

SOARING AIRFARES

Airlines Told To Devise Pricing Mechanism

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The government on Monday asked airlines to devise a mechanism to ensure reasonable airfares amid a surge in air ticket prices, particularly on certain routes that were earlier served by Go First.

In the case of the unfortunate Odisha tragedy, airlines have been advised to provide free carriage (cargo) services to the families of the deceased, the civil aviation ministry said.

During an hour-long meeting of the airlines advisory group, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia shared his concerns about the steep rise in airfares on certain routes.

Airlines have been asked to self-monitor airfares on routes that have seen a considerable rise in ticket prices, particularly those that were served by Go First earlier.

Go First stopped flying from May 3 and the reduction of capacity due to the crisis at the budget airline has come at a time when the peak domestic air travel period is round the corner. A mechanism should be devised by airlines to ensure reasonable pricing within the high RBDs (Reservation Booking Designator) and the same would be monitored by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the ministry said **| More on P10**

WAR AGAINST DRUGS

LG Calls For Stringent Action Against Drug Traffickers

‘Action Plan Of Task Force Highlights Administration's Zero-Tolerance Policy Towards Narcotics’

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union Territory Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday called for stringent action against the drug traffickers, increased IEC activities, involvement of communities and capacity building of police officers and drug enforcement agencies to tackle the menace of drug abuse.

Sinha passed these directions while chairing 5th UT level meeting of Narco Coordination Center (NCORD) here on Monday.

Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Director General of Police, Dilbag Singh, senior officers of Police, J&K administration and concerned UT and central agencies also attended the meeting.

Sinha took appraisal of the action taken on the directions passed during 4th NCORD meeting and discussed the comprehensive strategy both for the UT and District Level



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

initiatives to counter the menace of drug abuse.

He also discussed the action plan prepared by the task force, headed by Special DG (Crime) A.K. Choudhary.

Besides, the LG called for enhanced coordination between all the security and drug law enforcement agencies.

“The action plan of the task force **| More on P10**

‘Historic G20 Event Placed J&K On Int'l Tourism Map’

Stating that humanity was facing the grave challenge of plastic pollution today, the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday said it was high to incentivize and promote sustainable alternative materials for redesign and repackaging of products to protect the environment. “Humanity is facing grave challenges of plastic pollution today. Our resolution on this year's environment day is to ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’. It is now the responsibility of the entire society to accomplish this resolution through the spirit of Jan Bhagidari,” Sinha said. He was addressing the World Environment Day event, organized by the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment, at SKICC here on Monday. The LG reiterated the commitment of **| More on P10**

WE ARE TRULY FORTUNATE THAT NATURE HAS SELFLESSLY GIVEN US EVERYTHING THAT is necessary for a better life and it is our bounden duty to show sensitivity towards nature and make efforts to conserve natural resources.”

Dying Dal Lake To Get New Lease Of Life

Clean Energy Provider CEF Group To Process 70,000 Tonnes Of Lake Waste

Aaqib Javed

Srinagar:- An energy solutions company based in New Delhi has announced plans to tackle the waste management problem in Dal lake by converting 70,000 tons of lake waste into organic manure and allied products.

Clean Effentech International Pvt Ltd (CEF) Group and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) will jointly convert 70,000 tons of lake waste, like weeds, and lilies from Dal Lake into

organic manure and allied products.

CEF is an energy solutions company with a vast portfolio and solutions expertise. CEF has waste processing plants coming up in Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Jammu, Muzaffarnagar and various other locations in the country and four plants outside India as well.

The conversion process will kick-start in August 2023 at the waste processing plant of CEF Group, where Dal Lake waste will be treated and processed in the CEF plant being set up in **| More on P10**



A YOUTH DOING MORNING WALK along the newly constructed Jhelum riverfront in Rajbagh area of the city on a sunny Monday morning. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Hajj-2023: Space For Prayers, Ahram For Pilgrims At Srinagar Airport

Agencies

Srinagar: Ahead of Hajj 2023, the authorities at Srinagar International Airport have made special arrangements for prayers and designated the space for wearing Ahram - the white clothing worn by Hajj pilgrims.

Director Srinagar International Airport Kuldeep Singh Rishi said that a specified area has been marked for the Hajj pilgrims - both males and females - for changing Ahram and offering prayers.

This has been done for the convenience of Hajj pilgrims, he said.



Earlier, the Director in a tweet said a special area at the airport has been designated for

the convenience of pilgrims for changing into Ahram.

“Special area **| More on P10**

Employer Can't ‘Arbitrarily’ Abandon Selection Process At Any Time: HC

M Ahmad

Srinagar: While an employer has a right to abandon the selection process at any time, the same cannot be done arbitrarily or at its sweet will, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh said on Monday.

“The fundamental questions that arise for consideration in the instant petition is as to what are the rights of a candidate, who competes in a selection process and can an employer, who, admittedly, is a “State” within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution selectively



make appointments regardless of the merit determined in a selection process,” said a bench of Justice Javed Iqbal Wani while allowing a petition filed by candidate who had challenged his

non-selection as driver in J&K State Sports Council in 2014 despite being meritorious. One of the two candidates selected then, the petitioner—Ravinder Singh—through official documents revealed, was also ineligible being overage on the cut-off date provided in the advertisement notice.

