



GOVERNMENT OF  
JAMMU AND KASHMIR



## JUBILANT JAMMU KASHMIR

# JAMMU & KASHMIR READY TO HOST 3<sup>RD</sup> G20 TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING

Srinagar, J&K  
May 22-24, 2023

## Strengthening Grassroots Democracy

- PRI elections conducted in a fair and transparent manner in 2019-20 and about 33,000 PRIs across all tiers got elected over 4291 panchayats in 285 blocks of 20 districts.
- 20 DDC and 48 BDC office buildings being constructed.
- Massive Capacity building exercise carried out for all PRIs over more than 6 lakhs mandays and about 6,000 Elected Representatives sent on Exposure visits to other States and Institutes of Excellence across country. Plan to send 10,000 more during the current year.
- Power to give building permission in rural areas delegated to PRIs at panchayat level.
- All the Panchayats have been e-enabled.
- Monthly honorarium being paid to the elected representatives of the PRIs of all the three tiers.
- Ex-gratia compensation of Rs.25L being provided to the next of kins of elected representatives of all three tiers of Panchayati Raj, in the event of loss of life in militancy related incidents.
- Panchayat Prabhari Officers nominated for all 4291 Panchayats across the UT to facilitate panchayat level planning.

**23 Panchayats awarded for the first time at UT level for exhibiting exemplary work**



More than

**2500**

Panchayats have Panchayat Ghars now. Plan to construct 500 more Panchayat Ghars during the current year



**1131**

Gram Panchayats taken up for solarization to ensure uninterrupted power supply/internet connectivity



**1889**

Posts of Panchayat Accounts Assistant created and filled up through the J&K SSB



**22**

Panchayats awarded at the National level since 2018

**03**

Panchayats awarded this year

**73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution  
Amendment Act  
implemented in 2018**

**PRI institutions across  
all tiers financially  
empowered**

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE





# New AI-Based Tech Can Help Robots To Locate Lost Items

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have developed a new artificial intelligence (AI) based technology to programme robots to help people locate essential objects such as medicines, glasses, phones and other items they have lost.

The researchers want to initially use the technology to help people with dementia, and in future anyone who needs to search for something they have misplaced.

"The long-term impact of this is really exciting," said Ali Ayub, a post-doctoral fellow at the the University of Waterloo in Canada.

"A user can be involved not just with a companion robot but a personalised companion robot that can give them more independence," Ayub said.

Dementia restricts brain function, caus-

ing confusion, memory loss and disability. Many people with the condition repeatedly forget the location of everyday objects, which diminishes their quality of life and places additional burden on caregivers.

The researchers believe that a companion robot with an episodic memory of its own could be a game-changer in such situations. And they succeeded in using AI to create a new kind of artificial memory.

The team used an object-detection algorithm to programme the robot to detect, track and keep a memory log of specific objects in its camera view through stored video.

With the robot capable of distinguishing one object from another, it can record the time and date objects enter or leave its view.

The researchers then developed



a graphical interface to enable users to choose objects they want to be tracked and, after typing the objects' names, search for them on a smartphone app or computer.

Once that happens, the robot can indicate when and where it last observed the specific object, the researchers said.

Tests have shown the system is highly accurate. And while some individuals with dementia might find the technology daunting, Ayub said caregivers could readily use it.

The researchers will now conduct user studies with people without disabilities, then people with dementia.

A paper on the project was presented at the 2023 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction in March in Stockholm, Sweden.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

## Office of the District Social Welfare Officer Pulwama

e-mail: dswopulwama@gmail-Com

Subject: Selection list under "one stop centre" for Women (Sakhi), Pulwama.

### NOTIFICATION

Whereas, the advertisement notice for engagement of Human Resource (on Contractual basis) under "One Stop Centre" Pulwama was issued vide No. 10 DSWOP of 2022 Dated 23-08-2022 with 26-08-2022 as opening date of receipt of application forms and 12-09-2022 as closing date of receipt of application forms; and  
Whereas, Corrigendum to the advertisement No. 10-DSWOP of 2022 Dated 23-08-2022 with regard to 04 advertised posts namely 'Centre Administrator', 'Case Worker', 'Para Legal Personnel/Lawyer' and 'Para- medical Personnel' was issued vide No. DSWO/PUL/Estt./2023/1178-82 Dated 11-01-2023 with opening and closing date of receipt of application forms as 12-01-2023 and 17-01-2023 respectively and then last date was extended upto 22-01-2023 vide Notice No. DSWO/PUL/F.stt./2023/1306-10 dated 16-01-2023; and  
Whereas Selection list for various posts of One Stop Centre Was issued vide order No:25- DSWOP of 2023 Dated 23-02-2023 and was published in three leading dailies viz Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir etc on 25-03-2023; and  
Whereas, below mentioned Candidate was selected for post of Para legal personnel L/ Lawyer

S.No	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Residence	Total Points
1.	Aiman Jan	Farooq Ahmad Mir	Batgund	82.177

Whereas, aforementioned selected Candidate did not join within the period of 21 days from date of publication of Selection List and waiting list was operated and the below mentioned candidate was informed to join vide No.28- DSWOP of 2023 Dated 08-04-2023 within the period of 05 days for the said post from the date of publication of the notification and same was published in local dailies viz. Brighter Kashmir, Aftab, Srinagar mail and Kashmir Today dated 11-04-2023; and

S.No	Parentage	Residence	Total Points	Total Points
1.	Mursaleen Gull	Late. Gh Rasool Shah	Namlabal Pampore	77.351

Whereas, aforesaid candidate did not join within the stipulated time of 05 day period from date of publication of the notification; and  
Whereas, Competent authority i.e District Level Selection Committee (I) LSC has approved to offer the vacancy of Para-legal personnel/Lawyer to following candidate whose

S.No	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Residence	Total Points	Remarks
1.	Kowsarah Khaliq	Abdul Khaliq Bhat	Malangpora	73.30	Selected

The selected candidate shall have to join before the District Social Welfare Officer Pulwama within the period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notification and at the time of joining, the candidates have to produce the following documents in original:

1. Domicile certificate
  2. Academic Qualification Certificate
  3. Date of Birth Certificate
  4. Experience Certificate in relevant field
  5. Medical Fitness Certificate
  6. Character certificate
  7. An Affidavit on the prescribed format duly attested by the First class judicial magistrate to the effect that the candidate shall have no claim / right for permanent absorption under the scheme in the Department and is not working in any Govt./ Semi Govt. Department/ agency.
- The engagement shall be subject to the following conditions:
1. The appointment is purely temporary/Contractual in nature with the monthly consolidated remuneration as mentioned in advertisement Notice/as per Guidelines and initially for the period of one year which may be extendable subject to the approval of the budget from competent authority.
  2. The selection list is provisional and is subject to verification report regarding the authenticity of the documents from the issuing body/organization. In case of any adverse report is received regarding documents produced by the candidate, appointment of the candidate shall be terminated at once.
  3. The engagement being temporary/contractual arrangement is term inable if the performance is not satisfactory as assessed by the District Level Selection Committee headed by the District Development Commissioner.
  4. The Selection list is provisional and is subject to outcome of writ petition, if any pending before the court of law.

District Social Welfare Officer Pulwama  
(Nodal Officer - One Stop Centre Pulwama)

No. DSWO/PUL/Estt/2023/157-67  
DIPK-1881/23 Dated: 19-05-2023



## WHY TO USE CRITICAL CARE AMBULANCE

### Early Intervention

- Critical care ambulances are equipped with advanced medical equipment and trained medical professionals who can provide early intervention to patients during transit. This early intervention can help to stabilize patients and prevent their condition from deteriorating, thereby reducing the risk of mortality and morbidity.

### Timely Transportation

- Critical care ambulances can transport patients to hospitals more quickly and safely than private transport, reducing the time between the onset of the medical emergency and the start of treatment. This can be critical in cases of heart attacks, strokes, or traumatic injuries, where every minute counts.

### Reduced Complications

- Patients who receive critical care ambulance services are less likely to experience complications during transit or upon arrival at the hospital. This can result in shorter hospital stays, reduced healthcare costs, and improved patient outcomes.

### Better Coordination

- Critical care ambulance services often work closely with local hospitals and emergency medical services (EMS) to ensure that patients receive the appropriate care and treatment. This coordination can help to reduce the risk of medical errors and ensure that patients receive the best possible care.

### Improved Accessibility:

Critical care ambulance services can help to improve the accessibility of healthcare services in remote or underserved areas. This can help to reduce health disparities and improve the overall health of the population.



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### IS AVAILABLE IN SRIANGAR AT FOLLOWING PLACES

ABDULLAH NEWS AGENCY	AMIRA KADAL	BUDSHAH NEWS AGENCY	AFTAB MARKET
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GUPKARI NEWS AGENCY	LAL CHOWK	RAFIQ NEWS AGENCY	BATMALOO
KHAN NEWS AGENCY	REGAL CHOWK	MEHRAJ NEWS AGENCY	DALGATE
RASHEED NEWS AGENCY	DALGATE	ASHIQ NEWS AGENCY	GAGRIBAL
IMRAN NEWS AGENCY	KOHNKHAAN	SAMA NEWS AGENCY	SHALIMAR
KOHINOOR NEWS AGENCY	NISHAT	WANI NEWS AGENCY	HYDERPORA
SHEIKH NEWS AGENCY	HYDERPORA	AL NOOR NEWS AGENCY	NOWGAM
FAIRDEAL NEWS AGENCY	AIRPORT	BISMILLAH NEWS AGENCY	BAGH E MEHTAB
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FIRDOUS NEWS AGENCY	PIRBAGH	HARMINDER NEWS AGENCY	GOGJI BAGH

TANTRAY NEWS AGENCY	RAJ BAGH	BASHIR NEW AGENCY	NOWHATTA
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MUSHTAQ KALASH-PURI	KALASHPORA	HABBAKADAL NEWS AGENCY	HAB-BAKADAL
ALTAF NEWS AGENCY	FATEHKADAL	FAROOQ NEW AGENCY	GOJWARA
JEELANI NEW AGENCY	KHAWAJA BAZAR	DAR NEWS AGENCY	QAMAR-WARI
NAZIR NEWS AGENCY	RAINAWARI	CHANDER NEWS AGENCY	BEMINA
KHALID NEWS AGENCY	HAMDANIYA COLONY	JONSON NEWS AGENCY	SEKIDAFAR
BHAT NEWS AGENCY	JAMALLATTA	SHAFAT NEWS AGENCY	HAWAL
BILAL NEWS AGENCY	KAK SARAI	KHALIQ NEWS AGENCY	NOWSHEH-RA
MUZAFFAR ALI NEWS AGENCY	ALAMGIRI BAZAR	BILAL NEWS AGENCY	NOWSHEH-RA
TARIQ NEWS AGENCY	M.K. CHOWK	MUZAMIL NEWS AGENCY	SOURA
GULZAR NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	SUBHAN NEWS AGENCY	SKIMS SOURA
HASAN NEWS AGENCY	SOURA	NISAR NEWS AGENCY	LAL BAZAR
BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	BUCHPORA	BASHIR NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL
AIJAZ NEWS AGENCY	HAZRAT BAL	YASIR NEWS AGENCY	ZAKOORA
FOR ANY QUERY, CALL CIRCULATION DEPTT. : 0194-2502327			

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the RC of my motor cycle bearing Regd No: JK0AR-4367 while travelling from Samboora To Panthachow Srinagar . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Police Station Pantha Chowk Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Arshid Ahmad Dar  
R/o Zaffron Colony Sempora Sringar

NJ

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My DOB has been wrongly written in my school records as 09-05-2009 while my correct DOB is 09-05-2012 as per Aadhaar Card. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal R.P. School Lawaypora Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Shifa Bilal  
D/o Bilal Ah Lone  
R/o HMT Mustafaabad

BMG

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I Bashir Ahmad Bhat S/O Abdul Aziz Bhat R/O 299 Baghimehtab Housing colony Srinagar am the original allottee of plot no 299 in Housing colony Baghimehtab Srinagar and have applied for the free hold rights of said plot in my favor. The following original paper issued by J&K housing board stands misplaced/ not traceable.

1) Possession letter.  
Objection if any May be conveyed to the managing director J&K housing board green belt park Gandhi nagar Jammu within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. However no objection will be entertained after expiry of above said period  
Bashir Ahmad Bhat  
S/O Abdul Aziz Bhat  
R/O 299 Baghimehtab Housing colony Srinagar

NJ



## Skyrocketing Airfares Force Many Tourists To Visit Kashmir By Bus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar:** Skyrocketing airfares have forced many tourists to visit Kashmir by bus this summer.

Due to high demand, a return air ticket from Delhi to Srinagar these days can cost anywhere between Rs 25,000 and Rs 40,000. This makes some holiday destinations abroad such as the UAE, Thailand and Malaysia look cheaper with return air ticket per person costing as low as Rs 18,000.

"We travelled to Kashmir by bus. We could have come by air but tickets were so costly. At such prices, we could go to



Dubai as well," Rajesh, a tourist from Gujarat, told PTI.

Varsha Mankwada also took a

bus to Kashmir in view the expensive airfares.

"The air tickets were so expensive.

To and fro fare was around Rs 25,000. So, we came through travel agency by bus. Comparatively it was reasonable," she said.

Tushar Bhai, hailing from Gujarat, travelled to Srinagar by a flight from Mumbai. "I came here from Mumbai. We planned travel according to our budget but it has cost us dear. From Mumbai to Srinagar, it costs us Rs 16,000 per person," he said.

"We came here to see this beautiful place but we feel it's too expensive to travel to Kashmir. I think we may have got cheaper tickets if we were to travel somewhere else," he added.

Sanjeev, also from Gujarat, had a similar story to tell.

"The ticket cost us Rs 16,000 and they (airline) even don't offer anything complimentary..." he said.

Aashish from Delhi said this fare hike may be due to the peak tourism season.

"We gave a thought to cancel this trip but we are newlyweds. I visited here 2018 in same season as well but that time I didn't feel it was so expensive," he added.

Nikhil said the cost of air tickets should be reduced so that more and more tourists can visit Kashmir.

Some of the tourists said they

had booked cheap fares with Go First as early as January but its flights were cancelled after the private carrier filed for insolvency earlier this month.

Manzoor Ahmad Pakthoon, the owner of Silkroute Holidays, said the rise in airfares was badly affecting tourism.

"As far as airfares are concerned, it's badly hitting the tourism sector. We are committed to the packages we have sold but we cannot commit on behalf of the airlines. Due to rising fares, many tourists are cancelling their bookings," he said.

Manzoor Ahmad **More on P10**

## RBI Withdraws ₹2000 Note from Circulation

People Can Deposit In Banks Till Sept. 30



Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** In a surprise move, the Reserve Bank on Friday announced withdrawal of Rs 2,000 currency notes from circulation but gave public time till September 30 to either deposit such notes in accounts or exchange them at banks.

Unlike the November 2016 shock demonetisation when old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes were invalidated overnight, the Rs 2,000 notes will continue to be a legal tender till September 30.

In a statement, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it has asked banks to stop issuing Rs 2,000 notes with immediate effect.

While the RBI did not specify a limit for depositing the Rs 2,000 currency notes in bank accounts, exchange of a maximum of Rs 20,000 (10 notes of Rs 2,000) for other currency notes will be allowed at a time.

The move comes amid concerns of the highest denomination notes being used to hoard black money. The RBI had stopped printing Rs 2,000 notes in 2018-19 and the notes were rarely in circulation.

The Rs 2,000 denomination bank note was introduced in November 2016, primarily to meet the currency requirement of the economy in an expeditious manner after the withdrawal of legal tender status of all Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 bank notes in circulation at that time.

