these weapon systems have started for police personnel in some districts and weapons are being provided to the force in all districts and battalions.

"Shortly, these weapons will be provided to all districts and battalions of the force," the SSP said.

The corner shot weapon system also helps to fire accurately in dark and low-light conditions and facilitates firing from standing, kneeling, hip as well as lying positions. It can be fitted with a pistol such as a Glock 17, Glock 19 or a 9mm Browning for close-combat or covert operations, the officials said.

It is mounted with a high-resolution low-light infrared camera, infrared illumination, a red dot laser and a tactical torch.

The SSP said the efficiency of the Tavor X-95 weapon is very high. "We have also got modified AK rifles. Their firepower has been enhanced and they have faster firing speed. They have pinpoint efficiency and will help and strengthen our forces," Singh added.

The Tavor X95, also called Micro-Tavor, MTAR, and MTAR-21, is an assault rifle, designed and produced by Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) as part of the Tavor rifle family, along with the TAR-21 and the Tavor 7.

The MP5, which is manufactured by the German Heckler and Koch company, is one of the most widely used submachine guns in the world and having been adopted by over 40 nations.

Jindal Group

state of #JammuKashmir," he added.

Jindal also posted pictures of the foundation laying ceremony.

The Jindal group becomes the first major investor to set its footprint in Kashmir after abrogation of article 370 in 2019.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has said it has received investment proposals worth more than Rs 60,000 crore in the past couple of years.

The JSW steel processing unit will come up on an area of 3.5 hectares at an estimated cost of Rs 150 crore.

DC Budgam

generally not available at his office following which enquiry had already been initiated, he said.

In the meanwhile DC Budgam has suspended the Tehsilدار and attached him in the office of district S& E office and ACR has been appointed as enquiry Officer to ascertain the facts.

Govt Bans

platforms to incite the people of Jammu and Kashmir to join terrorist outfits against India.

In exercise of the powers conferred by the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the JKGF has been designated as a terror group, the notification stated.

2 TRF Militants

registered at the Safakadal police station.

3.6 Magnitude

was 97 kilometers east of Katra.

Fit India Movement

Shri Mata Sukrala Devi Trust accompanied by Jatin Langer, Vimal Mehra and Tajinder Singh also called on the LG and discussed with him various matters pertaining to the development of Shri Mata Sukrala Devi temple.

The LG, he said, gave a patient hearing to the issues put forth by the delegation and assured redressal of all their genuine concerns.

Goddess Sharda's Idol To Be Installed At Temple Along LoC Reaches Jammu

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: An idol of Goddess Sharda, whose journey began from Sringeri in Karnataka, reached here on Friday.

Devotees welcomed the goddess of knowledge and the main deity of ancient Kashmir, at Khunjiwani, the entry point to Jammu city, with flowers and by singing bhajans.

Later, the idol, made from an alloy of five metals, was brought to the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha (KPS), where hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits welcomed the goddess and paid obeisance to her. "We have brought Mata Shar-

da Devi's idol from Sringeri. It is our faith. It is to be installed at the newly constructed temple of Sharda Mata at Teetwal near the LoC in Kupwara," Save Sharda Committee Kashmir (SSCK) founder Ravinder Pandita told reporters.

"The temple will be inaugurated on March 22. We invite all the people to be part of the inauguration," he said.

The idol's journey began from Sringeri last month and it passed through various cities including Bengaluru, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Delhi and Amritsar before reaching Jammu.

4 Hizbul Operatives Convicted In PMLA Case

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Friday convicted four operatives of the banned terrorist organisation Hizbul Mujahideen on money laundering charges in a case linked to terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

It said the court of Additional Sessions Judge-3 (Patiala House court) will announce the punishment on February 27.

The four terrorists convicted under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) are Mohammad Shafi Shah, Talib Lali, Muzaffar Ahmad Dar, and Mushtaq Ahmad Lone.

They had pleaded guilty before the trial court for the offence of money laundering.

The case stems from an FIR filed by the National Investiga-

tion Agency (NIA) under various sections of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the ED said in a statement.

"Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), one of the most active terrorist organisations in Jammu and Kashmir, has been regularly receiving funds ... for carrying out terrorist activities.

"Investigation established that in the garb of Jammu Kashmir Affectees Relief Trust (JKART), Hizbul Mujahideen was actively involved in funding terrorist activities," the ED said.

The ED had filed a chargesheet in this case against a total of 12 terrorists in April 2020.

Out of them, eight have been declared 'proclaimed offenders' by the court, it said.