“There can be no dispute on the proposition of law that mere selection does not confer any right of appointment and that an employer has a right to abandon the selection process at any time, but the question

would be, can it be done arbitrarily without any reasonable and just cause on the sweet will of the employer and can an employer be permitted to resort to pick and choose method while making appointment from a selection list by appointing a less meritorious candidate and leave more meritorious candidate?”

The answer, the court said, has to be emphatic “no not at all” because “ours is a country governed by rule of law and arbitrariness is an anathema to the rule of law.”

“When an **| More on P10**

MeT Predicts Warmer Days In J&K

AGENCIES

Srinagar: Amid predictions for mainly dry weather and warmer days, night temperature in Jammu and Kashmir continued to hover below normal despite an increase on Monday.

Srinagar recorded a low of 11.3°C against 9.8°C on the previous night and it was below normal by 2.1°C for the summer capital.

Qazigund recorded a low of 9.8°C against 8.4°C on the previous night while the hill station of Pahalgam in South Kashmir recorded a low of 4.6°C against 4.0°C on the previous night.

In Kupwara town the mercury settled at 9.0°C against 8.2°C on the previous night and it was 2.7°C below normal for the north Kashmir area.

Kokernag recorded a low of 10.0°C against **| More on P10**

S H O R T T A K E S

Govt Transfers 3 JKAS Officers

The Union Territory administration Monday ordered transfers and postings of three Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) officers with immediate effect. As per an order issued by General Administration Department (GAD), Suheel Ahmad Lone, JKAS, Sub-Registrar, Pulwama, is transferred and **| More on P10**

Falling Tree Kills Tamil Tourist

A tourist from Tamil Nadu died on Monday after a tree fell on him during horse riding at a resort in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The victim has been identified as Janarthanam (67), they said. According to the officials, the tree fell due to strong winds near Hill Park on Baisaran track in Pahalgam and hit the victim. Both the rider and **| More on P10**

Govt Employee Found Dead In Qazigund

An employee of the Animal Husbandry department was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Nagrass area of Qazigund in south Kashmir's Kulgam district, an official said. An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the man identified as Mohammad Younous Khan son Mohammad Hussain of Nagrass was **| More on P10**

12 Injured As Tempo Rams Into Wall

Twelve people were injured after a tempo rammed into a wall in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Monday, officials said. The accident happened at the Rah Salyote area after the tempo driver lost control over the vehicle, they said. All the injured have been shifted to sub-district hospital in Sunderbani, they said.

Mughal Road Partially Reopens For Traffic

The Mughal road connecting Kashmir Valley's Shopian district with the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch was partially reopened for vehicular traffic after it was blocked for six days due to a landslide here, officials said. Debris from the landslides have been cleared partially and vehicular traffic has been restored at affected place, the officials said. **| More on P10**

Drug Peddler's Property Seized In Bandipora

The police here in this north Kashmir district on Monday seized property of a notorious drug peddler Khursheed Ahmad Waza alias MANDELA under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS) Act. Waza, a chronic and notorious drug peddler was arrested along with 04 KGs of Charas in a raid by the police, officials said. His son Aqib Khursheed Waza **| More on P10**

Man Stabbed By His Brother-In-Law In Batamalloo

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A man was allegedly stabbed by his brother-in-law in Batamalloo area of Srinagar on Monday, days after a middle aged man was stabbed to death by a youth in the same locality.

Reports reaching here said that during the night a man identified as Danish Mushtaq (27), resident of Tengpora Batamalloo was allegedly stabbed by his brother-in-law in Tengpora Batamalloo.

They said that Danish

has received a left thigh injury and has been shifted to hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile police have taken cognizance and started an investigation.

Pertinent to mention that police arrested a juvenile in connection with murder of a middle aged man at Mominabad Batamalloo a few days ago.

Accused juvenile, police said stabbed the victim multiple times, leaving him critically injured. The injured man was declared as brought by the doctors on arrival.

KTA Concerned Over Sluggish Pace Of Work On Smart City Projects

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Kashmir Traders Alliance (KTA) Monday asked the Lieutenant Governor led administration to speed up work on smart city projects in Srinagar.

Aijaz Shaidhar, President of KTA, stated that while the speed of work on smart city projects was good but there has been a sluggish approach post the G20 meeting took place in Srinagar.

"Smart City Projects are scattered across Srinagar city, it is important that these Projects are finished at the earliest as the dug up

roads, footpaths are hampering movement of the general public and has affected business in the city," he said in a statement.

"Government agencies should on priority finish works undertaken under the smart city initiative," he said.

Shaidhar said that they have urged the authorities to expedite the project's work, but nothing has been done so far," adding that the LG administration should prioritise finishing smart city projects since it has kept businesses in regions where work is being done captive.



Students from various schools partipated in World Environment Day at SKICC along the Boulevard Road in Srinagar on Monday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

Pledge Ceremonies Held In Srinagar Panchayat Halqas

Observer News Service

Srinagar: On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad pledge ceremonies were held in all Panchayat Halqas of Srinagar District during Gram Gram Sabha as part of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

The aim of the pledge ceremonies was to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving the goal of a sustainable substance abuse free Srinagar.