The RBI said it has also observed that Rs 2,000 denomination note is not commonly used for transactions. Further, the stock of bank notes in other denominations continues to be adequate to meet the currency requirement of the public, it added.

"In view of the above, and in pursuance of the 'Clean Note Policy' of the Reserve Bank of India, it has **More on P10**

Countdown To G20 Meet

## Security Strengthened Around SKICC In Srinagar

Press Trust Of India

**Srinagar:** Security has been strengthened around the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) here ahead of the G-20 working group meeting on tourism next week, officials said on Friday.

Elite NSG and marine commandos have been deployed in addition to police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and other paramilitary forces personnel to ensure the high-profile event passes off smoothly, they said.

On Thursday, the marine commandos or MARCOS carried out a sanitisation exercise in the famous Dal Lake near the venue.

The commandos searched various houseboats and went around the water body in



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

'shikaras'. The exercise was part of the security drill ahead of the G20 event.

Kashmir will host the third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting from May 22 to 24.

A similar drill was carried out by National Security Guard commandos in the Lal Chowk

area of the city here.

The NSG commandos, accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF personnel, carried out an area domination and sanitisation exercise. They checked hotels at Lal Chowk.

The officials said the drills were part of a **More on P10**

## 'Sprucing Up Work Almost Over'

**D**ays ahead of the third G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting to be held in Srinagar, Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh on Friday said "foolproof security arrangements" are there for it, and work on sprucing up the capital city of Jammu and Kashmir for the event is almost over. At a press conference here, he also said that of the member countries, which are part of the G20, three have not registered till date, though the last date to register is May 22. Singh added that about 60 foreign delegates are expected to take part in the event to be held from May 22-24. In response to a **More on P10**

## MD Asks KPDCL Officers To Have Backup Plan

**T**he Managing Director of Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) Baseer-ul-haq Choudhary on Friday directed his officers to have a backup plan in case of any eventuality that may lead to disturbance in power supply, besides maintaining Special Control Rooms round the clock during the G20 meeting scheduled to be held here next week. The MD, KPDCL passed these instructions while chairing a meeting of officers to review the power supply scenario for G20 meeting, an official spokesperson said. At the outset, he said, the chair was appraised regarding the finalization of works related to G20 meeting and power supply scenario for the event and further action plan by the senior officials of KPDCL. **More on P10**

## NTA Defers CUET Exams To May 26 In J&K

LG Steps In, Takes Up Centre Issue With Education Minister

Observer News Service

**Srinagar:** The Common University Entrance Test-Undergraduate (CUET-UG) has been deferred to May 26 in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that candidates do not have to appear in the examination at centres outside the Union territory, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said on Friday.

The second edition of the undergraduate entrance exam is set to begin across the country on May 21.

The announcement by NTA came hours after J&K Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha urged Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan for Common University Entrance Test (CUET) examination

centres for J&K students within the Union Territory.

"Discussed the matter relating to exam centres for the scheduled Common University Entrance Test (CUET) with Hon'ble Union Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Ji and requested him for CUET centres in J&K UT. He has assured the issue will be addressed on priority," the LG office posted on its official Twitter handle.

Pertinently, hundreds of CUET aspirants were in a fix after NTA designated their examination centres outside J&K in contrast to their preferred venues.

"Being sensitive to the needs of candidates and to facilitate the students of Jammu and Kashmir, the NTA is exploring the possibility of creating temporary centres in Kashmir. In view of the above, it has been decided that the CUET (UG) 2023 will now be conducted from 26 May 2023 **More on P10**

## Regularization Of 84 Casual, Contractual Employees HC Issues Warrant Against KU Registrar For Defying Orders

M Ahmad

**Srinagar:** Viewing non-compliance of its orders seriously, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh has issued bailable warrant against Registrar of University of Kashmir to secure his presence before it on June 12 in connection with a petition regarding regularization of 84 casual and contractual employees in the varsity.

Hearing a contempt petition filed by Sabyia Rashid and others, a bench of Justice Sanjeev Kumar observed that on April 28, the Court while giving two weeks further time to the university authorities to file compliance report in terms of order dated 26th August 2022, had made it clear that in case the needful was not done by the Registrar, he shall appear in person on the next date of hearing.

"As a matter of fact, there was a similar order passed by this Court on 31st March, 2023 also. The order dated 28th April, 2023, has been conveyed to the respondents (university authorities) by this Court. Despite the respondents having been served with the order, nobody has appeared on behalf of them," the court said, adding, "In these circumstances, this Court is left with no option but to secure the presence of respondent No. 2-Registrar, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal, Srinagar, through bailable warrant to the tune of Rs. 10,000 to be executed through SHO Police Station Hazratbal Srinagar." The court listed the petition for further consideration on June 12.

On 26th August last year, the court had observed that in terms of decision of the

University Council taken in its meeting held on 05 June 2020, 84 supernumerary positions were designated as Helpers in the pay band of Rs.4440-7440 and the court had ordered that same deem to have been created w.e.f. 01.11.2018;

"The respondents (KU authorities) shall go ahead with the process of regularization of 84 casual/contractual employees which include the petitioners against such posts/positions of Helpers and issue appropriate orders of regularization in favour of those who are found to have completed mandatory period of seven years of uninterrupted service and are otherwise found eligible in terms of University Notification dated 03.09.2014 (supra)," the court had said, adding, "The petitioners shall be entitled **More on P10**

## India Fully Prepared To Protect Sovereignty In Ladakh: PM

Press Trust Of India

**New Delhi:** India is fully prepared and committed to protecting its sovereignty and dignity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday and asserted that the future development of the India-China relationship can only be based on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests.

Responding to questions over the India-China standoff in eastern Ladakh, Modi in an interview with the Japanese publication Nikkei Asia, also emphasised that peace and tranquility on the border are essential for normal bilateral ties among the neighbours.

"India is fully prepared and committed to protect its sovereignty and dignity," the Prime Minister said while stressing his country's respect for sovereignty, the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

He also made it clear that



"the future development of the India-China relationship can only be based on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests" and noted that "normalising" the ties would benefit the wider region and the world.

India-China ties have been fraught since the Galwan clashes in June 2020. Both sides have been periodically holding meetings to defuse the crisis at the border but a lasting solution has eluded them so far. **More on P10**

## S H O R T T A K E S

### Seminary Student Drowns To Death

**A**n 18-year-old boy drowned to death in a river in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir Friday afternoon, officials said. News agency GNS quoting officials reported that one Talib Hussain son of Mohammad Yousaf, of Mahore Reasi, currently enrolled in a Madrasa (religious seminary) drowned while taking bath in a river at Kanthol Koteranka. "Despite all possible efforts, he could not be saved", they said. Confirming the incident, a police official said that the **More on P10**

### 3 Houses Guttled In Doda Fire

**T**hree mud houses belonging to Gujjar families were gutted in a huge fire in the Dhadkai area of Doda district in the early hours of Friday destroying properties worth lakhs, police said. There were no casualties or injuries in the incident and the cause of the fire is unknown. Sub-divisional police officer Gandoh Adil Rishu said three families were rendered homeless by the incident that took place in a village in the Gandoh sub-division. The fire erupted at 1 am **More on P10**

### Electricity Shock Injures Two Labourers

**T**wo labourers were hospitalized with injuries after receiving an electric shock in Lolab of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday evening. The two labourers got electrocuted at Dilbagh area in Divar Lolab when an iron pole they were erecting, touched a high-tension electric wire overhead. They were rushed to SDH Sogam, from where both of them were referred to District Hospital Handwara for preferential treatment. The duo has been identified as **More on P10**

### MeT Predicts Wet Weather From May 24

**W**hether department has forecast widespread rain in plains and "snowfall" over higher reaches from May 24-26. In between, a meteorological department official said that weather will be "mainly dry" and "brief spell" of rain and thunderstorm towards afternoon and evening remains a possibility. "Weather is likely to be mainly clear. However, a brief spell of rain/thunderstorm at scattered places towards late afternoon/evening can't be ruled out," he said regarding forecast for next 24 hours. **More on P10**

### IGNOU Office At Saida Kadal Inaugurated

**I**GNOU Regional Centre Srinagar formally inaugurated its new office building at Saida Kadal Rainwari Srinagar. The formal Inauguration was done by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of IUST, Prof. Shakeel Ahmad Ramshoo. The function was attended by the students, staff, civil society members and media personnel. Prof. Shakeel congratulated the IGNOU RC Srinagar for taking the much needed step of shifting the office from Raj Bagh to Saida Kadal as there was no public transportation **More on P10**

### 3 Burglars Held In Ganderbal: Police

**J**ammu and Kashmir Police on Friday claimed to have solved theft cases by arresting 3 accused persons involved in the commission of crime and recovered stolen property from their possession in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. In the jurisdiction of Police Post Shadipora, complaints from different areas were floating constantly regarding thefts of Angular Iron fitted in the fields, orchids of farmers for demarcation & fencing purposes etc. Accordingly, **More on P10**



## Panic After CUET Aspirants Allotted Test Centres Over 200 Km Away From Home

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Thousands of aspirants of the CUET-UG have become an aggrieved lot as they have been allotted examination centres hundreds of kilometres away from their hometown in spite of opting for a centre close to it.

Social media is also flooded with posts from worried students on the issue.

PTI spoke to several of these students who said that despite flagging the issue to the National Testing Agency (NTA) through email, they have so far received no response. NTA is tasked with conducting the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) - UG, which is scheduled to begin this Sunday.

"I chose Dumka (Jharkhand) and Deoghar (Jharkhand) exam centres as my preference in the CUET application form but I got Bhubaneswar (Khordha) as the centre for my examination on May 26. Several of my friends are facing the same issue," said a 17-year-old Riya, a Delhi University aspirant. This has caused panic in her family, she said.

Students from relatively poor background in Jammu and Kashmir are among those worst affected.

"I am from Kashmir. My examination centre is in Chandigarh, almost 500 km away from here. I live in a remote area. Please explain this genius

process!" said an angry Sheikh Daniyal.

"I am from Shopian, Kashmir, and my allotted city is Bathinda, Punjab, approximately 227 km from here. I did not opt for this when I applied for the exam online," Faisal Rashid, 17, said.

"It is unfair to place this additional burden on students who are already facing so many challenges in their pursuit of higher education. Students deserve equal opportunities to compete in the entrance test and access to education regardless of their financial circumstances," Rashid added.

The J&K Students Association has also written to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to intervene in the matter and ensure that the CUET exam centres are allotted within the Union Territory.

In a statement, the association's national convenor, Nasir Khuehami, said the decision by the NTA to allocate exam centres outside of Jammu and Kashmir has left hundreds of students in a state of despair.

It has had a particularly harsh impact on students from financially struggling households who are already anxious about the highly competitive entrance test, Khuehami said.

It is difficult for them to afford the expenses of travelling outside, he added.

## Assad attends Arab League summit in 'biggest blow' to US policy



Agencies

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was attending the Arab League Summit on Friday for the first time in 12 years in what leading US magazine Newsweek described as a defeat for Washington. Assad arrived in Jeddah on Thursday to attend the summit upon the invitation of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, first such invitation since Syria was engulfed by foreign-sponsored militancy over 10 years ago.

Syria's 12-year suspension from the Arab League was lifted on May 7 after a vote by Arab government delegates in Cairo. The decision was supported by all 13 of the 22 member states that were present at the session.

The growing normalization has not been welcomed by Washington whose policies in the past

decade have been focused on putting an end to the Assad government and isolating Syria.

On Thursday, Newsweek termed Assad's visit to Saudi Arabia as the "biggest blow" that President Joe Biden has received when it comes to his anti-Syria policies.

The publication cited the Syrian Mission to the United Nations urging Washington to end its illegal military presence in Syria and lift sanctions against the country.

The UN foundational document "affirms respect for the sovereignty of states and the non-use or threat of force in international relations, and rejects the crimes of aggression and occupation as the most serious and grave violation of international law, and, on the other hand, restricts the possibility of imposing sanctions to the Security Council," the mission told Newsweek.

## PM Modi Arrives In Japan To Attend G7 Summit, Quad Leaders' Meet

Press Trust of India

**HIROSHIMA:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived here in the Japanese city on Friday to attend the annual summit of the G7 grouping and the third in-person Quad leaders' meeting during which he will exchange views with world leaders on global challenges and discuss ways to collectively address them.

Modi arrived here on the first leg of his three-nation trip to Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia and is expected to take part in over 40 engagements.

He will interact with over two dozen world leaders in summits as well as in bilateral meetings, officials said.

"I look forward to exchanging views with the G7 countries and other invited partners on challenges that the world faces and the need to collectively address them. I would also be holding bilateral meetings with some of the leaders attending the Hiroshima G7 Summit," Modi said in his departure statement.

"My presence in this G7 summit is particularly meaningful as India holds the G20 presidency this year. I look forward to exchanging views with the G7 countries and other invited partners on challenges that the world fac-



es and the need to collectively address them," he said.

The prime minister was received by senior Japanese and Indian officials at the airport.

PM Modi is visiting Hiroshima from May 19 to 21 primarily for the annual summit of the G7 advanced economies in which he is expected to speak on challenges facing the globe, including food, fertiliser and energy security.

PM Modi is expected to hold bilateral meetings with some of the world leaders attending the Hiroshima G7 Summit.

The G-7 bloc comprises Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada and Italy, as well as the European Union.

From Japan, he will travel to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea where he will host the third summit of the Forum for

India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) on May 22 jointly with Prime Minister James Marape.

In the third and final leg of the trip, Modi will visit Australia from May 22 to 24.

The Quad summit was originally scheduled to be held in Sydney but it will now take place in Hiroshima as US President Joe Biden postponed his visit to Australia to focus on crucial debt-ceiling talks in Washington.

The Quad leaders from the US, India, Australia and Japan will discuss how they can deepen their cooperation on critical and emerging technologies, high-quality infrastructure, global health, climate change, maritime domain awareness, and other issues that matter to the people of the Indo-Pacific, according to the White House.

## "Want Normal Relations But..." PM Modi on India-Pakistan Ties

Agencies

**TOKYO:** India wants "normal and neighbourly relations" with Pakistan but it is incumbent on Islamabad to create a conducive environment free from terrorism and to take necessary steps, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in an interview with Nikkei Asia.

PM Modi said India wants normal bilateral ties with Pakistan, adding that "it is incumbent upon them to create a conducive environment free from terrorism and hostilities. The onus is on Pakistan to take necessary steps in this regard".

India has repeatedly raised its concern over Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism and has asserted that terror and talks cannot go together.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto had attended the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Goa earlier this month but there were no bilateral talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

PM Modi's interview to Nikkei Asia, which is part of Nikkei, one of Asia's largest independent business media groups, has come ahead of G7 Summit in Japan, happening at a time of increasing global challenges.

During the interview, the Prime Minister also answered queries related to ties with China and spoke about India's efforts to amplify the voices and concerns of the Global South.

"India is fully prepared and committed to protect its sovereignty and dignity," PM Modi said.

A standoff erupted with China in Eastern Ladakh in the summer of 2020 following actions of the Chinese army and while talks have led to disengagement from some areas, some friction points remain.

"Peace and tranquillity in the border areas are essential for normal bilateral ties with China. The future development of India-China relationship can only be based

on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests," PM Modi said, noting that "normalizing" the ties would benefit the wider region and the world.

PM Modi on Friday reached Hiroshima in Japan to attend the G7 Summit. India has been invited as a guest country for the Summit. India has been participating in the G7 Summit since 2003.

