

Another Matricide: Is Kashmir's Drug Abuse Getting Aggressive?

Majid Nabi

THE recent murder case of a Baramulla woman by her drug addict son has prompted experts to state that a drug-induced aggression is growing and getting fatal in Kashmir.

The aggression, a UK based Kashmiri consultant psychiatrist said, is caused by drug cravings, severe withdrawal syndrome, restlessness and mood swings in a drug addict. "The social fabric has changed in Kashmir, people do due to the social stigma attached to the menace do not want their children to be



admitted at drug de-addiction centers," she added. "People have to break the shackles and get their drug addict children treated before the situation turns ugly."

The Baramulla matricide episode is the third such reported case amid the growing instances of drug abuse in Kashmir. Last year, in October, a drug-gie along with his accomplice

KUPWARA HORROR! 'Monster Father Was Always High On Weed, Alcohol'

AUQIB JAVEED

THE gruesome murder of a nine-year-old girl in a remote village of Kupwara has again put spotlight on the monster of drug abuse, ravaging families and homes across this Valley. 29-year-old Mohammad Iqbal Khatana, who mercilessly slaughtered his daughter after

friend killed his mother by hitting her head with a stone in Anantnag district. In the same district, in December 2022, a drug addict killed three

including his mother. Experts attribute Kashmir's alarming substance abuse problem to post traumatic disorder caused by protracted

strife, family issues and unemployment-induced anxiety. In an alarming revelation by the central government in the Parliament **More on P6**

Number Of Militants On All-Time Low: DGP

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Militancy has not ended in Jammu and Kashmir yet, but it is on the wane as the number of militants has declined to an all-time low, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh said on Thursday. Singh made the statement while speaking to reporters in north Kashmir's Bandipora district.

"The militancy in J-K is not over, but it is ending. The number of militants whether locals or Pakistani terrorists, is at an all-time low," he said.

The DGP said the local youth who were pushed towards militancy, have now returned to the mainstream after leaving that path.

"The youth have understood that it (militancy) is the path of destruction. Today, they have many avenues in sports and education among other options. Many youths have taken the right path and are working towards their careers, lives and families.

"I am happy that the police and the security forces have brought terrorism under control to a larger extent and action is on to end the remnants of terror," he added. Answering a question on drone droppings, Singh said the security forces have taken many counter-measures on the ground to stop such incidents.

"They (drones) bring in drugs, AK47 rifles, pistols, grenades and IEDs from Pakistan. We successfully intercept them. Hundreds of such weapons have been seized, **More on P6**

ECI Visit To J&K Raises Hopes Of Assembly Polls

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The proposed visit of the Election Commission of India to Jammu and Kashmir likely this month has raised hopes of political parties that assembly polls in the Union territory could be held this year.

The last assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir in 2014, five years before the erstwhile state was reorganised into two Union territories on August 5, 2019.

The Centre then set up a delimitation commission for J&K, which submitted its report in October last year.

Recently, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said that the poll panel was aware that there's a "vacuum" in the Union territory which needs to be filled. He said the polls will be held keeping in mind various factors, including weather and security concerns.

While the ECI is yet to announce the visit, local media reports have suggested it could happen this month.

BJP leader Darakhshan Andrabi said her party and its cadres were ready for the polls whenever the Election Commission decides to hold



them. "We believe in democracy and democracy means elections. Our party and our cadres are ready for elections anytime," Andrabi told PTI.

She said the situation was good for holding the polls, but the final call will be taken by the EC.

"The government would want that the elections are held at the earliest. We want to take Kashmir forward, rest we will leave the decision to the Election Commission," Andrabi added.

Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari said the proposed visit of the Election Commission to the Union Territory was a

welcome step and the time had come to hold the polls.

"This is a welcome step. The EC visit has been long pending because the people of Jammu and Kashmir are yearning for elections. The visit is being viewed positively in light of statements made by the LG, who said the Jammu and Kashmir administration is ready for holding elections anytime," Bukhari said.

"We hope they will take a decision once they are here, after meeting stakeholders, and announce the elections soon. We are ready and the elections are already delayed. People have

been without an elected government for the last five years now," he added.

National Conference spokesman Imran Nabi Dar said that there's been no change in his party's stand since a delegation led by party president Farooq Abdullah called on the Election Commission.

"Our contention and our points remain the same that there is no visible effort being made by the concerned agencies about conducting assembly elections which is overdue now," Dar said.

He said Jammu and Kashmir is craving to have an elected government and there was no reason for them to further delay it.

"It's the Election Commission that has categorically said that there is a political vacuum in Jammu and Kashmir. So they need to address that vacuum and that vacuum will be addressed only when we will have assembly elections like all other states in the country," he added.

The spokesman said there is nothing that should prevent the Election Commission as it has already stated that all formalities for holding the elections are complete.

"In fact, the Union Home Ministry has **More on P6**

PM Confident Of BJP Win In 2024 LS Polls



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Setting his sights on BJP win in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asked party workers not to be complacent, asserting that "no one can defeat" the party next year, and slammed the Opposition for a "badshahi" mindset and insulting poor and backward classes.

Addressing BJP members at the party's 44th foundation day, he said those fighting an "existential battle" have become desperate at the exposure of their corruption and are conspiring against his government, which is committed to taking tough steps to rid India of corruption, nepotism and law and order challenges.

"Full of hate, these people are speaking **More on P6**

THE OPPOSITION PARTIES NEVER IMAGINED THAT ARTICLE 370 would be history one day and they cannot digest the work BJP has done to usher in peace and development in Kashmir."

Kashmiri Youth Goes Missing From Punjab

Agencies

Srinagar: A youth from North Kashmir's Kupwara district has gone missing from Ludhiana city of the northern Indian state of Punjab.

Firdous Ahmed Peer, a resident of the Muqam Dardpora Kralpora area of Kupwara went missing on 17 February this year and since then his whereabouts are unknown to his family.

The family members including the mother and the sister of the missing youth emerged in Press Enclave Srinagar to attract the attention of the media towards the matter.

"He was working **More on P6**

Fake PMO Official Handed Over To Gujarat Police

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: Over a month after being arrested from a five-star hotel in Srinagar, the Jammu and Kashmir police on Thursday handed over the custody of con-man Kiran Jagdish Bhai Patel to five member team of Gujarat police in compliance with court orders.

Patel was handed over to a five member team of Gujarat police, after the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Srinagar allowed an application by the Ahmadabad City Crime Branch.

CJM Srinagar, Raja Tasleem in his order said the submissions made by the Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) carries much weight and at the same time seems to be just, proper and appealing.

"Therefore, application is allowed, hence the custody of the accused namely Kiranbhai @Bansi son of Jagdishbhai Patel aged 48, residing at A-17, Prestige Bungalow, Nr. Jiviba School, Ghodasar, Ahmedabad City Gujarat is changing from FIR No 19/2023 of police station Nishat to FIR No 1119011230073/2023 of DCB police Station Ahmedabad city, Gujarat," reads the order passed by CJM Srinagar.

Patel was produced through video conferencing and the court after hearing and from the perusal of all material available on the Case Diary, directed the Central Jail Srinagar authorities to handover the custody of the conman to Gujarat Police.

Patel, who impersonated as Additional Director **More on P6**

Ex-CM Azad Drops Bombshell In His Autobiography

Says Mufti Sayeed 'Misused His Generosity' To Become J&K CM In 2002

Agencies

Srinagar: Former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has claimed that late Mufti Muhammad Sayeed misused his "generosity" to become chief minister of Jammu & Kashmir in 2002.

In his book, Azad, An Autobiography, the former CM said that he offered Mufti Muhammad Sayeed to be part of the government when he (Azad) had a letter of support from 42 MLAs to become CM.

"With the letter of support of 42 MLAs in my hand, I telephoned the governor, and he invited me the following day to discuss the date of oath-taking. I informed Sonia ji



about the developments over the telephone. She was happy to hear that I was now taking charge of government formation," Azad claims.

"A few hours before the meeting with the governor, around 8.00 a.m., **More on P6**

Not Credible Presentation Of Facts: PDP Leader

PDP leader Nayeem Akhtar on Thursday rubbished claims made by veteran politician Ghulam Nabi Azad on the formation of a PDP-Congress alliance in 2002, saying his statements did not add up to a "very credible presentation of facts". Azad, a former Congress stalwart, has claimed in his new book -- "Azad: An Autobiography" -- that Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed had come to Delhi for **More on P6**

3 Govt Employees Face ACB Heat For Grabbing Funds

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: The Anti-corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a case against three government employees of the education department in Baramulla district for swindling over Rs 1 crore funds meant for mid-day meal schemes during the year 2012-2015.

All the accused were booked by the Police Station ACB Baramulla under FIR No 02-2023 under section 5(1)(c), 5(1)(d) r/w section 5(2) of the J&K P.C Act Svt: 2006, Sections 201 & 120-B of RPC.

"Immediately after registration of the case, search warrants were also obtained and searches were conducted at their residence from where various incriminating documents were recovered. Further investigations are going on," an

official told Kashmir Observer on Thursday.

Sources from the anti-graft body told Kashmir Observer that ACB had earlier started a probe against the employees of the education zone Boniyar in 2016 after a complaint was filed.

The probe revealed that in the office of the ZEO Boniyar during the period 2012-13 to 2014-2015, the mid-day-meal scheme was being implemented in all the government schools through about 27 Pay Center Officers (PCOs) and as per applicable guidelines, payment to different schools was to be made through the official Bank accounts of these PCOs for further distribution among beneficiary schools through Incharge MDM.