The pledge was administered during the Gram Sabha held in all Panchayat Halqas of Harwan, Khonmoh, Srinagar and Qamarwari Blocks of the District.

On the occasion, all the participants vowed to stay away from drugs and to make efforts to make Srinagar a drug free District.

Besides members of DDC, BDC and other PRIs, the programs were participated by the general masses in large numbers.

Speakers on the occasion

said that drug addiction is an issue of grave concern, especially among the younger generation and has detrimental impact not only on the individual concerned but on the society as a whole.

During the programs, people were also sensitized about environmental issues and the role of Public in its preservation and protection.

The senior officers and officials of Rural Development Department present on the occasion.

Biker, Pillion Rider Injured In Srinagar Road Mishap

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A motorcycle skidded off the road on the flyover near Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar, resulting in injuries to the biker and the pillion rider, officials said on Monday.

Officials said the mishap took place at Rambagh Flyover, adding, the injured duo was immediately rushed to the hospital for treatment, wherein condition of one of the injured is stated to be critical.

The injured have been identified as Huzaif from Astanpora Rawalpura and Sabir Ayoub Hakeem of Rawalpura.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident and are investigating the matter.

Power Shutdown Notified For Several Kashmir Parts

Observer News Service


Srinagar: Power Controller Kashmir has informed that, the power supply to Receiving Stations Safakadal, Kawdoor, Mughal Masjid, Rainawari, Khanyar, Zoonimar, Soura and Wanganpora shall remain affected due to facilitate repair works at 132/ 33 Kv Grid Station Wanganpora on June 06 from 8 am to 12 noon and June 08 from 1 pm to 5 pm.

Similarly, in order to carry augmentation work of 33 Kv Tral-1st line the power supply to receiving stations Chewa, Tral and Tral-I Balla shall remain affected on June 06 and 08 from 9 am to 5 pm.

Likewise, in order to facilitate repair works the power supply to receiving stations Dalband, Brein, Nishat, Shalimar and Harwan shall remain affected on June 06 from 10 am to 5 pm and receiving station Harwan shall remain affected on June

07, 08, 10 and 12 from 10 am to 2 pm.

Similarly, in order to carry out rectification of damage OPGW on 132 Kv Wanpoh- Awantipora Line the power supply to 132 Kv Awantipora Line Ckt-1 shall remain affected on June 06 and 07 from 9 am to 6 pm; 33 Kv SICOP Line (From Wanpoh GSS), 11 Kv Wanpon and Railway Feeders (Harnag Receiving Station) shall remain affected on June 06 from 9 am to 6 pm.



Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited
Impaired Assets Portfolio Management Department
Zonal Office Baramulla, Amargarh, Sopore
E: amid.zobara@jkbmail.com ; W: www.jkbank.com

Sale Notice for sale of Movable Properties

Owing to non-payment of long outstanding loan by the below named borrower, the Bank has seized the hypothecated vehicle in terms of agreement, which is parked in/at J&K Bank, Zonal Office Baramulla, Amargarh Sopore.

The description and details of the vehicle is given hereunder:

S. No.	Name of Borrower	Name of Branch	Registration No.	Vehicle Description	Parked at
1.	Mr. Tariq Ahmad Dar S/o Mr. Mohammad Abdullah Dar R/o Shitloo, Rohama Rafiabab, Baramulla	T.P. Baramulla	JK05F-8658 Tata Tigor (XT-1.2 RTN BS4)	Chassis No:MAT629251HKGS1054 Engine No:REVTRN05GSYK40250 Model--2017	Zonal Office Baramulla, Amargarh Sopore


The Bank has decided to put the said vehicle at auction "as is where is & whatever there is" basis. The vehicle is available for inspection on any working day between 07.06.2023 to 22.06.2023 at J&K Bank, Zonal Office Baramulla, Amargarh Sopore. Sealed quotations affixed with two rupee revenue stamp are invited from the interested parties for the purchase of said vehicle to be accompanied by Call Deposit Receipt for Rs. 69,750.00 (being 25% of Reserve Price of Rs. 2,79,000.00) pledged to Authorized officer, The J&K Bank Ltd. IAPM Department, Zonal Office Baramulla which is to be deposited with Branch Office T.P. Baramulla by or before 23.06.2023 during working hours. The tenders will be opened on 26.06.2023 at 11.30 AM at J&K Bank, Zonal Office Baramulla, Amargarh Sopore in presence of the bidders who choose to remain present on the given date and time. The successful bidder shall have to deposit the entire qualified auction amount within seven (07) days. The Bank reserves the right to withdraw/cancel the bid/auction of the vehicle at any time/stage without assigning any reason thereof and shall not entertain any claim/liability of any other person/s of whatsoever nature. All attendant charges/dues/taxes including transfer of ownership/permits etc. shall have to be borne and be the responsibility of the purchaser exclusively of his own. GST at the applicable rate on the taxable value derived under GST law will be charged in addition to the bidding price/sale price. For other Terms & conditions, kindly contact our Branch Office T.P. Baramulla.

