

We Work For Masses Not Just 2k 'Special Persons': LG

Observer News Service

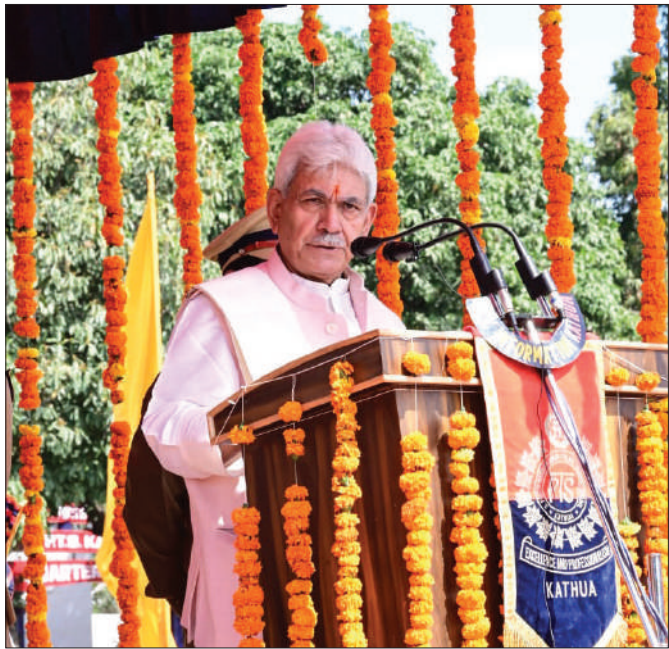
Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that his doors remained open for common citizens to address their genuine grievances but there is no space for trouble mongers, who are spreading misinformation about property tax.

"The doors of Raj Bhawan are 24x7 open for common citizen of Jammu and Kashmir, be it farmers, traders, scientist, cops or youth, if they have any valid grievance administration is there to listen it round the clock," the LG said while addressing the passing out parade of police at Kathua, adding, "However, some influential try to manipulate common citizens by spreading misinformation on property tax to save their own wealth, which administration would not be tolerate at any cost."

The LG further said that by misusing positions and law, some people make huge wealth for their next generations and friends but their time has gone.

"The administration of Jammu and Kashmir will work for the welfare of 1.30 crore people and not 1000-2000 'special citizens', the governor said.

The Lt Governor was speaking at the attestation-cum-passing out parade of recruit constables



of 29th Basic Recruitment Training Course (BRTC) at S Prithinandan Singh Police Training School here.

Earlier, the LG maintained that the proposed property tax in Jammu and Kashmir is lowest in the country.

"The total households in municipal areas of Jammu and Kashmir is around 5 lakh 20 thousand out of which 2 lakh six thousand household are exempted

from all taxes as it is below 1000 Sq Ft, another 2 lakh three thousand household are between 1000 to 1500 Sq ft and its maximum tax in Jammu and Srinagar cities is not above Rs 1000".

He further added that when it comes to commercial complexes and shops, Jammu has 1 lakh 1000 buildings and 46000 is below 100 Sq ft, which invites just Rs 600 tax in a year.

He maintained **More on P6**

'Public Infra To Be Created On Retrieved Lands'

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday said that his administration has retrieved huge chunks of land in the Union Territory which will be used to create public infrastructure.

"We have time and again reiterated that eviction drives will not harm the poor. I am happy that our administration and police have ensured that no poor were touched," Sinha said, while speaking at the attestation-cum-passing out parade of recruit constables at Police Training School (PTS) here.

"But it is also a fact that huge land has been retrieved. Today, I want to tell you that this land will be given to the youth for sporting activities. This land which was illegally occupied by influential people will have colleges and schools built over it. Hospitals will come up on these lands to provide better healthcare facilities to the people," he added.

Speaking about **More on P6**

Agri Land Of Pak-Based Militant Seized

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: In its ongoing action against militants operating from Pakistan, the NIA on Friday attached a property of The Resistance Front (TRF) operative Basit Ahmad Reshi in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The action follows the sealing of a Srinagar-based property of the chief of the Al-Umar Mujahideen, Mushtaq Zargar alias 'Latram', on Thursday.

Reshi, a "listed terrorist" under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), has been operating from Pakistan after his exfiltration there. He has been found funding militant activities and acts in the Kashmir Valley, a National Investigation Agency (NIA) spokesperson said.

The official said Reshi had joined militant ranks in 2015 and was involved in planning and executing an attack on a police guard post in Sopore that killed a constable and injured others.

He was earlier associated with banned outfit Hizbul-Mujahideen and at present, is involved in militant activities of the TRF, managing supplies of arms and ammunition as well as funds for the militant group from across the border, the spokesperson said.

The NIA said Reshi's agricultural land measuring 9.25 marlas has been attached under the provisions of the UAPA with the assistance of revenue and police officials.

Till date, the **More on P6**

CRPF Pledges To Secure KPs In Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Stringent measures are being taken to provide security to the members of the minority community in the valley, a senior CRPF officer in Jammu and Kashmir said here on Friday.

"Minority pickets of CRPF are on alert, we review the security regularly. Our endeavour is to keep all the minorities in south Kashmir safe and we are in touch with them on a regular basis," IG CPRF (Kashmir Operations) M S Bhatia told reporters in Anantnag district of south Kashmir.

His remarks come in the backdrop of militants on Sunday killing a 40-year-old Kashmiri Pandit in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district while he was on his way to a local market, in yet another targeted killing of a minority community member in the valley.



Sanjay Sharma, who worked as an ATM guard, was shot in the chest at point-blank range barely 100 metres from his residence in Achan area of south Kashmir.

The killing evoked widespread condemnation and demand for security for the community members.

Bhatia said every measure will be taken to provide security to the community.

"I want to assure that we are taking stringent security measures to provide a sense of security to **More on P6**

Separated During Partition, Sikh Family Reunites After 75 Yrs

Agenceis

Lahore: Seventy-five years after they separated during the Partition in 1947, the families of two Sikh brothers met at the Kartarpur Corridor, singing songs and showering flowers on each other in an emotional reunion made possible through social media. The families of

Gurdev Singh and Daya Singh arrived at the Kartarpur Corridor on Thursday for a reunion. Emotional scenes of the family reunion were witnessed at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur Sahib where they sang songs to express their joy and showered flowers on each other.

Both the brothers hailed from Haryana **More on P6**

THESE ARE CHALLENGING TIMES FOR OUR POLICE FORCES as the world today is facing conventional & non-conventional threats. We need to be vigilant & determined to neutralise the ecosystem providing ideological and financial support to terrorists."

Take Call On Mehbooba's Passport In 3 Months: Delhi HC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the passport authority to take a decision within three months on issuing a fresh travel document to PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

Justice Prathiba M Singh noted the issue has been pending for two years and, following an appeal against the rejection, it has now been remanded to the passport officer concerned for reconsideration.

"Considering that the matter is remanded back to the passport officer and the initial rejection was two years ago, let the passport officer concerned take a decision expeditiously and in any case within three months," ordered the judge.

The court's order came on a petition by Mufti seeking a direction to the authorities to take an early decision on her appeal regarding the issuance of a new passport.

The former Jammu & Kashmir chief minister said in her plea there was considerable delay in issuing a new passport to her despite reminders. She said no decision was being taken on her appeal.

The central government counsel informed the court that an order was passed on the appeal on March 2 and the matter has been sent to the passport officer in Jammu & Kashmir for fresh reconsideration.

In view of the Centre's stand, the court observed, the petition was infructuous and no further orders were required.

Last month, Mufti had sought the intervention of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for the issuance of passport, saying she has been waiting for it for the past three years to take her 80-year-old mother on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

In a letter to the minister, she had said the renewal of her passport was pending after the Jammu and Kashmir **More on P6**

Rs 2 Cr Cash, Heroin Recovered Near LoC

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: In a major breakthrough in its drive against narco-terrorism, the Jammu and Kashmir Police on Friday recovered seven kilograms of heroin, over Rs 2 crore cash and a pistol from the house of a notorious drug peddler along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district, a senior police officer said.

Additional Director General of Police, Jammu zone, Mukesh Singh said a major narco-terror module has been busted in the Union Territory, adding the search operation is still going on.

The recovery was made from the house of notorious drug peddler Rafi Dhana alias "Rafi Lala", who was recently detained under the stringent Public Safety Act, in Mandi sector, Singh said here.

He said police along with components of the National Crime Agency and the CRPF raided the house of Rafi near the LoC on specific information, leading to the recovery of seven kgs of heroin, over Rs 2 crore and a pistol with one magazine and 10 rounds and seven rounds of SLR. The counting of the cash is still going on, the officer said. With Friday's development, police and security forces have been able to bust a major narco-terror module in the Union Territory, Singh said.

"The searches are still going on in the presence of magistrates and prominent citizens. The nexus of this module **More on P6**

Stray Dogs Are Soldiers' Early Warning System On LoC In Gulmarg

Press Trust Of India

Gulmarg: Dogs in high-altitude areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Gulmarg, may be just strays for locals and the army establishment, but for soldiers, who patrol the LoC, the canines are not only their companions, but also their "early warning system".

Snow or sun, they are always with the men patrolling the Line of Control (LoC), said a soldier.

Temperatures in Gulmarg can drop to minus 10 degrees Celsius during the winters, and harsh winds and several feet of snow makes patrolling a daunting task, but soldiers said the dogs are always there to accompany them and their barks warn them of the dangers ahead.

"If there is anything



untoward ahead, they act as an early warning system for us. They are very helpful to us," the soldier said as a small pack of dogs walked ahead of him and his group going for a ski-patrol of the forward area along the LoC with Pakistan.

"These dogs are with

us today, tomorrow they will be with the next unit (which will be posted in the area)," he said

Irrespective of the weather condition, these canines lead the way for soldiers and sometime follow them back to their camps.

The soldiers care for these canines as if they were a part of their families, an officer said.

In high-altitude areas, covered by snow and accessible only by foot, soldiers share their limited supplies of biscuits and water with the canines, highlighting the nature and strength of their bond, he said.

Major General Ajay Chandpuria, General Officer Commanding of the Army's 19 Infantry Division, said there was nothing unusual in the friendship between the soldiers and the canines.

"Dogs are supposed to be man's best friend and that's true especially in winter. When the situation gets adverse and when there is a lot of snow, they are the best companions in winters," Maj Gen Chandpuria said.

ARE YOU 50+ ? and wearing Spectacles



Have you noticed you're holding your phone farther away from your face and squinting to read that text? Having trouble with up-close tasks, like putting on eye make-up? If you are in your 50s, you may be experiencing the loss of near focusing ability called Presbyopia.

WHAT IS PRESBYOPIA?

The medical term presbyopia is Greek for "old eyes." As if you needed one more reminder of how many candles there were on your last birthday cake, right? But before you start obsessing about your ebbing youth, relax. Remember that the loss of clear up-close vision happens to all of us eventually. It's not a disease, it's as normal as wrinkles. And there's an upside! Now one can get relaxed with **ReLEX technology**.