Asked whether India can play a mediator role in Russia-Ukraine conflict, PM Modi said his country's position on the Ukraine conflict "is clear and unwavering."

"India stands on the side of peace and will remain firmly there. We are committed to supporting those who face challenges in meeting their basic needs, especially in the face of rising costs of food, fuel, and fertilizers. We maintain communication with both Russia and Ukraine," PM Modi said, adding that "cooperation and collaboration should define our times, not conflict".



## Hundreds Of Millions Of Life Years Lost To Pandemic: WHO

Agencies

**GENEVA:** Nearly 337 million life years were lost in the two first years of the Covid-19 pandemic, as millions of people died prematurely, the World Health Organization said on Friday.

The UN health agency's annual world statistics report also showed a swelling threat from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The most dramatic finding, based on data up to 2022, was the estimate of how many years of life Covid had taken, WHO said.

The pandemic has wreaked global devastation and officially killed nearly seven million people, with the true figure believed to be closer to 20 million.

The WHO report lays bare how the virus itself and the broader impact of the crisis abruptly cut short the lives of millions of people.

While the WHO officially registered 5.4 million Covid

deaths in 2020 and 2021, its excess mortality data shows around 14.9 million people actually likely died due to the crisis over that period.

Even more striking, perhaps, it said the statistics show that during those two years alone, Covid resulted in the loss globally of 336.8 million years that otherwise would have been lived.

"It's like losing 22 years of life for every excess death," Samira Asma, WHO's assistant chief for data and analytics, told reporters ahead of the launch.

Off-track  
"Significant inequities underpin the distribution of Covid-19 cases and deaths, as well as access to vaccinations," the report said.

The WHO warned that the pandemic had helped throw off-track many health-related indicators that had been improving for years.

During the first two decades of the century, the world saw significant improvements in maternal and child health, with deaths falling by one-third and one-half respectively.

## Imran Khan Warns Of "Imminent Disaster", "East Pakistan-Like Situation"

Press Trust of India

**LAHORE:** Pakistan is heading towards an "imminent disaster" and it may face disintegration, former Prime Minister Imran Khan has warned as he accused the ruling coalition of hatching a conspiracy to pit the army against his party.

In a video-link address from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore on Wednesday, the 70-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief said the only solution to end political instability was to hold elections.

"The PDM leaders and Nawaz Sharif, who is missing in London, are least concerned whether the country's constitution is desecrated, state institutions are destroyed or even Pakistan Army earns a bad name. They are looking for their vested interests of saving the looted wealth alone," he said.

"I am seeing a frightening dream that the country is heading towards an imminent disaster. I appeal to the powers that be to let the elections take place and save the country," Imran Khan said as police surrounded his home.

Speaking about the unrest that followed his arrest from the Islamabad High Court



premises on May 9, Imran Khan asserted that it was a "pure conspiracy" hatched and executed allegedly on behalf of the ruling coalition and the Punjab caretaker government.

"This is high time that the powers that be should sensibly rethink otherwise the country will face an East Pakistan-like situation," he was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper.

Defending his criticism of the country's army, Imran Khan said: "When I reprimand the army, it is like I am criticising my kids."

"I have repeatedly stated that I do not interfere in state institutions' internal matters. I did not interfere when I had confirmed reports that the former army chief was conspiring against me," he said, claiming some politicians were telling the current army chief that Imran Khan would de-notify him if voted to power.

### NEWS MAKERS

## 100 Km Of Ghaziabad-Aligarh Expressway Constructed In Record 100 Hours



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Ghaziabad-Aligarh Expressway has made history by laying of bituminous concrete over a distance of 100 lane kilometers in an unprecedented time of 100 hours, an official statement said today.

The ministry of road transport and highways in a statement said this accomplishment highlights the dedication and ingenuity of India's road infrastructure industry.

Addressing the celebration ceremony virtually, road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari said the Ghaziabad-Aligarh section of NH34, spanning 118 kilometers, plays a vital role as a transportation

link between the densely populated regions of Ghaziabad and Aligarh.

He said this project traverses various towns and cities in Uttar Pradesh, including Dadri, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Sikandrabad, Bulandshahr, and Kurja.

It serves as a critical trade route, facilitating the movement of goods and contributing to regional economic development by connecting industrial areas, agricultural regions, and educational institutions, he added.

The minister said this innovative green technology involves utilizing 90 per cent of the milled material, which amounts to nearly 20 lakh square meters of road surface.

## Iran Links Poet Firdousi To Islamic Identity

Agencies

President Ebrahim Raeisi says the great "open-hearted and free-thinking" Iranian poet Abul-Qasem Ferdowsi revived the Persian language and the history of Iran, noting that his commemoration will help promote the Iranian-Islamic identity.

Raeisi made the remarks in a message on Monday on the commemoration day of the prominent Iranian poet and the preservation of the Persian language.

"Undoubtedly, commemorating this prominent poet and introducing his precious personality and works to the society, especially the young generation, will greatly help promote the Iranian and Islamic identity and self-confidence, develop and deepen common language and national empathy as well as regional solidarity," he said.

He added that the greatness of Ferdowsi is in his heroic perseverance in creating the national epic of the Islamic Iran.

The president described Iran as a "cultural and spiritual truth in the heart of the ancient continent of Asia", which connects the East to the West.

The administration supports researchers and professors in the direction of institutionalizing the thoughts of great figures like Hakim Ferdowsi in order to promote the rich Iranian culture, he added.

Ferdowsi was born in 940 CE in a small village near Tous in Iran's eastern Khorasan Razavi Province.



He is best known for his magnum opus, Shahnameh (Book of the Kings), which is a classic in epic Persian poetry and recounts Iran's mythical and historical past.

The book, which had a great influence on the nation's cultural heritage, chronicles the legendary history of the pre-Islamic kings of Iran from Keyumars to Yazdegerd III.

Ferdowsi spent over three decades writing the book in Persian at a time when Arabic was the main scientific and literary language of Iran.

Shahnameh is composed of 55,000 couplets and has been translated into several languages.

Every year, Iran pays tribute to its great poet on National Ferdowsi Day marked on May 15.

## How Sunak's Wife Lost 200 Million Pounds This Year

**LONDON:** The wealth of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty has plunged over the last twelve months, but at 529 million pounds (\$668 million) he is still immune from the cost of living crisis which dominates the UK's political agenda.

The pair are now ranked the 275th according to the Sunday Times Rich List, down from 222nd position last year due to the fall in value of their stake in Infosys, the India I.T. giant founded by Murty's father.

As Prime Minister, Sunak is entitled to an annual salary of about 165,000 pounds. When he became PM last October, his income rose from the general lawmaker rate, but not nearly enough to cushion the drop in his wealth from the estimated 730 million pounds last year to the 529 million pounds in 2023.

His fortune has opened him up to regular attacks from opposition politicians who say his is out of touch with ordinary people at a time when many Britons are getting poorer.

Inflation stands at over 10% and wages are not rising as fast, squeezing household in-



comes, and causing a "cost of living crisis" which dominates headlines. Sunak has pledged to halve inflation and grow the economy to address the issue.

Sunak is the richest ever occupant of No.10 Downing Street, but has said people should not hold his wealth against him.

"I think in our country, we judge people not by their bank account, we judge them by their character and their actions. And yes, I'm really fortunate to be in the situation I'm in now, but I wasn't born like this," he said last year.

Last year, Sunak's wife faced criticism and public anger in April over her "non-domiciled" tax status which meant she did not pay tax in Britain on her earnings abroad. She subsequently gave up the status and said she would pay British tax on her global income.



(Kashmir Observer, 20 May, 2005)



# Do We Remember Our Literary Ancestors?

Amir Suhail Wani

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What’s the scope of the word “remember”? Are there any limits to it? One may start from the broadest possible connotation of this word: to understand, memorise and know their works and their life. However, isn’t this too strict and too demanding of an approach?

What’s the scope of the word “remember”? Are there any limits to it? One may start from the broadest possible connotation of this word: to understand, memorise and know their works and their life. However, isn’t this too strict and too demanding of an approach?

For convenience and for being realistic, I finally limited the scope of the term “remembering” to just knowing the names of five prominent Kashmiri poets/writers; to my great surprise, most of the people I spoke to couldn’t even name five Kashmiri poets. Can you imagine the height of our ignorance towards our language and literature? This surprise is only augmented by the fact that our younger generation and a good portion of senior citizens are well acquainted with the western writers, urdu poets and poets from other languages in their translations.

There is no harm in reading the writers from other languages and it is in fact a welcome and positive development. However, to ignore or to forget poetic giants and towers of literary light back home is not only disappointing but reflects upon our deformed literary sensitivities.

Why is it important to remember our poets and literary stalwarts?

English may have many takers, and it certainly has, but for regional languages like Kashmiri. If natives don’t take pains and measures to preserve it, to celebrate its literary achievements and to remember those who have contributed to this language and its literature by dedicating their lives, nobody is going to take them forward and they will die a death of their own.

This question of remembering stalwarts has in fact lately boomeranged in the wake of scientific inclination of the present era and the technological dependency thereof. Pursuits like literature and fine arts seem to be the remnants of bygone eras and people don’t think there’s any “utility” in indulging, reviving and resurrecting the literary treasures of the past. To this class of thinkers, let it be briefly reminded that man is not merely a corporeal existence celebrating the captivity of the body. He has intellectual, social and spiritual faculties, whose celebration has equal claim in the affairs of human life, if life in its entirety is to be lived and felt. The wisdom traditions of this repository of literature is also of perennial importance in shaping human civilization and has a definitive role to play in making this world a better place to live.

While we lament the widespread culture of forgetfulness unleashed towards the literary heritage of Kashmir and the outstanding writers of Kashmiri language, we are implicitly bringing home the fact that Kashmiri language and literature deserves attention, remembrance and resurrection not only because it is our mother language and we are love blinded in its appreciation. On the contrary, our language has intrinsic merit and inherent legacy to it, which not only makes its literary heritage rich and complex, but also brings it a place of pride in the league of languages.

Western linguists and philologists like R.C.Temple, G. Greirson, M. A. Stein, Knowles and others who explored the subtleties of Kashmiri language were enchanted by its splendour and its nuanced literary tradition. So we are not mistaken in our claim that Kashmiri language and literature qualifies for revival and resurrection as it is a treasure trove of poetry, literary theories, aesthetics and classy literature in different genres. But shall not the state of affairs make one shriek at the state of apathy we have perpetuated towards our heritage.

Poetess of the stature of Lal Ded being not appreciated and evaluated the way she deserves is but a lingering mark of cultural insensitivity we are witness and a party to. While we cher-



ish reading Sa’adi, his anecdotes and moral precepts, the precise and incisive moral and religious insights of Sheikh Noor Uddin Wali, garbed in his pithy poetic aphorisms, fail to move us, and despite all pomp and show staged around these icons of Kashmir, the seriousness is fleeing the discourse and at times the buzz captures nothing more than their name. Had the wisdom poetry of Lad Ded and Sheikh Noor Uddin, for example, been properly evaluated for and presented to the younger generation, it is no wonder that they would have been as living and determining elements of our literary, aesthetic and spiritual landscape as Rumi, Iqbal or Ghalib are. The point in question here, it be reminded, is not about these two poets and nor is there anything wrong in reading Iqbal, Rumi or others. These two poets are just the exemplars of the ignorance and forgetfulness we have been talking about and invoking other poets, from other physical and linguistic geographies is only to bring our step-motherly attitude towards our language to the fore.

Till the last century, the Kashmiri poetic horizon was overcast with what is academically known as Sufi/Mystical/Bhakti poetry and in the garden of this tradition have sprouted poets like Mehmood Ghami, Shamas Fqeer, Wahab Khar, Samad Mir, Ahad Zargar and others. Their poetry is witness to the flexure, tenability and an inherent predisposition of Kashmiri language to accommodate and express sense and sensibility of hundred thousand shades and to hold in its bosom, the social, spiritual, religious and metaphysical themes with equal ease and elegance. But that shall not make one presume that Kashmiri language is suitable and apt for spiritual/mystical poetry only or that it is predominantly mystical. The scenario has changed during the past century and the corpus of literature produced in Kashmir by Mehjoor, Rasul Mir, Amin Kamil, Rehman Rahi, Farooq Nazki, Shahnaz Rashid, Satish Vimal and other literary stalwarts has brought the themes, other than mystical into the corpus of Kashmiri literature. This exercise of thematic flex has brought with it the depiction of socio-political realities, naturalism, romanticism, cultural crusading and more down to earth, mundane, humanistic and real life sensitivities into the fold of Kashmiri literary tradition. But the question may again be asked: are people, the general masses who have any taste for reading and literature, in contact with the contemporary literary landscape and do they benefit or do they cherish the poetic creations of fellow Kashmiris? This is a question that can’t be settled on the basis of statistics drawn from surveys and in fact no such surveys and statistics are available. But the general trend, as referred to above, points to the ebbing of interest and engagement with the native language and the literary tradition thereof.

Local authors have this recurrent complaint that books written in Kashmiri do not sell well and people do not show active interest in purchasing/buying these books - the kind of vigour they show towards English or Urdu literary works. At a time, when people have distanced themselves from Kashmiri script – both reading and writing, we have little hope for the books in vernacular to pick up. With this abandonment of script comes the phenomenon of the decay and the ultimate decay of language itself, something which doesn’t concern us here, but which is an inevitable consequence of the remoteness from our linguistic roots.

The need and necessity for reviving the Kashmiri language and literature and the pathetic state of affairs to this end has been outlined above. Can we do anything to this end? Yes, a lot and like any other phenomenon of transformation, the charity has to begin at home. Let us first wake up to the importance of the preservation and perpetuity of our language and literature and having made a transit through this awakening, let us start with exploration of prominent and more accessible Kashmiri poets. A number of books/handbooks on Kashmiri language and literature have been scrupulously compiled and they are a storehouse not of mere information or data, but wisdom and literary jewels of superior quality.

Cultural academy – which has lately confined itself to closed door seminars has to rethink its working strategy and to produce collections/books which are in accordance with the needs of present day readers, books which take contemporaneity into account without sacrificing the originality and the authenticity of work/author under discussion. If it fails to ensure proliferation of literary sensitivities among masses, to stimulate their interest and to cater to their demands in terms of books or otherwise, it must realise that it is failing to its purpose and not attending to the call that it is obliged to respond to by the very fact of its existence.

It must be also mentioned in passing that institutions and organisations can do fine tuning and improve a thing or two, but the superstructure and the grander edifice has to come organically, growing out of people’s passion and priority and if Kashmiri language, its literary heritage and the attendant phenomenon thereto are not our priority, let we be reminded that world is under no obligation to remember people who don’t remember their own language – the language that forms the golden temple of our cultural ethos and shared intellectual, socio-spiritual and spatio-temporal heritage.

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

Years ago, travelling from Imphal to the hills of Senapati in Manipur, I had the first taste of Kuki hospitality. We were visiting Haokholet Kipgen’s flower farm, a picturesque expanse of fields of gladioli blossoms and avocado trees. Ravenous after the two-hour drive through an eerily deserted highway, my Meitei companions and I chatted with our amiable host and tinkered with his air gun while lunch, comprising rice and chicken curry, was served.

Kipgen is a legislator today and one of the 10 Kuki signatories to a demand for a separate administrative unit in the wake of the violence that has rocked Manipur this month. All the 10 members of the legislative assembly from Kuki communities in Manipur, including two ministers, said the state had “miserably failed to protect” its Chin-Kuki-Zomi tribals. Living amid the Meiteis after this “is as good as death for our people,” the statement added.