Date:- 03.06.2023
Place : Amargarh, Sopore

Authorized Officer

Registered office : Corporate Headquarters, M.A.Road, Srinagar 190001, Kashmir, India
CIN: L65110JK1938SGC000048 ; T : +91 (0)194 2481 930-35 ; F : +91 (0)194 248 1928 ; E : info@jkbmail.com ; W : www.jkbank.com

DIPK-NB-1091/23 dated: 05-06-2023



Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited
Impaired Assets Portfolio Management Department
Zonal Office Baramulla, Amargarh, Sopore
E: amid.zobara@jkbmail.com ; W: www.jkbank.com

AUCTION CUM-SALE NOTICE
(For Sale of Secured asset under the SARFAESI Act, 2002)

Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Mortgage (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd. (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 23.06.2023, for recovery of Rs. 55,60,169.24 being balance outstanding as on 30.04.2023 due to The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd. (Secured Creditor) from Mr. Habibullah War S/O. Mr. Ghulam Mohiuddin War R/O. Fatehpura, Baramulla, Sole proprietor of M/S Bilal Traders (Borrower cum Mortgage) and I. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad War S/O. Mr. Ghulam Mohiuddin War R/O Fatehpura, Baramulla ii). Mr. Ghulam Ahmad Dar S/O. Mr. Ahsan Dar R/O. Poshbagh, Baramulla iii). Ms. Naseema Bano D/O. Mr. Ghulam Mohiuddin War R/O Fatehpura, Baramulla (Guarantors). The reserve price will be Rs. 94.28 Lacs and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 9,42,800.00.

Description of Property:-
Land measuring 04 Kanal 18½ marlas situated at mouza Fatehpura, Tehsil & District Baramulla standing in the name of Borrower-Mr. Habibullah War with following details:

SCHEDULE OF MORTGAGED PROPERTY:

Khasra No.	Khata No.	Khewat No.	Area of Land	
			Kanal	Marlas
1982/1030 Min	576	169	0	18 ½
2336/1030	584	169	01	00
1186	582	169	0	10
1186 Min	582	169	02	10
		Total Land	04 Kanal	18 ½ Marlas

The tender document containing full details of the properties and all the terms and conditions can be had from JK Bank Branch Office Khwaja Bagh Baramulla during office hours on all working days against a payment of Rs.100/-. The completed tenders must be received in the said Branch latest by 22.06.2023. The tender should be accompanied by an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of not less than 10% of the Price Offered (which in any case should not be below the Reserve Price for the property concerned) in the form of a Demand Draft/ Pay Order payable at Sopore, Kashmir, issued by a commercial bank in favour of The Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd. Branch- Khwaja Bagh Baramulla.


This publication is also 15 days notice to the borrower/mortgagor/guarantors of the above said loan account about holding of sale on above mentioned date/ place if the outstanding dues are not paid in full.

Date:- 03.06.2023
Place : Sopore

Authorized Officer

Registered office : Corporate Headquarters, M.A.Road, Srinagar 190001, Kashmir, India
CIN: L65110JK1938SGC000048 ; T : +91 (0)194 2481 930-35 ; F : +91 (0)194 248 1928 ; E : info@jkbmail.com ; W : www.jkbank.com

DIPK-NB-1090/23 dated: 05-06-2023

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 - TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
 - PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
 - PDD: 0194-2450213
 - FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
 - CAPD: 18001807011
 - SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
 - Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS


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



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
16 Zil-Qadah
1444

PRAYERS

FAJR	3:37
ZUHR	12:28
ASR	5:26
Magrib	7:41
ISHA	9:20

This Day In History

- 640- Arab Muslim army sent by Caliph Omar (RA) begins siege of Heliopolis, city succumbs mid to late July, paving way for Muslim conquest of Byzantine Egypt
- 1744 France and Prussia sign peace treaty
- 1801- Peace of Badajoz: Spain-Portugal
- 1882- Cyclone in Arabian Sea (Bombay, India) drowns 100,000 (disputed event)
- 1882- Electric iron patented by New York inventor Henry W. Seely. It weighed almost 15 pounds and was very slow to heat up.
- 1912- The eruption of Novarupta in Alaska begins, the largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century
- 1916- The death of Yuan Shikai, ruler of much of China since 1912, causes central government to virtually collapse in the face of pressure from warlords, and from political reformers including Sun Yat-sen
- 1918- Battle of Belleau Wood, 1st US victory of WW I
- 1919- Finland declares war on bolsheviks
- 1919- The Republic of Prekmurje ends
- 1926- Egyptian government of Adly Pasha forms
- 1942- Japanese forces retreat, ending Battle of Midway
- 1944- Operation Overlord: D-Day begins as the 156,000-strong Allied Expeditionary Force lands in Normandy, France, during World War II
- 1944- World War II: All Major League Baseball games are cancelled in honor of the D-Day landings in northern France
- 1947- Treaty drawn up for establishment of International Patent Institute
- 1966- Gemini 9 completes 45 orbits after rendezvous with "angry alligator"
- 1966- NFL & AFL announce their merger
- 1967- Israeli troops occupy Gaza during second day of the Six-Day War
- 1971- Air West flight 706 collides with a US Marine Corps F-4B Phantom jet over Los Angeles killing all 49 aboard the DC-6 and the pilot of the F-4B
- 1972 - Explosion at world's largest coal mine kills 427 (Wankie, Rhodesia)
- 1972 - US bombs Haiphong, North-Vietnam; 1000s killed
- 1975 - Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam established
- 1977 - Washington Post reports US has developed neutron bomb
- 1981 - A passenger train travelling between Mansi and Saharsa, India, jumps the tracks at a bridge crossing the Bagmatiriver, killing 268 officially with another 300 or more missing.
- 1983 -Nicaragua expels 3 US diplomats
- 1985 - Soyuz T-13 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 7 space station