SYMPTOMS OF PRESBYOPIA:

- Having eyestrain or headaches after reading or doing close work
- Having difficulty reading small print
- Having fatigue from doing close work
- Needing brighter lighting when reading or doing close work
- Needing to hold reading material at an arm's distance to focus properly on it
- Overall problems seeing and focusing on objects that are close to you
- Squinting



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*This content is not responsible for any experienced advice, diagnosis & treatment. Clinical results may vary from person to person.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change name in my electricity bill as Mukhtar Ahmad Khan instead of Abdul Ahad R/O Bana Mohalla Fateh Kadal Srinagar (Consumer ID 0204030002168). If anyone has an objection he or she may contact the concerned department within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.
Mukhtar Ahmad Khan
Bana Mohalla, Fateh Kadal Srinagar

SS

PUBLIC NOTICE

In School record's my Son's caste name has been wrongly written as Mochi instead of Sheikh which needs to be corrected In this regard anybody having any objections may contact Principal M. D Hajini Memorial Public School Hajin Sonawari within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained at all.

Ab. Qayoom Sheikh
F/O. Faizan Ahmad Sheikh R/O. Hajin Sonawari Bpr.

PN HJ

انتقال پرمال

یہ خبر نیات دکھ اور انیس کے ساتھ شہر کی جانی ہے کہ مورخہ 2 مارچ 2023 بروز جمعرات کو شبیر احمد نیکی ولد جانی محمد اکبر نیکی نماز فجر کے بعد انتقال کر گئے۔ انا اللہ وَاٰلہٖ وَاَزْوٰجہٗ سٰلَمٌ۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو بہشت الفردوس عطا کرے آمین۔ اور ان کے لواحقین کو یہ صدمہ عظیم برداشت کرنے کی بہت عطا فرمائے آمین۔ اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 6 مارچ 2023 بروز سوموار صبح سات بجے ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع حسن آباد میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ اس کے بعد تقویم مجلس ان کے گھر واقع چک صدرہ محل نزدیک این آئی بی سرینگر نگر بھر جاری رہے گی۔

نوٹ:- مستورات سے کدواش ہے کہ وہ اپنے ساتھ میوہ وغیرہ نہ لائیں

سوگواران:- خانم انیس۔۔۔۔۔ 8082264345، 9797190654، 9906858982 inf

nj

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing Consumer ID No: 0203020004948 From Muhammad Sidiq Harbol to Nighat W/o Mukhtar Ahmad Shagoo. If any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Nighat W/o Mukhtar Ahmad Shagoo
R/O Nawab Bazar

x

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to apply for .D. class contractor card registration. Now I am applying for its registration if any body have any objection in this regard may file the same A. E. R & B Division Handwara Distt Kupwara office with in 7 days from the publication of this notice .After that no objection shall be entertained .
Muneer Ahmad Dar
S/O:- Asood Ahmad Dar
R/O :- Nutnussa .Tehsil Handwara Distt:- Kupwara

lg.n

From The Office Of Advocate Peerzada Rashid Ashraf

In the case of : Mohd Iqbal Misgar S/o Ghulam Nabi Misgar R/o 570 housing colony talnagar Chanapora Sgr
VERSUS
Public at large
(NON-CAVEATOS)
In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A The Caveator has reason to believe that Non-Caveators may file any Application, Petition, Appeal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seed in obtaining some relief/order at their back /in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveator be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.
nj Sd/advocate

از عدالت چیف جوڈیشل مجسٹریٹ سرینگر

با اجلاس: Mr.Tasleem Arif:
رجسٹرار جیس اینڈ جیس ایس۔ ایم۔ سی۔ سرینگر (سیول)
سائل / سائلہ Sara Hakeem
درخواست بفرج اندراج تاریخ وفات
نام Ghulam Qadir Hakeem
تاریخ وفات / پیدائش 11/05/1998
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے عدالت ہذا میں ایک درخواست بشمول حلفی بغرض اندراج تاریخ وفات Ghulam Qadir Hakeem S/o Late Mohd Hakeem Sultan Hakeem R/o Haka Bazar Nowhatta مورخہ 27-02-2023 پیش کی ہے۔ لہذا احوام الناس کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ نسبت درخواست کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہونے کی صورت میں اسے اپنے عذر یا اشتہار کے اندر اس یوم عدالت میں آکر پیش کرے۔ بعد گزرنے معیا کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔ تاریخ آئندہ عدالت ہذا میں 07-03-2023 کو قتر ہے۔
تحریر الصدور

nj

از عدالت چیف جوڈیشل مجسٹریٹ سرینگر

با اجلاس: Mr.Tasleem Arif:
رجسٹرار جیس اینڈ جیس ایس۔ ایم۔ سی۔ سرینگر (سیول)
سائل / سائلہ Mohd Abbas Bhat
درخواست بفرج اندراج تاریخ وفات
نام Ghulam Hassan Bhat
تاریخ وفات / پیدائش 29-07-2019
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے عدالت ہذا میں ایک درخواست بشمول حلفی بغرض اندراج تاریخ وفات Ghulam Hassan Bhat S/o Late Ghulam Hassan Bhat Mohd Bhat R/o Mominabad Khumani Chowk Bemina Sgr مورخہ 27-02-2023 پیش کی ہے۔ لہذا احوام الناس کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ نسبت درخواست کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہونے کی صورت میں اسے اپنے عذر یا اشتہار کے اندر اس یوم عدالت میں آکر پیش کرے۔ بعد گزرنے معیا کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔ تاریخ آئندہ عدالت ہذا میں 07-03-2023 کو قتر ہے۔
تحریر الصدور

nj

Childhood Obesity In India Likely To Rise Over 9 Per Cent Annually By 2035: Study

Press Trust of India

Childhood obesity in India is likely to see an annual rise of 9.1 per cent by 2035, if prevention, treatment and support do not improve, according to a global study released ahead of World Obesity Day.

Observed every year on March 4, the goal of World Obesity Day is to stimulate and support practical actions that will help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight and reverse the global obesity crisis.

The report published by the World Obesity Federation predicts that more than half the global population will be overweight and obese within 12 years if prevention, treatment and support do not improve.

In India, around 11 per cent people will be obese by 2035, with an annual increase in adult obesity between 2020 and 2035 to be 5.2 per cent, it noted.

The report 'World Obesity Atlas 2023' shows that in 2020 boys in India had a 3 per cent obesity risk, but by 2035 the risk will likely go up by 12



per cent and for girls the risk was 2 per cent in 2020, but in the next 12 years, it will rise to 7 per cent.

The report also shows that Indian women in 2020 had an obesity risk of 7 per cent, which will rise to 13 per cent by 2035. Men had a risk of 4 per cent in 2020, which will rise to 8 per cent in 12 years.

The study predicts that continued failure to improve prevention and treatment could contribute to a total economic impact of USD 4.32 trillion by 2035 nearly 3 per cent of global GDP. The likely impact on India's national GDP will be 1.8 per cent, the

report shows.

The main reasons for rising obesity prevalence in lower income countries include shift to highly processed foods, greater levels of sedentary behaviour, weaker policies to control the food supply and food marketing, and less well resourced healthcare services to assist in weight management and in health education.

"This year's Atlas is a clear warning that by failing to address obesity today, we risk serious repercussions in the future. It is particularly worrying to see obesity rates rising fastest among children and adolescents,"

said Professor Louise Baur, President of the World Obesity Federation.

"Governments and policymakers around the world need to do all they can to avoid passing health, social, and economic costs on to the younger generation.

"That means looking urgently at the systems and root factors that contribute to obesity, and actively involving young people in the solutions. If we act together now, we have the opportunity to help billions of people in the future," Baur said in a statement.

The report shows marked variations in preparedness across national income levels and geographical regions. For example, the average preparedness ranking for low income countries is just 154/183 compared to 29/183 for high income countries.

India has a preparedness of 98/183, which was marked as "average" by the report. All 10 of the most prepared countries are in Europe, while eight of the 10 least prepared countries are in the African region.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Office of the Executive Engineer, (Jal Shakti) PHE, Mechanical Rural Division, Sgr.

GIST of Short term e-Tender.

Short Term E-N.I.T. No:- PHE/MRD/TS/165 of 03/2023

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Short term e-tenders are invited in two cover system from approved and eligible Contractors having GST registration/registered with J&K Govt., Railways and other State/Central Government Organizations for the following work:-

| Sr. | Nature of Work | Location | Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) | Cost of Tender Doc. | Time of Completion | Programme |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| A | S/I/T/C of rubber armored hose pipes | Bugam Ist | 0.60 | 100/= | 07 days | M&R |

Critical Dates/Information.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Publishing Date | 01-03-2023 (5:00 PM) |
| 2. Period of Downloading of Bids | 01-03-2023 (5:00 PM) to 20 -03-2023 (11:00 AM) |
| 3. Period of Submission of bids | 01-03-2023 (5:00 PM) to 20 -03-2023 (11:00 AM) |
| 4. Date of opening of Tender/Timing | 20 -03-2023 (12:00 PM) |
| 5. Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer, (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar | |
| 6. Document Cost: Non-Refundable in the shape of Treasury Challan/receipt shall be deposited to Account Head 0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar (The firm shall specify the e-NIT No. & name of work for which applied) | |
| 7. Bid Validity Period: 90 Days | |
| 8. The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www .Jktenders.gov.in | |
| 09 Instead of EMD the firm has to furnish "Bid Security Declaration", format of the declaration is enclosed in the Bid Document | |

Note:- The tenderer who is declared as L1 after opening of price bid will deposit 3% of the Estimated cost of the work in shape of CDR/ FDR before allotment is issued in his favour.
No:- PHE/MRD /TS/4941-45

DIPK-18194/22 DT:- 03-03-2023

Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti (PHE)
Mechanical Rural Division Srinagar.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR UT

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MUFFASIL (R&B) DIVISION BUDGAM

ENGINEERING COMPLEX BUDGAM PIN NO.191111

E-MAIL:- XENNRNBIVBUD@GMAIL.COM,PHONE-FAX:- 01951-255208

TENDER NOTICE

E-TENDERING NIT NO.-262-MDB OF 2022-23/17709-29 DATED:- 01-03-2023

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works.

| S.No | Name of Work | Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) | Earnest Money (Rs) | Cost of T/ Doc. (Rs.) | Time of completion | Class of Contractor | MH Acct |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Improvement of Baghi Khalwat Road at Humhama | 7.00 | Rs.14000/- | Rs.300/- | 12 Days | "CEE" "DEE" | 3054 M&R |
| 2. | Repairs/Renovation of Tehsil Office Building at Beerwah (Balance Work) | 2.72 | Rs.5440/- | Rs.200/- | 10 Days | "DEE" | Capex Budge 2022-23 (Land Reforms Sector) |
| 3. | Restoration of Yarikah Khapora Raithan Road. | 2.00 | Rs.4000/- | Rs.200/- | 10 Days | "DEE" | Adll 3054 M&R |
| 4. | Repairs Renovation of Patwari Khan at Doobi Pora Khansahib (Balance Work) | 1.00 | Rs.2000/- | Rs.200/- | 12 Days | "DEE" | Capex Budge 2022-23 (Land Reforms Sector) |

Position of AAA =Accordd (S.No.1) vide No. CE(R&B)/K/TS/954 of 2022-23 Dtd: 28/2/2023

=Accordd (S.No.2 &4) vide Order No. 312-DDCB of 2022-23 Dtd:-27/02/2023.

=Accordd (S.No.3) Revised Annual Repairs under Non Plan Head vide No.