Among these signatories are two ministers from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, Letpao Haokip and Nemcha Kipgen, as well as their party legislator, Vungzagin Valte, who was seriously injured when his vehicle was targeted in Imphal on May 4. The other Kuki representatives who have voiced the demand, besides Haokholet Kipgen, are

L.M. Khaute, Ngursanglur Sanate, Letzamang Haokip and Paoliennial Haokip from the BJP and Kimneo Haokip Hangshing and Chinlunthang Haokip from the Kuki People’s Alliance, which extended its support to the BJP. The chief minister, N. Biren Singh, who met the Union home minister, Amit Shah, in Delhi on Sunday and was assured that the state’s territorial integrity would be preserved, on Monday rejected the demand of the Kuki delegation. The delegates met Shah on Monday.

The latest spate of violence in Manipur was triggered by its high court asking the state government to decide whether the valley-based Meiteis, who comprise 53% of the population, should be accorded scheduled tribe status. The largely Christian Naga and Kuki tribes, who reside in the 10 hill districts that surround Imphal valley, reacted because they feel that the ST facilities they enjoy will

be eroded as a consequence. And although the Supreme Court has said that no high court can grant ST status, emotions are now singed to the point of retributive, not restorative justice.

Over the past fortnight, many lives have been lost in Manipur and the rift’s aftershocks have echoed elsewhere, particularly in Delhi and Shillong, where a large number of Meitei and Kuki students are pursuing their education. Heartwarming stories about the bonding between the Kukis and Meiteis in Calcutta or those of members of the Kuki community saving Meitei lives and vice-versa have surfaced.

But these few stellar selfless acts are not going to resolve a festering divide. It is imperative that there is dialogue. And talks are what the saner voices on either side have been pleading for. As in Track II diplomacy, non-State actors must be-

come stakeholders, because the overriding feeling is that, by political design, the Imphal valley has been developing while the hills wallow in neglect, despite efforts to improve the lives of the indigenous population.

Now with the Kuki political leaders, including those in the ruling party, looking at Union territory or statehood options, the government has to initiate a healing process. The Centre’s support in restoring a semblance of normalcy, so that the thousands who have fled or were evacuated can return home, is urgently required.

Manipur’s much-sought-after Shirui Lily Festival, scheduled to be held from May 17 to 20, had to be postponed indefinitely. The developments of the past fortnight may even keep away those who had made Manipur their home. The need of the hour is to use every mechanism to minimise ethnic tension.

Bridging the trust chasm must be accorded priority, a tall task ahead of a tightrope-walking political dispensation.

*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 Telegraph India*

## Heal The Rift

Sudipta Bhattacharjee



# Prioritising The Road Ahead For The Indian Industry

Current G-20 Sherpa and former head of the Niti Aayog, Amitabh Kant in his book, Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise, offers an insider's peep

Asad Mirza

“However, the book has also gave an opportunity to the top business leaders and policy makers to air their views about the future course to be taken by the Indian government and the businesses to lead this economic growth trajectory

75 years after independence, becoming the fifth largest economy in the world and poised to be the third largest economy by 2030, India has indeed surpassed many significant milestones. But the moot question here is what has fuelled India's growth, the services or the manufacturing sector, and what should be its future plan of action.

The economic reforms ushered-in by the Narasimha Rao government in 1990s, and the subsequent unshackling of chains bounding the private sector ill then, proved to be a boon for the Indian businessmen. But more or less these economic reforms ushered in the groundwork for future transformation of the Indian businesses, which were able to lead the growth curve with the services sector.

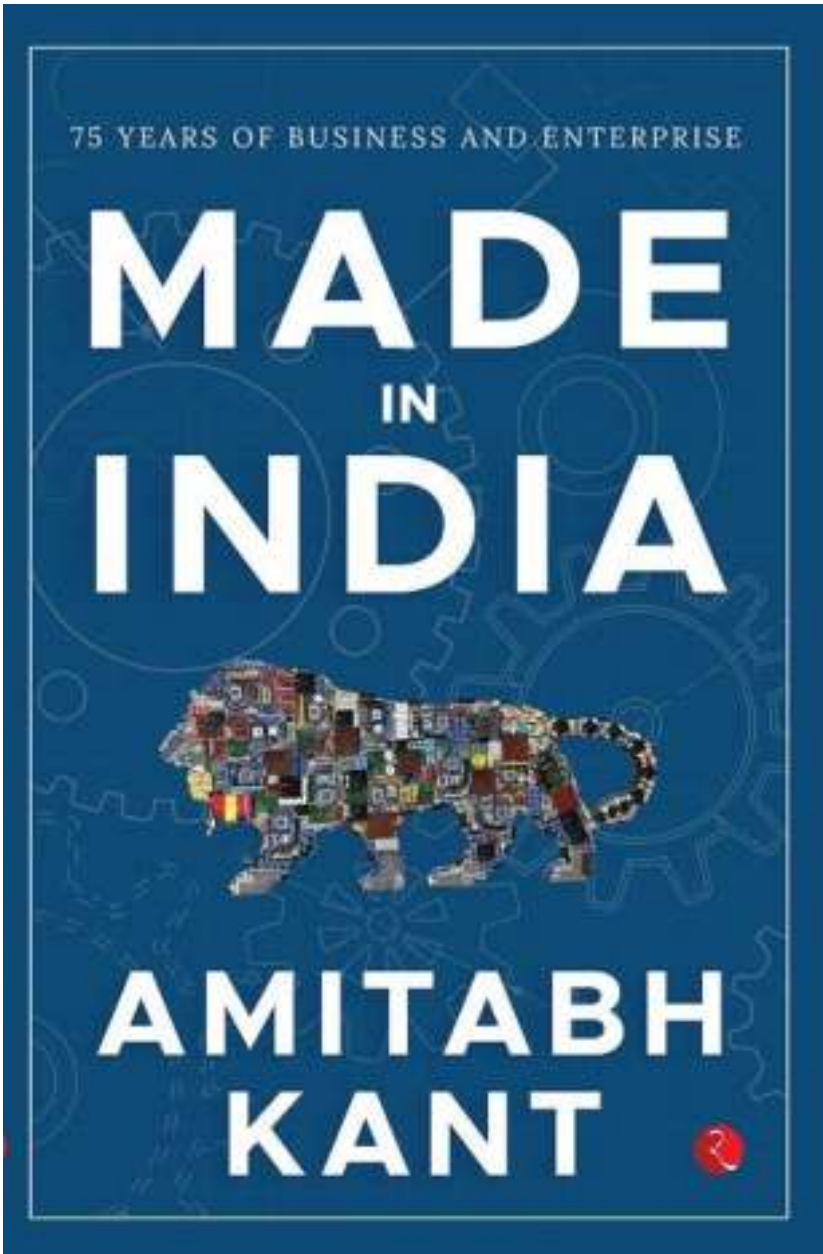
Current G-20 Sherpa and former head of the Niti Aayog, Amitabh Kant in his book, Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise, offers an insider's peep into the second-generation reforms which began in 2014 and delves deep into the policies and people behind the new age start-ups and their novel businesses versions that are unleashing the entrepreneurial zeal among the Indian youth.

Kant's ringside view as a top policy maker have added immensely to the book, besides highlighting his out of the box campaigns such as Make In India, Start-up India, God's Own Country, and policy changes like Performance-Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI), Aspirational Districts, e-Mobility, Green Hydrogen, and Ease of Doing Business reforms.

However, the book has also gave an opportunity to the top business leaders and policy makers to air their views about the future course to be taken by the Indian government and the businesses to lead this economic growth trajectory.

Speaking at the book release function of the book, EAM S Jaishankar made a strong pitch for the country to refocus its economic growth strategy on manufacturing. While Kant emphasised that the growth of MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in India is also desirable but is contingent upon having very large companies.

On the other hand, N Chandrabosekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons expounded that there are three transitions coupled with moving geopolitical situations. From the transition's point of view, the first is digital and AI, second one is energy and third one is supply chain. In all the three transitions, India is probably the best placed country in the world, to maximise on the opportunities offered and further propelling



the Indian growth story.

Uday Kotak highlighted the resilience and stability of the Indian banking system and financial systems in the world today. He felt that the Indian banking industry has got something right in comparison to the US and European banks. He said we have got our act together, we have created a stable financial system, well capitalised and it's a goldilocks time - lowest non-performing assets, clean credit, reasonable growth in the book, and none of these risk issues like we are seeing in the developed nations. Thus assuring the stability and the solidity of the Indian financial sector, in the future too.

Taking the debate further on services sector v/s manufacturing sector,

Jaishankar opined that this focus on services was actually an elegant excuse for being incompetent. He further emphasised that India will never be a great country if it is not a great manufacturer. He also battled for the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) scheme, which provides incentives for domestic manufacturers.

In his opening remarks, Kant, distinguished India's economic growth challenge from that of other countries like China and South Korea. He stressed on the need for India to foray into sunrise sectors of growth like mobile manufacturing and electric mobility, industrialising further without carbonising.

While pushing for a refocus on manufacturing, Jaishankar remarked correctly that India needs to

stop looking for a China fix. Indian growth cannot be built on the pattern of Chinese efficiency and planned inputs and outputs.

India surely lost on the count of efficiency, when during the Covid period, with lockdowns affecting Chinese production capabilities and the order books getting bulky, Chinese companies preferred to spread base in countries like Vietnam instead of India.

Jaishankar also touched on the gap of comprehensive national power between India and China, which he described as a big concern in the diplomatic arena. Comprehensive national power is a common parlance in foreign policy to refer to a totality of a country's economic, military and political power.

The foreign minister went as far as to say that improvements in Ease of Doing Business (EDB) have helped grow India's "global stature", and proves that India is finally moving towards "a politics of delivery".

Without directly referring to the Ukraine war, the Indian foreign minister remarked that the current "global polarisation" is an opportunity for India.

"Global polarisation has made diplomacy far more complex but it is also a window of opportunity for many nations. Smart business moves can really open up many possibilities," he said.

Unambiguously, all the participants were unanimous in highlighting and appreciating India's robust economic growth since 2014, increase in its global stature besides expanding its wings in those sectors which were hitherto considered unapproachable or unfeasible for the Indian businesses to manage, but Indian businessmen have proved the critics and naysayers wrong, majorly due to the support and guidance provided by the government.

As most of the panellists at the book launch agreed, we indeed have to take a clarion call to move our industries to the manufacturing paradigm but additionally we also have to focus more on building-up the infrastructure ecosystem, which could sustain these large scale manufacturing activities, which in turn will give a boost to the MSMEs, only then we could be safe and proud in proclaiming that India's development story after 2014 has been a successful one, based on its performance levels.

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

## The Benefits Of Giving Yourself A Break

It can be helpful in overcoming your own creative blocks.

Barton Goldsmith

Like many creative people, I sometimes get bored with my "art" and have to take a break. Stepping back can be a great way to unblock your creativity. I just did this and came back much stronger.

This process has also proved helpful to my writer and musician clients. Hopefully, it will be helpful to you in overcoming your own creative blocks. Doing this can work for almost anything you want to get better at.

I started my writing career as a musician, a singer-songwriter, wanting to be the next Cat Stevens or James Taylor. Needless to say, that didn't work out, but I still love music and play a lot and create in my spare time.

Recently, my music was not flowing, and I felt like I wasn't growing creatively. I was getting frustrated, and I realised I should do something different. I can't say that I knew what would happen next, but I needed a

change. The truth is that getting stuck creatively is not a permanent roadblock; it's just a bridge that you have to figure out how to cross.

Anyway, I wasn't growing, and I got bored, then angry, and I decided to quit and put my studio away. I took down all of my equipment, packed away everything, then closed the closet door, so I wouldn't see it. I also barely listened to music during this period, but strangely there was almost always a song in my head.

I even stopped looking at guitars online. I honestly thought that this part of my life might be over. I've been working so much through the pandemic that I thought I might not ever have the time I needed to get better at my music — but I guess I never fully bought into that idea.

Last week was one of the busiest weeks I have had in years. There is so much emotional pain right now; people are telling me that no therapists will take on new clients and are beginning to be seen. Potential clients have actually burst into tears just because

“This process has also proved helpful to my writer and musician clients. Hopefully, it will be helpful to you in overcoming your own creative blocks. Doing this can work for almost anything you want to get better at.

I was willing to listen to them on the phone. We are all going through stuff, and if you don't think that's the case, you are in denial or defensive for the wrong reasons. I got mad at my music for all the wrong reasons, but then something healing happened.

I took out the guitars over the weekend, and I don't know why. I put them in stands around me and just sat with them. At first, it was a bit of a stare-down. I took photographs and so did my wife, more as a means of reintroduction than for posterity. I rearranged my guitars several times, and then I started playing one, then another, and then I began to sing. I went through several pieces that I didn't think I would remember, and the real kicker is that I was markedly better than when I had stopped.

And that, my friends, is the great tool (or trick) to allow your creativity to return to you. Just put whatever you're doing aside for a

month, and see what happens. I believe you will come back on your own, and when you do, it will be better than it was before you stopped or got blocked.

We all have to put our energy somewhere, so if you need to take a break, try doing something different. For example, if you're a writer, maybe take up a musical instrument. If you're an actor, try writing. You get the idea. I poured myself and my creativity into my work, and that got better too, come to think of it.

I know I'm not the first to discover this, but not enough people do it. When you get blocked, learn to step away, not into nothingness but into another good avenue for your energy. When you return to your art or your work, chances are you will be better at it.

*Khaleej Times*



## Doda Makes CCTV Cams In Metadors, School Buses Mandatory

Observer News Service

**DODA:** To make the roads in the district safe and pleasant for the commuters, the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) on Friday took a host of decisions here at its 3rd meeting of the current year, chaired by Deputy Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan (Chairman DRSC).

The DRSC assessed the availability, requirement, and augmentation of existing infrastructure and other logistics for safe plying of vehicles on the roads in the district.

Taking in account certain complaints and apprehension raised in the DRSC meeting, Chairman (DC) ordered the installation of CCTV cameras in all the School buses, and Matadors registered with ARTO Doda.

The executing agencies were directed to install glow signage, speed limit boards and boards with Emergency Response Team contact numbers on all the roads. The DRSC also instructed the concerned authorities to raise memorials at accident sites to alert the commuters. The agencies were also asked to remove the encroachments from all the roads.

On decision of installation of CCTV cameras at the identified places by NHIDCL and other agencies, the meeting was informed that the matter has

been taken up with higher authorities for the grant of funds and necessary approval.

On the previous instructions of holding joint naka at 9th KM near Assar, it was apprised that the same is held frequently. The Chairman asked the officers to conduct checking at Assar Naka regularly to prevent unfit and unregistered vehicles from entering the district unnoticed. The agencies were also in-



structed to install crash barriers on identified spots where accidents have happened or are likely to happen, at the first instance and to create the parking bays at appropriate distances.

The DRSC also discussed the implementation of other decisions and availability and disbursement of the Road Safety funds, IRAD training, awareness and implementation activities, and other issues.

The meeting was attended by SSP, Abdul Qayoom; SE PWD, RP Singh; ARTO, Rajesh Gupta; CMO, DIO, Ex Ens of PWD and PMGSY, DTI traffic, and other members of the DRSC.

## Police Seize Timber Worth Lakhs In Bhaderwah

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Timber scants extracted from green cedar trees worth lakhs of rupees, along with dozens of fallen cedar trees and logs, were seized from the Chirala range of Jammu and Kashmir's Bhaderwah forest division, police said on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, a series of raids were conducted last week in the areas of Lohar Thava, Sundar Goth, Draman Gad, and Kutta, said Doda SSP Abdul Qayoom.