From KO Archives

‘No Proposal To Form Kashmir Committee’

SIMLA:There is no proposal to set up a Kashmir Committee in Parliament, Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee said here today.

"At the moment, there is no proposal to form a Kashmir Committee," he said replying to questions after inaugurating a two-day conference 'Towards South Asian Unity' organised by the South Asian Free Media Association.

Chatterjee was asked by a Pakistani journalist if a Kashmir Committee could be formed in the Indian Parliament on the lines of such a panel set up in Pakistan in the wake of the Baroness Emma Nicholson's report on Kashmir in the European Parliament.

(Kashmir Observer, 06 June, 2007)

Iran to Reopen Diplomatic Missions in Saudi Arabia This Week



Agencies

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy in Riyadh, consulate general in Jeddah and Iran's permanent representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) will be officially reopened on Tuesday and Wednesday," Nasser Kan'ani said on Monday.

Kan'ani said Iran's embassy in Riyadh and its consulate general in Jeddah have started activities before the departure of Iranians to attend the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

Following several days of intensive negotiations in Beijing, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed on March 10 to resume diplomatic ties and reopen embassies within two months. In a joint statement after signing the agreement, Tehran and Riyadh highlighted the need to respect national sovereignty and refrain from interference in the internal affairs of one another.

They also agreed to implement a security cooperation

agreement signed in April 2001 and another accord reached in May 1998 to boost economic, commercial, investment, technical, scientific, cultural, sports, and youth affairs cooperation.

Last month, Iran appointed Alireza Enayati as its ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Enayati had previously served as Iran's ambassador to Kuwait, assistant to the foreign minister and director-general of Persian Gulf affairs at the Foreign Ministry.

In a Friday meeting with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the sidelines of a meeting of the BRICS group of emerging countries, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said he would pay an official visit to Tehran in the near future.

He extended his gratitude to the Iranian side for warmly welcoming the Saudi technical delegation and providing valuable assistance as to the reopening of the Saudi embassy and consulate general in Iran.

"Made It Very Clear": Nitish Kumar Delays Mega Opposition Meet, Names Congress

Press Trust of India

PATNA: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar today said that he was insistent upon "heads" of respective parties attending the opposition meet, which was scheduled on June 12, but has been postponed.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function in Patna, the JD(U) chief said a new date for the much talked about meeting will be announced after consultation with all parties.

"We had to put off the June 12 meeting after the Congress and another party conveyed to me that they found the date inconvenient. I have therefore decided to postpone the meet and asked the Congress to suggest a new date after consultation with other parties.

"But I have made one thing very clear. All parties which agree to attend the meeting, must be represented by their respective heads," Mr Kumar said.

If any party insisted that it be represented by someone else, that would not be acceptable, he said.

"For example, there was an impression that the Congress may send someone else other than its president. This was something we could not accept", added Mr Kumar, who has, since his exit from the NDA last year, embarked on a drive to bring together all parties op-



posed to the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha polls next year.

Last week, state Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh had said that his party was planning to send "one chief minister and another senior leader" for the meeting.

This had evoked taunts from the BJP, now in opposition in Bihar, which claimed neither Rahul Gandhi, who is abroad, nor Mallikarjun Kharge, the Congress president, was assigning much importance to the initiative of Nitish Kumar, despite being his ally in the state. The idea of a meeting of opposition parties in Patna was first mooted by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at a press conference she addressed jointly with Mr Kumar in April.

Accompanied by his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, Nitish Kumar had visited Kolkata to meet the TMC chief who exhorted him to carry forward the legacy of Jayaprakash Narayan, referring to the socialist leader's revolt against the Indira Gandhi government before and during the Emergency.

US Defence Secretary Meets Rajnath Singh

Putting 'Full Weight' Behind India's Defence Modernisation: US

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India and the US have a unique role in preserving the rules-based global order, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Monday while citing "bullying and coercion" by China and Russian aggression against Ukraine.

After holding wide-ranging talks with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here, Austin said that the US government is putting its "full weight" behind supporting India's defence modernisation.

Describing the US-India relationship as one of the most "consequential" ones, Austin said the partnership is a "cornerstone" for a free and open Indo-Pacific and that the growing military cooperation between the two "great powers" can be a force for global good.