Acts/5820-21/10/12/2022

Position of TS:- =Accordd

Position of funds:- = Available/Committed,

Project Authority:- = Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Depatt and District Dev. Commissioner Budgam,

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www .jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of date given below:-

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Date of Issue of Tender Notice | 01-02-2023 |
| 2. | Period of downloading of bidding documents | From 01-03-2023 |
| 3. | Bid Submission Start Date | 01-03-2023 from 10.00 AM |
| 4. | Bid Submission End Date | 07-03-2023 upto 3.00 P.M. |
| 5. | Date & Time of opening of Bids | 07-03-2023 at 3.30 P.M in the office of Executive Engineer Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam |
| | Submission of Performance Security (PS) | Within 7 days of receipt of LOI. (The bidder as to provide 3% of allotted Cost as Performance Security within 7days after opening of Financial Bid) in shape of CDR/FDR/BG |

Note:-

No: EE/MD/17709-29

DIPK-18159/22 DATED:-03-03-2022

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Muffasil(R&B) Division
Budgam,



MP Khatana Reviews Dev Activities In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Ghulam Ali Khatana, today chaired a meeting of officers to review development projects being executed in Srinagar district.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Srinagar, Joint Director Planning and other district officers.

MP took detailed assessment of various development projects being implemented by Rural Development, Education, Youth Services & Sports, Health & Medical Education, Jal Shakti, Power Development, Agriculture and allied departments.

During the meeting, ADDC briefed the MP about the status of developmental programs being implemented

in the district.

The MP was given a thorough presentation on implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) and other beneficiary oriented schemes besides 100 percent saturation of these schemes in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Khatana expressed satisfaction over the pace of progress on several development works.

While seeking feedback on each project, he called upon the officers to identify all the bottlenecks, if any, to achieve set targets in given timelines. He exhorted upon the officers to expedite the ongoing works for timely completion. He also asked the officers to remain available for the people so as to ensure timely redressal of their issues and concerns.

'World Wildlife Day' Commemorated At Dachigam National Park



Observer News Service

Srinagar: To commemorate 'World Wildlife Day', the Department of Wildlife Protection Central Division today organized an event themed "Partnerships for wildlife conservation" at Dachigam National Park, here.

The day is celebrated every year on the 3rd of March to generate awareness among the people regarding the Wildlife and its Conservation.

Researcher Scholars, Public Representatives, students and teachers, Civil Society members, Volunteers, several NGOs and officials of the Wildlife Protection Department participated in the event.

On the occasion, Wildlife Warden Central Altaf Hussain said that this day provides an opportunity to take the message of conservation to grass roots level by involving students, scholars and the civil society to raise awareness about the multitude of benefits that conservation of

Wildlife, Environment and Natural Resources offer to human civilization.

He further elaborated that there is urgent need to develop a coordinated method wherein every member of the civil society and other organizations will participate in the process of conservation besides the Department of Wildlife Protection and Forest.

Speakers from NGOs, Schools, and PRI etc also laid emphasis on the importance of the wildlife environment and over interdependence on these two components. They highlighted the fact that if any component of the environment suffers the distortion because of human activities then all of us have to pay a big price.

It was jointly pledged by all present in the gathering to propagate the message of Wildlife Conservation and protection of its natural habitat. The motive is to trigger the enthusiasm of the people towards taking part actively in all conservation aspects.



Unique Protest Against Smart Meter Installation Held At Rainawari

Women Blocks Road, Sings 'Medley Songs' To Oppose Move

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: A unique protest against installation of 'smart' power meters was held at Rainawari area in the old city on Saturday, with protesters, mainly women holding smart meters in hands, singing Kashmiri medley songs 'wanvun' so as to be heard by those sitting at the helm of affairs.

Protests against the move continue across Kashmir including Srinagar, ever since the process of installing smart meters began in the newly carved out Union Territory, with locals blaming previous regimes for putting people of J&K into 'dire-straits'.

"This is not a road show, this is a real grief, take pity and stop oppressing poor" were the slogans protesters, mainly women, were shouting after blocking the

main road near Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial (JLNM) Hospital at Rainawari.

Protesters blocked the traffic movement on the busy road for around an hour. Traffic was restored after some officials reached the spot to pacify agitating women.

The protesting women alleged that the previous regimes for their political interests allowed the National Hydro-electricity Power Corporation's (NHPC) to take over J & K's potential source of income, which is now selling power to Kashmiri people at extremely exorbitant rates.

They said installing smart meters in Rainawari is a far-fetched dream to be accomplished, as the residents would prefer to live in 'pitch dark' than to allow the government to install smart meters in the

area, wherein people live 'hand to mouth'.

Protests were held in several other areas of Rainawari including Mugal Mohalla with women holding smart meters in their hands singing Kashmiri medley songs (wanvun) to grab the attention of the people sitting at the helm of affairs.

"Why do we install smart meters, these are the previous regimes that robbed J&K of its only potential source of income and threw it into darkness. Why are we forced to install smart meters and pay hefty monthly bills when J&K supplies power to other states for free," Rehana, a protester, told the media.

Protesters said they will not allow smart meters to be installed in their area as they have been paying a good amount ranging from Rs 1000 to 1300 as monthly electricity bill.

NEP-2020

Two day National Conference Held In Higher Education Institutions

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A two days' National Conference on Implementation of NEP-2020 in Higher Education Institutions concluded today at Govt. College of Education (IASE), M.A. Road, Srinagar here.

The conference was organized to deliberate on the key themes pertaining to Implementation of NEP-2020 in Higher Education Institutions.

The conference was attended by academicians, policy planners, researchers from different institutions/universities within and outside the UT of J&K.

As many as 20 papers were presented in three technical sessions spread over two days.

The inaugural session saw a galaxy of experts and researchers from various fields assemble in the conference. Dr. Seema Naz, Principal Host College at the very outset threw light on the achievements of the institution in the field of teacher education. Fazl illahi, Conference Coordinator, in his backdrop to the conference highlighted significant issues in NEP-2020.

Prof. Manisha Priyam from Department of Educa-

tion Policy, NIEPA, Ministry of Education, in her keynote address talked about the new precepts in NEP-2020 and multidisciplinary.

Prof. Sanjeev Sonawane, Pro Vice Chancellor, Savitribai Phule University Pune in his special address highlighted the importance of learner and learning.

Prof. Qayyum Hussain, VC, Cluster University Srinagar in his presidential address highlighted the challenges for effective implementation of NEP-2020.

The three technical sessions were presided over by Prof. Mahmmud Ahmad Khan, Prof. Parveen Pandit and Prof. Zahoor Geelani. Each session was complemented by Prof. Mohammad Ashraf, Prof. Ratnabali and Prof. Geetanjali Kalaas discussants.

The conference concluded on the second day with the panel discussion under the theme "NEP-2020: Making it Happen". The session was presided over by Prof. Yasmeen Ashai, Director Colleges, Higher Education Department. She drew attention to the key areas and challenges in the way of implementing the visionary policy in the UT of J&K



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|  HIJRI CALENDAR 11 Shaban 1444 | PRAYERS | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| | FAJR | 5:37 |
| | ZUHR | 12:43 |
| | ASR | 4:47 |
| | Magrib | 6:32 |
| | ISHA | 7:50 |

This Day In History

- 51 - Nero, later to become Roman Emperor, is given the title princeps iuventutis (head of the youth)
- 1152 - Frederick I Barbarossa elected Holy Roman Emperor
- 1215 - King John of England makes an oath to the Pope as a crusader to gain the support of Innocent III.
- 1790 - France is divided into 83 départements, which cut across the former provinces in an attempt to dislodge regional loyalties based on noble ownership of land.
- 1793 - French troops conquer Geertruidenberg, Netherlands
- 1804 - The Battle of Vinegar Hill, colony of New South Wales (Australia), when Irish convicts (some of whom had been involved in Ireland's Battle of Vinegar Hill in 1798) led the colony's only significant convict uprising.
- 1824 - The "National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck" founded in the United Kingdom, later to be renamed The Royal National Lifeboat Institution in 1858.
- 1841 - Longest US presidential inauguration speech (8,443 words), William Henry Harrison
- 1861 - Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th US President
- 1865 - Abraham Lincoln inaugurated for his 2nd term as US president
- 1870 - On command of Louis Riel, Thomas Scott is executed by a firing squad. Riel rejects all appeals and requests to intervene in an attempt to demonstrate to the Canadian government that the Métis must be taken seriously
- 1890 - The longest bridge in the Great Britain, the Forth Bridge (railway) (1,710 ft) in Scotland is opened by the Prince of Wales, who later became King Edward VII.
- 1913 - Woodrow Wilson inaugurated as 28th US President
- 1918 - First recorded case of Spanish flu at Funston Army Camp, Kansas; start of worldwide pandemic killing 50-100 million
- 1921 - Warren G. Harding is inaugurated as the 29th President of the United States
- 1923 - Lenin's last article in Pravda (about Soviet bureaucracy)
- 1927 - Babe Ruth becomes the highest-paid player in MLB history when he signs 3-year, \$70,000 per season contract with the New York Yankees
- 1933 - Chancellor Dollfuss dissolves Austrian parliament
- 1933 - Franklin D. Roosevelt inaugurated as 32nd US President, pledges to pull US out of the Depression, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself"
- 1941 - The United Kingdom launches Operation Claymore on the Lofoten Islands, during World War II.

From KO Archives

Musharraf Frees Indian Prisoners

Islamabad - Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf ordered the release on Tuesday of 31 Indian Sikhs detained in illegal entry and also recommended that captive Indian fishermen be freed, a foreign ministry official said.

Musharraf made the goodwill gesture during a meeting with senior members of two Indian communist parties, Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani said.

NDTV news channel reported that Musharraf had ordered the release of 200 Indian civilians held in Pakistani prisons, but J i l i a n i said he did not know the exact number.

Jilani said the president had ordered the release of 31 young Sikhs who had crossed into Pakistan from Iran.

He said 2&6 Indian fishermen had been released last month, and that authorities were awaiting confirmation from the Indian High Commission that other detained fishermen were indeed Indian before freeing them.

The president said Pakistan and India should not unnecessarily detain each other's fishermen," Jilani said after Musharraf met the delegation led by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, head of the Communist Party of India-Marxist.

(Kashmir Observer, 04 March, 2005)

The Case for Handicrafts

Amir Suhail Wani

“What is culture and civilization but a fabric made of the warp and woof of these socio-economic mores, cultural continuities and the signatures of indigenous and vernacular goods. As the threads loosen, one after the other, the fabric of culture will clove asunder without much attention

A man in his late fifties with a hunchback leans forward as he reads what is locally known as “Kalbaaf Taleem” (Carpet Weaver’s instructions) and meshes threads. He will reach the final stroke in the next couple of days that will result in the fruition of a masterpiece – a piece of carpet that may decorate royal palaces, presidential houses or any other place of global repute. The weaver, who worriedly drives his apparatus on the carpet hung in front of him, is anxious about his wages. He is least aware that in his colourful threads, he weaves the culture, craft and civilization, all in one seamless flow – fusing all of it together in a piece of carpet.

But the sight has dwindled, the industry in shambles and the hopes of revival too bleak. This applies to almost all traditional crafts – Paper Machie, Wood Carving, Pashmina Works; all seem to have suffered the same fate.

Handicraft industry stands handicapped, unable to stay apace with emerging market trends, plagued by middlemen culture and pushed to footnotes by the wuthering apathy of government and concerned agencies. The decay of handicrafts is not only an economic misfortune, depriving us of our perennial occupations but is also a cultural and civilisational loss, no less than the loss of language, political autonomy, a sense of self-identity of the nation and people. What is culture and civilization but a fabric made of the warp and woof of these socio-economic mores, cultural continuities and the signatures of indigenous and vernacular goods. As the threads loosen, one after the other, the fabric of culture will clove asunder without much attention.