The federal agency has also attached assets worth Rs 1.22 crore as part of this investigation.

Saudi Bars Children Below 12 Years For Haj-2023

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Saudi Government has decided to disallow the children below 12 years of age in a bid to ensure their safety, Haj Committee of India (HCoI), informed Friday.

A circular issued by the HCoI, reads that it is intimated that the authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have decided that children below the age of 12 years are not allowed to proceed for Haj 1444(H)-2023 considering the fact that it is not appropriate to accompany children under the age of 12 years to ensure their safety.

"In view of the position explained above, no application of children below the age of 12 years as on 30-04-2023 including infants will be entertained for Haj 1444 2023. Therefore, all Haj applications of the children below 12 years including infants registered till date will be rejected for Haj 1444-2023," the circular reads.

The circular further reads that it is expected that the authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia might stipulate further health and administrative guidelines in view of the prevailing conditions. The same shall be notified accordingly in the due course of time.

HCoI member Ej Ajaz Hussain said that the decision to disallow children below 12 years of age is aimed at ensuring their safety and the move is part of Haj policy 2023. He said that new health and administrative guidelines will be issued shortly.

Pertinently, Haj 2023 has been made cheaper by Rs 80,000 and that the pilgrim has to pay only Rs 3, 70,000 against 4.50 lakh paid earlier. Plus, there will be 25 embankments across country this year while as pilgrims above 70 years of age will be prioritized—(KNO)

DC Bandipora Reviews Healthcare Services In District

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr Owais Ahmad on Friday chaired a meeting of officers to review the healthcare services being provided in the district.

The meeting discussed the posting details of the healthcare staff, vacancies of medical officer, availability of USG and

X-ray units in CHCs and PHCs. Dr Owais also sought progress report and physical achievements of various Missions, schemes and targets like institution delivery progress, Anaemia Mukht Bharat, IMR and MMR, ANC, Status of Referrals, Work done of DEIC/ RBSK, KAYAKALP report, National Mental Health programme (NMHP), National Healthcare of elderly (NPHCE), PMJAY SEHAT and Ayushman Bharat.

Dr Owais directed the officers to improve targets of various schemes besides ensuring aadhar based enrollment of children.

He also asked the depart-

ment to register PHCs in KAY-AKALP besides urging them to ensure 100 percent enrollment under Ayushman Bharat.

The DC directed concerned to ensure regular Ultrasound and X-ray facility in hospitals 24*7 besides directing for proper utilization of unused Machines and equipments.

He urged officers to augment the healthcare facilities in CHCs and PHCs so that the District hospital is not overburdened and similarly asked the CMO to ensure better healthcare services in District Hospital Bandipora to avoid frequent referrals to city hospitals.

The DC also called for special focus on mental health counselling by activating counselling cell at district level. He also urged them to create awareness regarding mental health to students through school camps.

The meeting also urged the department to aware people about 108 free ambulances and the TELE MANAS helpline through Boards and digital screens.

ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE

AAP On Hunger Strike In Srinagar To Demand Order Sparing Poor

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Aam Aadmi Party on Friday said it is on hunger strike here to demand a formal order from the Jammu and Kashmir administration to spare poor residents and shopkeepers from the ongoing anti-encroachment drive.

"Our vice-president Nazir Ahmad Ittoo started the hunger strike last night but due to security reasons, we were not allowed to sit at the Press Colony. We had to shift to our office," AAP youth leader Mudassar Hassan said.

"The hunger strike will continue till a formal order is issued by the administration," he added.

Hassan said the administration was making statements



day in and day out that poor people will not be affected by the demolition drive.

"We are asking the administration to issue a formal order

to this effect," he said, adding that the party was not against an anti-encroachment drive against rich and influential land grabbers.

Activist Alleges 'Timber Smuggling' In Prem Nagar Road Widening Project

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: An RTI activist from Doda has alleged corruption in the road alignment/ widening project from Khelani Pariyot to Prem Nagar with a design length 20.251 Km.

Adil Farooq, an RTI activist from Doda has submitted a complaint to LG's office earlier also.

In the complaint, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer, Adil alleges that in order to widen the road from Khelani Priyot to Prem Nagar, trees had to be cut down in Bhadarwah Forest Division.

Official sources revealed that the construction & upgradation of Road with Paved Shoulder of Road from Design Chainage 31 (Khelani Pariyot) to 51(Prem Nagar) (Design Length 20.251 Km) was e-Tendered by PWD (R&B) B.C Road Division Bhadarwah Falling in Compartments 30/Ch, 32/Ch & 33/Ch in Chiralra Range of Bhadarwah Forest Division.