The US is "absolutely committed" to "our historic investment" in ensuing technology cooperation with India, the US defence secretary said at a media briefing.

In their talks, Austin and Singh concluded an ambitious roadmap for defence-industrial cooperation to fast-track technology tie-ups and co-production of military platforms such as air combat and land systems.

"I can tell you that the US government is putting our full weight behind supporting India's defence modernisation. I look forward to continuing to work with Minister Singh going forward," Austin said.

In his comments to the media, the US defence secretary spoke about various dimensions of the growing defence



and strategic cooperation between India and the US and its significance in the current geo-political scenario.

"This all matters because we all face a rapidly changing world. We see bullying and coercion from the People's Republic of China and Russian aggression against Ukraine that seeks to redraw borders by force and threatens national sovereignty, as well as transnational threats such as terrorism and climate change," he said.

His remarks come amid rising tension in the Taiwan Strait where a Chinese naval ship cut sharply across the path of an American destroyer on Saturday, forcing the US vessel to slow to avoid a collision.

The US defence secretary also rejected China's allegations that the US was trying to establish an Asian NATO in the Indo-Pacific.

"We are absolutely not trying to establish a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) in the Indo-Pacific. We continue to work with like-minded countries to ensure that the region remains free and open," he said.

THE US IS "ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED" to "our historic investment" in ensuing technology cooperation with India, the US defence secretary said at a media briefing.

Trains 'Slowly' Cross Odisha Crash Site Days After Disaster

Press Trust of India

As the Vande Bharat Express crossed the site of the triple train crash at Bahanaga Bazar Monday morning successfully, the first train to cross the disaster site during day hours, passengers on board gasped at the horror of the devastation unleashed by the train pile up last Friday unfolded before their eyes.

As the train which started from Howrah slowed down as a mark of caution running across freshly repaired tracks, a few muttered Jagannath, Jagannath, the name of the presiding deity of Puri, the destination of the train, but most were too stunned to speak.

The railway authorities had on Sunday informed passengers through a group



SMS that the train would leave on time.

The train left on time from Howrah station at 6.10 am but no one was sure of the route it would take as news on the state of the tracks which had broken up because of the accident which claimed 275 lives was unknown.

Passengers were heard discussing the route it might take, especially as the display board in the compartment showed it was travelling at a speed of over

110 km per hour.

The majority of the passengers were bound for Puri, the sea side pilgrim town and a favourite go-to destination for tourists in eastern India.

However, after the train reached Kharagpur the announcements that the next station would be Baleswar made the passengers rush to the large windows of the train, ready with their mobile phones.

The train speed was still between 110 km and 122 km.



80 Afghan Girls Hospitalised After Being Poisoned At Schools: Report

Agencies

KABUL: An education official in Afghanistan said almost 80 girls were hospitalised after being poisoned at schools, Fox News said.

According to reports, the incidents happened over Saturday and Sunday in the province of Sar-e-Pul in the north.

Mohammad Rahmani, the director of the provincial department of education, said the poisoning had occurred in the Sangcharak district among female pupils in grades 1 through 6.

He said that 60 children at Naswan-e-Kabod Aab School and 17 more at Naswan-e-Faizabad School had been poisoned, Fox News reported.

"Both primary schools are near to each other and were targeted one after the other," he said, adding, "We shifted the students to the hospital and now they are all fine."

The department's investigation is ongoing and initial inquiries show that someone with a grudge paid a third

party to carry out the attacks, Rahmani said, without sharing further details. He gave no information on how the girls were poisoned or the nature of their injuries, according to Fox News.

It is thought to be the first time this kind of assault has happened since the Taliban swept to power in August 2021 and began their crackdown on the rights and freedoms of Afghan women and girls.

Girls are banned from education beyond sixth grade, including university, and women are barred from most jobs and public spaces Fox News reported.

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The attack serves as a reminder of a wave of poisonings in neighbouring Iran targeting school-age girls, dating back to November. Thousands of students said they were sickened by noxious fumes in the incidents. But there has been no word on who might be behind the incidents or what -- if any, chemicals have been used, Fox News reported.

Fighter Jets Chase Small Plane In Washington Area Before It Crashes In Virginia

WASHINGTON: The United States scrambled F-16 fighter jets in a supersonic chase of a light aircraft with an unresponsive pilot that violated airspace around Washington DC and later crashed into the mountains of Virginia, officials said.

No survivors were found at the crash site, Virginia state police said.

The jet fighters created a sonic boom over the US capital as they pursued the errant Cessna Citation, officials said, causing consternation among people in the Washington area.

Four people were onboard the Cessna, a source familiar with the matter said. A Cessna Citation can carry seven to 12 passengers.

After several hours first responders reached the crash site but found no one alive, the Virginia State Police said in a statement.

The Cessna was registered to Encore Motors of Melbourne, Florida, according to the flight-tracking website Flight Aware.

Encore owner John Rumpel told the Washington Post his daughter, a grandchild and her nanny were on board.

"We know nothing about the crash," the Post quoted Rumpel

as saying. "We are talking to the FAA now," he added before ending the call.

The U.S. military attempted to contact the pilot, who was unresponsive, until the Cessna crashed near the George Washington National Forest in Virginia, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said in a statement.