Profusion of machine made goods, the discomforting fraudulence, falling out of sync from market trends and the indifference of the government are some of the reasons that immediately come to mind while one tries to figure out the reasons for the decay of our artisanship and handicrafts. The first of these – the indiscriminate profusion of machine made goods seems to have no answer as history teaches us. The arrival of the printing press, for example, led to the downfall and absolute decadence of as large an industry as calligraphy and overnight made thousands of scribes redundant. In the presence of machine made goods, the hand-made goods only retain their importance for the elite with refined aesthetic sense and the simultaneous abundance of resources to meet these resources. But can this vast industry, the industry that includes dozens of specialised crafts survive on the whims of the economic elite? People, who are themselves in a state of economic constraint are little bothered



about the intricacies and superfine underpinnings of an artistic masterpiece and they are in no mood to purchase a good against the amount that can otherwise sustain them for a year. In an imbroglia like this, the government can and must play an active role by allocating remunerations to artisans, take the task of export into its own hands and assure that the finished goods reach the market places where they are needed the most. There is a dire need of capital infusion into this dying industry if the government wants to keep it alive and bring it on par with the global standards.

The conundrum of pervasive and malafide presence of spurious and fake items under the pretext of genuine handicrafts has been lately addressed by the concerned agencies by such means as GI tagging and product specific brand stampings. This might go a long way to help the customers to distinguish the fake from genuine and to save themselves of fraudulence and trickstery. The onus lies on the artisans to update themselves about GI tagging and its relevance to their product and the marketing thereof so as to carve a niche of their own in brand creation. Adjacent to fakery is the overwhelming ignorance of artisans to the emerging marketing strategies, the use of E-commerce and other online services which could have otherwise boosted their products and placed them at par with the global trends. Both government and NGOs are actively pursuing this case of updating the artisans on

this front and in this week itself, ELFA International, a Kashmir based humanitarian body organized a massive training and sensitization workshop with craftsmen drawn from almost across the spectrum and had threadbare sessions with them on emergent trends in production and marketing sector, informing them also of the steps taken by government in this direction. About the government, it can be said that the picture isn’t entirely bleak but it is instead the lack of information about the schemes and initiatives taken by the government for the welfare of craftsmen that leads to missing out an opportunity. The schemes initiated by DHC at the central level and the ones implemented by HSC at state level all are for the up gradation of the crafts and craftsmen, but the ignorance of the same results in loss of opportunities.

The aforesaid remedies as figured out have to work in sync, in resonance to rejuvenate this otherwise gasping industry and while rescuing it and taking it to shores, there’s a hope that we will be recreating not only employment for the coming generation, but connecting them to their roots, with dignity and prosperity.

Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The author is a Srinagar based columnist

A Pandemic-Ready World

The exercise to strengthen WHO’s International Health Regulations Framework must balance sovereignty of member-nations with facilitation of timely action

K Srinath Reddy

Even as the world mostly refers to the Covid-19 pandemic in the past tense, the threat of future pandemics is presently engaging the attention of all countries through two major international initiatives convened by the World Health Organisation (WHO). International Health Regulations (IHRs) are being revised to increase the speed and efficiency of global health alerts. A new Pandemic Treaty is being negotiated to provide a more efficient and equitable response to a pandemic than witnessed recently. Both these initiatives will draw on the experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic to enhance global capabilities for responding to a new microbial threat.

IHR is the most important multi-lateral treaty that regulates the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response, and resilience (HEPR). It commenced in 1969, for reporting on six infectious diseases. By 1973, the focus was on three diseases—cholera, yellow fever and plague. In 1995, the World Health Assembly (WHA) called for extending the scope to many sources of risk to human health (biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear). The SARS-I pandemic catalysed a major revisit of IHR in 2005, calling on countries to assess and improve their national capacities for surveillance and response, and was to be accomplished by 2012. IHR 2005 required countries to notify WHO of any event which can potentially cause a ‘public health emergency of international concern’ (PHEIC) and to develop core public health capacities to investigate and control such threats. It enabled WHO to declare a PHEIC and coordinate a global response.

Despite this, the Covid-19 pandemic response revealed several weaknesses—both at several national levels and in global coordination. Many national health systems were inadequately prepared to recognise, report and respond to the escalating threat. Global sharing of information was neither uniformly prompt nor reliable. WHO’s assessments and national reports were at variance and global technical assistance had to be provided



through filters of negotiated national government consent. Calls for revision of IHR mounted, both to expand its scope and to strengthen its implementation.

Proposals for revision of IHR were placed before the 75th WHA in 2022, were debated in the 76th WHA this year and are being steered towards the adoption of a new-age IHR in the 77th WHA. A total of 307 amendments to the existing IHR have been tabled by member states. They will be debated to develop consensus on revisions.

The most radical amendments have been proposed by the US, which has been very wary of bioterrorism and pandemic threats from other countries. The US’s Centers for Disease Control (CDC) work closely with WHO to monitor global trends. Covid-19 pandemic raised concerns about loopholes in timeliness, completeness and accuracy of outbreak reporting and speed of response, which the US proposals seek to plug. Amendments tabled by the US include proposals for rapid sharing of pathogen genetic sequence data and shorter

deadlines for reporting and responding to emerging threats. An amendment to Article 12 proposes to remove the need for WHO to consult and find agreement with the country, which is seen to be the origin of a potential threat. This will be done through the mechanism of an ‘intermediate public health alert’ that requires ‘heightened international awareness’.

An amendment also proposes to give the six regional directors of WHO powers to declare a ‘public health emergency of regional concern’ (PHERC), avoiding delays of a global review and expediting coordinated regional responses. The US proposals allow WHO to rely on ‘outside’ information received from non-official channels, with only 24 hours given to the national government to respond before the information is made public. This is intended to overcome the tardiness or inaccuracy of national reporting but critics question whether third parties may use this channel to damage the reputation of countries. Consultation with countries is also not required before a PHE-

IC or PHERC is declared. Amendments propose to make deployment of WHO’s technical assistance missions to countries mandatory, by replacing ‘may’ with ‘shall’. This is supported further by amendments to Article 15, allowing WHO’s Director General and Expert Committees to recommend the deployment of expert teams to a country experiencing a PHEIC.

Critics of the proposed amendments are concerned about the erosion of national sovereignty, if many of the decisions are taken by WHO on the basis of expert committees which consist of non-officials and are often dominated by scientists from high income countries. There is concern that declaration of a PHEIC will provide a fast track to emergency use authorisation of drugs and vaccines with curtailed scrutiny of evidence on efficacy and safety. Annex 2 of the current IHR calls for declaration of a PHEIC when a SARS virus is detected. Should that be done even if the virus has a low infection fatality rate (IFR)? This has implications for people’s mobility and livelihoods.

There is a compelling need to strengthen global surveillance systems for timely detection of serious threats to public health which not only pose danger to lives but also undermine economic security and social stability. WHO needs to be strengthened to act with speed, technical competence, objectivity, and capacity to coordinate global responses, whenever a PHEIC arises. It should do so without unduly undermining national sovereignty in making assessments and deciding on locally appropriate responses. The ongoing negotiations on IHR will have to find a fine balance between these goals. Alongside this effort to make IHR a ‘fit for purpose’ instrument, the new Pandemic Treaty which is being negotiated in parallel should usher in a new era of cooperation in global health.

Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
The article was originally published by Financial Express

What Is A Book In The Digital Age?

Zoe Sadokierski

As a professional book designer, I've spent a decade observing electronic books from a caggy distance. A couple of years ago, I reluctantly recognised the need to engage with these alien book forms, both as a reader and a designer. It is the 21st century.

What I have come to realise is this: electronic books can do certain things that print books cannot, and therein lies their value. Enhanced electronic books are changing our definition and expectations of books.

My office, home and handbag are still stuffed with print books; eBooks (e for electronic) have not replaced pBooks (p for print) in my life. I find myself toggling between the two.

I consider the relationships between print and electronic books from the perspective of a reader and designer. What are these different formats, and how do they affect the way we produce and consume content?

THE SMELL AND FEEL OF PAPER

Let's get nostalgia out of the way quickly. Print books have a material quality that electronic books do not. For many of us, the intimacy of cradling a book close to our chest, hanging our head over it and shutting out the real world is a sacred ritual. The smell and feel of paper can never be replicated by a cold, hard screen.

Although it's possible to read an electronic book in a bath, it's less relaxing and more dangerous (not in a fun way). Browsing a bookstore or library and flicking through books is a social, embodied experience. Clicking on a screen is not.

Amazon.com has a complex algorithm to suggest books I may like based on previous purchases, but I'd rather have a librarian or bookseller make suggestions based on their expertise and a conversation, and walk out holding the book object. The tactile differences between page and screen will always be an issue for those of us raised on ink and paper.

But watch how a toddler tapping stubbornly at a magazine becomes annoyed that the image isn't changing. That child is unlikely to feel the same nostalgia for print as her par-

ents, because her understanding of "book" will be significantly different to theirs.

The technology we use to present and consume information has changed. The toddler who understands that tapping a glassy surface should make an image change demonstrates that technology is developing at an unprecedented rate, and unless we are constantly attentive we risk being left behind.

NEW TECH, NEW CHALLENGES

Although often linked, anxiety about the new is different than nostalgia for the old.

A print book is a beautifully simple technology to use. Pick the thing up, turn each leaf in sequence until finished. If literate, anyone can pick up and read any print book.

An electronic book is a more complex technology. An eBook requires a computer, eReader or tablet, and a power source to keep the device charged. It requires computer access to a website or digital catalogue where files can be downloaded, and an understanding of how to use it.

Pages aren't just turned, they are clicked and pinched and swiped – movements that need to be learned, and vary between different devices and brands.

In other words, you need new kinds of literacy to even get to the text. Moreover, you need to keep up with constant development and updating of these devices and programs, and understand the value and limitations of different devices, formats and suppliers.

This market-driven mess is the major issue with current eBooks. Different eReaders are made by different companies – Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook and the Sony Reader, to name a few. Then there are tablets, such as Apple's iPad, which perform a range of functions similar to a computer, one of which is enabling users to read eBooks through an app (short for "application", or computer program).

These different devices run on different software, and require different file types. An eBook that works on a Kindle may not work on an iPad. There is no single file type that allows an eBook to be published all devices.

So although cutting out the print-



LET'S GET NOSTALGIA OUT OF THE WAY QUICKLY. PRINT BOOKS HAVE A MATERIAL QUALITY THAT ELECTRONIC BOOKS DO NOT.

For many of us, the intimacy of cradling a book close to our chest, hanging our head over it and shutting out the real world is a sacred ritual

ing and binding process of traditional book production may seem to reduce production time and costs, the confusion of designing for different platforms and devices means an entirely new and more complicated production process has been introduced.

Urgency to capture the market means many of these devices and the software/programs on them are released before they have been properly tested, and have faults that need to be addressed by constantly updating to newer versions of the software.

Amazon's Kindle Fire eReader, released just before Christmas 2011, was riddled with bugs and problems: volume-control glitches, an off-switch that was easily hit by accident, slow loading time and an unresponsive touch screen. Hundreds of articles and forums are dedicated to problems associated with iPads: overheating devices, Wi-Fi connec-

tivity issues, slow charging, apps and eBooks refusing to sync or download.

This can seem overwhelming when you could just pick up a print book and begin reading immediately.

Yet the complexity of the digital system is what allows eBooks to do astounding things, and offers versatility and accessibility impossible in print.