Several teams have been formed in all the police stations of Doda district to survey the forest area in their respective jurisdiction and submit the damage report, the SSP said.

Mechanical cutters are being

used in the Chirala area for illegal felling and extraction of timber on a commercial scale despite an order by Doda District Magistrate prohibiting their use, the SSP said, adding that strict action will be taken against violators under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and Indian Penal Code.

Environmentalists and social workers in Chirala have accused the forest officials of being involved in facilitation of timber smuggling, unabated green felling, and forest encroachment on an alarming scale.

"Such massive damage is not possible without the involvement of forest officials. There should be a high-level inquiry against the erring officials," said Kamran Khan, an environmentalist and journalist.

## School Edu Dept Issues Guidelines For Safety, Security, Economic Empowerment Of Women, Girl Students

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The School Education Department have issued guidelines to ensure safety, security and economic empowerment of women and girl students.

In this regard, the department has issued an circular directing to adopt actionable points from Planning Development and Monitoring Department on Women Empowerment and Health and Nutrition.

According to a local news agency KNO, Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) has said that the second National Conference of Chief Secretar-

ies was organized in New Delhi in January 2023 in which the Ministry of Women and Child Development emphasized on the two sub-themes namely 'Creating Enabling ecosystem for Safety and Empowerment of Women' and "Economic Empowerment" under broad pillar "Empowering Women".

"Certain points emerged that are crucial for ensuring safety, security and economic empowerment of women and girls in the country and in realising the vision of the Prime Minister (PM) of turning around the country as a developed nation during 'Amrit kaal'," it reads.

## Smriti Irani In Udhampur As Part Of Centre's Public Outreach Program Launches Awareness Campaign On Single Use Plastics In PDA Jurisdiction

Observer News Service

**UDHAMPUR:** Union Minister for Women, Child Development and Minority Affairs, Smriti Irani on Friday launched an awareness campaign on Single Use Plastics (SUP) at Patnitop after she reached Udhampur for her two day visit to the district as part of Public Outreach Programme of Modi government.

Pertinently, Patnitop Development Authority has embarked upon a comprehensive plan towards imposing complete ban on Single Use Plastics all across its jurisdiction in accordance with the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021 and Patnitop Development Authority Solid Waste Management Bye-Laws, 2021, to curb plastic pollution and protect the fragile ecosystem for a sustainable future.

The objective of the awareness



campaign was to sensitize the people about the risks associated with SUP, assess the public opinion, promote usage of alternatives.

Appreciating the eco-friendly initiative of PDA while launching the awareness campaign from the lush green meadows of Patnitop, Smriti Irani urged upon the stakeholders and tourists for

their support and cooperation in preserving the natural beauty and ecological balance of Patnitop Tourism Circuit.

"Plastics have adverse effects on all living beings and their ecosystems. Single Use Plastics particularly, have high littering potential and best way is to reduce their usage and gradually shun them. Be-

havioral change might seem difficult, but it is not impossible. Here, in this picturesque destination, tourists and tourism stakeholders, and the local populace must support the shift away from the reliance on plastics. They can also lead the way through innovation in plastic management, feasible alternatives and pollution management," Union Minister maintained.

On the occasion, Chief Executive Officer PDA, said, "PDA has been taking several initiatives to maintain 'Clean Patnitop Green Patnitop'. We request the stakeholders to share their inputs and suggestions regarding effective imposition of the ban, innovative solutions and alternatives to plastics."

Others present on the occasion were Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Deputy Commissioner Ramban, SSPs Udhampur and Ramban, PRI representatives besides others.



**MEN AND MACHINERY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR** Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) continues its ongoing drive to clean Dal Lake near the SKICC, the main venue of the upcoming G20 meeting in Srinagar.

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

G20 TWG MEET IN SRINAGAR

## Delegates To Experience Local Culture; Saffron, Walnuts, Qahwa Cups To Be Gifted

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** G20 delegates will experience the local culture of Jammu and Kashmir and get to see handicrafts and other works of artisans during their visit to Srinagar for the third Tourism Working Group meeting of the influential bloc, officials said on Friday.

About 60 foreign delegates are expected to take part in the event slated to be held from May 22-24.

As part of the event, the delegates will also visit the art and craft Bazaar organised by the state government, showcasing local handicrafts, work of artisans, signifying the importance of community participation, the Tourism Ministry said.

The delegates will also have hands-on experience through DIY (do-it-yourself) activities at the craft bazaar, it said.

The Ministry of Tourism is also promoting local products of Jammu and Kashmir, and

products under the ODOP (one district one product).

So, papier-mache boxes, saffron, walnuts, Qahwa cups and brass spoon will be given to delegate as souvenirs, Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh told reporters on Friday.

In response to a query, he said, the delegates will take a ride on shikara on Dal Lake and attend cultural performances on its bank.

The mayor of Srinagar will host a lunch for G20 delegates in the city, besides a gala dinner to be hosted by the Lt Governor of J&K.

The Group of Twenty (G20) is an inter-governmental forum comprising 19 countries - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States, and the European Union.

At the press conference, ministry officials also shared

a digital design of the artistic stage that has been planned for hosting the gala dinner and farewell dinner.

Walnuts of Kashmir are popular across India and even exported around the world, the ministry said.

Singh said "foolproof security arrangements" are there for third Tourism Working Group meeting, and work on sprucing up of the capital city of Jammu and Kashmir for the event is almost over.

"This G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Srinagar aims to strengthen economic growth, preserve cultural heritage, and promote sustainable development of the region," the ministry said, adding, it welcomes the participation of delegates from G20 member countries, invited countries, and international organizations to collectively work towards advancing the tourism sector and achieving the UN sustainable development goals 2030.

## China, Turkey Likely To Give A Miss To G20 Meet In Kashmir

Observer Monitoring Desk

**NEW DELHI:** With just days to go for the G20 Working Group meeting on Tourism in Srinagar, the Government of India announced on Friday that China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have yet to confirm their attendance, indicating they are likely to skip the meeting.

"A total of 60 international delegates have registered so far for the Third working group meeting to be held from May 22-24," Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh said, briefing the media in Delhi.

"A total of 17 G20 member countries have confirmed their participation till now. Those who have still not registered are China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The number of invited countries is 9 out of which only Egypt has not registered so far, Singh added.

In addition to it, several countries will have a low-key participation as they plan to send officials from their embassies in New Delhi rather than diplomats from their capitals, Hindustan Times reported. This is the first major international event to be held in Kashmir ever.

The report claims that China is not attending the event as its ally Pakistan has raised objection to

India conducting the event in Kashmir. It skipped the G20 meeting held in China in March. Whereas Turkey had criticised India for doing away with the special status to Jammu and Kashmir in 2019.

UN's special rapporteur on minority issues Fernand de Varennes had recently criticised India over the G20 meet in Srinagar. "G20 should on the contrary uphold 'International human rights obligations & the #UN Declaration of Human Rights should be upheld...and the situation in Jammu and Kashmir should be decried and condemned, not pushed under the rug and ignored with the holding of this meeting'," he added.

As a result, several other countries have decided to have a low-key representation.

"Saudi Arabia and Mexico are likely to be represented by diplomats from their embassies in New Delhi instead of officials from their respective capitals," Deccan Herald quoted sources as saying.

## Replace Annual Water Charges With Monthly Bills For Convenience Of Public: CS

Conducts Virtual Tour Of Works; Takes Feedback From Public, PRIs Also

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing the momentum, Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Friday again conducted a virtual tour of works taken up under the central flagship programme Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) for their early completion across the UT of J&K.

He interacted with the public and officials of the department for first hand appraisal of the progress made in the mission so far.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Jal Shakti Department (JSD); Mission Director, JJM; Deputy Commissioners; Special Secretary, JSD; Director Finance, JSD; Chief Engineers; Superintending Engineers; and other officers of the Jal Shakti Department either physically or virtually.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary asked the officers about the progress of the mission and asked them to meet the deadlines without any fail. He also urged them to expedite the tendering of remaining works so that these are taken up early and completed within the given timeframe. He also talked to locals and PRI members there and enquired from them about the quality and pace of work going on at each site.

He directed that clearances for laying of pipe networks through forests should be provided expeditiously while safeguarding environment. He

asked for monitoring such issues at the highest level so that no work gets delayed due to lack of attention.

He impressed upon them to involve the members of PaniSamities at every step so that they gets accustomed to the nitty gritty of running these schemes successfully in future as per the mandate of the mission. He enjoined upon the officers for evaluation of the works besides greater role for public representatives and Paani Samities in monitoring progress of various works.

He instructed the officers to carry out assessment of sustainability of source of each water supply scheme. He also advised them to ensure that people are provided adequate quantity of potable water. He exhorted upon them to secure NABL accreditation of every water testing lab for third party certification of the quality parameters.

Dr Mehta also maintained that presently the Jal Jeevan Mission is being implemented in the initial years of the 'AmritKaal' period which is quite heartening and one of the prerequisites for 'Viksit J&K' endeavour. He made out that with the completion of this Mission, every household is going to get a functional tap water connection that embodies in itself a goal of 'Viksit Bharat Abhiyan' towards empowering people at the grassroots level.



**Government of UT of Jammu & Kashmir**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIRS, KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ANANTNAG**  
Phone/FAX: 01932-222951 E-mail: capdang121@gmail.com  
Subject: - Hiring of Vehicle for Shri Amar Nath Ji Yatra 2023 by Assistant Director FCS&CA Anantnag.  
**TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
Sealed Tenders are invited from the registered Sumo Stands/ Drivers having valid permit for utilization/engagement of (01) commercial vehicle for official use during Shri Amar Nath Ji Yatra 2023 preferably Tata Sumo/Scorpio/Tavera from 1st of June 2023 till culmination of Yatra period 2023 by the office of Assistant Director Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Anantnag as per the rates already notified by the office of Transport Commissioner (Chairman, State Transport Authority), Jammu & Kashmir Vide Notification No: 01-P-MVD of 2021 Dated: 19-03-2021. The sealed tenders shall reach to the office of Assistant Director FCS&CA Anantnag within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. The tenders shall be opened in the office of undersigned on 27-05-2023 at 11:30 a.m. The tender shall be allotted to the lowest bidder after completion of all codal formalities.  
Moreover, the terms and conditions for hiring of vehicles/daily fare/haltage rates shall remain same as prescribed by the Transport Department.  
No: FCS&CA/AD/ANG/23/ 5859-62 Assistant Director  
Dated: 18-05-2023 DIPK-1901-23 FCS&CA Department  
DT: 19-05-2023 Anantnag

**OFFICE OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, (MACHAIL YATRA CELL) KISHTWAR.**  
**TENDER DOCUMENT FOR PROVIDING HELICOPTER SERVICE FOR SHREE MACHAIL MATA YATRA- AND HUD MATA YATRA-2023 & 2024**  
e-TENDER No.02 of 2023 DATED: 17.05.2023  
Last Date for submission of e-Tender: 24.05-2023 up to 03:00 PM (1500 hrs)  
Address: Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar,  
Phone No. 01995-261455, Fax Mo. 01995-261466 | Email: dckishtwar-jk@nic.ir. ikkis@nic.in  
**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, KISHTWAR.**  
**e-NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER**  
e-tender on the prescribed format are invited on the behalf of the Chairman, Shree Machail Mata Yatra 2023 & 24 and Shree Hudh Mata Yatra 2023 & 24 J&K for providing Hell Service, in a two bid format (Technical and Financial) from registered Aviation Companies having a fleet of Minimum Three Air Worthy Light Helicopters endorsed on their Non Scheduled Operators Permit (NSOP) for operations in J&K on Kishtwar-Gulabgari-Machail and Kishtwar-Sounder/Sirshi-Kaikoot sectors in district Kishtwar, on License basis w.e.f 20 06.2023 to 29.06.2023 for the year 2023 for Shree Hud Mata Yatra 2023 and w.e.f 25-07-2023 and 2024 to 05-09-2023 for the year 2023 and 2024 for Shree Machail Mata Yatra & for a period of ten (10) days for Shree Hudh Mata Yatra 2024 and the date will be notified separately.  
2. The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications Bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of detailed Terms and Conditions can be seen/downloaded online from the website www.jktenders.gov.in against a non-refundable/ non-transferable fee of Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand and only) other detail can be seen/downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in. as per following details:-  

Publishing Date	17-05-2023 04.00 PM
Download Start date	17-05-2023 04.00 PM
Documents download/ sale end date	24-05-2023 03.00 PM
Bid Submission Start Date	17-05-2023 04.00 PM
Bid Submission last date	24-05-2023 03.00 PM
Hardcopy submission last date	24-05-2023 03.00 PM
Date of opening of technical Bid (Online)	24-05-2023 05.00 PM
Date of opening of Financial Bid (Online)	25-05-2023 02.00 PM

  
3. The aforesaid bids duly addressed to Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar must be uploaded on the website of www.jktenders.gov.in in favour of the Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar by or before 24-05-2023 04.00 PM and bidder shall mention security deposit detail and UTR No. in the prescribed Technical Bid form and Schedule \*An. Completing bidding process will be done online in accordance with the provision of detailed e-NIT. The successful bidder shall submit the original instruments in respect of Security Deposit and other relevant Documents before opening of technical bid by 24-05-2023 04.00 PM failing which the bid shall not be evaluated. The Scope of the Helicopter services and other terms and condition are detailed in Annexure "I." of the e-tender document  
Ho: DCK/SMMY/23-24/05-09  
Dated: 17.05.2023  
DIPK-1906-23  
DT: 19-05-2023  
Sd-  
(Interjeet Singh Parihar) KAS,  
Addl. Deputy Commissioner,  
Kishtwar.



J&K Bank Customer's Family  
Relieved After Timely  
Settlement Of Insurance Claim



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a timely settlement of an insurance claim under Met Loan and Life Suraksha (MLLS) scheme, PNB-MetLife -J&K Bank's Life Insurance Partner - gave a symbolic cheque amounting to Rs 32 Lacs to Naseema, legal heir of Late Bashir Ahmad Kuchhay, who was Bank's customer at Surasyar Branch in Budgam.

Pertinently, the actual amount was partly credited to loan account of the deceased while as the rest of amount was transferred to nominee's saving account as per the Level Cover Option of the policy.

The Bank's Zonal Head (Budgam) Saadut Hussain Pampori handed over the cheque to the nominee of deceased Naseema Bano in presence of Zonal Insurance Coordinator Sajad Ahmad Farooqi, Zonal Head (Credit Life) PNB MetLife Irfan Ali Zargar and other officials of the Bank and insurance agency.

While thanking the Bank and Insurance Company on the occasion, Naseema Said, "I think we have been fortunate enough to have this insurance policy, the timely settle-

ment of which has relieved us of huge financial burden."

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head said that with economic well-being of customers at the core, the Bank always advise its clients to get their loans insured so that unforeseen eventualities in life are taken care of without putting difficult financial burdens upon their loved ones.

"We cannot compensate the loss of life but at least we can relieve the burden of berieved family by compensating the earning capacity of the demised family member to a great extent. Moreover, we insist upon our insurance partners to ensure prompt and easy settlement of insurance claims of all our customers that would take care of financial-safety and welfare of their family members" he said.

Notably, the deceased customer had chosen an insurance cover of his loan under PNB-MetLife's Met Loan and Life Suraksha (MLLS) scheme with Level Cover option, wherein the sum assured is the amount linked to credit as selected by the policyholder at the beginning.

'Maintain Balance'  
While Pricing Tickets:  
Govt To Airlines

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The government has asked airlines to exercise moderation and ensure a balance in pricing of air tickets amid a spike in airfares on certain routes especially after suspension of flights by crisis-hit Go First, according to a senior official.