The Cessna appeared to be flying on autopilot, another source familiar the matter said.

"The NORAD aircraft were authorized to travel at supersonic speeds and a sonic boom may have been heard by residents of the region," the statement said, adding that NORAD aircraft also used flares in an attempt to the pilot's attention.

A US official said the fighters did not cause the crash.

The Cessna took off from Elizabethton Municipal Airport in Elizabethton, Tennessee, and was bound for Long Island MacArthur Airport in New York, about 50 miles (80 km) east of Manhattan, the FAA said in a statement, adding that it and the National Transportation Safety Board would investigate.



NEWS MAKERS

Imam Khomeini's legacy lives on in movement toward new world order: Iran's FM

Agencies

IRANIAN Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says the personality of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini is an eternal truth moving towards a modern Islamic civilization.

Amir-Abdollahian made the remark in a post on his Instagram account on Sunday to commemorate the 34th passing anniversary of Imam Khomeini.

He said Imam Khomeini's character has stood up firmly against various types of malice and conspiracies as well as the propaganda employed by the sworn enemies of the Iranian and other free nations of the world.

The legacy of the late founder of the Islamic Republic is the current movement towards a new world order under the wise guidance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the minister said.

Amir-Abdollahian said Imam Khomeini and his school of monotheism



changed the thoughts and hearts of the free and free-thinking people in Iran and across the world. It challenged the system of global dictatorship and dominance, he said.

As announced by Ayatollah Khamenei, faith and hope have been the driving force of such a "huge and history-making" development, Amir-Abdollahian wrote.

Villagers Chop Off Dalit Man's Thumb After Nephew Picks-up Cricket Ball

Press Trust of India

PATAN: A group of people allegedly assaulted a Dalit man and chopped off his thumb after his nephew picked up a cricket ball during a match at a school playground in Gujarat's Patan district, police said.

The incident took place in Kakoshi village in the district on Sunday, an official said.

According to the FIR, the accused got angry and threatened the boy who had picked up the ball while watching a cricket match at a school playground in the village, he said.

They also allegedly hurled casteist slurs with the intention to insult and intimidate members of the Dalit community, the official said.

When the boy's uncle Dhiraj Parmar objected to this, the matter was settled for the time being, he said.

However, later that evening, a group of seven men armed with sharp weapons assaulted the complainant Dhiraj and his brother Kirti, the official said.

One of the accused chopped off Kirti's thumb and injured him seriously, he said.

An FIR has been registered under sections 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons), 506 (criminal intimidation) and other relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities Act), the official said.

Efforts are on to apprehend the accused, he added.

Gangster-Politician Mukhtar Ansari Gets Life Term For 1991 Murder

Press Trust of India

A court in Varanasi on Monday sentenced gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari to life imprisonment for the murder of Awadhesh Rai, the brother of a Congress leader, more than 30 years ago.

Awadhesh Rai, the brother of former MLA Ajay Rai, was shot dead on August 3, 1991, at the gate of his Lahurabir residence in Varanasi. A case was registered against Mukhtar Ansari and others.

The MP-MLA court's special judge Avnish Gautam awarded life sentence to Ansari in the case, a lawyer told reporters outside the Varanasi court.

Reacting to Ansari's conviction earlier in the day, Ajay Rai said, "This is the end of our many years of waiting. I, my parents, Awadhesh's daughter and the whole family kept patience... Governments came and went and Mukhtar strengthened himself.

"But we did not give up. Because of our lawyers' efforts, today the court has found Mukhtar guilty in the murder case of my brother," Rai added.

Lawyers said that around 1 am on August 3, 1991, Congress leader Ajay Rai and his brother were standing at the gate of



their house in Varanasi when some assailants, including Ansari, came there in a car and shot Awadhesh.

Ajay Rai fired from his licensed pistol in retaliation, following which the assailants fled, leaving the car behind, they said. Awadhesh was rushed to a hospital in Kabirchaura, where doctors declared him dead.

Ansari, a five-time MLA from Mau Sadar seat, did not contest the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election and the seat was won by his son Abbas Ansari on a ticket from the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, which had tied up with the Samajwadi Party.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

DEPARTMENT OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE



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कौशल भारत - कुशल भारत

KUPWARA (District Kupwara)



Skill India
कौशल भारत - कुशल भारत

Website:- itikupwara.in

Phone/Fax No:- 01955252052
E-Mail:- itikupwara001@gmail.com

ADMISSION NOTICE

Online applications are invited from the desirous candidates with effect from 1st June, 2023 to 21st of June, 2023, for seeking admission in Govt ITI Kupwara for the academic session 2023-24-25 in various Engineering/Non Engineering trades. The classes shall commence from 25th September 2023 after the due completion of on- line selection process by JKBOTE.