MORE PROS THAN CONS

The most immediate appeal of eBooks for digitally-reluctant readers is the efficiency afforded by an eReader. Packing for a vacation, a single device the width of a novella that contains hundreds of books is incredibly convenient and offers a previously unimagined variety of instantaneous choice.

Travelling on the Trans-Mongolian Rail a few years ago, I constantly cursed the bulk of Anna Karenina.

With an eReader, I could have slipped Tolstoy's entire oeuvre into my jacket pocket, with some Dostoyevsky for good measure. Then again, finding a power source in a yurt would have proved problematic.

Other appealing aspects of eBooks are immediacy and variety. Incredible numbers of eBooks, including many that are difficult to find in print, are available instantly from repositories, with no delivery time, and with many at a lower cost than print books.

The US-based online literary archive Project Gutenberg has more than 42,000 free eBooks – digitised books that have fallen out of copyright.

Most publishers offer new releases in both print and electronic editions simultaneously. These eBooks are direct translations of print books; the same text is scanned in, or typeset for an eReader, exactly as it would appear in the print edition. For those direct

translations, the difference between a print and electronic edition is a matter of the reader's preference. The content of the book is the same, only the format differs.

A RICHER READING EXPERIENCE

A more curious breed are "enhanced eBooks", which include audio-visual and interactive elements such as short videos and animations.

UK company Touch Press are leading that field. Their titles include an edition of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* that contains a scanned draft of the manuscript hand-edited by Ezra Pound, an original video performance of the poem, and a suite of video interviews with poets, theatre directors and scholars discussing the cultural significance of the poem.

They have also produced an edition of Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical drawings that allows users to zoom at extraordinary resolution and compare Leonardo's theories against modern knowledge with 3D models of human anatomy, as well as interactive demonstrations.

Touch Press is also behind an animated, annotated periodic table of elements that has to be seen to be believed. Their highly interactive release, *Gems and Jewels*, allows users to rotate the pictures within the books to see the other side.

Touch Press' website manifesto reads:

Books are one of the defining inventions of civilisation. Today publishing is being transformed by digital technologies. The aim of Touch Press is to create new kinds of books that re-invent the reading experience by offering information that is enhanced with rich media and that adapts dynamically to the interests and experience of the reader.

These kinds of publications are different than the eBooks that are straight translations from print to digital. They include audio-visual and interactive elements that cannot be reproduced on the page.

These are the eBooks that are changing the way we consider what a book is, and could be.

By arrangements with The Conversation

When Covid Politics Collides With Covid Science, Public Health Loses

Jonathan Lambert

With covid now an afterthought rather than an emergency in the minds of many Americans, politicians and pundits are rushing to have the final word on who handled the crisis well – and who dropped the ball.

These recent declarations of pandemic winners and losers often ignore the iterative and uncertain nature of science in favor of blunt headlines and slogans bolstered by cherry-picked studies. And they often elide scientists' and policymakers' honest grappling with major decisions in the face of limited and evolving data.

"The Mask Mandates Did Nothing. Will Any Lessons Be Learned?" New York Times columnist Bret Stephens declared last month, flattening a highly nuanced, heavily caveated scientific study of mask-wearing into a single talking point. And after reports this week that the Energy Department concluded with "low confidence" that a lab leak in China likely caused the pandemic, several prominent Republicans touted it as ruling out a natural origin. They included Sen. John Barasso (R-Wyo.), who tweeted that "China is responsible for COVID."

Such black-and-white pronouncements can muddy the public's understanding of what worked (like vaccines), what didn't (ivermectin), and the wide gray area around other measures, like mask mandates or school closures, that scientists are still evaluating. Three years into the pandemic, the United States' political war over covid has eroded public trust in science, with the biggest drop – more than 20 percentage points – among Republicans. That polarization makes responding to the next crisis, whether it's a pandemic or something else, even harder.

"Those who have dogmatic positions and are playing to the politics can be extreme, use hyperbole and be definitive in their pronouncements," said Timothy Caulfield, research director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta. "Those who are trying to be close to what the science actually says have to have all these caveats and hedge what they say, and it's just like [they're] going to gunfight with a knife."

POLITICIZATION LEADS TO MISTRUST

Before covid entered the global con-

sciousness in early 2020, Americans' trust in science was largely bipartisan, with relatively small gaps between the parties.

"There just wasn't much of a political divide," said Cary Funk, director of Pew Research's science and society team, which has tracked public opinion on the topic since 2016. But during the pandemic, a gap appeared – and it continues to widen.

In January 2019, a Pew poll found that 88 percent of Republicans had a great deal or a fair amount of confidence that medical scientists act in the best interests of the public, compared with 87 percent of Democrats. By September 2022, only 68 percent of Republicans reported the same, compared with 91 percent of Democrats. The partisan gap is even wider – 63 to 89 – for trust in scientists generally.

That split didn't start right when the pandemic hit, said Funk. "For about six weeks, we saw very little partisan division about what was happening," she said. "But shortly thereafter, we started to see this political division open up, and that really became a hallmark of public opinion around everything connected with the coronavirus outbreak."

By that point, the country was in the throes of the first covid wave – battling a virus the world knew little about, while politicians sniped over how to handle it and who to blame.

President Donald Trump called the coronavirus a "new hoax" at a campaign rally in late February 2020, and continually downplayed the threat during weeks of daily White House press briefings. Democrats lobbed heavy criticism at Trump for moving too slowly and minimizing the potential risk, at times exaggerating how Trump's policies affected the nation's readiness to detect and fight pandemic threats.

"Those political cues can be very sticky and hard to strip away," said Rebekah Nagler, a health communication researcher at the University of Minnesota. "When you introduce that politicization element, you're inviting people to interpret new information through a political lens." A recent history of polarization around health policy, including support for the Affordable Care Act, may have also primed the public to take political sides on covid, she said.

In those early weeks and months, un-

certainty about the scale of the threat the virus posed, how it spread and what could be done to stop it further fueled the partisan divide, creating an opening for mis- and disinformation to flourish.

"Politicization can involve the strategic elevation of uncertainty around science for political gain," said Sarah Gollust, a health policy researcher at the University of Minnesota.



In early 2020, "science was moving so rapidly, for good reason, as the scientific community was trying to make sense of a novel pandemic," she said. Scientists raced to post new findings online as pre-prints, bypassing the normal slow process of peer review, to get information out as quickly as possible. That created a flurry of often conflicting information that was challenging for the research community to sift through, much less the public.

"There was so much evidence being produced so rapidly, there was so much more to pick from and potentially elevate conflict," said Gollust.

SHIFTING GUIDANCE

Official guidance often shifted as a result of that evolving understanding and a dynamic environment. Initially, public health officials dissuaded people from buying masks to ensure limited supply

could be used by medical professionals. But in early April 2020, that guidance changed, in part because of new science on how the virus spread.

The rapidity of such changes, while likely necessary, can erode trust, said Gil Eyal, a sociologist at Columbia University: "If the surgeon general says you don't need masks, because they won't protect you, and then the CDC corrects course,

an opportunity for those who want to generate distrust to generate distrust because they can say, 'This institution said X, and now they're saying Y, that means you can't trust them,'" he said. Fast-forward to today, and virtually every aspect of the pandemic – from treatments to the value of masking – is viewed through a partisan or ideological lens.

"Once something becomes about ideology, it becomes very difficult to change people's minds," said Caulfield. "It almost doesn't matter what the science says."

Despite evidence that covid vaccines and boosters are safe and effective, uptake remains lower among Republicans, likely contributing to partisan gaps in covid deaths that emerged after the vaccine. And ivermectin – an anti-malaria drug touted by Trump in 2020, which study after study has shown to be ineffective for treating covid – continues to be pushed by some doctors, who are even expanding their recommendations to diseases like RSV and flu. (In the meantime, the promotion of ivermectin as a covid cure resulted in a rise in poisonings linked to the drug, which is also used to deworm horses and other animals.)

While evidence against ivermectin is well established, questions around the effectiveness of policies aimed at reducing covid's spread, from masking to school closures, are still being studied. Answers are likely going to be complex and context-dependent, arising from many, many studies carried out in the coming years. Some questions, like whether the coronavirus was leaked from a lab or jumped naturally from animals to people, may never be definitely answered.

Polarization around these questions favors quick and easy answers, as the past several weeks have shown. Ideological actors can seize a study and label it as completely definitive when it's anything but, said Caulfield. But that nuance can get lost among those of a similar ilk, he said, creating a revisionist history of the pandemic.

"There's this profound cherry-picking, they select a favored scientific story, then try to ossify it as the truth," said Caulfield. "It's damaging on so many levels."

CAN TRUST IN SCIENCE BE REBUILT?

Three years into the pandemic, the trust-in-science partisan gap shows no

sign of shrinking.

Covid politicization is still on display as candidates and potential candidates for the 2024 presidential race look to score covid points, and as House Republicans launch inquiries into the Biden administration's handling of the pandemic.

That has profound implications that go well beyond how we understand this pandemic – which is still killing more than 300 people a day in the U.S. – to what we do when the next public health crisis emerges.

Depoliticizing covid after so long may be challenging. "I wouldn't say I'm super optimistic about a reframing at this point, in part because these beliefs are so sticky," said Nagler. But there are strategies scientists and public health officials could employ going forward.

One is to be clearer about how science works. Emphasizing that the scientific process is our best way of making sense of the world, but that it's iterative and inherently uncertain, can go a long way, said Nagler. "We have some data to suggest that if you remind people about how science works, it can be somewhat protective in how they respond to conflicting health information," said Nagler. That doesn't change the messy information environment, she said, but it can improve people's ability to operate within it.

For public health officials, being transparent about decision-making is crucial, said Kasisomayajula Viswanath, a health communication researcher at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "We have to admit that we don't know certain things and will get some things wrong, that's just the nature of science," he said. "But we'll need to be honest and open [with the public] and provide that information," on how decisions are being made, he said. "This needs to come from the highest levels of government."

But public health messaging can't come solely from on high, Viswanath said. Local organizations and leaders often hold more credibility for community members, making them better messengers, he said. "We need to engage them in this process of rebuilding trust."

There's no easy way to reverse the loss of trust in science and public health – but "we don't have a choice," said Viswanath. "How we do that is the big question."

–Grid

BJP, Cong Trade Barbs Over Rahul's Pegasus Remarks At Cambridge University

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks at Cambridge University that he was under surveillance triggered a political slugfest on Friday with the BJP accusing him of maligning India on foreign soil and the Congress hitting back by citing instances of Prime Minister Narendra Modi raking up internal politics abroad.

Gandhi, who is a visiting fellow of the Cambridge Judge Business School, during a lecture 'Learning to Listen in the 21st Century' on Tuesday evening said Indian democracy is under attack and several politicians, including himself, are under surveillance.

Referring to the controversial Pegasus snooping issue, Gandhi alleged that the Israeli spyware was installed on the phones of a large number of politicians, including him.

"I, myself, had Pegasus on my phone. A large number of politicians have Pegasus on their phones. I've been called by intelligence officers who say please be careful what you say on the phone because we are sort of recording this stuff. So, this is a constant pressure that we feel," the 52-year-old former Congress chief claimed at the lecture, a video recording of which was posted on Twitter by Congress leader Sam Pitroda, ex-adviser to former prime minister Manmohan Singh.

Reacting to the remarks, Union Minister Anurag Thakur hit out at Gandhi over his claims of being under surveillance by intelligence agencies and accused him of maligning India on foreign soil after facing successive



electoral setbacks. "Pegasus is not in Rahul Gandhi's phone but in his mind," he said.