Adil alleges that the due process was not followed and cutting of trees was done by the Forest Department which is in violation of norms.

"The forest department did the marking of the road. According, technical sanction and administrative approval was issued for the work that had to be done. After the administrative approval was granted, FDC had to do a handover. However, that did not take place," Adil said.

"Instead of the State Forest Corporation (SFC), the trees were cut by the Forest Department."

Adil also said that the Enumeration and Marking of Trees,

Poles & Saplings in all the compartments was conducted by Bhadarwah Forest Division of the Forest Department.

"The total No. Trees marked in Comptt. 30/Ch were 45=997.50cft, in Comptt. 32/Ch were 153=4607cft, and in Comptt. 33/Ch were 269=4015cft totalling to 467=9619.50cft and all the marked trees were Chir Species in different Dia-class/Girth." The complaint filed in the LG office reads.

"The Proper Marking of Trees was conducted and Lists of the same were submitted by the DFO Bhadarwah to the Chief Conservator of Forest Doda and then the same were counter-signed and submitted to the Chief Conservator of Forest Jammu. That a Formal Administrative Approval/ In Principle was issued/accorded by the higher authorities."

The complainant also alleges that after receiving the orders from Higher authorities, a formal letter was issued to the Divisional Manager FDC by the DFO Bhadarwah under his office No: DFO/BHAD/FCA/1227-28 on 24/05/2022 to put the said Road Marking in E-Tendering process of FDC to get the Trees extracted through proper channel.

"After receiving the letter from DFO Bhadarwah, The Divisional Manager FDC directed Range Officer Chiralra to initiate The Handing over the Process. The Range officer Chiralra reported that all the extraction has already been done illegally, all the 467trees=9619.15cft have been removed & converted."

Official sources have also revealed that as of now, there is no Green Standing Tree available, the road has already been upgraded without handing over these compartments to FDC. If not FDC who has extracted these markings.

According to law, the FDC being the only legal agency for extraction of markings that too huge markings of approx. 10,000 CFT.

However, authorities have dismissed the RTI activist's accusations saying the complainant has vested interest and has procured official documents which in itself is 'illegal'.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Conservator Forests, Jitender Singh denied the allegations saying said the complainant/ activist has a vested interest in the case.

"There have been certain violations wherein some trees had been damaged and the debris had been relocated, in that case, they have been penalized," Jitender said.

As far as the cutting of trees is concerned, their number is less than what is being said.

"Whenever list for a project is made, it involves an exaggerated figure, however, on ground not more than 200 trees were cut down. It involves large number of trees with no timber value, they are not counted as well"

"The complainant has procured the list of the marked trees from somewhere and he is getting deceived by that" Jitender added.

The RTI activist urged the LG administration to order an investigation by an independent agency in the project so that facts could be brought forth.

MAHA SHIVRATRI FESTIVAL I

DC Kulgam Oversees Arrangments At Vessu Migrant Colony



Observer News Service

KULGAM: The Deputy Commissioner (DC), Dr Bilal-Mohi-Ud-Din-Bhat on Friday visited Vessu colony to review the arrangements being made for the festival of Maha Shivratri.

During the visit, the DC inspected sale counters established in the colony by Fisheries, Agriculture, Horticulture and other departments where Trout fish, dry fruits and fresh vegetables were made available for the inhabitants.

Later, the DC also took stock of the pace and progress made on construction of transit accommodation at the colony which is under the execution of JKPC.

On the occasion, it was given out that out of 13 blocks consisting of 208 2BHK flats, 6 blocks consisting of 96 Flats have been completed. The ambitious project has a total project cost of 64.62 crore. The DC instructed the concerned to mobilize men and machinery to complete other blocks at an earliest.

Accompanying the Deputy Commissioner were SSP Kulgam Sahil Sarangal, ACR, ACP, Tehsilidar, Executive Engineers from PDD and PHE, CAO, CHO, EO and other officers.

Admin To Conduct Study For Transformative Innovation In J&K's Agri-Economy

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir administration will launch a sensor-based artificial intelligence pilot project on high-density apple orchards, protected cultivation, and smart livestock farming in the union Territory.

The step is aimed at incorporating technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), into agriculture to address challenges such as low efficiency, profitability and competitiveness.

J&K administration's proposal for a sensor-based smart agriculture ecosystem can be a game-changer for the agri-economy of the region and integration of agriculture with technology can make agriculture professional and competitive.