"It was also **More on P6**

S H O R T T A K E S

Iltija Mufti Gets 'UAE Specific' Passport

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija has been issued a "country specific passport" for two years to allow her to study in the United Arab Emirates, brushing aside an adverse report by Jammu and Kashmir Police's Criminal Investigation Department, officials said on Thursday. Iltija, 35, moved the Jammu and Kashmir High Court in February after her application for a passport was not cleared. Her passport expired on January 2 this year and she had applied for a fresh one on June 8 last year. The court directed **More on P6**

Cardiac Arrest Kills Tamil Tourist

An elderly tourist from Tamil Nadu died on Thursday after suffering a cardiac arrest in the tourist resort of Sonamarg in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. 70-year-old Kandasamy of Arrupukottai in Tamil Nadu was on a visit to the hill station when he suffered a cardiac arrest on Thursday afternoon, reports said. He was instantly removed by his family to the primary health centre (PHC) Sonamarg for treatment. However, the doctors there declared him dead. **More on P6**

Militant Associate Held In Bandipora

Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested a militant associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) from Bandipora district of North Kashmir. Jamsheed Ahmad Bhat was arrested by a joint team of police, army and CRPF from a checkpoint established near Canal Road in Aloosa area of the district, a police spokesperson said. The checkpoint, he said, was established on the basis of specific information regarding movement of militants. "Incriminating materials, ammunition and **More on P6**

Ammo Recovered In Kupwara Forest

The government forces recovered a huge cache of ammunition in a forest area in North Kashmir's Kupwara district, police said Thursday. Based on reliable input, a joint search operation was launched by Police and Army in Haphrudra forest of the district, a police spokesperson said. During the search, he said, a huge cache of ammunition including 720 rounds of 7.62 mm (most likely of Chinese origin), 05 rounds of RPGs, 09 booster tubes of RPG **More on P6**

GREF Labourer Drowns To Death

A 20-year-old GREF labourer died while taking a bath in a river in Poonch district, officials said. Identifying the deceased as one Imtiazi Ahmad son of Mohammad Hanief, a resident of Upper Surankote, the officials told a local news agency GNS that the person was brought out from the river in unconscious state and taken to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead. Medical Officer, Dr. Javid Ahmad, also confirmed the death of the labourer. A police official has in the meantime **More on P6**

LG Meets Family Of Slain ATM Guard

Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday met the family members of Sanjay Sharma, the ATM guard who was shot dead by militants in Pulwama. Sharma, 40, was shot at point-blank range in the Achan area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 26. Meeting his family at Raj Bhavan, Sinha condoled with them and assured them of all possible assistance by the administration, officials said. The Kashmiri Pandit family, which stayed put during the peak militancy in 1990s in the valley, migrated **More on P6**

Shia Bodies Announce Zakat-ul-Fitr

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Days after Kashmir Grand Mufti Nasir-ul Islam said that 65 rupees have been fixed as the Zakat-ul-Fitr per person this Ramadan, major Shia bodies announced that a person has to donate three kilograms of the basic staple food (rice in case of Kashmir valley) as Zakat-ul-Fitr or equivalent amount of money.

Zakat ul-Fitr is compulsory upon every self-supporting adult Muslim who has food in excess of their needs, on behalf of themselves and their dependents at the end of the month of Ramadan.

Anjuman-e-Sharie Shiayan, Ittihadul Muslimeen and Shia Association said Zakat-ul-Fitr has to be three kilograms of the basic staple food of a believer consumes throughout the year.

It depends on the type of major item of food consumed during the year. This may be rice, wheat, barley, etc. In weight, it should be at least three kilograms of food per person. It is also permissible to pay cash of equivalent value, Shia clergy said.

Aga Syed Hadi Al-Mousavi Al-Safavi said that three kilograms of rice has to be donated as Sadaqat-ul-Fitr.

According to Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, it can be done in two ways: "either three kgs of rice is to be donated or cash equivalent to its market value so that a poor person can buy it in the market."

However, Masroor said that the concept of Zakat is different in Shia fiqh.

"We do not pay Zakat for anything and everything. Zakat is obliga-

tory on specific items such as gold, silver and cattle when they are possessed beyond a certain quantity. In eatery items it is obligatory to pay on wheat, dates, cattle and raisins and other items.

In Kashmir, every family has gold as a household item but it is not possessed in bulk and it does not surpass the limit and usually does not qualify for Zakat.

"We need to keep in mind that poor people are again exempted from paying Zakat"

"In case of Shias, the fitra is higher than that of the Ahlul Sunnah. A poor man should be able to purchase three kgs of rice in the market" said Agha Hadi.

Aga Syed Hassan al Mousavi al Safvi also said that Fitra has to be a staple food.

"It can be donated in two ways, either the three kilograms of food item or the amount with which one can buy it" he said.

When contacted, Shia Association president Maulana Imran Reza Ansari said the association will release the details on Sadaqat-ul-Fitr in a couple of days.

"There is a consensus that it has to be three kgs of staple food, however, we will reveal all major details in the coming days" Ansari said.

According to Shia fiqh Zakat-ul-fitr must be paid by the head of the family on behalf of his dependents, including servants, and/or dependent relatives who are fed in his house. If a Muslim or even a non-Muslim guest arrives at someone's house after sunset of the night preceding the Eid-ul-Fitr and dines with his host, it is incumbent on the latter to pay for the former's fitra.



Students of Kashmir University offer Zuhr prayers in the lawns of campus on 15th day of the holy month of Ramazan on Thursday. KO Photo Syed Mohammad Burhan

CS Conducts Extensive Tour Of City

Inspects beautification, developmental works carried under Smart City Mission

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Thursday conducted an extensive tour of the Srinagar city to review the preparations and take stock of developmental works for make over of the city being executed by Srinagar Smart City Ltd and R&B Department.

He was accompanied by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad; Commissioner SMC & CEO Srinagar Smart City, Athar Amir, Dir Floriculture Kashmir, Chief Engineer R&B, SSP Traffic and officers of line departments.

While inspecting the works being carried out for improvement & upgradation of Moulana Azad Road at Polo View, the Chief Secretary instructed SSCL to make adequate parking space available at MA Road near Polo View and Polo View Market.

On the occasion, he also interacted with the shopkeepers who expressed satisfaction over the face-

lift of the market and also took the opportunity to apprise him regarding parking space for customers in its vicinity. The CS assured them that parking shall be taken care of.

While visiting the area, he directed concerned officers for development of Poloview Parks and asked SSCL to use it for cultural activities to increase the footfall there.

Meanwhile, CEO Smart City briefed CS about all the works including utility shifting of electric poles, widening of Footpaths, underground drainage lines, paid parking spaces created for cycling and vehicles besides option of monthly subscriptions provided to Poloview Shopkeepers.

Among other sites which the Chief Secretary visited today included Residency Road where he was briefed about the conversion of overhead electrical networks into underground ducts and redevelopment of Residency Road on modern lines.

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Maiden Genome Sequencing Lab At SKIMS Begins Operation

Agencies

Srinagar: J&K first genome sequencing lab has been made functional at SKIMS Soura.

Dr Bashir Ahmad Fonda Head of Department Microbiology at SKIMS said that the genome sequencing lab has been made functional at SKIMS Soura and has started receiving a batch of samples.

"The lab will as of now take care of the requirement of genome se-

quencing for now in the whole UT as samples from Jammu also will be tested here," he said.

He said that it will take around a week's time in receiving, testing and analysis of the samples.

A health official said that they no longer need to wait for months to get results from genome sequencing labs outside J&K. Now the lab has been made functional in SKIMS Soura and they can get confirmation of circulating variants in

about a week, he said.

He said that making the lab functional will help the authorities to improve the capacity of surveillance efforts in J&K.

The official said that when they will get information about circulating variants in time, the authorities can take steps accordingly.

He said that getting results of samples sent for genome sequencing late was hampering their efforts to track the spread of new variants. (KNO)

In Downtown, Malik Keeps Aroma Of Ramazan Special Bakery Wafting

Agencies

Srinagar: The fondness for the exquisite bread and cookies with the delicious smell wafting through the air is inviting more and more customers to Wasim Malik's bakery in Srinagar as the holy month of Ramadan approaches its mid-phase.

Hailing from the Fateh Kadal area of Srinagar's downtown, said that soon after completing graduation, he joined his

family's bakery business.

Wasim said he started making special bread and cookies in Ramadan around eight years ago. "Initially, there were only a few items but now we are selling more than eight varieties of bread," he said. With a fully furnished bakery store, Malik decided to skip two big Islamic holiday occasions—Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha—and instead chose the month of Ramadan to make a difference in his traditional baking methods.

F.No. N-15/8/2020-NI
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
 (DIVYANGJAN)
Appointment of Director, National Institutes

Online applications are invited for the post of Director of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR), Sehore, Madhya Pradesh and Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLRTC), New Delhi (Autonomous Bodies) under the administrative control of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. Post is to be filled up on deputation/contract basis and carries pay as per Pay Level 13 (Rs. 123100-215900) of Pay Matrix for deputation and consolidated remuneration of Rs. 1,75,000/- per month for contract basis.

2. Detailed advertisement is available on the website of the Department <https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in> and on the website of the respective Institutes. The last date for receipt of applications would be 45 days from the date of publishing of the advertisement in employment news.

(Navin Kumar)
 Under Secretary to the Govt

cbc- 38117/11/0064/2223

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3.	Medical Officer (Casualty)	3 (UR), 1 (OBC)	New Delhi 2, Goa 2	Level-10	Direct recruitment
4.	Medical Officer (Blood Bank)	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-10	Direct recruitment
5.	Staff Nurse	5 (UR), 1 (OBC), 1 (ST), 1 (EWS)	New Delhi 2, Goa 6	Level-7	Direct recruitment
6.	Pharmacy Manager	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-7	Deputation falling which by Direct recruitment
7.	Senior Hindi Translator	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-7	Direct recruitment
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10.	Junior Engineer (Maintenance)	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-6	Direct recruitment
11.	Assistant	2 (UR)	New Delhi 1, Goa 1	Level-6	Direct recruitment
12.	Upper Division Clerk	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-4	Direct recruitment
13.	Sonography Assistant	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-4	Direct recruitment
14.	ECG Technician	1 (UR)	New Delhi	Level-4	Direct recruitment
15.	Storekeeper	1 (OBC)	New Delhi/ Goa	Level-2	Direct recruitment

For details of qualification, experience, prescribed format of application, and terms & conditions, please visit AIIA's website <https://aiaa.gov.in>. Last date of receipt of applications is 20th April, 2023.

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

PRAYERS

FAJR	4:45
ZUHR	12:34
ASR	5:07
Magrib	6:58
ISHA	8:22

HIJRI CALENDAR
 16 RAMAZAN
 1444

This Day In History

- 1946 - Syria's independence from France is officially recognised.
- 1953 - 1st west-to-east jet transatlantic nonstop flight
- 1954 - US President Dwight D. Eisenhower in news conference is first to voice fear of a "domino-effect" of communism in Indo-China
- 1956 - Spain relinquishes her protectorate in Morocco
- 1964 - IBM announces the System/360.
- 1967 - Israeli Syrian border fights
- 1969 - Supreme Court strikes down laws prohibiting private possession of obscene material
- 1978 - US President Jimmy Carter defers production of neutron bomb
- 1982 - Iran minister of Foreign affairs Ghotbzadeh arrested
- 1983 - Oldest human skeleton, aged 80,000 years, discovered in Egypt
- 1983 - STS-6 specialist Story Musgrave & Don Peterson 1st STS spacewalk
- 1988 - Russia announces it will withdraw its troops from Afghanistan
- 1996 - Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya hits fastest ODI fifty off 17 balls v Paki stan, Singapore
- 1996 - Pakistan beat Sri Lanka to win Singer Cup in Singapore
- 1999 - The World Trade Organisation rules in favor of the United States in its long-running trade dispute with the European Union over bananas
- 2001 - Mars Odyssey is launched

From KO Archives

Blazing Start To Historic Bus

Militants Storm 'Passengers' Sanctuary, Tourist Reception Centre In Flames

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR - With barely hours left for the Muzaffarabad bag to roll and despite unprecedented security measures, militants attacked the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC), where the passengers have been lodged under heavy armed guard.

The front building of the complex was on fire within minutes of the initial shots ringing out at around 3:45 this afternoon.