While making it clear that there are no plans to regulate airfares, the official said there should not be a huge gap between the tickets sold in the lower and upper fare buckets by the airlines.

India is one of the fastest growing civil aviation markets in the world and domestic passenger traffic has been rising after being significantly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

After cash-strapped Go First stopped flying from May 3, there has been a significant rise in airfares on certain routes that were operated by the budget carrier. The routes include Delhi-Srinagar and Delhi-Pune. Also, the reduction of capacity due to the Go First crisis has come at a time when peak domestic air travel period is round the corner.

The senior civil aviation ministry official told reporters that airlines have been asked to "exercise moderation" and "maintain some kind of balance" in terms of pricing of tickets.



There cannot be a situation where there is a huge gap between the lowest and highest fare buckets, and passengers should not face hardships in terms of exorbitant fares, the official said on the condition of anonymity.

There are no plans to regulate airfares, the official said.

Go First, which is undergoing voluntary insolvency resolution proceedings, has cancelled flights till May 26. Besides, many planes of IndiGo are grounded due to Pratt & Whitney engine issues while SpiceJet is also facing financial headwinds.

The official noted that capacity is an issue and hoped that resumption of flights by Go First at the earliest would help ease the situation before the peak travel season in June.

In April, domestic airlines flew 128.88 lakh passengers, as per the latest official data.

There has been a steep jump in airfares on certain routes where Go First was operating.

For instance, the average one-way spot fare on Delhi-Leh route saw a 125 per cent rise to an average of ₹13,674 during the May

3-10 period compared to April 20-28 period, as per data shared by travel portal Ixigo.

During the same comparable periods, average one-way spot fare witnessed an increase of 86 per cent to ₹16,898 on Delhi-Srinagar route, the data showed. After deregulation of the country's airline sector, airfares are market driven and are neither established nor regulated by the government. Airline pricing runs in multiple levels (buckets or Reservation Booking Designators).

Civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, on March 16, informed the Lok Sabha that "airfares are neither established nor regulated by the government".

"The airline pricing system runs in multiple levels (buckets) which are in line with practices being followed globally. The prices are fixed by airlines keeping in mind the market, demand, seasonality and other market forces. The airfare increases with increase in demand for seats as the lower fare buckets get sold out fast when bookings are offered by airlines," he had said in a written reply.

Pakistan Investors Brace  
For Thunderbolt As Imran  
Khan Tests Army

Bloomberg

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan investors are bracing for a sudden jolt as former premier Imran Khan's showdown with the powerful military, and the government, reaches a tipping point.

Warnings of a massive drop in the rupee are flaring up, with some analysts forecasting another 20% decline is possible. Heightened tensions after Khan's arrest last week may push an International Monetary Fund's \$6.7 billion bailout further out of reach, with bond managers staring at the specter of a sovereign default.

Khan, who was later released by the top court, is challenging the military's influence in politics and pushing the government to hold early elections. Risks are rapidly increasing for investors as the upheaval is a potent reminder of the nation's history with three coups since 1958, while an apparent assassination attempt on the 70-year-old politician in November underscored that violence may intensify.

"To be invested in Pakistan means you should be prepared for bigger risks," said Edwin

Gutierrez, head of emerging-market sovereign debt at abrdn plc, a long-time investor in the nation. "Black swans are a bigger probability."

Moody's Investors Service said this month the nation may default after June if it fails to secure IMF funding. In February, the company downgraded Pakistan's sovereign credit rating to an all-time low. Pakistan's external debt service is estimated at about \$22 billion for fiscal year 2024, which begins in July, according to Columbia Threadneedle Investments, about five times the nation's foreign-exchange reserves.

Bond investors are growing more nervous, with the extra yield they demand to hold Pakistan's dollar bonds over US Treasuries climbing above 35 percentage points to a record this month. Pakistan's dollar bonds are trading at distressed levels, with notes due in 2031 quoted at about 34 cents on the dollar.

The rupee slid to a record-low 299 per dollar at close last week and ended at 285.6 on Thursday. The currency has lost about 20% this year, among the worst performers in the world.

Byju's Alpha Accused of Hiding  
\$500 Million From Lenders

Bloomberg

**NEW DELHI:** Lenders accused one of India's hottest tech companies, Byju's Alpha, of hiding \$500 million as part of a fight between creditors and the self-proclaimed biggest education technology company in the world.

The allegation came out at a court hearing on Thursday in Delaware, where Byju's Alpha faces a lawsuit over who should control the company. Lenders claim that because of a default earlier this year, they have the right to put their representative, Timothy R. Pohl, in charge.

The dispute is the latest setback for the high-flying startup founded by Byju Raveendran. Byju's had already been working to appease creditors trying to restructure a \$1.2 billion term loan when government investigators searched company offices in April. The Bengaluru-based company has been working toward an initial public offering of its tutoring unit for several years.

Earlier this year, as the two sides were in a stand-



off, a top manager at Byju's Alpha "admitted to transferring half a billion dollars out of the company," Brock Czeschin, one of Pohl's lawyers, said during the hearing, which was held by telephone.

Byju's Alpha was trying to protect the money from predatory lenders, Joe Cicero, a lawyer for Byju's Alpha, said during the hearing. The company had a right to transfer the money under the loan agreement, he said.

The company is current on all debt payments and any defaults should be considered technical breaches of the loan agreement, Byju's Alpha attorney Sharon Korpus said in an interview.

FUTURE TRIAL

Delaware Chancery Court Judge Morgan Zurn did not make any ruling about whether moving the money was appropriate. Zurn did side with lenders by order-

ing Byju's Alpha managers not to make any substantive changes at the company. The judge scheduled a trial to decide who controls Byju's Alpha later this year.

The lawsuit was filed by Glas Trust Company against Byju's Alpha, its director, Riju Ravindran, and Tangible Play Inc. The two companies being sued are units of Think and Learn Private, the edtech empire founded by Byju Raveendran. Ravindran is also a director of Think and Learn, according to a regulatory filing.

Byju's Alpha is just a holding company that the lenders need to control in order to protect their rights, Czeschin said during the hearing. The lenders are not trying to take over the entire edtech company, he said.

The lenders are distressed debt investors who are wrongly trying to make a profit on the company's debt, Byju's Alpha claimed during the court hearing. The company will get "a large capital infusion" in about two weeks that will allow Byju's Alpha to pay down the \$1.2 billion it owes creditors, Cicero said in court.

Dulloo Launches 'Aalav'  
Awareness Programme  
For Farmers

Says initiative will ensure  
progress, prosperity of  
farmers in J&K

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department (APD), Atal Dulloo, Friday flagged off 'Aalav' awareness Van from Lal Chowk.

The program aims to raise awareness about the Holistic

from the Valley.

In his address, Dulloo emphasized the three essential dimensions of Holistic Agriculture Development Plan including 'economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection'. He highlighted that the Aalav programme would prioritize these dimensions to ensure the progress and prosperity of farmers in the region.

He said that Aalav programme marks a significant step towards holistic development of agri-



Agriculture Development Plan (HADP) in the region.

Atal Dulloo, who also serves as Vice Chairman of J&K Advisory Board for Development of Kisans, flagged off the awareness vehicle marking commencement of the ambitious 'Aalav' programme.

Heads of Departments of Agriculture and allied sectors as well as board members were present during the flag-off ceremony. The event was also attended by progressive farmers

culture in the region, fostering sustainable practices and empowering farmers with the necessary knowledge and resources to thrive in their endeavors. He added that it is a testament to the government's dedication towards welfare and progress of farmers, as they continue to play a vital role in growth of the agricultural sector.

The Aalav Programme, a key component of HADP, aims to create a comprehensive support system for farmers.

ACS Chairs Meeting Regarding  
Strengthening Of Project  
Monitoring Unit Of HADP

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo, Friday chaired a meeting regarding strengthening of Project Monitoring Unit (PML) and other developments under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by Director General Planning, Agriculture Production Department, Special Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Mission Director, HADP, Nidhi Srinivas from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ankur Bansal, CEO/Founder GDI (BMGF), member PMU and Technical Officers.

During the meeting, a detailed PowerPoint Presentation on various aspects of HADP highlighting challenges confronted in implementation of the mega project.

ACS impressed upon the officers to implement HADP in its entirety keeping its aims and objectives in mind. He emphasized the need of laying special focus on various aspects like procurement, IT, value chain development and marketing for the effective implementation of HADP.

Dulloo said that the ambitious plan will bring about significant improvement in ag-

riculture and allied sectors in Jammu and Kashmir, providing a boost to the region's economy and benefitting farmers and consumers alike. He added that the interventions under the plan will enhance quality and quantity of produce in the region. " Various multi-pronged strategies ranging from infrastructure development to specific technological interventions are being ensured for reaping the benefits", he added.

It was informed that expert teams from other parts of the country will be visiting the UT to share their models and expertise in the sector. Their best practices will be adopted and replicated here in J&K to get optimum outcome.

Regarding the 'Kisan Sampark Abhiyan', Atal Dulloo said that the people have evinced great enthusiasm and their overwhelming participation has given new dimensions to this ambitious programme of the government.

It was also informed in the meeting that with implementation of HADP, JK will have secured livelihood for 13 lakh farm families with emphasis on 2,62,006 marginal families, creation of 18,861 additional enterprises and additional 2,87,910 jobs besides skill development to over 2.5 lakh persons in agri-skills.

Bank Loan Fraud: ED Attaches Rs 122-  
Cr Assets Of Pune Bizmen, Others

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Assets worth more than Rs 122 crore of various accused, including that of a former chairman of Pune-based Seva Vikas co-operative Bank and promoter of an education group, have been attached as part of money laundering investigation linked to an alleged bank loan fraud, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said Friday.

A provisional order for attaching 47 immovable properties worth Rs 121.81 crore located in Pune in Maharashtra and movable assets of Rs 54.25 lakh (belonging to Devi Concrete Products) has been issued under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The properties belong to Amar Mulchandani, former chairman of Seva Vikas co-operative Bank, Vivek Aranha, promoter of Pune-based Rosary Education group, Sagar Suryawanshi, Khemchand Bhojwani and their family members and

linked entities.

The case stems from a Pune Police FIR against the Rosary Education group, its promoters and others with regard to an alleged loan fraud, the ED said in a statement.

"Subsequently, joint registrar (audit) did an audit of the entire Seva Vikas co-op bank and found gross fraud and misappropriation of Rs 429.6 crore across 124 NPA (non performing assets) loan accounts. "Based on this audit report, additional FIRs were registered against the loan beneficiaries and bank management including its ex-chairman Amar Mulchandani," it said.

The RBI had cancelled the license of the bank and the ED is probing the "entire bank fraud in which small deposits of thousands of innocent depositors have been siphoned off by illegal loans sanctioned by the management of the bank."

The agency alleged Amar Mulchandani treated public deposits in the bank like his "per-

sonal fiefdom" and he "violated" all prudent banking norms to illegally sanction loans to his favoured borrowers in arbitrary manner, without checking their creditworthiness and without adequate collateral securities. He did this, the ED said, after taking "bribes" at the rate of 20 per cent commission of the sanctioned loan amount.

"He made his family members as directors in the bank with a clear motive to have a brute majority in the board of directors to sanction loans as per his whims and fancies," the ED alleged. Amar Mulchandani, it claimed, also sanctioned various "benami" loans to siphon off money.

"Major loan defaulters Vinay Aranha (family member of Vivek Aranha), Sagar Suryawanshi and Khemchand Bhojwani etc. were found to be hand in glove with Amar Mulchandani. They acted as mutual guarantors in their loan accounts which all turned into NPA," the money laundering investigation found.

'No TCS On  
Overseas Payment  
Through Int'l  
Credit, Debit Cards'

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** The government on Friday said no TCS will be levied on international spending of up to Rs 7 lakh a year by using debit or credit cards.

Facing backlash from a wide section of people, the Finance Ministry said the move is aimed at removing procedural ambiguity with regard to Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) and the levying of Tax Collected at Source (TCS).

The ministry's decision earlier this week to bring international credit card spending under the RBI's liberalised remittance scheme (LRS) and the consequent levy of 20 per cent TCS has evoked sharp reactions from experts and stakeholders.

"To avoid any procedural ambiguity, it has been decided that any payments by an individual using their international Debit or Credit cards up to Rs 7 lakh per financial year will be excluded from the LRS limits and hence, will not attract any TCS," the ministry said in a statement.

Govt To Get Rs 87,416 Crore  
Dividend From RBI

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI:** The Reserve Bank of India on Friday approved a Rs 87,416 crore-dividend payout to the central government for 2022-23, nearly triple of what it paid in the previous year.

The dividend payout is significantly higher than the amount estimated in the Union Budget 2023-24 from the central bank and state-owned financial institutions.

The government was expecting Rs 48,000 crore from the RBI, public sector banks and financial institutions in the current fiscal.

The dividend payout by the RBI was Rs 30,307 crore for accounting year 2021-22. With public banks posting record profits of over Rs 1 lakh crore in fiscal 2022-23, the government's earnings from them too is likely to be higher.

For 2021-22 fiscal, the government earned Rs 40,953 crore from the RBI and public sector financial institutions. It was much lower compared to Budget Estimate of Rs 73,948 crore for 2022-23.

The decision on Rs 87,416 crore-dividend payout was taken at the 602nd meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the RBI held under the Chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das.

"The board approved the transfer of Rs 87,416 crore as surplus to the central government for the accounting year 2022-23 while deciding to keep the Contingency Risk Buffer at 6 per cent," the RBI said in a statement.

The contingency risk buffer, which is based on the recommendations of the Bimal Jalan Committee report, was 5.50 per cent for accounting year 2021-22. The panel had prescribed a Contingency Risk Buffer range of 6.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent. Further, the RBI said the board reviewed the global and domestic economic situation and associated challenges including the impact of current global geopolitical developments.

It also discussed the working of the RBI during the year April 2022 March 2023 and approved the annual report and accounts for the accounting year 2022-23.

The meeting was attended by deputy governors Mahesh Kumar Jain, Michael Debabrata Patra, M Rajeshwar Rao, T Rabi Sankar and other directors of the central board.

Directors on the board are Satish K Marathe, Revathy Iyer, Sachin Chaturvedi, Anand Gopal Mahindra, Pankaj Ramanbhai Patel and Ravindra H Dholakia.

Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs also attended the meeting.



CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

Skyrocketing Airfares

Wangnoo, the president of Nigeen Tourist Traders Association, said the high airfares were affecting the tourism fraternity here.

“We have seen businesses flourishing in the last two years. Hotels, guest houses, houseboats are full and shikara and ponywallas all were happy but unfortunately this airfare hike really affected us in last two months,” Wangnoo said.

He said middle-class families prefer to travel to the UAE when airfares to Kashmir shoot up.

“When a family of four or five people cannot afford, they prefer to go to Dubai and other places rather than visit to Kashmir.

“I personally suggest...the Civil Aviation Ministry to take this issue seriously and put some kind of a cap on air fares so that the middle-class tourists can come here,” he added.

RBI Withdraws

been decided to withdraw the Rs 2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation,” the RBI said.

The bank notes in Rs 2,000 denomination will continue to be a legal tender, it added.

The central bank has asked the public to deposit Rs 2,000 bank notes into their bank accounts and/or exchange them into banknotes of other denominations at any bank branch.

“Members of the public are encouraged to utilise the time up to September 30, 2023 to deposit and/or exchange the Rs 2,000 bank notes,” the central bank said.

Deposit into bank accounts can be made in the usual manner, that is, without restrictions and subject to extant instructions and other applicable statutory provisions, it said.