Thakur wondered what prevented Gandhi and other Congress leaders from submitting their phones to a Supreme Court-appointed technical committee that probed the Pegasus snooping issue.

"We can understand his hatred towards the prime minister, but the conspiracy to malign the country on foreign soil with the help of foreign friends raises questions on the agenda of the Congress," the information and broadcasting minister told reporters here.

Thakur said Gandhi was aware of the electoral rout the Congress was facing in the assembly elections and had resorted to levelling allegations from foreign soil.

"Once again, the Congress lost in the elections but their bankruptcy was evident when they lost no opportunity to malign India from foreign soil," he said.

Hitting back at Thakur and the

BJP for its criticism of Gandhi, the Congress cited instances of Prime Minister Modi going abroad and allegedly raising internal politics and criticising the Congress.

"I have seen those foolish statements given by Anurag 'Golimaaro' Thakur," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said in an apparent reference to the 'Golimaaro' slogans purportedly raised at a public meeting of Thakur last year.

She urged the information and broadcasting minister him to listen to Gandhi's full lecture.

On BJP's criticism that Gandhi was "maligning" the country from foreign soil, Shrinete said the kind of statements Modi had made in places such as Shanghai, Toronto, California, Seoul and Abu Dhabi on internal politics and against the leading Opposition party of the country, if those are recounted then the BJP will have no place to hide.

If they listen to Rahul Gandhi's lecture, they would get to know that he has talked about democracy and how the media, judiciary and the Opposition are intimidated and how it is important for agencies to remain impartial, she said.

"He (Gandhi) has talked about strengthening democracy. Those who give statements of 'Golimaaro' from stage and become cabinet minister from minister of state, they can never understand the meaning of these remarks," she said.

Congress' head of media and publicity department Pawan Khara said the party would like to advise the BJP that they should stop such activities which are shameful to even discuss.

"So if they stop doing such activities, we will stop discussing them. There is an allegation on you (BJP) took the help of Israel to snoop into the phones of Opposition and your own leaders. They don't feel ashamed of that, but if it is discussed they feel shame," he said.

The BJP thinks that England will not find out about their raid on BBC if the Congress does not discuss it, he said.

"We are living in a different era we are not living in the 17th or 18th century where news travelled at the speed of a camel cart or at the speed of a pigeon. Now if I am talking to you anybody sitting in Papua New Guinea can hear me out," Khara said.

In an apparent swipe at Prime Minister Modi, Khara claimed that from foreign soil he made fun of the country. "The kind of activities you are involved in, you should first be ashamed of them. We will stop discussing them then so that you don't feel ashamed," the Congress leader said.

Earlier, the BJP made light of Rahul Gandhi's allegation that he was being snooped upon, saying the Congress leader was "hallucinating" and makes such claims as he wants to create headlines wherever he goes.

"What we can say for Rahul Gandhi's hallucinations. If he makes his (Congress) MoU with China public, we will be interested and people of India will also like to know. Who is interested in his telephonic conversations," BJP spokesperson Tom Vadakkan told reporters.

Vadakkan noted that the Supreme Court has closed the Pegasus matter.

Put Issues Related To Border In 'Proper Place', Work For Its Early Normalisation: Chinese FM Qin to Jaishankar

Press Trust of India

Beijing: India and China should put the boundary issue in the "proper place" in bilateral relations and work together to bring the situation at their borders "under normalised management" as soon as possible, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang conveyed to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar, the foreign ministry said here on Friday.

Qin's first in-person meeting with Jaishankar on Thursday came on the sidelines of the G20 foreign ministers conclave in New Delhi amid the over 34-month-long border row in eastern Ladakh. Qin took charge as Chinese foreign minister in December, succeeding Wang Yi. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

Jaishankar conveyed to Qin that the state of India-China relations is "abnormal" as their talks focused on addressing the challenges in bilateral ties, especially that of peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

"We also had a brief discussion on what was happening in the G20 framework. But the thrust of the meeting was really on our bilateral relationship and the challenges in the bilateral relationship, especially that of peace and tranquillity in the border areas," Jaishankar said.

Qin told Jaishankar that both sides should implement the important consensus of the leaders of the two countries, maintain dialogue and properly resolve disputes, and promote the improvement of bilateral ties and the steady moving forward of the

relations, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted an official press release from the Chinese foreign ministry as saying.

"The boundary issue should be put in the proper place in bilateral relations," Qin said, adding that the situation on the borders should be brought under normalised management as soon as possible.

China is willing to speed up the resumption of exchanges and cooperation with India in various fields, resume direct flights at the earliest date and facilitate people-to-people exchanges, Qin said.

He said that as neighbouring countries and major emerging economies, China and India have far more common interests than differences.

The development and revitalisation of China and India display the strength of developing countries, which will change the future of one-third of the world's population, the future of Asia and even the whole world, Qin noted.

He said "the two sides should view their bilateral relations in the context of the once-in-a-century changes in the world, understand bilateral cooperation from the perspective of their respective national rejuvenation, and be partners on the path to modernisation". He said China and India have shared interests in many areas including safeguarding the rights and interests of developing countries, promoting South-South cooperation and addressing global challenges such as climate change.

China supports the Indian side in fulfilling its chairmanship of the G20 and is ready

to strengthen communication and cooperation to safeguard the common interests of developing countries and international equity and justice, so as to inject stability and positive energy into the world, Qin said.

India assumed the Presidency of the G20 on December 1 last year.

The talk between the foreign ministers came nearly eight months after Jaishankar held a meeting with the then-Chinese foreign minister Wang in Bali on the sidelines of a G20 meeting.

At the hour-long meeting on July 7, Jaishankar conveyed to Wang the need for early resolution of all the outstanding issues in eastern Ladakh.

Relations between China and India have virtually frozen ever since the eastern Ladakh military standoff between the two countries in May 2020.

In line with a decision taken at the 16th round of military talks, the two sides carried out disengagement from Patrolling Point 15 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area in September last year.

But the face-off between the two of the planet's biggest military forces lingered on in Demchok and Depsang regions though the Indian side pressed for completion of the disengagement in remaining friction points at the earliest.

On February 22, India and China held in-person diplomatic talks in Beijing and discussed proposals for disengagement in the remaining friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in an "open and constructive manner".

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

We Work For

that around 40 percent of households in municipalities are exempted from any tax while the remaining 40 have to pay very nominal tax.

The Government said that how the system works if owners take lakhs of rent for commercial property and not give 5000 to corporation.

On land eviction drive, the LG ensured that no poor will be affected during the anti-encroachment drive, adding, "All the land taken away from encroachers will be utilized for development and creating facilities for the citizens.

The LG also lauded the role of Jammu and Kashmir Police in its fight against terrorism and highlighted the need to neutralise the ecosystem providing 'ideological and financial' support to terrorists in the Union Territory.

"I am confident that you will discharge your responsibility towards the nation with utmost sensitivity, commitment and dedication," added the Lt Governor.

"The integrity, dedication and professionalism of J&K Police are pivotal in the fight against terrorism," he said, and stressed upon the future-ready policing strategies to tackle the new forms of internal security challenges.

"These are challenging times for our police forces as the world today is facing conventional & non-conventional threats. We need to be vigilant & determined to neutralise the ecosystem providing ideological and financial support to terrorists," the Lt Governor said.

"We believe in 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and peaceful coexistence. There is no place for subversive elements in a civilized society," observed the Lt Governor. Narco-Terrorism has become one of the biggest threats to society.

J&K UT is on the march and is being transformed. It is our sacred duty to provide a safe, secure and right environment to fulfill the aspirations of the common man, he said.

Noting that the top positions in the batch have been secured by women constables, the Lt Governor said that these achievements show that our women are no less than anyone. The Lt

Governor further asked the DGP, Dilbag Singh to consider increasing the quota of reservation for women in the police force.

An oath was administered to the passing out cadets for performing their duties with dedication and honesty.

The Lt Governor took the Rashtriya Salute and witnessed the spectacular parade and martial art demonstration. He also felicitated the cadets who excelled during their training course.

R/Ct. Sunali Bhagat emerged as the best all-rounder. Recruit Constables Sarleen Kour, Sapna Saini, Heena Choudhary and Nitika Rajput were also felicitated by the Lt Governor for their excellent performances.

A total of 480 new recruits, including 49 women recruit Constables have completed their rigorous training today at the PTS Kathua. Out of 480, as many as 330 constables have already served as SPOs, 32 as followers, and 85 have been appointed under SRO.

'Public Infra

his government's decision to impose property tax in J&K, Sinha said a lot of misinformation is being spread by the vested interests.

"I want to tell you that property tax is in place in every state and Union Territory of the country. Jammu and Kashmir is the last region where property tax has been implemented," he said.

"But you need to understand the facts. Even before imposing the property tax in J&K, we decided to keep it minimum," he added.

If I speak about the figures, the LG said, whether it is Srinagar, Jammu or Kathua, there are only 5.20 lakh houses and out of these, 2.6L houses are less than 1000 sq ft and no tax is being imposed on them.

"Now if you look at figures, 40% of people living in cities will have to pay no tax. Similarly, the houses or flats between 1000 sq ft to 1500 sq ft are 2, 03,600. And these households, mostly in Srinagar and Jammu will have to pay a maximum Rs 1000 per annum. If I speak of

Kathua or other municipalities, the households will have to pay less than Rs 600 per annum," he said

"46,000 out of 1, 01, 000 shops in city areas are less than 100 sq ft and they will have to pay upto Rs 600 per annum. We are fine paying monthly rent of Rs 10 lakh to the big multiplexes that have come up but can't pay Rs 5000 to corporations. How can this system work?" he added

The LG further said that the doors of his administration are open for the people to put forward any suggestions.

He said that Jammu and Kashmir is undergoing a change and his administration will run for 1.35 crore people and not for a few thousand special ones.

"The people who misused law and amassed wealth for their five generations are instigating people to secure their personal interests. We won't let it happen. The times are gone when everything happened as per your instructions. You misused laws to benefit your near and dear ones," he added

Agri Land Of

agency has attached the properties of five designated terrorists -- US-based Gupatwant Singh Pannun, Canada-based Hardeep Singh Nijjar, and Pakistan-based Mushtaq Zargar, Basit Ahmad Pir and KCF (Panjwar) member Paramjit Singh alias 'Panjwar'.

Recently, the NIA also attached under the UAPA, the Hurriyat's office in Srinagar, which was owned in part by Nayeem Khan, an accused chargesheeted by the NIA in the Hurriyat funding case.

CRPF Pledges

them and everything will be done for their security," he said.

To a question about the security measures for the Amarnath Yatra, which is likely to begin in June, the CRPF officer said security agencies have started assessing the security measures for the annual pilgrimage to the south Kashmir Himalayas.

"Last year, the yatra concluded peacefully and a huge number of yatris came. This year too, we hope for a huge number of yatris. Stringent security measures will be put in place, including use of technology like drones. Also, ROPs, bullet-proof vehicles will be used in such a manner that the yatris have a wonderful experience," he said.

Bhatia said whatever steps need to be taken to facilitate the yatris will be taken like the last year.

"CRPF's helpline Madadgar" proved very helpful last year and this year too, we are ready to work in the same manner," he added.

Asked about the number of militants in south Kashmir, the IG CRPF said while it is difficult to give the exact number of militants as it keeps on changing, the forces have an upper hand.