A union of four militant groups that have issued threats against the bus service has claimed responsibility for the attack, which took place hardly 200 yards away from the venue the prime minister will flag off the bus service from.

An officer of the security forces said that militants had entered the building with guns blazing and later set it on fire. Seven employees, including a woman, were injured in the heavy firing while the building which houses several government offices was being evacuated.

Security officers said that Muzaffarabad-bound passengers were safe as they had been lodged in a different wing of the complex.

They put the number of attackers at two and said the one of them was killed soon after the attack and the other in the subsequent action by security forces. Evacuation of the civilians from the building was carried out swiftly by the police as fire tenders went into action to control the blaze that spread from the attic to the lower floor within no time.

Reports said that the militants attacked from the main gate opening indiscriminate fire as they stormed into the complex.

The state police, BSF and CRPF immediately surrounded the site and launched the operation against the militants. Among the injured were Roushan Ara of Hyderpora, Vakil Ahmad Pandith of Tangmarg, Basheer Ahmad of Wanabal.

Records or nearly score of government offices housed in the building have been lost in the fire. The losses in terms of property are expected to run into crores.

Even though the fire tenders and firemen desperately fought the flames, the building mainly constructed of timber was reduced to a burning hulk.

The building also housed an office of the State Road Transport Corporation, which has to operate the Indian sector of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

The other offices that were located in the building, include the branches of Jammu and Kashmir Bank and the State Bank of India; an office of Tourism Development Corporation, Indian Airlines, post office, offices of fisheries and wild life departments, and the tourist police office. (Kashmir Observer, 07 April, 2005)

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Friday | 07-04-2023

Jobless Growth

In a grim forecast for the world economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its report on Wednesday has warned that the growing geopolitical fragmentation around the world, exemplified by the US-China trade war and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, could cut global output by two percent over the long run. The IMF's research indicates that the reallocation of foreign direct investment away from geographically close countries towards those that are geopolitically close, such as the United States and Europe, has the potential to cause significant damage to emerging market economies that rely on inflows of investment from more distant countries. The IMF has called on policymakers to foster greater global integration. The international financial body has also published research outlining the impact of geopolitical fragmentation on the banking sector, highlighting the cost to Russia and its allies of the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "In general, a fragmented world is likely to be a poorer one," IMF officials wrote in a blog post published Wednesday.

The World Trade Organization, on the other hand, said 2023 global trade growth would be slightly better than earlier estimates, but would remain "subpar", weighed down by the Ukraine war and stubbornly high inflation.

Similarly, there aren't glad tidings for India in 2023. The World Bank on Tuesday cut India's growth forecast for 2023-24 to 6.3 percent from its December estimate of 6.6 percent amid global headwinds and with rising borrowing costs and slower income growth leading to a moderation in consumption. However, on a positive note, the bank's country director Auguste Tano Kouame said the Indian economy continues to show strong resilience to external shocks. And as has been the case in recent years, the country's fundamentals are strong enough to weather the unhelpful global economic situation. The Asian Development Bank has also predicted India's economy grow at a slower-than-expected 6.4 percent this year.

Overall, the Ukraine war, growing US-China tension and the consequent revival of the cold war like geopolitical confrontation is not a good news for the world economy. Even though India has been holding out and has emerged as one of the fastest growing economy, the growth hasn't adequately percolated to the ground. Unemployment and inflation remain areas of concern. Now the Reserve Bank of India is due to go for another rate hike to tame inflation.

OTHER OPINION

History textbook deletions

Even a cursory look at the chapters deleted shows that they bring a different level of knowledge and understanding to the students, even if the broad period or theme was covered in early years, in different textbooks. And anyway, going by this rationalisation, chapters on Harappa or other aspects could very easily have been dropped. That they were not, indicates that it is not a simple case of reducing the load. This is also a spurious argument because the level of discussion varies in textbooks for different classes, and to not discuss the development of the state in ancient India or the anti-colonial freedom struggles in India because this may have been covered earlier doesn't make sense. By that standard, courses at the Masters level in universities would be shorn of much of their content as students may have covered themes/topics in their under-graduation!

Don't miss | Purged from NCERT Textbooks: Hindu extremists' dislike for Gandhi, RSS ban after assassination

Let us look at the chapter on the 'Confrontation of Cultures' that has been deleted from the Class 11 history textbook. There is almost nothing here that has been covered previously. The chapter looks at the European presence in the Americas, and the nature of the confrontation, contestation and assimilation that occurred as a result. From the small subsistence economies in the Caribbean and in Brazil, to the large state societies in Central America and Peru, this chapter overturns the Eurocentric understanding of mercantile expansion, conquest of resource-rich regions, religious encounters and transformations, and the rise of capitalism at a later stage. Linked to this is the chapter on the Industrial Revolution. There is a reversal of the gaze from the conventional Eurocentric narratives of progress and achievement alone, with the changes and transformation of society and economy through inventions, discoveries, the harnessing of resources on an unprecedented scale, and the rise of the factory system and a modern workforce that lived in squalor, the growth of a small and affluent section of industrialists etc. being some of the issues covered here. This is a dense chapter and does raise the bar as far as knowledge is concerned, all the more so because these themes have not been touched upon earlier in this sustained manner. Again, how the axing of this can be rationalised is curious. Both these chapters are in fact crucial for our understanding of colonialism and capitalism in the early modern world, which had ramifications in the Indian context.

Indian Express

OPEC: Saudis aren't afraid of US anymore

M. K. BHADRAKUMAR

The shock oil production cuts from May outlined by the OPEC+ on Sunday essentially means that eight key OPEC countries decided to join hands with Russia to reduce oil production, messaging that OPEC and OPEC+ are now back in control of the oil market.

No single oil producing country is acting as the Pied Piper here. The great beauty about it is that Saudi Arabia and seven other major OPEC countries have unexpectedly decided to support Russia's efforts and unilaterally reduce production.

While the 8 OPEC countries are talking about a reduction of one million b/d from May to the end of the year, Russia will extend for the same period its voluntary adjustment that already started in March, by 500,000 barrels.

Now, add to this the production adjustments already decided by the OPEC+ previously, and the total additional voluntary production adjustments touch a whopping 1.6 million b/d.

What has led to this? Fundamentally, as many analysts had forewarned, the Western sanctions against Russian oil created distortions and anomalies in the oil market and upset the delicate ecosystem of supply and demand, which were compounded by the incredibly risky decision by the G7, at the behest of the US Treasury, to impose a price cap on Russia's oil sales abroad.

On top of it, the Biden administration's provocative moves to release oil regularly from the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve in attempts to micromanage the oil prices and keep them abnormally low in the interests of the American consumer as well as to keep the inflationary pressures under check turned out to be an affront to the oil-producing countries whose economies critically depend on income from oil exports.

The OPEC+ calls the production cuts "a precautionary measure aimed at supporting the stability of the oil market." In the downstream of the OPEC+ decision, analysts expect the oil prices to rise in the short term and pressure on Western central banks to increase due to the possible spike in inflation.

What stands out in the OPEC+ decision is that Russia's decision to reduce oil production by the end of the year has been unanimously supported by the main Arab producers. Independent but time-coordinated statements were made by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Iraq, Algeria, Oman and Kazakhstan, while Russia confirmed its intention to extend until the end of the year its own production reduction by 500,000 barrels per day, which began in March.

Significantly, these statements have been made precisely by those largest oil producers in OPEC, who have a record of fully utilising their existing quota. Put differently, the reduction in production is going to be real, not just on paper.

Partly at least, the banking crisis in the US and Europe prompted the OPEC+ to intervene. Although Washington will



downplay it, in March, Brent oil prices fell to \$70 per barrel for the first time since 2021 amid the bankruptcy of several banks in the US and the near-death experience of Credit Suisse, one of the largest banks in Switzerland. The events sparked concern about the stability of the Western banking system and fear of a recession that would affect oil demand.

There is every likelihood that tensions may increase between the US and Saudi Arabia as higher oil prices will push inflation and make it even more difficult for the US Federal Reserve to find

because they felt that there wasn't enough economic activity in the West and there were clear signs of recession contrary to expectation.

Thus, as a result of the sanctions against Russia, Europe is facing the complex situation of inflation and near-recession known as stagflation. In reality, the adaptive and agile OPEC+ read the situation correctly and has shown that it is willing to act ahead of the curve. At a time when the world economy is struggling to grow at a healthy rate, the demand for oil would be relatively less, and it makes sense to

concluded in April 2020.

The big question is, how Moscow might profit from the OPEC+ decision. The rise in crude oil prices particularly benefits Russia. Simply put, the production cuts will tighten up the oil market and thus help Russia to secure better prices for the crude oil it sells. Second, the new cuts also confirm that Russia is still an integral and important part of the group of oil producing countries, despite the western attempts to isolate it.

Third, the consequences of Sunday's decision are all the

“In reality, the adaptive and agile OPEC+ read the situation correctly and has shown that it is willing to act ahead of the curve. At a time when the world economy is struggling to grow at a healthy rate, the demand for oil would be relatively less, and it makes sense to cut oil production to maintain the price balance

a balance between raising the key rate and maintaining financial and economic stability. Equally, the Biden administration must be furious that practical cooperation is still continuing between Russia and the OPEC countries, especially Saudi Arabia, notwithstanding the West's price cap on Russian oil and Moscow's decision to unilaterally cut production in March.

However, the Biden administration has only a limited range of options to respond to the OPEC+'s surprise move: one, go for another release of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; two, pressure US producers to increase domestic oil output; three, back legislation that would allow the US to take the dramatic step of suing OPEC nations; or, four, curb the US' export of gasoline and diesel.

To be sure, the OPEC+ production cut goes against the Western demand to increase oil output even as sanctions were imposed against Russian oil and gas exports. On the other hand, the disruption in oil supplies from Russia contributed to the rising inflation in the EU countries.

The US wanted the Gulf Arab states to step in and step up oil production. But the latter did not oblige

cut oil production to maintain the price balance.

All that the Western leaders can complain about is that the OPEC+ cut in oil output has come at an inappropriate time. But the woes of Western economies cannot be laid at the door of OPEC+ as there are inherent problems which are now coming to the surface. For instance, the large scale protests in France against pension reform or the widespread strikes in Britain for higher wages show that there are deep structural problems in these economies, and the governments seem helpless in tackling them.

In geopolitical terms, the OPEC+ move came after a meeting between Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak and Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman in Riyadh on March 16 that focused on oil market cooperation. Therefore, it is widely seen as the tightening of the bond between Russia and Saudi Arabia. In fact, in May, as the largest members of OPEC join Russia in its unilateral reduction, the balance of quotas and the ratio of market shares between and amongst the participants in the OPEC+ deal will return to the level set when it was

greater because, unlike the previous cuts by the OPEC+ group at the height of the pandemic or last October, today, the momentum for global oil demand is up, not down — what with a strong recovery by China expected.

That is to say, the surprise OPEC+ reduction further consolidates the Saudi-Russian energy alliance, by aligning their production levels, thus placing them on equal footing. It is a slap in the face for Washington.