“In order to ensure operational convenience and to avoid disruption of regular activities of bank branches, exchange of Rs 2,000 bank notes into bank notes of other denominations can be made up to a limit of Rs 20,000 at a time at any bank starting from May 23, 2023,” the RBI said.

To complete the exercise in a time-bound manner and to provide adequate time to the members of public, the RBI has asked all banks to provide deposit and/or exchange facility for Rs 2,000 bank notes until September 30, 2023.

Also, the facility for exchange of Rs 2,000 bank notes up to the limit of Rs 20,000 at a time shall also be provided at the 19 Regional Offices (ROs) of RBI having Issue Departments from May 23, 2023.

As per the RBI, about 89 per cent of the Rs 2,000 denomination banknotes were issued prior to March 2017 and are at the end of their estimated life span of 4-5 years.

The total value of such banknotes in circulation has declined from Rs 6.73 lakh crore at its peak as on March 31, 2018 (37.3 per cent of notes in circulation) to Rs 3.62 lakh crore constituting only 10.8 per cent of notes in circulation as on March 31, 2023.

In January 2014, the RBI announced withdrawal from circulation all bank notes issued prior to 2005.

Security Strengthened

security plan to make sure the event passes off without any untoward incident.

They said security has been beefed up across Kashmir Valley, especially in the city here.

Security forces have been deployed in strength in the city for area domination and sanitisation exercises.

Vehicles passing through the city are being randomly checked to ensure that no subversive elements manage to enter the city, the officials said.

The officials said a three-layer security will be put in place for the event.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police has put up anti-drone mechanisms in place, they said.

The officials said the city has been made a no-drone zone till the event is over.

They said the administration is pulling out all stops to put on a grand show for the delegates arriving in the city for the key meeting, they added.

The routes expected to be taken by the foreign delegates have been given a makeover ahead of the meet.

Several projects, which were part of Srinagar Smart City, were taken up on priority and the city has been decked up for the international event.

Meanwhile, the police in Kashmir issued a public advisory against suspicious international mobile numbers allegedly being used to spread rumours about the G20 meeting in the Valley.

Many mobile phone users in the valley have received recorded messages from such numbers asking them to boycott the event.

The police said such numbers were spreading anti-national messages/propaganda and the general public is requested to remain alert of such attempts and not to respond to any suspicious calls.

The police’s cyber cell has also taken cognisance of the matter and investigations are underway.

‘Sprucing Up

query, Singh said, the delegates will take a ride on shikara on Dal Lake and attend cultural performances on its bank. The mayor of Srinagar will host a lunch for G20 delegates in the city, besides a gala dinner to be hosted by the Lt Governor of J&K.

The Group of Twenty (G20) is an inter-governmental forum comprising 19 countries - Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States, and the European Union.

Asked if Turkiye and China have registered, officials said, not so far.

Two Tourism Working Group (TWG) meetings of the G20 have already taken place at Runn of Kutch in Gujarat and Siliguri-Darjeeling, and the stage is now set for the third one which will take place in Srinagar from May 22-24, Singh said.

A side event on ‘Film Tourism for Economic

Growth and Cultural Preservation’ is being organised on May 22, focusing on strategies to promote film tourism. The event will see participation of G20 member countries, invited countries, international organisations, and industry stakeholders including leading producers from the film industry, the officials said.

This side event will also include unveiling of the draft ‘National Strategy on Film Tourism’ that will provide a roadmap for harnessing the role of films in promoting tourist destinations. Besides, a panel discussion featuring speakers from G20 member countries, invited countries will shed light on country-specific enablers and challenges in promoting destinations through films, the Tourism Ministry said.

Inputs will also be taken on this draft at the TWG meeting in Srinagar, and after multiple discussions, it is expected to be completed in “three months”, officials said.

Along the sidelines of the main event, a national-level side event is organised along with FICCI which will focus on ‘Promoting Incredible India through Film Tourism,’ offering states and union territories an opportunity to share their policies and best practices that have facilitated the development of film tourism. Industry stakeholders will also provide suggestions on encouraging filmmakers to shoot in various locations across the country , it said.

India is currently holding the presidency of the G20, and special invitee guest countries are -- Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and the UAE.

Egypt has not registered so far for the third TWG, the officials said.

The G20 meet in Jammu & Kashmir is being billed as the first major international event being hosted in the state after the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution and the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into the Union Territories of J and K, and Ladakh.

It was on August 5, 2019, when the Centre had ended the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and restrictions imposed in the region had severely impacted tourism there.

In the last two years, J&K has registered a rise in tourist influx.

Asked about the security arrangements for the event, Singh told reporters, “I cannot tell you much on it, as this aspect is being taken care of under the aegis of the Home Ministry. The Home Ministry is making all foolproof arrangements. The Home Secretary himself visited there. Last week, he took two meetings, in which senior officials of J&K, the chief secretary, the DGP, and I, were there in the meeting. So, nothing to worry from the point of view of security. Very foolproof arrangements there”.

Hectic work is underway in Srinagar ahead of the crucial event, and the Smart City project works have also been sped up.

“In a meeting yesterday, the chief secretary assured us that almost all sprucing up work from airport to the city, and of the city area under the Smart City project, is almost over. And, balance work will be over by tomorrow, May 20. So, by the time delegates arrive, work should be over,” he said.

In Srinagar, delegates will be treated to cultural programmes at the Sher-e-Kashmir Convention Centre.

Later, they were to go to Gulmarg for gondola ride. A technical session on promotion of film tourism was also planned to be hosted there.

However, Gulmarg has now been dropped out of the itinerary, with Singh saying that “we were expecting a smaller number of participants”, but, it was now felt that it will lead to a lot of “logistics issue”.

The delegates will have an excursion in and around Srinagar.

Under India’s G20 Tourism Track, the TWG is working on five inter-connected priority areas -- green tourism, digitisation, skills, tourism MSMEs and destination. These priorities are key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and achieve the targets for 2030 SDGs. There are two key deliverables of the TWG, which are “GOA Roadmap for tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals and G20 Tourism Ministers’ Declaration”.

The Ministry of Tourism is making “positive progress” on finalising the two key deliverables. During this meeting, G20 member countries, invited countries, and international organisations will give inputs and feedback on these two draft documents. After negotiations with G20 member countries on these drafts, final versions will be placed in the fourth TWG meeting and Ministerial meeting, slated to take place in Goa n June.

The ministry has also planned a side event along with CII on ‘Ecotourism as a vehicle to achieve Sustainable Development Goal’.

MD Asks KPDCCL

Various details related to power supply for the upcoming G20 meet were discussed in detail.

The MD, the spokesperson said, directed the KPDCCL officers to chart out a deployment plan for better coordination with District Administration for emergency services related to Electricity.

“Concerned Executive Engineers were directed to get in touch with the Senior Superintendent of Police (Security) for issuance of security passes to all those employees that will be present round the clock,” he said.

Choudhary, he said, directed the officers to have a backup plan in case of any eventuality that may lead to disturbance in power supply.

“He also directed the concerned officers to maintain Special Control Rooms round the clock during the summit. Instructions were also given to the concerned officers to prioritize the works and complete all the pending no later by today evening,” he added.

In the meeting, the spokesperson said, directions were also issued to the concerned officers to maintain better coordination with sister wings of JKPDD for reliable power supply to the venues.

He said that the local officers to remain in touch with concerned SHO (Police) for hassle free movement of employees shortlisted for the event to maintain the power supply.

Gulmarg, Dachigam

group meeting under India’s G20 presidency at the SKICC will be visiting the Royal Mughal Gardens Nishat and Shalimar rather than making the time-consuming and exhaustive drive to Gulmarg, officials said.

The decision, they said, was taken as a security measure and in view of the long distance travel to ski-resort which is around 55 kilometers from Srinagar, the summer capital of J&K.

Multitier security arrangements have been put in place in and around SKICC, the venue for G20 tourism track meeting with Marine Commando Force (MCF) and National Security Guards (NSG) commandos deployed in Jhelum and Dal Lake to avoid any untoward incident.

Officials said that police are also using counter-drone technology to keep a close eye on the public movement, while sharpshooters will be deployed atop buildings around Brein and Nishat to keep a watch on the venue.

Hi-tech drones will be monitoring across the city while Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras have been installed in and around the venue. Police and CRPF have increased patrolling in Srinagar.

Sources said that contingents of Army, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and local police will be deployed around the venue as part of security arrangements.

Patrolling in public places in Srinagar has been intensified and checking and frisking of public tightened.

NTA Defers

onwards in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir,” the NTA, which conducts the exam, stated.

It said that there has been “a phenomenal increase” in the number of applicants -- 87,309 unique candidates -- from Jammu and Kashmir this year.

“...it has been decided that the CUET (UG) 2023 examination scheduled for 21 to 25 May 2023 is cancelled in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir,” the NTA stated.

A total of 87,309 candidates have been registered from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The number of applications this year saw an increase of 41 per cent from the debut edition last year.

CUET-UG remains the second-largest entrance exam in the country in terms of the number of applicants. In the debut edition of CUET-UG, 12.50 lakh students registered themselves and 9.9 lakh submitted applications.

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET-UG) for medical admissions is the largest entrance test in India with an average of 18 lakh registrations.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), in March last year, announced that undergraduate admissions will be conducted in all central universities through a common entrance test and not based on class 12 marks.

The debut edition of the CUET-UG was conducted in July last year and was marred by glitches, prompting the NTA to cancel the exam at multiple centres. (With PTI inputs)

HC Issues Warrant

to their regularization with retrospective effect from the date they have attained the eligibility for such regularization i.e. 01.11.2018 and shall also be entitled to arrears of their salary. The court had also directed the varsity to complete the entire exercise, culminating into issuance of regularization orders in favour of eligible casual/contractual engagees within a period of two months.

India Fully

On Pakistan, the publication quoted him as saying that India wants “normal and

neighborly relations.”

“However, it is incumbent upon them to create a conducive environment free from terrorism and hostilities. The onus is on Pakistan to take necessary steps in this regard,” he said.

Speaking about the Indian economy, he noted that it has been one of the world’s fastest-growing.

“Our progress is evident, as we have risen from being the tenth largest economy in 2014 to now being the fifth largest globally... While it is true that global headwinds pose challenges to growth, we have built a strong foundation in recent years, which positions us favorably,” he said.

On the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Modi said India’s position on the matter “is clear and unwavering.”

“India stands on the side of peace and will remain firmly there. We are committed to supporting those who face challenges in meeting their basic needs, especially in the face of rising costs of food, fuel, and fertilizers. We maintain communication with both Russia and Ukraine,” Modi said.

“Cooperation and collaboration should define our times, not conflict,” he told Nikkei Asia.

The Prime Minister is on a three-nation trip to Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Earlier, Modi arrived in the Japanese city of Hiroshima to attend the annual summit of the G7 grouping and the third in-person Quad leaders’ meeting.

During the interview, he also said he will amplify the voices and concerns of the Global South, a reference for developing countries, at the Group of Seven (G7) summit in Hiroshima.

Referring to global changes and challenges in areas such as energy, digital technology and supply chains, he said, “I will emphasize India’s role as a reliable partner in addressing these challenges” and added that India’s experience would “resonate strongly at the meeting.”

On India’s ties with Japan, he said both countries shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law have naturally brought them closer.

India, which is not a G-7 member, was invited by host and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

“We now see a growing convergence in our political, strategic, security, and economic interests,” he told the publication.

Asked about the issue of United Nations reform amid India’s long and sustained bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council, Modi spoke of the “limitations” of global governance institutions that remain “confined to outdated mindsets.”

“These deficiencies have become evident in addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorism, and financial crises,” he said.

“The credibility of the UNSC and its decision-making process will always be questioned if it continues to deny representation on a permanent basis to the world’s largest democracy, as well as entire continents like Africa and Latin America.”

Seminary Student

body was being handed over to the family for last rites.

3 Houses Gutted

in one of the three houses and quickly spread to the other two houses, the SDPO said. The mud houses belonged to Jamat Ali, Lal Hussain, and Mohd Israel, he added.

SSP Doda Abdul Qayoom said after news of the incident spread, hundreds of locals rushed in and attempted to extinguish the fire but the blaze had already engulfed all three houses.

“We have registered a case regarding the accident and the report will be submitted to the DC (Deputy Commissioner) so that the process of compensation is processed at the earliest,” the SSP said.

BDC chairman Gandoh Mohd Hanief said the efforts by locals at the spot prevented the fire from spreading to adjoining houses.

Hanief said the rescue teams faced significant delays in reaching the affected area due to poor road connectivity to the village.

“The lack of road infrastructure has proven to be a major hurdle in dealing with emergencies effectively,” the BDC chairman added.

Distressed by the incident, the locals urged the district administration to fix roads promptly.

They called for immediate action to prevent a repeat of the tragedy. They also appealed to the administration to provide those affected by Friday’s fire with immediate relief.

Electricity Shock

Aijaz Ahmad Mir of Chrali Gund Lolab and Aadil Ahmad Mir of Thundooa Lolab.

It has been learnt that one among the injured namely Aijaz Ahmad Mir has received critical injuries in the incident.

Despite repeated attempts, the AEE concerned could not be reached for his comments.

(GNS)

MeT Predicts Wet

From May 20-23, he said, mainly dry was expected. However, he said, a brief spell of rain/thunderstorm at places towards late afternoon and evening can’t be ruled out “although chances are less”.

From May 24-26, the official said that widespread rain and snow over higher reaches was “very likely”. He said some places may receive “heavy rain”.

As regards the temperature, he said, Srinagar recorded a low of 9.2°C against 13.7°C on the previous night and it was 2.0°C below normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 7.0°C against 11.0°C on the previous night while the hill station of Pahalgam recorded a low of 2.7°C against 7.4°C on the previous night.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 6.7°C against 8.4°C on the previous night and it was 3.4°C below normal for the north Kashmir area.

Kokernag recorded a low of 7.2°C against 11.2°C on the previous night and it was 2.8°C below normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 3.0°C against 4.6°C on previous night and it was below normal by 3.8°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district, he said.

IGNOU Office

facility available in the Raj Bagh area and hence the students coming from North, South, Central Kashmir and Leh and Kargil regions were facing difficulties. He said that the shifting is in the interest of the Learners and other stakeholders as it is very well connected with different modes of transportation and is now located in an area where the premier educational institutions of Kashmir are located.

He also showed his happiness with the different services created for the Learners in the new building and the comfortable work space for the staff. Dr. Shah Nawaz Ahmad Dar, Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar said that we are confident that this change will allow us to enhance our Student Support Services and meet the expectations of our Learners.

Dr. Shah Nawaz also informed that IGNOU has started the admission process for its various academic programs for July 2023 admission cycle. Some of the recently launched programs are Master of Arts in Migration and Diaspora (MAMIDI), MSC in Information Security (MSCIS), MA in Journalism and Electronic Media (MAJEM), MA in Journalism and Digital Media (MAJDM), Masters in Urdu (MAUD), PG Diploma in Environmental Management and Law (PGDEML), Post Graduate Diploma in Agribusiness (PGDAB), and various degree programs in several academic disciplines (general, honours and skill based).

Dr. Shah Nawaz said that the information regarding the newly launched and other programs offered by IGNOU is available on the official website of IGNOU (www.ignou.ac.in) in a common e-prospectus July 2023, which is also available on the IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar website (www.rcsrinagar.ignou.ac.in). Desirous students can use the Samarth portal of IGNOU (https://ignouadmission.samartha.edu.in/) to take admission (which is completely ONLINE) in any of the programmes offered by the university for the July 2023 admission cycle. Last date for the submission of admission application forms for both ODL & OL programmes is 30th June, 2023. For any query, students can visit IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar or call on 0194-3102402 or send mail to admissionrcsrinagar@ignou.ac.in. Re-registration for July 2023 session is also going on and the last date is 15th June 2023.