"The proposal for sensor-based smart agriculture can be a transformative innovation for Jammu and Kashmir's agri-economy. A sensor-based pilot study will be conducted

on high-density apple orchards, protected cultivation, and smart livestock farming," additional chief secretary (ACS) Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo told PTI.

Dulloo said that the incorporation of technology, particularly AI and IoT, into agriculture has the potential to address challenges such as low efficiency, profitability, and competitiveness.

"This could lead to a more attractive and professional image for the industry", he said.

Having a total outlay of Rs 30.40 crore the project on sensor-based smart agriculture aims to integrate agriculture with technology, he said.

The objective is to increase the use of resources and improve efficiency by up to 80 per cent and automate agricultural operations with precision in HDPs of apple, vegetables, and livestock. "The use of AI-based detection of pests and diseases using handheld sensor devices can significantly reduce the drudgery and cost

of cultivation by 20 per cent," Dulloo said.

The official said that the proposal also aims to develop algorithms for big data analytics for remote operations of IoTs and create a startup ecosystem in smart agriculture by networking with IITs and industries.

Certificate and diploma courses in AI & ML, IoT, and automation, and Blockchain technology will be launched to train skilled manpower for the new skillsets required in the industry, he said.

"The outcome of the proposal will be 50-80 per cent increase in resource use efficiency, the development of a sensor-based grading and sorting system of apple, and the development of a decision support system (DSS) for pest and disease management", Dulloo said.

The official said that the real-time detection and variable rate spray using robotics and drones will reduce the production cost by 80 per cent. The proposal also aims

to build a sensor corridor for livestock and phenotyping and yield prediction, he said. He further said that the trained manpower, consisting of graduates, certificate and diploma holders in IOT, AI fields will form a new startup culture in the sensor-based agriculture system.

Similarly, livestock rearing is currently done in poor environmental shelter, so there is a need for a sensor-based monitoring system for shed environment and an auto-management system for tagging of animals for identification, the official said.

"Thermal and pedo-sensors based heat detection and IoT-based sensors can be used for phenotyping and health management and yield prediction of livestock. Digital transformation in agriculture is one of the potential areas to mitigate the challenge of increasing output by 60% by 2040 to match the ever-growing population", Dulloo said.



Govt To Procure 200 E-Buses For Twin Capital Cities

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government is procuring 100 e-buses each for both the capital cities, the officials said.

The electric buses will establish an environmentally, socially and financially sustainable network of public transport in the Union Territory's twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar, officials said on Friday.

For this, Tata Motors has been given land to build the depot whose construction has started, they said.

The Jammu and Kashmir government is procuring 100 e-buses each for both the capital cities, the officials said.

The electric buses will establish an environmentally, socially and financially sustainable network of public transport in the city, said Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jammu Smart City Limited (JSL) Rahul Yadav who reviewed the project.

He said that the electric buses will play a vital role in facilitating tourists as well as people.

G-20 SUMMIT

DC Baramulla Takes Stock Arrangements; Reviews Progress



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: As part of G20 Summit events expected to be held in the month of May here, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr Sehrish Asgar held a detailed tour of the entire sub division and took stock of all the arrangements to be put in place.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed tour of the entire Sub Division and took feedback of the concerned officers.

The DC later held two separate meetings at Tangmarg and Golf Club Gulmarg wherein she took a holistic review of arrangements related to the summit.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Zahoor Ahmad Raina; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Peerzada Mumtaz Ahmad; Sub Divisional Magistrate Gulmarg, CEO GDA besides concerned functionaries all line departments.

The meetings were held to take stock of actions taken in respect of directions issued for preparation of the G-20 Summit. The DC discussed the action

taken by all concerned Departments in threadbare and also highlighted the importance of hosting a G20 Summit.

She took a Department wise review regarding the action taken by them to enhance the facade of roads through development of footpaths, medians, traffic road furnishing, landscape improvement, installation of roadside VMDs besides removal of wooden poles, rusted plant guards, hanging cable wires and unnecessary road dividers and debris, painting of Government buildings and commercial building walls along the roads to increase the aesthetic value of those structures.

Dr Sehrish directed the Officers to accelerate the pace of works and ensure that all the developmental/beautification works are completed in set timelines.

Morevoer, she also asked the concerned to expedite the process of installing welcome hoardings, signages at designated places across the district.

During the field visit, the DC held a comprehensive review of road spots at Narbal- Gulmarg National Highway.

The DC discussed the action

India Dominate Australia On Day 1 Of 2nd Test

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Mohammed Shami took four wickets even as the spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja tormented Australia as India comfortably took the honours on Day 1 of the second Test, at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, in Delhi, on Friday.