Make no mistake, this is another signal regarding a new era where the Saudis are not afraid of the US anymore, as the OPEC "leverage" is on Riyadh's side. The Saudis are only doing what they need to do, and the White House has no say in the matter. Clearly, a recasting of the regional and global dynamics that has been set in motion lately is gathering momentum. The future of petrodollar seems increasingly uncertain.

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



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Trump's Indictment

It is an unprecedented legal case which has the potential to change the American political landscape, as Donald Trump has become the first former US President to be indicted. It is an unsaid law in the USA that even former Presidents are accorded the same

level of immunity as incumbents, but then Trump is no ordinary former President, he has not faded into twilight after his first term, rather he is eyeing a second term in 2024. Since the prosecutor in this hush money case is a Democrat and black so all kinds of political blames

would be charged against the lawyer by Trump and his supporters. But the problem with Trump is even if he navigates through this crisis, a few other cases of subverting 2020 elections, and financial fraud are in the process to be filed against him. One thing is certain that this

indictment will test American democracy as it faces its biggest test since Watergate in 1972. President Nixon then chose to quit, Trump is anything but Nixon.

Bal Govind



Mindful Fridays

Building Resilience in Teens

The Power of Parent-Child Connections to Prevent Substance Abuse

Wasim Kakroo

Substance abuse refers to the excessive and harmful use of drugs, alcohol, or other addictive substances that can lead to physical and mental health problems. The impact of substance abuse is not limited to the individual; it affects families, communities, and society as a whole. Substance abuse has become a major public health concern and a serious problem in recent years especially in our state, due to the increasing availability and accessibility of various types of drugs and alcohol.

Adolescents, owing to their developmental stage, in particular, are vulnerable to the effects of substance abuse. Exposure to substance abuse at a young age can lead to a range of negative consequences, including developmental problems, impaired cognitive function, academic difficulties, behavioral problems, and increased risk of addiction. Additionally, adolescents who grow up in households where substance abuse is present may experience emotional and psychological trauma, which can have long-term effects on their mental health.

Preventing substance abuse is crucial to adolescents' physical and mental health, as well as their future success and well-being and parents can play a significant role in this regard.

In today's article, I as a clinical psychologist, am going to discuss a few parental and family factors that can lead to the development of substance abuse and the remedies thereof.

1. Poor communication: Poor communication between parents and adolescents can lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection, which can drive young people to seek solace in drugs and alcohol. Adolescents who feel that their parents do not listen to them, do not understand them, or do not provide emotional support are more likely to turn to substance abuse as a way to cope with their emotions.

Remedies: Effective communication and listening skills promote a healthy relationship between parents and adolescents. Open communication channels encourage adolescents to seek guidance and support from their parents rather than turning to substance abuse. Prioritizing communication helps parents support their adolescents in making healthy choices. Clinical psychologists can help improve communication skills through therapy, counseling, and education on effective communication strategies. Identifying communication barriers, teaching active listening skills, and facilitating open communication are some ways psychologists can help. Working together, parents and adolescents can develop a healthy relationship, prevent substance abuse, and learn healthy coping mechanisms.

2. Lack of supervision: Lack of supervision can have a significant impact on adolescents' risk of substance abuse. Adolescents who do not have adequate supervision or parental guidance are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including experimenting with drugs and alcohol. This is because without supervision, adolescents may feel more freedom to explore their environment and make impulsive decisions without considering the consequences.

Remedies: Parents who provide adequate supervision can help prevent substance abuse by monitoring their adolescents' activities, setting clear boundaries, and offering guidance when needed. This includes keeping an eye on who their adolescents are spending time with, knowing where they are at all times, and being involved in their adolescents' lives. Additionally, parents can have open and honest conversations with their adolescents about the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of making responsible decisions. Ultimately, by providing adequate supervision and guidance, parents can help their adolescents avoid the pitfalls of substance abuse and set them up for a healthier, happier future.

3. Exposure to substance abuse



OPEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS ENCOURAGE ADOLESCENTS TO SEEK GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FROM THEIR PARENTS RATHER THAN TURNING TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE. Prioritizing communication helps parents support their adolescents in making healthy choices

within the family: It can have a significant impact on a adolescents' development and well-being. Adolescents who grow up in households where substance abuse is prevalent are at a higher risk of developing substance abuse problems themselves. This is because they may have a genetic predisposition to addiction, or they may learn that using drugs or alcohol is an acceptable coping mechanism for stress and emotions. In addition, adolescents who grow up in households where substance abuse is prevalent may lack adequate parental supervision, which can contribute to their risk of developing substance abuse problems.

Remedies: It is essential that parents who struggle with substance abuse seek help to prevent their adolescents from developing substance abuse problems. This may involve seeking treatment for their own addiction. Parents should also seek counseling from clinical psychologists to learn healthy coping mechanisms for stress and emotions and to improve their parenting skills. By getting help, parents can break the cycle of addiction and provide a healthy environment for their adolescents to grow and thrive in. It is never too late to seek help, and by doing so, parents can positively impact their own lives and the lives of their adolescents.

4. Family conflicts: It can have a profound impact on adolescents' emotional well-being and overall development. When adolescents are exposed to conflicts between parents or other family members, they are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions. Triangulation is another harmful behavior that parents should avoid. Triangulation occurs when one parent involves an adolescent in a conflict with the other parent, causing the adolescent to feel guilty, anxious, and confused. This can lead to behavioral problems, academic difficulties, and even substance abuse later in life.

Remedies: Parents should avoid involving their adolescents in adult issues and conflicts and seek help to resolve conflicts in a healthy manner. This can involve working with a family therapist to learn effective communication and conflict resolution strategies. Ultimately, providing a safe and stable home environment can help prevent adolescents from experiencing the negative consequences of family conflict, including substance abuse.

5. Giving adolescents adult responsibilities: When parents burden their adolescents with adult roles, it can be overwhelming for them and hence parents they may unknowingly create an environment of stress and anxiety that can drive their adolescents towards substance abuse. Adolescents are not yet emotionally mature or capable of handling the complexities of adult life. They need time to develop and grow at their own pace.

Remedies: Parents should provide age-appropriate responsibilities and support to help their adolescents learn and grow in a healthy manner. This can include chores around the house, homework, and other activities that help them learn new skills and develop a sense of responsibility. Parents should communicate with their adolescents regularly and offer guidance and support when necessary. Parents can also encourage their adolescents to participate in positive activities that will help them build confidence and self-esteem.

6. Not helping adolescents deal with their academic pressure: Academic pressure can lead to stress, anxiety, and depression in adolescents, which can increase the likelihood of substance abuse.

Remedies: Parents play a critical role in helping adolescents manage academic pressures by providing emotional support, fostering a positive environment, and encouraging healthy habits. Adolescents with learning difficulties, learning dis-

abilities, or subaverage intelligence may need additional support. Parents can help by developing coping mechanisms such as mindfulness, exercise, and creative outlets, and by seeking professional help from clinical psychologists if necessary. They can also advocate for accommodations at school and work with teachers to develop individualized learning plans. Overall, parents can help their adolescents succeed by creating a supportive and open environment where they feel comfortable sharing their concerns and feelings, and by providing the necessary resources and assistance to manage academic pressures.

7. Comparing adolescents especially for their academic performance: It is a common practice for parents to compare their adolescents' academic performance with each other, hoping for them to achieve perfect scores. However, this constant pressure to perform can lead to emotional distress, anxiety, and substance abuse among adolescents.

Remedies: To prevent this, parents should strive to foster a supportive and nurturing environment for their adolescents, where they can grow and learn without the burden of unrealistic expectations.

Clinical psychologists can also play a vital role in helping parents understand the negative impact of high expectations and develop realistic academic goals for their adolescents. They can assist both parents and adolescents in coping with stress and anxiety, build healthy communication, and cultivate self-esteem and confidence in adolescents. By working together, parents and clinical psychologists can help adolescents thrive academically without sacrificing their mental health and well-being.

8. Bullying: It is a widespread problem in schools and homes that can have severe consequences for the mental and physical health of

adolescents. One of the ways adolescents cope with the stress and anxiety caused by bullying is by turning to drugs and alcohol, which can lead to addiction and other harmful behaviors. Adolescents who are bullied are more likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol than those who are not, and the younger they start using substances, the higher the risk of developing addiction.

Remedies: Parents play a critical role in preventing their adolescents from turning to substance abuse as a coping mechanism for bullying. It is essential for parents to recognize the signs of bullying and to take proactive steps to address it, such as talking to school officials or seeking help from a clinical psychologist. Parents can also provide support and guidance to their adolescents, such as teaching them healthy coping mechanisms and building their self-esteem. By doing so, parents can help their adolescents develop resilience and prevent them from turning to drugs and alcohol as a way of coping with the stress of bullying.

9. Mishandling failed love relationships: Failed love relationships can cause emotional distress in young people, leading to feelings of rejection and heartbreak. Some may resort to substance abuse as a coping mechanism. Parents can mishandle the situation and further increase the chances of such young people turning to substance abuse.

Remedies: Parents can support their adolescents by being available to talk, listening without judgment, and teaching them healthy coping mechanisms, such as exercise, journaling, and spending time with loved ones. It's essential to discourage adolescents from turning to drugs or alcohol to cope. Clinical psychologists can provide counseling and therapy to help individuals process their emotions and develop healthy coping mechanisms. They can also work with parents to offer emotional support and tools to promote well-being. Psychologists

play a critical role in helping families navigate the challenges of failed relationships.

10. Inflicting chronic physical and emotional abuse upon adolescents and failing to prevent sexual abuse: Chronic physical abuse, emotional abuse, emotional neglect by parents and failing to prevent sexual abuse can cause immense emotional pain and trauma among adolescents. Such experiences can lead to substance abuse as a coping mechanism.

Remedies: Parents can help their children by providing emotional support, being non-judgmental, and seeking professional help. Clinical psychologists play a crucial role in recovery by providing therapy, identifying triggers, teaching coping skills, and addressing underlying issues. In addition, psychologists work with families to help them communicate effectively, develop healthy boundaries, and promote a positive and supportive environment for recovery.

11. Misinterpreting or ignoring the mental health needs: Parental ignorance and misinterpretation of adolescents' mental health needs can have severe consequences for their adolescents. They may fail to recognize the symptoms of mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, and may not seek appropriate help for their adolescents. Additionally, the adolescents may feel ashamed or afraid to talk about their mental health issues, which can lead to further isolation and an increased risk of substance abuse.

Remedies: To address this problem, parents need to educate themselves about the symptoms of mental health issues and seek help when needed. They should also create a supportive and non-judgmental environment where their teenagers feel comfortable talking about their mental health struggles. This can include seeking therapy or counseling for their adolescents, being open to medication if necessary, and creating a healthy home environment that supports mental health.