"All the security forces are working in coordination and the results are there for everyone to see," he added.

About the use of technology in the counter-insurgency operations, the CRPF IG said it is our responsibility to keep our jawans safe and for that, whatever technological upgradation is necessary, like the critical situation response vehicle, JCB, bullet-proof, technological equipment, etc. "we will take that".

"Our aim is to neutralise enemies without incurring any own losses," he said.

On reports that the Army would be removed from the hinterland areas in some parts of the valley and the CRPF will be given that responsibility, Bhatia said such a decision is for the Centre to take and "we will do whatever role is given to us".

Separated During

and used to live in Gomla village in Mahendragarh district with their late father's friend, Karim Bakhsh, at the time of the Partition.

Bakhsh migrated to Pakistan along with elder Gurdev Singh while younger Daya Singh remained in Haryana with his maternal uncle.

After reaching Pakistan, Bakhsh moved to

Jhang district of Punjab province, some 200 kms from Lahore, and gave a Muslim name (Ghulam Muhammad) to Gurdev Singh. Gurdev Singh passed away a few years ago.

Muhammad Sharif, son of Gurdev, told the media that over the years his father had written letters to the government of India to find the whereabouts of his brother Daya Singh.

"Six months ago, we managed to find uncle Daya Singh through social media," he said, adding that both families decided to reach Kartarpur Sahib for the reunion.

He urged the Indian government to give visas to his family members here so that they could visit their ancestral house in Haryana.

Last year, two brothers who separated during the Partition reunited at Kartarpur Corridor.

Muhammad Siddique, 80, from Pakistan and Habib, 78, from India, met in January 2022 at the Kartarpur Corridor. They were also reunited with the help of social media.

The Kartarpur Corridor links Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, with the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district in India's Punjab state.

The 4 km-long corridor provides visa-free access to Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit the Darbar Sahib.

Take Call On Mehbooba's

CID gave a report that issuing the travel document to her will undermine national security.

In March 2021, Mehbooba and her mother were denied passports after the Jammu and Kashmir Police cited an "adverse report".

Mehbooba's passport expired on May 31, 2019, and she had applied for a fresh passport on December 11 the next year.

Rs 2 Cr Cash, Heroin

with Punjab-based narcotics smugglers is being investigated," the ADGP said, adding a case has been registered at police station Mandi and further investigation set into motion.

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

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DAK Sounds Caution Over Excessive Use Of Earphones

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: On world hearing day, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Friday warned against excessive use of earphones.

"Overuse of earphones at higher volumes over prolonged period of time can result in hearing loss," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

Dr Hassan said the younger generation is particularly vulnerable because they are glued to their personal listening devices like earphones, headphones and earbuds.

They plug these devices into their smartphones and listen to many hours at volumes exceeding the safe limit.

"Young people often choose volumes as high as 105 decibels," he said

"The safe sound levels are around 85 decibels for adults and 75 decibels for children."

The DAK President said more people are coming with hearing issues due to the overuse of earphones and headphones.

"Today's earphone users are going to be tomorrow's hearing aid users," he said.

"According to a study published in the Journal BMJ Glob-



al Health, one billion young people are potentially at risk of hearing loss due to their excessive use of headphones and earbuds."

Dr Nisar said hearing is the sense that connects us to the people.

Taking care of our hearing is key to maintaining healthy relationship(s) and general health and well-being. He said there is an urgent need to prioritize safe listening practices to safeguard aural health

It is always preferable to avoid earphones, but those who need them should take precautions.

"Limit the usage time, keep the volume low and take breaks," he said

"Every year on March 3, world hearing day is observed to raise awareness on ways of preventing deafness and promoting aural care through safe listening," he added.

SCERTs Must Adhere To Their Research Mandate: Prof Sansanwal



Farooq Shah

SRINAGAR: At the 5-day capacity building workshop on "Research Methodology And Data Analysis" organized by Regional Institute of Education (RIE), Ajmer, Prof. D. N. Sansanwal, who retired as Head and Dean, Faculty of Education, Devi Ahilya University, Indore, said that SCERTs must adhere to their research mandate to make their existence felt.

"The SCERTs' foundational tenet is research, and if they don't understand their responsibility and role, their very existence will be put into question," he said.

For the workshop that the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Kashmir Division, had long requested, RIE Ajmer had specifically invited Prof. Sansanwal as an expert.

Some 30 members of the DIET faculty from Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh took part in the workshop, where experts from RIE Ajmer led numerous sessions over the course of five days to discuss why research is a key step in resolving issues that present themselves to us in a variety of ways.

"We are grateful for the support, as our request to RIE Ajmer to hold a workshop on research methods and data analysis was quickly granted," Dr Nazneen Me'raj, who is a senior academic officer associated with the Survey Division of the SCERT.

Set up as Regional College of Education in 1963 under the aegis of National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, the institute was in 1995 renamed as Regional Institute of Education (RIE), Ajmer.

It looks after the educational interests of the Northern Region comprising the states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab,

Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union Territory of Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

In addition to Prof. Sansanwal, RIE Ajmer had brought in two specialists, Dr. Muzamil Hasan and Dr Sajid Jamal, who over the course of five days taught the participants various areas of research technique.

"Our objective is to improve the participants' skills, processes, instincts, skills, and resources so they can better prepare local staff for a variety of research-related tasks," Dr. Muzamil said. "RIE Ajmer is prepared to offer any assistance to anyone who submits a workable research idea."

Prof. Sansanwal asked the participants to start with small projects in order for research to get going rather than embarking on lengthy and difficult ones.

"Research, especially analytical studies, may produce more accurate findings with a smaller sample size because intensive measures can be taken to control all confounders, wherever they exist," he said. "It can assist in building a solid foundation for organisations like SCERT to leave their imprint on the field of research."

On day 2, while touring the facility, the recently appointed Director of SCERT, Prof. Parikhsat Singh Manhas, came by the workshop and praised SCERT for hosting such events.

"We take great pride in having experts from renowned institutions participate in our workshops," Prof. Manhas said. "It is our shared obligation to improve the calibre of our educational institutions and make them accessible for the good of our students."

He hoped that SCERT, J&K, will emerge as the No.1 institute of the country in the time to come.

District Authorities Assure Fair Probe Into Kupwara Man's Death

Observer News Service

KUPWARA: The district authorities have promised fair and impartial probe into the death of a man, whose body was recovered from a forest area in North Kashmir's Kupwara district after 75 days.

The assurance was given to the family of Abdul Rasheed Dar by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Dr. Doifode Sagar Dattatray and SSP Kupwara, Yougal Manhas, who visited the bereaved family at Kunan Poshpora to pay their condolences, an official spokesperson said Friday.

Both the dignitaries, he said, assured the family that investigation will be conducted in



a transparent and impartial manner to bring it to a logical conclusion.

On the occasion, the spokesperson said, the family members extended their gratitude towards the District Administration for tracing out the mortal remains of Dar.

He said BDC Chairperson and local Sarpanchs and Panchs present on the occasion, equally extended their gratitude to Deputy Commissioner Kupwara and SSP Kupwara in handling the case.

"The family members also assured that they will not allow any anti-social elements to take undue benefit out of the unfortunate incident," he added

The body of Abdul Rashid Dar, who went missing on December 16, 2022, was recovered from Zurhama-PK Galli forests on March 1.

Dar's family had earlier alleged that he was detained by the Army after which his whereabouts were unknown.

PAAs To Replace Panchayat Secretaries As First Signatory For Govt Schemes

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Expanding the functions and responsibilities of Panchayat Account Assistants (PAAs), the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, J&K has appointed them as the first signatories for all the government schemes run by the department.

According to an order issued today by the RDD & PR department in this regard, the PAAs shall now be responsible for uploading approved GPDPs on jk.panchayat portal, clearance of audit paras and OB items, responding to audit observations and recovering amount, if any, observed in the audit paras.

The order added that the PAAs shall now replace Panchayat Secretary as the first signatories in all government programmes including the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA scheme.

As the first signatory, they are responsible for ensuring that all financial transactions of the Panchayats are correctly recorded, verified and authorized before any payment is made.

Pertinently, a novel approach was developed in the UT to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system and ensure accurate accounting of finances in the Panchayats. For this, the Finance Department created 2000 Panchayat Accounts Assistant (PAAs) posts

in Rural Development Department vide Government Order No. 373-F dated 27-06-2019. After their appointment, they were assigned roles and responsibilities to maintain all records relating to Gram Panchayat Accounts wherein their primary responsibility was to check the accuracy of all financial transactions, to scrutinize the resolutions passed by the Gram Panchayat.

In addition to preparing responses to audit reports, they were also entrusted with the responsibility of reconciliation of revenue, receipt and expenditure figures with the office of Principal Accountant General Office of Jammu and Kashmir.

Illegal Riverbed Mining Continues In Shali Ganga

Locals Now Send Legal Notice To Govt , DMO

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: As illegal Riverbed Mining continues in Shali Ganga stream in Panzan area of Budgam, the locals have now issued a legal notice through their counsel to the District Mineral Officer (DMO) Budgam and top Govt officers asking him to stop the illegal practice.

The legal notice which has been sent to DMO Budgam and Govt officials including Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Director Geology & Mining JK Govt, Member Secretary Pollution Control Committee and Deputy Commissioner Budgam says that mining work allotted to one Abdul Rashid Mir (project proponent) through e auction at block number 10 in Shali Ganga nallah was blatantly violating Environmental norms and rules particularly the Jammu and Kashmir Minor Mineral Concession, Storage, Transportation of Minerals, Management and Prevention of Illegal Mining Rules 2016, Biological Diversity Act 2002, The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and particularly Specific Condition number 53 of JK Environmental Impact Assessment Authority.

"The project proponent is leaving no stone unturned to destroy and damage the environment and has neither installed functional and op-



erational CCTVs on the mining site nor is selling the river bed material as per 50% concessional rates to local population and adjoining areas. Further the said PP is openly using JCB's, L&T, hydraulic excavators etc which is prohibited under mineral rules 2016 and conditions laid by JK Environmental Impact Assessment Authority," reads the legal notice issued by Badrul Duija Advocate J&K High Court who is the counsel for the petitioners.

The locals have alleged that the project proponent had

already sublet the work to some unauthorized persons who have plundered the Shali Ganga to a great extent during the last one year. "We have requested SDM, DC, DMO several times to act against the illegal mining activity. We get assurances but on the ground there is no action. We have now issued a legal notice to Govt and if there is no action we will seek judicial intervention by filing a formal case in High Court or NGT "said Ghulam Nabi a local resident of Panzan Chadoora

Centre Wants To Keep Kashmir Pot Boiling For Garnering Votes: Mehbooba

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Friday said the Centre wants to keep the pot boiling in Jammu and Kashmir to garner more votes in elections.

Her remarks come in the wake of the dismissal of three employees by the Jammu and Kashmir government for their alleged involvement in anti-national activities and the attaching of properties of militants.

"In the name of fighting militancy, govt employees are dismissed arbitrarily & houses attached without giving the families any chance to avail the due legal course. This is collective punishment for innocent families & upends their lives," Mufti wrote on Twitter.

The former chief minister said the "muscular iron fist policy" may appeal to the BJP vote bank in the country, but in Jammu and Kashmir, "it is not only wrecking lives but further alienating people here from rest of the country".

"GOI wants to keep the Kashmir pot boiling to use it in elections to garner votes," she added.

In its ongoing action against militants operating from Pakistan, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday attached a property of The Resistance Front (TRF) operative Basit Ahmad Reshi in Baram-



ulla district.