3 Burglars Held

cases under relevant sections of law were registered at Police Station Ganderbal and investigation was initiated, a police spokesman said.

On receipt of this information, he said, SSP Ganderbal Nikhil Borkar constituted a special Police team led by incharge PP Shadipora under the supervision of DySP Hqrs Ganderbal Gh Hassan.

“In a quick & swift action, the Police team busted a gang of burglars involved in the commission of the crime & multiple theft cases were solved by recovering a huge quantity of stolen Angular Iron on the instance of arrested burglars,” he said.

Police identified the trio as Arif Ahmad Saaid, Tariq Ahmad Mir and Mudasir Ahmad.

“They have been shifted to police station where they remain in custody,” the spokesperson said.

During the investigation, he said, it came to fore that the stolen material was kept hidden by them under stagnant water near Chinara Bagh Narainbagh. Moreover, 01 Load Carrier bearing registration number JK01M-3868 used in the commission of crime has also been seized, police spokesperson added.

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

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## Promotion Of Talent In Full Pace: Director YSS

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Director Youth Services and Sports (YSS) J&K, Subash C Chhibber on Friday reiterated that the department will make sure it doesn't leave any stone unturned in its bid to tap the sports talent in the region. He said that promotion of sports talent was department's top priority.

In the backdrop of the upcoming G-20 meeting, the Department of Youth Services and Sports J&K has initiated a mega programme of youth engagement in all 20 districts of the Union Territory.

The DYSS Director has directed all the district officers of the Kashmir province to ensure maximum participation of students in the activities being held.

In addition to the routine departmental activities being carried out as per the Yearly YSS calendar of activities, efforts are underway to organize sports activities in different games for senior citizens and specially-abled youth. Moreover, the department is continuously organizing sports activities with great enthusiasm in connection with G-20 Meeting.

Under this initiative, events were held on Friday in different sports zones of North Kashmir districts.

Under the ongoing competitions, both Inter School Zonal Level and Inter Zonal District Lev-

el activities were organised, encompassing a range of disciplines. Boys and girls actively participated in events such as Yoga, Rope/Skipping, Carrom, and a thrilling Cross Country run.

Waseem Raja Joint Director Kashmir YSS while providing details about the activities conducted by YSS on Friday, said that it's heartening to see field employees of the department working tirelessly to generate information about the forthcoming G-20 Meeting.

JD further said the department organised Inter-School competitions in various disciplines as part of the G20 initiative on Friday.

Pertinently, Zone Dangerpora conducted an Inter School Zonal level Cross Country Run, witnessing the active participation of 161 students. Similarly, Zone Sopore organised an Inter School Zonal Level Yoga competition, with over 100 young athletes showcasing their flexibility and skills.

Furthermore, in Bandipora district, a two-day-long District Kho Kho tournament for boys under the age of 19 years concluded. The tournament witnessed intense competition, with District Budgam emerging as the winning team against District Baramulla.

While carrying forward the awareness campaigns related G-20 a series of colorful events were held in Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama, Budgam, and Shopian.

## Night Matches Held To Mark G-20 Meet: JKSC



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir hosted its first-ever night hockey match at newly constructed Hockey Astro-Turf at Polo Ground. The event brought together 150 participants and captivated the attention of more than 500 enthusiastic spectators.

Secretary J&K Sports Council (JKSC) Nuzhat Gul presided over the function as the chief guest. She was accompanied by Nuzhat Farooq Sports Officer Kashmir besides other officials of the Sports Council.

Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Sarmad Hafeez said that the match not only celebrated the spirit of hockey but also served as a platform to inspire future generations to pursue their sporting dreams.

Secretary JKSC Gull said that this is the first of many night matches to come, cementing J&K's place on the national

sporting map and nurturing a thriving sporting culture in the region.

While Football and Hockey events mesmerized the crowds, Cricket match played between Red FM and High Court XI also lived up to every penny. After winning the toss, Red FM elected to field first. Highcourt XI posted a competitive total of 167/9 in their allotted quota of 20 overs, with Shabir Lefty's 93 runs in 64 balls being the standout performance. Wahid from Red FM was the pick of the bowlers, taking two wickets, while Sameen and Daamin took one wicket each.

In response, Red FM's Umar Nisar and Yawar Amin displayed their batting prowess, with Umar scoring an unbeaten 90\* runs in 64 balls and Yawar contributing with 55 runs in 38 balls while Tufail and Tawseef took one wicket each for High Court XI.

## IPL 2023: CSK Play DC, Aim At Qualification



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** A determined Chennai Super Kings unit wouldn't mind being masters of its fate in its bid to steamroll the already ousted Delhi Capitals, who are looking to end a forgettable IPL campaign on a high in a final league game, here on Saturday.

At the moment, CSK are on second on the points table with 15 points from 13 games. But a loss against DC along with a string of unfavourable results could see the four-time champions miss out on the last leg of IPL action.

A win would, however, confirm a play-off spot but whether they finish in second place or third would depend on the Lucknow Super Giants' result against Kolkata Knight Riders later in the day.

CSK has a better net run rate of +0.381 than LSG's +0.304, who are also on 15 points.

The slow nature of the Feroz Shah Kotla track will suit CSK's game plan and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, in all likelihood playing his last competitive game in the

National Capital will like to make full use of the conditions against an out-of-sorts team. Batting has been CSK's strong suit.

Devon Conway, Ruturaj Gaikwad, and Ajinkya Rahane have provided solid starts but CSK needs the likes of Ambati Rayudu, Ravindra Jadeja, and Moeen Ali to complement Shivam Dube better in the middle overs.

On the bowling front, Tushar Deshpande has been expensive but he gets breakthroughs while young pacer Matheesha Pathirana has been doing a good job.

The spin trio of Jadeja, Moeen, and Mahesh Theekshana have also been effective in stemming the flow of runs.

But standing in CSK's way is an unpredictable Delhi side.

After a miserable first half, where they lost five games on the trot, the Capitals did manage to pick up some momentum, winning five out of their next eight games but it came too late in the competition.

They are out of the reckoning but head into the contest on the back of their first 200-plus scores and a morale-

boosting 15-run win over Punjab Kings, all but ending their chances of qualification. Come Saturday, David Warner and Co. would like to play the proverbial party-poopers once again by ending their IPL season with a win at home.

Apart from a few cameos by Axar Patel, Delhi's Indian batting line-up has failed miserably this season. Prithvi Shaw has perhaps been the biggest letdown along with veteran Manish Pandey, who is into his 16th IPL season.

Warner has mostly carried the Delhi batting with the likes of Mitchell Marsh, Phil Salt, and Rilee Rossouw showcasing their batting prowess in some games.

The bowling unit has eked out most of Delhi's wins with the spin duo of Axar and Kuldeep Yadav doing a remarkable job.

After leaking runs in the initial games, Anrich Nortje has also found his groove while Khaleel Ahmed has also been impactful on occasions and profligate at other times. The match starts at 3:30 pm IST.

## BCCI Set To Ratify Its POSH Policy & Form World Cup Working Group At SGM

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian cricket board will ratify its new Prevention Of Sexual Harassment (PSH) policy at a Special General Meeting (SGM) in Ahmedabad on May 27 while a core "Working Group" will be formed to oversee preparations for the 2023 ODI World Cup in October-November.

The PTI has accessed the five point agenda of the SGM agenda including "Formation of Infrastructure Development and Subsidy Sub-Committee, Guidelines for appointment of Physiotherapists and Trainers in state teams, Formation of Working Group for ICC World Cup 2023, Formation of committee of Women's Premier League and Ratification of Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy".

After the sexual harassment accusations against former BCCI CEO Rahul Johri, the BCCI



had formed a four-member Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) but more members could be included in the new committee as per revised policy.

The Working Group for the ODI World Cup will comprise BCCI president, secretary, treasurer along with acting CEO and other senior officials.

The board has already allocated funds for upgradation of infrastructure of all the stadiums zeroed in for the ODI

World Cup.

Most of the venues need urgent revamp and need to be made spectator friendly. As far as committee formation for the Women's Premier League is concerned, they would need to ensure that a dedicated window for the tournament is finalised at the earliest.

"This year, Australian women's team will be playing international matches till third week of February and hence you can only start WPL after that. In case, you are looking at Diwali window, then there is men's World Cup," a franchise official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

One important aspect will be appointment of physios and trainers for the state units and the BCCI would want a NCA certified support staff to be associated with domestic teams for a uniform fitness module and injury management programme.



## 'Australia Have Slight Advantage In WTC Final'

Agencies

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting believes that the conditions of the Oval will be similar to Australia and this will give the Aussies a slight edge against India in the World Test Championship 2023 final.

"I think it will be a bit more similar to an Australian wicket than it will be to an Indian wicket, therefore I am giving a slight advantage to Australia. If this game was being played in India, I would have said it is really going to be hard for Australia to win. If this game was played in Australia, I'd say Australia are the heavy favourites. The fact that this final is being played in England probably brings both teams a little closer together," Ponting said at an event in New Delhi.

The Indian team has started to dominate in overseas conditions in recent times. They dominated Australia in the 2020/21 Border Gavaskar Trophy. Along with this, the Pataudi Trophy 2021-2022 against England ended on level terms (2-2). The Indian team will certainly back themselves to lift the trophy even though the conditions may not play up to their advantage.

"The one thing India has been able to change through that period from the late 1990s until now or even the early 2000s until now is their ability to compete outside of India," Ponting said. "Yes, their batting skills have gotten better but the fact that

they have been able to produce some very good fast bowlers over the 10-15-year period that they've been able to have success away," Ponting added.

One player who has played a crucial role in uplifting India's chances in overseas conditions is Cheteshwar Pujara. The veteran Indian batter has put Division Two on fire with his incredible run-scoring and resilience in the Test format. He is currently the highest run-scorer in Division Two, having scored 545 runs in seven innings at an average of 77.85, with three centuries and a fifty. His best score is 151 across five matches. Even Ponting addressed the threat Pujara carries and he called out his wicket as the most prized wicket out of all the Indian batters that the Australian team will try to claim with all their might.

"He will be the prized wicket all the Australians will be looking forward to. Last few series they've played, [Cheteshwar] Pujara has been really hard to dismiss. He's over there [in England] playing now [for Sussex]. Steve Smith is also there playing along with Marnus Labuschagne, trying to get a bit of a feel for the conditions before this big Test match comes around. So, look, I think it'll be India India's top order against Australia's fast bowling. I think it is a bit of a mouthwatering sort of thought going forward." India's challenge against Australia will begin on June 7. (ANI)

## Vaughan Returns To BBC Cricket Coverage For Ashes



Agencies

**LONDON:** Former England captain Michael Vaughan will be part of the BBC's cricket coverage for the Ashes series and England's one-off test match against Ireland in June, the broadcaster said on Friday. Vaughan, 48, stepped down from commentary duties last June after his former Yorkshire team mate Azeem Rafiq alleged he had used racist language during their time at the cricket club.

Vaughan strongly denied the allegation and was cleared by the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) in March. Rafiq, a player of Pakistani descent, alleged Vaughan told him and other players of Asian origin

there were "too many of you lot, we need to do something about it" before a match in 2009.

The CDC said its panel "was not satisfied on the balance of probabilities" that Vaughan said the words "at the time and in the specific circumstances alleged". Vaughan, who led England to success in the 2005 Ashes series, was one of seven individuals charged by the England & Wales Cricket Board with using racist or discriminatory language.

He had previously been dropped from the BBC's coverage of the 2021-22 Ashes in Australia. England face Ireland at Lord's on June 1 before the five-test Ashes series against Australia begins at Edgbaston on June 16.

## Italian Teams Bidding For Clean Sweep Of European Trophies

Agencies

**MILAN:** Italian teams are bidding to achieve what they have only done once before: a clean sweep of all three of Europe's top club competitions.

Inter Milan is aiming to end a 13-year wait for the Champions League trophy, while Roma is targeting a second straight European title after reaching the Europa League final and Fiorentina is in the Europa Conference League final.

In 1990, AC Milan won the European Cup and Juventus won the UEFA Cup — the previous names for the Champions League and Europa League. Sampdoria won the now-defunct European Cup Winners' Cup.

"Inter, Roma and Fiorentina have been extraordinary, they have accomplished an exceptional result for the whole movement," said Gabriele Gravina, the president of the Italian soccer federation. "The enthusiasm generated by this success is something unique so I congratulate the respective directors, technical staff

and the players because the three finals are the result of very solid technical projects."

Gravina will attend all three finals, starting with Roma's match against Sevilla in Budapest on May 31. Fiorentina then plays West Ham in Prague a week later before Inter takes on Manchester City in Istanbul on June 10.

"Now we will cheer them on for final successes," Gravina said. "Certainly it won't be easy, but I am convinced that all three have good chances."

"For the future, the hope is that these results will become more constant in time, by supporting the work of the federation on youngsters, financial balance and stadiums."

**CITY JUGGERNAUT**

Inter has the hardest task of the Italian teams as it faces juggernaut Manchester City.

The English team will be full of confidence after routing 14-time champion Real Madrid 4-0 on Wednesday to progress to the final 5-1 on aggregate.

Like City, Inter is bidding for a treble of trophies.



While not quite in the realm of City's treble bid — Champions League, English Premier League, FA Cup — Inter won the Italian Super Cup in January, has the Italian Cup final against Fiorentina next Wednesday, and then the Champions League final with City next month. Inter beat city rival AC Milan 3-0 on aggregate

to reach the final.

**MOURINHO MAGIC**

Roma is in its second straight final after ending Italian soccer's long wait for a European title last year.

Roma's success in last season's inaugural Europa Conference League was the first European trophy for an Italian team

since Inter won the treble of the Champions League, Serie A and the Italian Cup in 2010.

Both teams were coached by the same man: José Mourinho.

The 60-year-old Mourinho is bidding for a sixth European title. He has won the Europa League with both Porto (when it was still known as the UEFA Cup) and Manchester United

and also has two Champions League titles.

"I'm not worried about being part of Roma history, but simply helping the lads achieve big things and improve, as well as helping the Roma fans, who've given me so much going back to day one," Mourinho said. "We're always giving our all to try to make the supporters happy. Reaching the final is certainly a source of so much joy."

Roma's opponent has dominated the competition as Sevilla is bidding for a record-extending seventh title. The Spanish team has never lost a Europa League final.

**JUVE MISS OUT**

Sevilla got to the final by beating another Italian team, in Juventus.

It won 2-1 after extra time on Thursday to progress 3-2 on aggregate and prevent an all-Italian final.

The elimination was the latest woe for Juventus in a season that has been full of turmoil on and off the field.

Juventus is second in Serie A

and on course for a spot in next season's Champions League but could yet be docked points again.

The Bianconeri were hit with a 15-point penalty for false accounting in January but its punishment was suspended last month and the case was referred back to the soccer federation's appeals court.

A new ruling is expected Monday.

**TWO FINALS**

After waiting nearly a decade to play in the final of any competition, two have come along at once for Fiorentina.

As well as facing West Ham in the Europa Conference League, Fiorentina will also take on Inter in the Italian Cup final.

The Tuscan team last contested a final when it lost to Napoli in the 2014 Italian Cup.

Fiorentina has to go back even further for its last European final, when it was beaten by Juventus in the UEFA Cup in 1990 — the year Italian teams last dominated European soccer. (AP)