The author is a licensed clinical psychologist (alumni of Govt. Medical College Srinagar) and works as a consultant clinical psychologist at Centre for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at Rambagh, Srinagar. He can be reached at 88250 67196

J&K Bank Collaborates With NIT Srinagar For Its Green Campus Initiative Provides Amenities To Sainik Bhawan Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: J&K Bank today collaborated with National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar in its Green and Clean campus initiative under Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan by providing funds under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for procurement of dustbins and garden benches.

Bank's Zonal Head (Srinagar) Shabir Ahmad today handed over a cheque of Rupees Seven Lac to Registrar (NIT) Dr Syed Kaiser Bukhari in presence of Branch Manager (NIT) and other officials from NIT and the Bank.

Registrar NIT Dr S Kaiser Bukhari thanked the Bank for its support in making NIT one-of-its-kind green campuses in the country with a focus on reduction of carbon emissions, encouragement of green energy initiatives and preservation of ecology and environment.

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head said, "Partnering



with prestigious institution like NIT under our CSR program makes great sense because of its location in environmentally sensitive area with Dal and Nigeen Lake in its immediate vicinity."

"Supporting such initiatives under Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan to focus on sustaining green and clean campuses will also go a long way in contributing our bit towards preserving these

water bodies", he added.

Meanwhile, Bank also provided various amenities to Sainik Bhawan Srinagar for upgradation of facilities at their Srinagar Office in Batamalo. Zila Sainik Welfare is an organisation that looks after the welfare of ex-Servicemen, widows, war widows etc. and their families belonging to different areas of Kashmir region.

Another Matricide:

recently, nearly one million people in Jammu and Kashmir consume drugs in one or the other form.

The data provided by the federal government suggested that nearly 4 lakh people have fallen prey to substance abuse since November last year, as six lakh people according to the State Level Committee of the Narco Coordination Centre, were affected by drugs in J&K until then.

"J&K has already surpassed the number of drug addicts in Punjab," said Dr. Fazl-e-Roub, Consultant Psychiatrist IMHANS Kashmir.

"Behind the flare-up is the three-decade-old strife, family issues and unemployment escalated by pandemic lockdown."

As many as 30 drug peddlers were booked under Narco-Public Safety Act and 22 were booked under The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1988 in Srinagar last year.

Similarly, 169 cases were registered under NDPS Act in Srinagar in 2022, while 287 persons involved in drug peddling were put behind the bars.

In North Kashmir's Baramulla, 100 drug peddlers have been booked in 68 NDPS cases registered across the district since January this year with around 50 arrests made.

"Parents have a significant role to play in this direction, as police alone cannot curb the menace," Rakesh Bhalwal, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, told Kashmir Observer.

"Police vacillate to counsel drug addicts, fearing if the person dies due to craving or some other reasons during counseling in the police station, parents would blame police for custodial killing."

Situation in Srinagar is alarming so far as substance abuse is concerned, SSP Bhalwal said. "A total of 208 cases were registered in Srinagar in 2022 while 30 drug peddlers were booked under Narco PSA and 22 under PIT NDPS Act," the officer said, adding that a total of 39 cases were registered from January 2023 till date in Srinagar, with 68 arrests.

414.57 grams of heroin, 14.159 kg charas, 72.79 kg fukka, 77.34 kg poppy-straw or bung, 5774 bottles of psychotropic syrup and 99382 tablets and capsules were recovered from those arrested in 2022, SSP Srinagar said. "While as 740.33 grams of heroin, 3.36 grams charas, 49 bottles of psychotropic syrup and 6223 tablets and capsules were recovered in Srinagar from January 2023 till date."

Not only adults, the female consultant psychiatrist said, but children below 14 years have also been affected with drugs, while married adults aged 33 to 40 have also fallen prey to the menace.

"The episodes that unfolded in the valley after 2019 have also contributed to the substance abuse in the valley," she said, "while post traumatic disorders like turmoil, unemployment are considered to be the root causes of the menace," she added.

'Monster Father

would usually have heated arguments with her over pity issues.

"Entire village is shell shocked. We never thought Khatana would kill his own daughter in cold-blood," says Haji Farooq, a resident of Khurhama village.

Initially, Khatana tried to portray himself innocent and filed a complaint in the police station, Khurhama that his daughter is missing. However on April 3, the police in a shocking revelation said that Khatana had killed her own daughter in a fit of rage.

"We were offering Taraweeh prayer when we heard the noise of Khatana's family that their daughter is missing—little did we know the father will turn out to be her killer," Farooq added.

According to locals, the family is so poor that sometimes they find it difficult to make both the ends meet. Khatana's father, Mohammad Hussain works as labourer at the house of Mushtaq Chaya's brother, a well-known hotelier of Kashmir, in Srinagar.

Abdul Rashid, cousin of the accused, told Kashmir Observer that Khatana was a simple guy but got involved in smoking cannabis and taking alcohol frequently.

"He was earlier working at a car workshop but eventually managed to convince a cab owner to keep him as driver," Rashid said. He got married 10 years ago with a woman from the Dardpora area of Lolab.

"His father was working hard in Srinagar and

helped his family financially but he turned out to be a monster," Rashid said.

He said that the accused has a history of fighting not only with his wife but his own siblings as well. Khatana has sold his entire property and had only two storied kacha houses.

"He was the eldest one among three brothers. His elderly father is still working as a domestic help in Srinagar and would support Khatana's family financially," Rashid said, adding that "I think he killed his daughter out of frustration,"

Rashid further added Khatana's father and his brother might take care of his family now.

Rashid was a school drop-out and didn't study further. "They are too poor. If you visit his home you will see their condition," said Farooq.

The villagers are confident that the police will leave no stone unturned to punish the accused for the crime that even "Allah will not forgive" him.

Number Of Militants

quintals of drugs have also been seized, and police and security forces have achieved many successes on that front.

"The drone activity has decreased, but it is still on. Our endeavour is to stop such smuggling and action is being taken," he added.

The DGP said the police have launched a special drive against drugs in every range and district of the union territory, adding that action is being taken against those involved in the narcotics trade.

"We have achieved many successes at the borders where drugs are dumped. Then the drugs are transported to various places in J-K, Punjab and other places. We have busted many such big cartels," he said.

When asked about the J-K Waqf Boards' decision to hold Eid congregational prayers at the historic Eidgah this year, Singh said the divisional administration of the Kashmir valley would take a call on that.

"Everything has to be balanced here. Generally, there is no law and order problem in Srinagar and there have been no such reports in other districts as well. The last year went off peacefully. This year, so far, has also been totally peaceful," he said.

Singh expressed gratitude to the people of the valley for understanding the "conspiracies of Pakistan, its agencies, organisations and pro-Pakistan persons who used to instigate people here for stone-pelting and made them fodder for their personal and other benefits".

ECI Visit To

also said that situation is getting better. The other aspect was the weather, which is also pleasant now," he said.

PM Confident

one lie after another. They have become restless and desperate at the exposure of their corrupt deeds. They can see now only one way out. They are openly saying 'Modi teri kabar khudegi'. They are issuing threats to dig (my) grave," he said.

Modi cautioned party members, who heard his nearly 50-minute-long address at over 10 lakh places where it was broadcast live, against complacency, noting that it is already said that no one can defeat the ruling party in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

"Despite being the world's biggest political party, we don't have to be complacent. People have already started saying that no one can defeat the BJP in 2024. This is true but as BJP workers we have to win the heart of every citizen of the country," he said.

"We should not be confined to winning polls. Our goal is to win over the hearts of crores of people. We have to fight every poll with the same hard work that we have put in since the time of Jana Sangh," he said and lauded the contribution of the party workers.

With the BJP accusing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of insulting backward communities, Modi slammed some persons with a "badshahi" mindset for insulting the poor and backward since the party stormed to power in 2014 and accused them of treating people like slaves for decades after independence.

The BJP has empowered these people's voices, he said.

The British might have left in 1947 but they left behind the seeds of treating people as slaves in the minds of some, he said.

"This class of people prospered a lot in the years after independence who considered power their birthright," he added in a clear swipe at the

Congress which ruled the country in the early decades after freedom.

Modi also accused the Congress and other political parties of being tied to nepotism, dynasty, casteism and regionalism.

The BJP represents a new culture of taking everyone along, he asserted.

"The BJP has taken birth from the womb of democracy, and has been nourished and nurtured with the nectar of democracy," he said.

A host of opposition parties, including the Congress, the Left and several regional parties, have come together over the alleged targeting of their leaders by central probe agencies in corruption cases and also over the issue of Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha following his conviction in a defamation case last month.

Without referring to various allegations levelled by these parties against his government, the Prime Minister said they have been "battling an existential crisis" and are resorting to levelling allegations and hatching conspiracies against the ruling party.

The support of the poor, tribals, backward classes, Dalits and women among others will continue to protect the 'lotus' (BJP party symbol) and help it bloom, he said, adding the BJP cannot let people's aspirations and dreams go unfulfilled and will continue to focus on development and welfare.

He drew parallels between Lord Hanuman, whose birth anniversary is being observed by the devout on Thursday, to assert that the party believed in the ideals of selfless service, something with which the Ramayana character is identified.

India has realised its potential and strength after 2014 just like Lord Hanuman did after eliminating his self-doubt, PM Modi said. "If we see the whole life of Lord Hanuman, he had a 'can-do' attitude that helped him achieve big successes." As Lord Hanuman took on demons fiercely, the government will also act stringently in ridding the country of ills like corruption, nepotism and law and order challenges, the prime minister added.

Modi cited the free ration scheme, health insurance and other welfare measures, which have benefited a huge number of people across the country, to assert that social justice was an article of faith for the BJP while other parties used the plank to advance the interest of particular families without helping society.

While the BJP thought and dreamt big and then set out to dedicate itself to achieving these goals, opposition parties could set small goals and patented each other for achieving ever smaller targets.

The Opposition parties never imagined that Article 370 would be history one day and they cannot digest the work BJP has done to usher in peace and development in Kashmir and the North East, he said.

Asserting that 2014 heralded India's journey towards its renaissance, Modi said India after over "800 years of slavery" has stood up to recover its lost glory. The Prime Minister stressed the need for BJP workers to use technology and asked them to work in accordance with the party's ideology and within the confines of India's Constitution.

Kashmiri Youth

in a hotel at Ludhiana where he had gone there along with a friend from Anantnag. The hotel authorities informed us that Firdous has been untraceable since 17 February," one of the relatives told a local news agency KNT.

Another relative said that police in Ludhiana don't take the issue seriously. "We repeatedly visited the police station in Ludhiana but the men in uniform are not giving serious heed and no efforts are being made to locate our missing member," he said.

The protesting family appealed to the Jammu Kashmir Police and Kupwara district administration to take up the issue with the Punjab Police.

Fake PMO

in (Strategy & Campaigns) Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and enjoyed requisite perks including Z-plus security cover, a bulletproof SUV and official accommodation at a five-star hotel, was lodged in Srinagar Central Jail after his arrest on March 3.

Purported videos of Patel surveying the snow slopes of Gulmarg with a posse of armed security personnel around him and of a convoy of vehicles accompanying him weaving through a Valley town have been circulated widely across social media platforms.