The action follows the sealing of a Srinagar-based property of chief of the Al-Umar Mujahideen, Mushtaq Zargar alias 'Latram', on Thursday.

Besides three government employees, including a school-teacher recently arrested for allegedly carrying out several blasts, were dismissed from service for their alleged involvement in anti-national activities, an official said.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration ordered the dismissal of government middle school teacher Arif Sheikh of Reasi, Junior Engineer (Public Works department) Manzoor Ahmad Itoo of Bandipora and Syed Saleem Andrabi of Kupwara, an orderly in the Social Welfare department, under Article 311 of the Constitution, a government spokesperson said.

Article 311 of the Constitution provides for dismissal of a person employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State.

School Edu Dept To Implement Students Police Cadet Scheme

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir are all set to implement the Students Police Cadet (SPC) Scheme among the students of 8th and 9th standard.

In this regard, OSD with Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) has sought details of already identified students from Chief Education Officers (CEOs) of the region.

A local news agency KNO reported that the OSD in a letter to CEOs has said, "I am directed to request you to furnish the list of already identified students of 8th and 9th class for Implementation of SPC scheme in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir."

The officer has further said that the list should reach DSEK by or before March-6-2023.

According to the official documents, more than 1400

students of classes 8th and 9th have been identified from all districts of the region.

Pertinently, SPC project is a school-based youth development initiative that trains high school students to evolve as future leaders of a democratic society by inculcating within them respect for the law, discipline, civic sense, empathy for vulnerable sections of society and resistance to social evils.

The project also enables youth to explore and develop their innate capabilities, thereby empowering them to resist the growth of negative tendencies such as social intolerance, substance abuse, deviant behavior, and anti-establishment violence.

Equally, it strengthens within them commitment towards their family, the community, and the environment—(KNO)

Crackdown Started Against Traffic Violators In Bandipora

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Bandipora has intensified its drive against violators of Motor Vehicle Act and other traffic rules especially focused on over-speeding, installation of speed limiting devices, overloading and non compliance to other traffic rules.

According to a statement issued by the district administration, the Enforcement team of MVD and Traffic Police conducted physical checking of vehicles and checked at least 45

vehicles at different routes including Bandipora-Sopore road and Bandipora-Srinagar road.

Documents of several vehicles were retained for further processing under the provisions of MV Act 1988 and rules framed thereunder.

An amount of Rs. 20000 as fine has been realized from offending vehicles/drivers.

The ARTO said that drive shall continue in Towns and Rural areas of the district and strict action as per the law shall be taken against the erring drivers for road safety violations.



'Mumkin' Scheme Proves Instrumental In Satiating Aspirations Of J&K Youth: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The ambitious 'Mumkin Scheme', conceived by J&K Government under Mission Youth initiative, is proving instrumental towards satiating aspirations of youth who can contribute in societal growth and welfare in tremendous ways, an official spokesperson said Friday.

Under the scheme, he said, unemployed youth are being facilitated to procure small commercial vehicles on a subsidised basis to establish a sustainable livelihood in the

transport sector.

He said the 'Mumkin' is a livelihood programme designed primarily for unemployed young people in the age group of 18 to 35 years.

"Through the scheme, small commercial vehicles are being provided to the youth with the banking partner extending the loan facility to the extent of 100 percent for on-road price of the vehicle to be purchased," he added

Apart from this, the spokesperson said, Mission Youth provides an amount of Rs 80,000 or 10 percent

for the on-road price of the vehicle (whichever is lesser) as an upfront subsidy and the vehicle manufacturers (scheme partner of government) provide a special upfront discount, not less than the amount of subsidy.

He said to make the scheme implementation completely transparent and fast, a module has been developed on the JK-e-Services portal for operating the scheme digitally.

"The J&K administration is also facilitating soft finance for setting up new enter-

prises or for expansion and modernisation of existing ventures for income generation," he added.

Pertinently, Mission Youth is an ambitious programme of UT administration aimed at to positively engage youth in socio-economic development of J&K through a multi-pronged strategy involving all necessary systematic interventions particularly in the areas of skill development, livelihood generation, education, recreation and sports.

According to the spokesperson, the UT administration is

laying special thrust on youth skilling & self-employment in Rural areas with targeted schemes to drive a socio-economic transformation.

Muzafar Wani of Ramban is thankful to administration for providing him a vehicle helping him to secure a respectable livelihood that could fulfil the needs of his family.

Wani is satisfied with the earnings after owning a vehicle under Mumkin scheme. Similarly, Hatib Javaid of Shopian was working as daily wage labourer and could hardly bear the expenses

of his family with a meagre earning.

In Khonmoh area in Srinagar, Riyaz Raqeeb, another beneficiary of the scheme, said he learnt to drive at a young age as he had to lend a helping hand to his family of six, including his four siblings.

He worked as a driver for private companies and other vehicle owners on a daily basis, however, he struggled to earn enough to look after his family.

I was not earning enough to fund the education and other

needs of my four younger siblings. Though I worked for 12 to 14 hours a day, I earned little, Raqeeb says.

He stumbled upon the government's initiative on social media in August last year, and soon found himself at the District Employment and Counseling Centre in Srinagar.

I am thankful to the government for providing me source of livelihood, Raqeeb says.

The awareness programme of Mumkin scheme gave him a ray of hope for realizing his dream of owning a vehicle, the spokesperson added.



WPL: Beginning Of New Dawn For India's Gen-Next

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: India's women cricketers will not only get the much-needed exposure to take their game to the next level but also enjoy the perks of a cash-rich tournament when the Women's Premier League (WPL) ushers in a new dawn for the sport in the country.

The 21-match tournament will commence on Saturday with Gujarat Giants taking on India captain Harmanpreet Kaur-led Mumbai Indians in the tournament-opener.

The WPL will not just be about the creme-de-la-creme of world cricket with huge pay packets and reputations to play for but also for someone like Sneha Deepthi, who would like to prove that motherhood hasn't robbed her of the passion to play elite sport.

A certain hard-hitting Jasia Akhtar from Jammu and Kashmir will be eager to send the ball soaring into the stands and expect that people from her state will take her name alongside Umrin Malik.

For the Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues, and the Shafali Vermas, the pressure and arclights of a high octane tournament will prepare them for those tight games in global tournaments, which they have been struggling to close in their favour.

The inaugural edition of the T20 league – some would argue was long overdue – will feature a total of five teams and 87 players, with girls as young as a little above

15 set to ply their trade with and against some the best in the world.

The competition consists of an overall 21 matches including two knockout games, and will be played across two venues in Mumbai, with the iconic Brabourne Stadium being the other.

WPL has created a compelling buzz in the world of cricket, with the five franchises being sold for a grand total of INR 4,669 crore, which includes Adani Group's purchase of the Gujarat franchise for a whopping INR 1,289 crore.

The player auction witnessed a total of INR 59.50 crore spent by the five franchises, not only providing the players with a further boost to their financial being, but also ensuring a promising road ahead to young girls.

India's star batter Smriti Mandhana was the most expensive buy at the auction held in Mumbai – Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) bought her for INR 3.4 crore and expectedly named her the captain.

The franchise, which has always put its trust on big names of the cricket world but yet to win a title in the men's league, added Sophie Devine and Ellyse Perry to continue the tradition.

The second costliest team in the league at INR 912.99 crore, Mumbai Indians will embark on their WPL 2023 journey hoping to emulate the unprecedented heights and glory achieved by their men's counterparts, who have won a record five IPL titles.

Australia Crush India, Qualify For WTC Final



Press Trust of India

INDORE: There was no twist in the tale as Australia turned the tables on India with an emphatic nine-wicket win in the third Test on a track that offered wicked turn and variable bounce, confirming their place in the World Test Championship (WTC) final here Friday.

Travis Head (49 not out) and Marnus Labuschagne (28 not out) survived some anxious moments before taking Australia home in 18.5 overs as the match got over in little over two days.

Wins in India are rare for the visiting teams and it is no different for Australia, who recorded their first victory on Indian soil in six years.

For India, it was only their third defeat in the last 10 years and they will need to rework their plans ahead of the final Test, beginning in Ahmedabad from March 9.

The pitches in the series have also come under scathing criticism but, going by Rohit Sharma's views on the subject, one can expect a raging turner to be dished out at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

India's batters have been found wanting against the spinning ball and Rohit wants them to raise their game and find a way to score runs.

The hosts managed only 109

ICC Rates Indore Pitch As 'Poor'

Agencies

International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday rated the pitch for the third Test between India and Australia at the Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore as "poor" under its Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process.

"ICC Match Referee Chris Broad submitted his report to the ICC expressing the concerns of the match officials and after consulting with captains of both teams. Following the assessment, the venue has received three demerit points," ICC said in an official statement.

"The pitch, which was very dry, did not provide a balance between bat and ball, favouring spinners from the start. The fifth ball of the match broke through the pitch surface and continued to occasionally break the surface providing little or no seam movement and there was excessive and uneven bounce throughout the match," the statement quoted Broad as saying. (ANI)

and 163 in their two innings here, with the top-order letting the team down again.

"On pitches like these, you have to find a way to score runs and you have to find your own method. We were disappointing with the bat in both the innings," said Rohit after the loss.

Kulgam Kid's Batting Skills Praised By Irfan Pathan

Agencies

KULGAM: A 9-year-old boy from Kulgam who aspires to play for India was praised by Irfan Pathan for amazing batting skills.

Mumin Liyakat son of Liyakat Ahmad Dar resident of Matibugh Yaripora is now a well known face with amazing batting skills. His batting skills caught the attention of former Indian Cricketer Irfan Pathan who has been guiding him and sharing tips with him in a video.

"Will Surely Keep an eye on him," said Irfan Pathan after he was impressed with Mumin during the event held at CAP - Cricket Academy of Pathans Jaipur.

To achieve his dream, he has been playing cricket every day before 9 am and after 4 pm.

"My favourite player is Virat Kohli and I am following his style," Momin said. "My family has been very supportive of me and are always encouraging me to play cricket," he added.

His father Liyakat Ahmad Dar said that he left cricket in 2012 after he got injured on the field. But he also has been constantly guiding his son in the game.

"My son plays with a leather ball from day one and he has been practising on cemented turf instead of an ordinary turf," he said, adding that the ball on cemented turf comes with more speed and it gives batsman less time to react.

The proud father said that he is one among three players from Kashmir who were selected in CAP Jaipur where over 300 talented from J&K were participating.

He said that Pathan asked to share his Mumin's video to CAP Jaipur where he went through a three months training course.

Mumin's coach Abrar ul Haq said that he is full of talent and the way he plays a shot at this very young age that too on cemented turf, it seems he is a born talented and will achieve his dream (KNO)



French Prosecutors Indict PSG's Hakimi On Rape Allegation

Agencies

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain defender Achraf Hakimi has been indicted on rape charges, French prosecutors said Friday.

The prosecutors office in the Paris suburb of Nanterre said Hakimi was questioned on Thursday by investigators probing rape allegations. He was then indicted by an investigating judge and placed under judicial supervision.

Hakimi is facing preliminary charges of rape. Under French law, that means there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed but it allows magistrates more time to investigate before deciding whether to send the case to trial.

Hakimi's lawyer, Fanny Colin, said the player "strongly denied accusations made against him," in a written message to The Associated Press. Colin also said that some elements collected by the judicial police show, according to her, that Hakimi "in this case has been subjected to a racketeering attempt."



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