At close of play India were 21 without loss after dismissing Australia for 263 in the first innings. Skipper Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul were undefeated on 13 and 4 respectively when the final session ended.

India trail the visitors by 242 runs. Earlier, seasoned seamer Shami finished with four wickets for 60 runs as Australia were once again undone by India's slow bowling. Ashwin (3/57) and Jadeja (3/68) also played a leading hand in the



India trail the visitors by 242 runs. Earlier, seasoned seamer Shami finished with four wickets for 60 runs as Australia were once again undone by India's slow bowling. Ashwin (3/57) and Jadeja (3/68) also played a leading hand in the victors' demolition. For Australia, Usman Khawaja (81) and Peter Handscomb (72 net out) made substantial contributions. The pitch was a typical slow turner but had better carry than the

Nagpur wicket and it did help Khawaja, as he was able to hit through the line during his knock that was studded with 12 fours and a six.

Shami (14.4-4-60-4) must be given credit for the way he bowled after Rohit introduced him from the other end in the first session.

His repertoire of deliveries were on full display as he struck with the new, semi-new and old ball, while Ashwin (21-4-57-3) and Jadeja (21-2-68-3) came up with breakthroughs just when the Australians seemed to be gaining foothold of the proceedings.

The highlight on Friday's play was Rahul's brilliant catch at point off a powerful reverse sweep by Khawaja. That athletic effort not just broke the 59-run sixth-wicket partnership between Khawaja and Peter Handscomb but also halted Australia's charge.

Real Kashmir Take On Mohammedan Sporting At TRC Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC is set to lock horns with Mohammedan Sporting Club in I-League 8th with 20 points today, Saturday, February 18, at Synthetic Turf TRC here. The match is slated for a 2:00 PM kick off.

As we come to the final stretch of the 2022-23 I-League, Real Kashmir next play Aizawl FC on February 21. The match will take place at the Synthetic Turf TRC.

I-League table, having taken 20 points from 16 games thus far. Mohammedan are a place above Real Kashmir, sitting at 8th with 20 points from 17.

A win today could lift the Srinagar-based club up three places in the I-League table, which is led by Sreenidi Deccan FC who have 37 points from their 17 matches.

Real Kashmir next play Aizawl FC on February 21. The match will take place at the Synthetic Turf TRC.



BCCI Chief Selector Chetan Sharma Resigns

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: BCCI's chairman of selection committee Chetan Sharma resigned from his post early on February 17, 2023. He sent his resignation to BCCI Secretary Jay Shah who has reportedly accepted it. The resignation comes amid a controversial sting operation conducted by Zee News which showed Mr. Sharma revealing classified selection matters.

"Yes, Chetan has tendered his resignation to BCCI secretary Jay Shah and his resignation has been accepted. His position had become untenable after the sting operation. He resigned voluntarily and

wasn't asked to resign," a senior BCCI source told PTI on condition of anonymity on Friday.

Chetan Sharma was in Kolkata along with other



selection committee members for the Ranji Trophy final between Bengal and Saurashtra. They were there to select the Irani Cup team. It is learnt that Chetan's comments did not go down well with the BCCI top brass, and the current national squad members also

lost their trust in him.

"Coach Rahul Dravid, captains Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya have completely lost faith in him. He couldn't have possibly sat across the table along with them for selection committee meetings as he had lost all respect. He paid the price for being a big mouth," said another BCCI source.

Mr. Sharma was seen allegedly revealing his internal discussions with head coach Rahul Dravid and Virat Kohli, along with casting serious allegations against some senior players in the team. He alleged that there was an ego tussle between former captain Virat Kohli and the former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly.

'Chess For Every One' Tournament Begins At Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: FIDE-rated chess tournament "Chess For Every One" commenced on Friday at Indoor Sports Stadium Polo View here.

The tournament is recognised by the All India Chess Federation and is being organised by The Kashmir Chess Club in collaboration with All J&K Chess Association and under the aegis of J&K Sports Council.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidori inaugurated the event in pres-



ence of Cluster Head J&K Bank Riyaz Ahmad Wani, Sajad Khalik Bhat of J&K Police and Indoor Sports Manager Iqbal and many other guests and dignitaries, according to a press release issued by the club's Press Secretary/PRO Gowhar Rashid. In the welcome note and opening remarks from club

member, Comrade Pervez applauded the club members and other volunteers who came forward from time to time.

Around 110 players took part in the first round of matches, as many international rated players from J&K and outside are participating in the tournament.

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