He had even visited the last post at Uri in north Kashmir, posing for pictures at a bridge treated as a Line of Control between India and Pakistan.

Sources in the police department told Kashmir Observer that the five member Gujarat police team left for Ahmedabad by road around 5pm Thursday. Sources said the trials against conman will run concurrently.

It may be in place to mention that the court of CJM Srinagar had on March 23, rejected bail of the accused conman on the grounds that granting bail to him at this stage would undermine the integrity of the probe.

A day later on March 24, Patel, a resident of the Ghodasara area of Ahmedabad, was booked by the Gujarat police on cheating and criminal conspiracy charges for trying to usurp a senior citizen's bungalow. Besides it, three cases under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including cheating, forgery and breach of trust, dating back to 2017 are registered against him in police stations in Ahmedabad and Baroda.

Ex-CM Azad

I was in the balcony of my room of Hotel Broadway in Srinagar, having tea with Ashok Bhan, a friend, Congressman and lawyer of the Supreme Court, when a thought occurred to me. Perhaps it was driven by emotion. I told Bhan that I should ask Mufti's party to join the government. I had a long family association with him, which I had maintained even after his split with the Congress. Though I did not need his backing to form the government, I believed that with him on board, the government would be even more stable and could perform better. Besides, he had been a Congressman, and his MLAs could be co-opted in the government," the former CM claims.

Azad further says Mufti made him wait, saying he needs 3-4 days to think over the proposal. "I telephoned Mufti and informed him that I would be meeting the governor at 11.00 a.m. I suggested that his party could be part of the government

and asked him to give me names of five-six MLAs of his party who could be accommodated as ministers. He said that it was a good idea and immediately invited me for breakfast, saying that I could go to the Raj Bhavan after having breakfast with him; I readily agreed. I had breakfast with him at his residence and repeated my offer. He heard me out and said that he wanted three-four days to think it over. He suggested that I better defer my meeting with the governor until then," Azad says.

The former CM claims that he trusted Mufti and didn't spot his deviousness. "I should have seen through his game plan then and gone ahead with the oath-taking; after all, his party could have joined the government later. But I trusted him implicitly and did not spot his deviousness. How was I to know that he would throw our personal relations to the wind and misuse my generosity! I met the governor and briefed him about my talks with Mufti that morning, also informing him that I would get back to him after three-four days," the former CM writes.

He said Mufti confirmed his participation in his government when he and Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha, met him in Srinagar. "I returned to Delhi and narrated the whole story to Sonia ji. It was decided that Dr Manmohan Singh, then the LoP in the Rajya Sabha, and I would fly to Srinagar and meet the PDP leader to firm up his party's inclusion in the government. The following day, Dr Singh and I went to Srinagar and had lunch with Mufti, during which he confirmed his party's participation in the government," he adds.

According to Azad, Mufti got up in an agitated state during the meeting called by Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi for announcing the alliance when he was asked to give names of 5-6 names from his party who could be accommodated as ministers.

"Thereafter, Sonia ji invited Mufti to Delhi for the final announcement of the alliance. I, too, was present at the meeting. Mufti thanked the Congress president and me for agreeing to his party's participation in the government. But when he was asked for names from his party who could be part of my government, he suddenly got up in an agitated state and exclaimed, 'I thought that I had been invited to be the chief minister! Sonia ji and I were aghast and said that no such indication or assurance had been given from our side at any point of time. Mufti nearly shouted back that he had been called to Delhi to be insulted. 'Why was I called? I could have been informed over the telephone.' It was clear that he wanted to hijack the government," Azad says.

He writes that he himself intervened and requested Sonia Gandhi that a power-sharing arrangement could be worked by which he would be CM for the first three years and Mufti for the next three years.

"When matters seemed to be going out of hand, I intervened and requested Sonia ji that an arrangement could be worked out by which I would be CM for the first three years and Mufti could take over for the next three years (then the J&K government's term was of six years). This way, everyone would be happy. However, Mufti, having got a toehold, now wanted full entry through the door. He insisted on being the CM for the first three years. Sonia ji was in no mood to relent. Again, I requested her that in the larger interest of the state, we should agree to his demand. That is how Mufti, whose party had come third in the elections, with just 16MLAs, became the CM, while I, despite having the support of 42 MLAs, had to return to national politics," he says.

In 2002 elections, National Conference won 28 seats, Congress 20 seats and Peoples Democratic Party 16 seats—(KNO)

Not Credible

talks with the then Congress president Sonia Gandhi, to form the government in Jammu and Kashmir in 2002.

"I think what Azad said does not add up to a very credible presentation of facts. Azad is reported to claim that he had 42 MLAs with him. Then why didn't he straight away go and stake the claim (to government formation)," Akhtar told PTI.

The former bureaucrat, who was a close aide of Sayeed, wondered how a party with just 16 members could "blackmail" Gandhi on government formation.

"It's a narrative that Azad has presented. He has been the longest player at the national level, he has been quite an important player in national politics but our limited concern is about what has been reported in the press as part of this book related to the 2002 formation of the PDP-Congress ministry in the state.

"How could a party with 16 members at number 3 in the table of seats blackmail Sonia Gandhi form a government with the chief minister (coming) from that party of 16?" he asked.

Akhtar said Azad's narrative on those very important days of Kashmir's history is the "lack of appreciation of the atmosphere those days".

"It's my feeling that Sonia Gandhi perhaps had greater appreciation than Azad ever had, even as the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

"Congress had taken note of this that Kashmir perhaps wanted a change and they had given many seats to the PDP in Kashmir valley which was at the centre of trouble so perhaps they wanted to give this experiment a try and give a sense of achievement to the people of Kashmir who had always been traditionally denied the right to choose their leader," he said.

"It was a very historic moment which unfortunately came to halt in 2005 after the change-over. A (peace) process that was started in 2002 and 2005 with Mufti Sahab in J&K and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and later Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh in Delhi, came to an abrupt end in 2006... (It) was perhaps the last chance Kashmir had for permanent resolution and peace," he added.

3 Govt Employees

found that during the above said period, an amount of Rs. 1,78,52,000/- was allocated under MDM scheme for education zone Boniyar by CEO Baramulla, out of which an amount of Rs. 1,75,91,000 has been shown withdrawn as expenditure," sources said.

The probe, they said, also revealed that huge payments were shown made to various PCOs/schools in the cash book maintained at Zonal

Education Office, Boniyar were actually not received by concerned PCOs/schools.

"The amount shown paid was prima-facie embellished by the officials/officers of the education Zone Boniyar in connivance with one another. During the probe into the matter the District vigilance officer has also flagged grave concern and huge discrepancies in the record of the MDM of District Baramulla, the report of the DVO was also further verified by the vigilance organization," sources said.

The investigation further revealed that an amount of Rs. 1,18,09,000/- was shown disbursed in the cash book by the employees of ZEO Boniyar from 01.04.2012 to 31.08.2013 to different PCOs whereas only Rs. 45,96,943/- was found received by the PCOs during relevant period and rest of the amount was embezzled.

"Further for the period 01.09.2013 to 31.03.2015 an amount of Rs. 53,29,378/- was shown withdrawn on account of expenditure for MDM, whereas it transpired that amount of Rs. 23,45,911/- only was received by the PCOs and again rest of the amount was embezzled by these officials," the ACB investigation reveals.

It further adds that the amount not received by the PCOs has been misappropriated by then officers/officials of ZEO office Boniyar.

Iltija Mufti Gets 'UAE

the Regional Passport Office (RPO) to look into the merits of the case. Following this, Iltija, who wants to go for higher studies, has been issued a passport that is valid from April 5, 2023 to April 4, 2025, according to a letter by the RPO to the additional solicitor general.

"This passport will be valid only for UAE," an official said. The passport has a stamp stating this.

Quoting the RPO's letter, officials said the CID/police verification report received from the special director general of police (CID), Jammu and Kashmir, in February does not favour issuing her a passport.

The officials said Passport Officer (Srinagar) Davinder Kumar sought a detailed report from the CID on whether there was any charge sheet or FIR against Iltija. However, the department refused to share its report and reiterated its stance taken in February.

"Why is the validity of this passport only for two years and that too country specific?" Iltija asked.

"They have not done me any favour. I am thankful to the honourable court but the larger question remains about CID's gross misconduct and abuse of power by weaponising passports," she told PTI. She said the CID's adverse report is full of "bald-faced lies".

"They are infringing on my rights by filing adverse reports to ensure my passport is not issued," Iltija alleged.

"To add to that, the adverse report has been classified as top secret. The only reason it is top secret is because the CID has nothing substantial against me," Iltija said.

On March 29, the CID sought dismissal of Iltija's writ petition. It informed the high court that her final verification report was forwarded to the department concerned in February.

"The petitioner has no ground to approach the court against the answering respondent because none of the rights, whether fundamental or legal, have been infringed by the answering respondent," Senior Superintendent of Police, headquarters, CID, Jammu and Kashmir, had said.

In March 2021, Mehbooba and her 80-year-old mother Gulshan Nazir were refused passports, citing an "adverse report" against them.

Mehbooba's passport expired on May 31, 2019 and she had applied for a fresh one on December 11, 2020. Her mother, wife of former chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, also applied for a passport in 2020 to undertake a religious pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia.

Mehbooba's passport application is still pending. However, authorities issued the travel document to her mother in February on the directions of the high court.

Cardiac Arrest Kills

The body, reports said, was later handed over to the family after completion of medico-legal formalities.

Meanwhile, Police have taken cognizance of the incident.

Militant Associate

explosives including 01 Chinese grenade & 12 live AK-47 rounds were recovered from his possession," the spokesperson said.

He said a case under relevant sections of law has been registered at PS Bandipora and further investigation has been initiated in this regard.

Ammo Recovered

and 10 x UBGL grenades (most likely of Russian origin) were recovered.

"The ammunition was concealed in the forest area with adequate packaging. In fact few of the ammunition has been found in sealed packages," the spokesperson said.

He said that a thorough search in the forest area was launched t for any more caches of arms and ammunition or for any hideout.

GRES Labourer

said that the body would be handed over to the family for last rites after medico-legal formalities.

LG Meets Family

to Jammu after Sharma's killing. Three weeks after his gunning down, his wife Sunita along with her three children and six other close relatives came to Jammu and applied for registration as migrants.

Sharma's wife has also sought the LG's intervention in a proper rehabilitation package, including accommodation, a job on compassionate grounds, and free education for her children.

Meanwhile, Choudhary Lal Singh, former Minister called on the LG at Raj Bhawan here and discussed with him several matters of public importance.

Besides him, Anil Sharma, President, All J&K Panchayat Conference also called on the LG and projected various issues concerning Panchayat Gardeners cum Guards.

The LG Governor assured the former Minister and President, All J&K Panchayat Conference of appropriate redressal of the genuine issues and demands put forth by them during the interactions," officials said.

BOSE Exams Clash with Jamia Millia Entrance Test

Students Appeal Authorities To Reschedule Paper Of Physical Education

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The students of class 12th have appealed to authorities of the J&K Board of School Education to reschedule the examination of their physical education paper, saying that it overlaps with the entrance test being conducted for undergraduate courses at Jamia Millia University.

According to Kashmir News Observer students want the authorities to reschedule the

examination of the physical education paper scheduled on 29th April as the Jamia Millia University entrance test is also being held on that day.

"We request principal secretary, Education Alok Kumar and chairman Board of School Education PR Manhas to reschedule examination of the physical education paper so that hundreds of aspirants from Kashmir Valley can appear in the entrance examination being conducted by Jamia Millia University," they said.

J&K Cong Hits Out At Azad For Praising PM

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Thursday slammed its former member Ghulam Nabi Azad, saying his statements on Narendra Modi are contrary to the speeches he gave in Parliament and by praising the prime minister, he was only exposing himself.

Azad, a veteran politician and former Union minister, on Wednesday, lavished praise on Modi while launching an all-out attack on the Congress party.

The Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chief said the Congress is still run by "remote control" and alleged that a "new coterie of inexperienced sycophants" manage its affairs.

As the leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha, Azad used to accuse the Narendra Modi government of indulging in politics of vendetta. By giving such statements, he is contradicting himself, a J&K Congress spokesperson said.

"The statements of Azad, in

which he tries to bail out the Modi government by showering praises... this change of heart started when his long tenure in the Rajya Sabha was coming to end," he said.

He is only exposing himself by praising Modi, the spokesperson said.

"It is unfortunate that the DPAP leader praised a leader who disbanded, divided and downgraded his own historical state of J&K against the wishes of people besides abrogating the rights to land and jobs, which Azad now claims to be fighting for," he said.

The same leader did not allow Azad to visit Jammu and Kashmir without orders of the Supreme Court.

"The more he shall speak, the more he shall expose himself on this aspect before the people of this UT and country. People are aware of the Congress leadership's generosity towards him for a very long time, which he should not forget," he added.

No Need To Worry About New Covid-19 Variant: DAK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Thursday said there is no need to worry about new Covid-19 variant.

"There is no evidence to suggest that the new sub-variant causes more severe disease," said DAK President and influenza expert Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

Dr Hassan said the new variant is causing uptick of cases in some parts of the country.

"While cases are rising, there is no evidence of increase in hospitalization," he said adding there is no need to panic as long as it does not lead to severe illness."

The DAK President said case count has lost relevance; hospitalization numbers are now reliable markers when it comes to assessing the threat from pandemic.

"If we continue to highlight only the increase in cases, we run the risk of causing unnecessary public panic," he said.

Dr Nisar said new variant XBB1.16 is a sub-lineage of

omicron strain of Covid-19.

Most of us have gone through the omicron wave and our population has enough immunity against omicron and its sub-variants

With high vaccination rates and natural immunity, the possibility of a new wave in our population due to the variant is unlikely.

He said Covid-19 has entered into the endemic stage and the rise and fall in cases is going to be a routine process.

"What we are seeing in terms of a spike in Covid cases is on expected line," he said adding the current surge is not a wave but an endemic spike and we expect these fluctuations in future too.

General Secretary DAK Dr Arshad Ali said new variants will keep coming as frequent changes in the genomic structure are part of the natural course of the virus.

"For last one year, we have got variants which are basically sub-lineages of Omicron, so it seems virus has stabilized," he said.

CUK's Commerce Dept Holds Panel Discussion



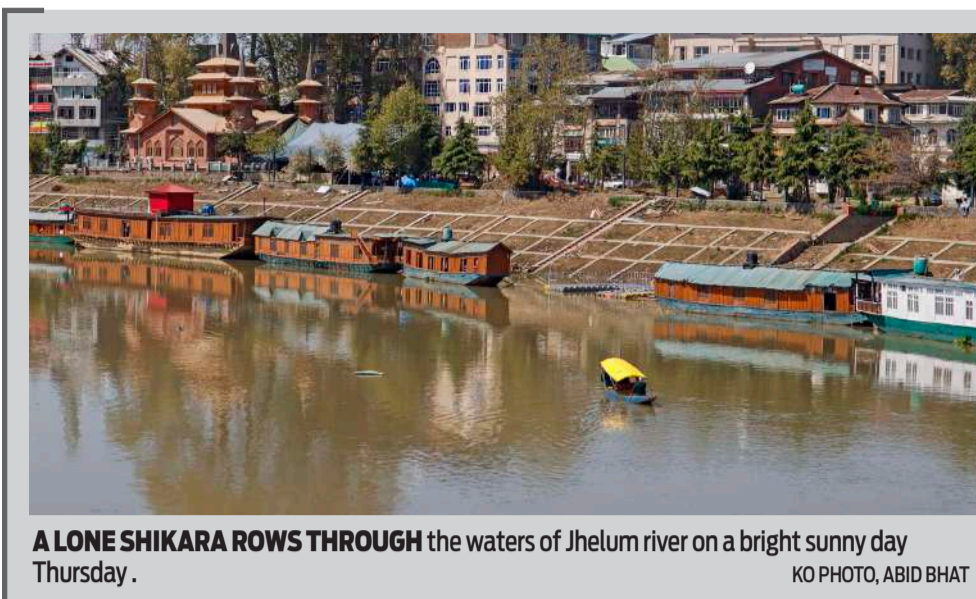
Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Under the G-20 University connect, Department of Commerce, Central University of Kashmir (CUK), organized a panel discussion by the students on the theme "G-20 Trade, Business, Economics and Sustainability" at Green Campus here on Thursday.

In the discussion 10 students made presentations on countries falling in the domain of G-20 including India, Turkey, Russia, Australia, China, USA, Brazil, France, Argentina and European Union. The panellists highlighted business trade and economic opportunities between India and other G-20 members and also identified the areas for their trade and economic cooperation and sustainability. The students discussed other issues which can cement the political and diplomatic

relations between the nations based on the trade and economic fundamentals. They captured the picture of India's position in G-20 and described that India has huge opportunities to progress in view of its huge demographic potential, size of economy and resources.

Speaking on the occasion, Dean School of Business Studies, Prof. Fayaz Ahmad Nika emphasised on the importance of sustainable development and how India and other G-20 nations can play a vital role in it globally to overcome the detrimental effects of globalization. He mentioned that trade and business is the basic cornerstone that connects the countries and in G-20 the nations have the mandate to move further towards progressive relations on the assumption of economic cooperation and sustainability.



A LONE SHIKARA ROWS THROUGH the waters of Jhelum river on a bright sunny day Thursday.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

RTO Kashmir Generated Revenue Of Over Rs 300 Cr In 2022-23

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Regional Transport Office Kashmir has generated revenue of Rs 313.47 Crores in the financial year 2022-23, marking a growth of 20 percent over the previous financial year 2021-22.

This was informed in a meeting chaired by Additional Transport Commissioner, Reyaz Ahmad Sofi and was attended by RTO Kashmir and ARTOs of all 10 districts of Kashmir division. It was informed that the total revenue includes Rs 237.45 Cr of the token tax, Rs 14.87 Cr of licenses fee, Rs 9.41 Cr passenger tax, besides Rs 1.95 Cr compounding fee from the motorists for violation of various traffic rules.

With a special focus on the passenger tax, a significant growth of 630 percent was registered in the year 2022-23 by the department.

Additional Transport Commissioner congratulated the officers and officials of the department for crossing 300 Crore milestone and all the officials of the MVD Kashmir were asked to work with double enthusiasm for the year 2023-24 and continue this growth story.

It was revealed that during the



financial year 2022-23, 64032 new vehicles were registered. Also, 2174 fresh Permits were issued and 24420 Permits renewed, 6078 fresh Fitness Certificates were issued and 30875 renewed, 35018 fresh Driving licenses were issued and 62388 renewed, besides 7912 cases of vehicle transfer cases were completed in the financial year.

It was given that 55 driving licenses, 92 Registration Certificates of vehicles, and 106 Commercial Permits were suspended or canceled over the year under review for various repeated offences under the Motor Vehicles Act.

"Collection of taxes and fees from motorists and fines for traffic offences has become smooth and easier and compliance has also improved after the introduction of online services and online payment systems. Besides, we have strengthened the patrolling on roads despite meagre human resources" said

Syed Shah Nawaz Bukhari, Regional Transport officer, Kashmir.

He said that the transport department is on the path of progress with transparent and seamless policies and the department would further put it on a high growth trajectory.

Additional Transport Commissioner directed the transport officials for strict enforcement of Motor Vehicle Act and Rules on road safety by checking over-speeding, rash driving, monitoring the overloading and enhancing revenue collection by preventing evasion of road tax, permit and fitness renewals, etc.

RTO Kashmir emphasized that a smooth and reliable public transport system for convenience of the general public should be the priority and stated such a move could significantly reduce the number of cars on the roads and solve the traffic issues in Srinagar city and other towns of the valley.

More Rains Lash J&K, Mercury Stays Below Normal At Most Places

Agencies

SRINAGAR: More rains lashed Jammu and Kashmir since overnight while night temperature stayed below normal at all places except Pahalgam and Bhaderwah on Thursday, officials said.

Quoting a meteorological department official, news agency GNS reported that in last 24 hours till 0830 hours today, Srinagar received 3.4mm, Qazigund 9.9mm, Pahalgam 4.4mm, Kupwara 9.1mm, Kokernag 9.8mm, Gulmarg 10.8mm, Jammu 0.2mm, Baniha 5.4mm, Batote 2.0mm, Katra 4.0mm and Bhaderwah 1.1mm.

He said light rain with thunder at few places, mainly towards late afternoon/evening was expected during the next 24 hours.

From April 7-10, he said, mainly dry weather was expected and generally cloudy weather with light rain at isolated places towards late afternoon/evening has been forecast for April 11. Generally cloudy weather was expected from April 12-15, he said.

Regarding the temperature, the MeT official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 6.3°C against 2.7°C on the previous night and it was 0.6°C below normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 4.0°C against 3.6°C on the previous night and it was 1.7°C below normal for the gateway town of Kashmir.

Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of minus 2.4°C against 1.8°C on the previous night and it was 0.2°C above



normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Kokernag recorded a low of 3.1°C against 2.3°C on the previous night and it was 2.3°C below normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 1.6°C against minus 3.5°C on the previous night and it was 2.1°C below normal for the famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 3.6°C against 1.2°C on the previous night and it was 1.9°C below normal for the north Kashmir area.

Jammu recorded a low of 14.7°C against 13.1°C on the previous night. It was 3.1°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal, he said, recorded a low of 5.4°C (below normal by 2.0°C), Batote 6.5°C (below normal by 3.6°C), Katra 11.2°C (3.9°C below normal) and Bhaderwah 6.7°C (0.7°C above normal). Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of minus 2.0°C and 4.0°C respectively, he added.

2 Injured As Vehicle Skids Off The Road In Budgam

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Two persons were injured in a road accident in Kaisermulla area of Chadoora in Central Kashmir Budgam district on Thursday.

Quoting an official, news agency KNO reported that two persons were injured when the vehicle they were travelling in skid-

ded off the road near Kaisermulla on Sarai-Chadoora road.

He identified them as Bashir Ahmad Khan and Shakeel Ahmad Padroo—both residents of Pulwama.

He said that the duo was immediately shifted to sub-district hospital Chadoora for treatment where from Bashir was shifted to SMHS Srinagar for further treatment.



Court Rejects Bail Of 3 Accused In SI Recruitment Scam

Agencies

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Court has rejected the bail applications of three accused in the J&K Service Selection Board Police sub-inspector recruitment scam.

According to reports, 2nd Additional Sessions Judge Jammu Balbir Lal Jaswal rejected bail applications of Ashish Yadav, Sunder Singh and Pawan Kumar who were in custody in much publicized SI recruitment Scam.

Rejecting the bail application, Sessions Judge after hearing Advocate Vivek Gaur for the applicants whereas Vijay Kumar and DP Singh for the CBI observed that in the present case the paper of Sub Inspector J&K Police is leaked by the accused persons.

"The paper leak scam has damaged the future of the younger generation. Indeed the act of the accused cannot be equated with scams involving millions of Rupees. It is an organized crime and offence against the public at large," the court observed and gauged the seriousness of the matter, saying the cases are serious in nature if the factum is evaluated and accused succeeded in their design, undeserving candidates are allowed to secure the top positions.

"It said that it does not merely deprive the deserving candidates, it will also deprive the society of deserving and competent

officers. The acts of the accused are calculated and deliberate design with eye on personal profit regardless of its consequences to aspirants of examination and their parents.

If the bail is considered in part by the accused persons it will prejudice the students who have honestly worked hard for round the clock," the court said.

In my considered view an ordinary crime generally affects the small number of people and usually as an impact upon the physical well being of the victims but an economic offence on the other hand also adversely affects the psyche of honest citizens so granting the bail to such offenders where the investigation is underway definitely outrage the sentiments of the public at large and also tend towards the frustration of the investigation.

The court is not inclined to express the view upon the merits of the case which is owed to be verdict at the conclusion of the trial. At this stage the court has whatsoever expressed is for the sake of considering the question of bail merely. The applicant accused are involved in the serious offence though carries the punishment up to 07 years have no criteria to consider their bail excluding the factors for determination of the bail in favour of the above named accused at this stage—(KNO)

CS Directs For Making PSUs More Vibrant, Profitable

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta on Thursday chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the functioning of various Corporations and Public Sector Undertakings.

While chairing the meeting, Chief Secretary directed the concerned Managing Directors for making their respective public sector units more vibrant and financially viable. He said that every corporation should be a profit making corporation and all out efforts should be taken in this regard. He directed them to come up with a clear and implantable plan within a month for government's consideration which should specify how they

are going to be profit oriented. It was also noted that Cable Car Corporation, J&K Forest Development Corporation, J&K Minerals Corporation, etc are currently profit making bodies.

He said that bottlenecks, if any, in the smooth functioning of these should be removed through policy and process enablers.

He further said that the corporations should hold quarterly meetings on regular basis and submit their accounts till 2021-22 by 15th of this month. He also said that all corporations should update the names of board members on their respective websites. He also observed that universities should hold two council meetings annually.

Unidentified Body Recovered In Sonamarg

Agencies

SRINAGAR- An unidentified body of a man was recovered in Sonamarg area of central Kashmir's Ganderbal district during the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

Quoting an official, news

agency KNO reported that police received information from local residents that a body was lying near Sindh river behind imperial resorts Sonamarg. He said upon receiving the information, a team from the Sonamarg police station immediately rushed to the spot and recovered the body.

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA (AIIA) (An Autonomous Organization under the Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India) Gautampuri, Sarita Vihar, Mathura Road, New Delhi - 110076 E-mail: director@aiaa.gov.in				
Advt. No. AIIA/Recvt/01/2023		16 th March, 2023		
The Institute invites applications for the following Faculty posts to be filled up on direct recruitment/deputation basis at AIIA, New Delhi and its Satellite Centre at AIIA, Goa :-				
Sl. No.	Posts	No. of Posts/Category	Pay Scale	Mode of Recruitment
1.	PROFESSOR (For AIIA, New Delhi)		Level-14A	Direct/Deputation
	Kaumarbhritya	1 (OBC)		
	Swasthavritta	1 (OBC)		
	Kriya Sharir	1 (SC)		
	Panchakarma	1 (UR)		
	Kayachikitsa or Shalya or Stri Rog & Prasooti (as per availability of most suitable candidate with experience in Hospital administration)	1 (ST)		
Translational Research Division (Suitable Faculty from Ayurveda specialty with experience in teaching of research methodology and bio-statistics)		1 (SC)		
2.	ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR (For AIIA, New Delhi)		Level-13A1	Direct/Deputation
	Ayurveda Samhita & Siddhant	1 (ST)		
	Rog Nidan & Vikriti Vigyan	1 (OBC)		
	Translational Research Division (Suitable Faculty from Ayurveda specialty with experience in teaching of research methodology and bio-statistics)	1 (SC)		
3.	ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (For AIIA, Goa)		Level-12	Direct Recruitment
	Kayachikitsa	1 (EWS)		
	Prasuti Tantra & Stri Rog	1 (OBC)		
	Ras Shashtra & Bhaisajya Kalpana	1 (SC)		
	Shalaky Tantra	1 (OBC)		
For details of qualification, experience, prescribed format of application, and terms & conditions, please visit AIIA's website https://aiaa.gov.in . Last date of receipt of applications is 20 th April, 2023.				
CBC - 17219/12/0002/2324		Director		



Injured Williamson Likely To Miss ODI WC

Press Trust of India

WELLINGTON: New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson is likely to miss the ODI World Cup in India later this year after suffering a severe knee injury while playing his first match for Gujarat Giants in the ongoing IPL.

Following the injury, Williamson returned to New Zealand and scans on Tuesday confirmed that he had ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament of his right knee. Williamson suffered the injury while fielding for Gujarat Titans against Chennai Super Kings in Ahmedabad.

According to New Zealand Cricket statement, the right-handed batter will go under the knife within the next three weeks.

On receiving the news, Williamson acknowledged the support he had received from his franchise and NZC following the injury.

"I've received great support over the past few days and want to thank both the Gujarat Titans and New Zealand Cricket for that," he said.

"Naturally it's disappointing to get such an injury, but my focus now is on having the surgery and starting rehab.

"It's going to take some time, but I'll be doing everything I can to get back on the field as soon as possible," he added. According to the standard rehabilitation period for such an injury, Williamson is unlikely to be fit and available for World Cup which is scheduled to be held in October-November.

"I look forward to doing what I can to support Gary (Stead) and the team over the next few months," Williamson said.

New Zealand coach Stead too feels it would be very difficult for Williamson to be fit before the World Cup.

"You take Kane the player for a start, but then Kane the leader and the person he is within our group as well, it's a huge spanner in the works for us," Stead said.

"We haven't given up hope that he might be right but at this stage it does look unlikely. Our first thoughts are with Kane at the moment, it's a tough time for him, it's not an injury you expect...it hits you pretty hard."

Buildup To ODI WC Clouded By India-Pakistan Relations



Agencies

Six months out from the likely start of the Cricket World Cup in India, the match schedule for the tournament is still under wraps as geopolitics cloud the buildup to the showpiece event.

The delay is in stark contrast to the 2019 event, when the dates and venues for the tournament in England and Wales were announced more than a year out in keeping with usual practice for major sporting events. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has previously co-hosted three ODI World Cups and organising the 10-team event in October-November should present no major difficulties for the world's richest board.

However, soured political relations between India and Pakistan have complicated matters and cricket finds itself caught in the geopolitical crossfire be-

tween the feuding neighbours, who play each other only in multi-team events. India have ruled out travelling to Pakistan for the Asia Cup in September and are likely to play their matches at a neutral venue after organisers agreed on a 'hybrid' model - a move that looks likely to prompt a tit-for-tat response.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) denied media reports that it had made a similar demand at the ICC board meetings in Dubai last month but in a statement last week said it may push for the hybrid model "at the proper ICC forum at the right time". Should Pakistan agree to travel to India, the BCCI would have to secure visa clearance from the Indian government.

A source with direct knowledge of the deliberations told Reuters that moving matches out of India had not even been discussed and the fixtures would be announced in "due course". Cricket news website cricinfo.

com has reported that the BCCI has yet to obtain a tax exemption for the tournament from the Indian government, which is part of the hosting agreement it signed with the ICC.

Should it fail to obtain the exemption the BCCI has said the amount could be deducted from its share of the ICC's central revenue pool. BCCI Secretary Jay Shah was not immediately available to clarify matters surrounding the schedule but, in an ICC statement revealing the tournament's brand identity on Saturday, promised to deliver a "memorable event".

"We cannot wait until October to see world class cricket on show in the pinnacle event of the one-day game and for India to host an incredible spectacle," Shah said. Cricinfo has reported the World Cup will start on Oct. 5 with the final scheduled at the world's largest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad on Nov. 19. (Reuters)



WC Winner Argentina Moves Top Of FIFA Rankings

Agencies

ZURICH: World Cup winner Argentina topped the FIFA rankings on Thursday for the first time in six years. Argentina's two wins in friendlies last month ended the one-year run at the top for Brazil, which lost at Morocco 2-1 and fell to No. 3. France, the World Cup beaten finalist, followed Argentina in rising one place, to No. 2. France won back-to-back European Championship qualifiers against No. 6 the Netherlands and Ireland.

Belgium stayed at No. 4, with

England next after two wins including beating No. 8 Italy. Europe completed the top 10 with No. 7 Croatia followed by Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Morocco, which has joined the Spanish and Portuguese in a 2030 World Cup bidding plan, stayed at No. 11 to lead African teams.

The United States was still No. 13, two ahead of regional rival Mexico. Canada, the other North American co-host of the 2026 World Cup, rose six to No. 47. Japan at No. 20 was the best of the Asian teams, and 2022 World Cup host Qatar fell to No. 61.

Chelsea Reappoint Frank Lampard As Interim Manager

Agencies

LONDON: Frank Lampard has returned to Chelsea as interim manager until the end of the season following the sacking of Graham Potter, the Premier League club confirmed on Thursday. The club's record goalscorer previously spent 19 months as manager at Stamford Bridge before being dismissed in January 2021.

"We are delighted to welcome Frank back to Stamford Bridge. Frank is a Premier League Hall of Famer and a legend at this club," co-controlling owners Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali said in a statement on the club's website.

"As we continue our thorough



and exhaustive process for a permanent head coach, we want to provide the club and our fans with a clear and stable plan for the remainder of the season.

"We want to give ourselves every chance of success and Frank has all of the characteristics and qualities we need to drive us to the finish line."

Ramazan Kargem

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