Candidates having minimum age of 14 years, as on 1st June 2023, with no upper age bar can apply. The desirous candidates have to fill up the admission forms online on ITI admission link <http://itiadmissions.jkdsd.in> available on the official website of Directorate of Skill Development Department i.e. www.ikdsd.in and also on the institute website i.e. www.itikupwara.in

The details pertaining to trades for which admissions are to be made for the Session 2023-24-25 in Government ITI Kupwara is available in the portal and is also listed as Annexure to this notification. The Candidates have to fill up the complete details which include Basic Details like Name, Parentage etc and Qualification Details online in the said portal and have to upload the soft copy of the following documents online only:-

1. Marks Certificate of Qualifying Examination.
2. Date of Birth Certificate.
3. Category Certificate(SC/ST/Ex. Serviceman/ Physically Handicapped/EWS) if any
4. Aadhar Card.

Note:- Domicile Certificate need to be produced by those candidates only who are selected after framing of selection list and at the time of Admission in the ITI.

The candidates after finalizing the profile and application online will be required to deposit the printout of the system-generated application in ITI Kupwara along with self-attested photo copies of above mentioned documents in the Institute.

The detailed guidelines for filling the application forms by the candidate are available on ITI admission portal.

The candidates will be required to deposit application form fee of Rs100/- (One hundred only) per three (03) choices of trade applied, against cash receipt in Govt ITI Kupwara

Important Note:

1. Selection will be made purely on the basis of academic merit obtained by the applicants in their qualifying examination.
2. On successful completion of training in the trades, National Council for Vocational Training will award certificate.
3. Candidates who have already undergone training in any of the trades can apply for admissions in another trade after two years after completion of previous training course. However, for the ensuing academic session, their admission can be considered in any trade having poor response.

NOTE:- FOR ANY QUERY PLEASE CONTACT: 7889948340/9622909885,

ANNEXURE TO ADMISSION NOTICE 2023

LIST OF TRADES AVAILABLE FOR ADMISSIONS IN GOVT ITI KUPWARA

FOR THE ACADEMIC SESSION 2023-24-25

S.No	Name of Trade	Duration	Minimum Qualification	NCVT/ SCVT	Scheme (Normal/PPP)
1	Computer operator & programming Assistant.	1 Year	10th	NCVT	Normal
2	Stenographer & Secretarial Assistant	1 Year	10th	NCVT	Normal
3	Sewing Technology	1 Year	8th	NCVT	Normal
4	Electrician	2 Year	10th	NCVT	Normal
5	Electronics Mechanic	2 Year	10th	NCVT	Normal
6	Mechanic Motor Vehicle	2 Year	10th	NCVT	Normal
7	Welder	1 Year	8th	NCVT	Normal
8	Carpenter	1 Year	8th	SCVT	Normal

No: ITI/Trg/Adm/2023/492-95
Dated: 03-06-2023
DIPK-2803-23
DT: 05/06/2023

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Odisha Train Tragedy

About 275 people were killed and around 1000 were injured in Odisha train tragedy, one of the worst in decades. According to Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, a change in electronic interlocking may have caused the horrific accident. He said that "whoever did it and how it happened will come out during the detailed investigation." The interlocking error means that due to an 'incorrect signal', the train that was supposed to go via the main 'up line', changed tracks at a speed of more than 125 kmph and collided with a goods train that was parked there. How did this happen? That is a matter of investigation. Some reports have pointed out that it could have also happened due to an 'electronic interlocking' error. And some reports also suggest that the railway ministry had been warned about the error weeks ago.

This is a serious issue and the government needs to get to the bottom of this. Whether it is a human or electronic error, the accountability should be fixed and heads should roll. The train collision has left a trail of devastation. As the dust settles, it is imperative to focus on what lies ahead. Several critical questions need answers: How will responsibility be assigned? Will this tragedy serve as a catalyst for the changes in railways which is the mode of transport for a large mass of people all over the country. Data says it all: India has the fourth largest railway network with over 22,593 operating trains with a daily passenger count of 24 million passengers and 203.88 million tonnes of freight. In 2022, passenger traffic stood at 3.54 billion as compared to 1.28 billion in 2021.

However, the recent performance audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India revealed that maintenance of tracks played a significant role in three-quarters of the consequential train accidents between 2017-18 and 2020-21. This highlights the importance of prioritizing track maintenance and addressing related issues to prevent derailments.

The tragic events in Odisha is a wake-up call and should not be forgotten or dismissed as another unfortunate incident. It should serve as a catalyst for change, spurring the government to take decisive action and improve track management. Lakhs of people travel by railways in India. And their safety deserves the highest priority. And first step towards this goal is to find out what happened in Odisha and to fix responsibility.

OTHER OPINION

Beating El Niño

Most economy watchers are upbeat about India's growth prospects in the current fiscal, more so after the revised better-than-expected GDP numbers for 2022-23. But there are three possible headwinds: A general global economic slowdown that can impact exports, the cumulative effect of interest rate increases in the past one year, and El Niño. It's the last one that poses the most immediate threat. Most climate models are indicating high probabilities for El Niño developing by July-August. This has also led the India Meteorological Department to forecast aggregate rainfall over the country during June-September at 96 per cent of the long period seasonal average, making it a just-about normal monsoon.

In the event of a subnormal season, the most obvious casualty would be the kharif crops that are mainly planted during June-July. The more the delay in the monsoon's onset and coverage across the country, it reduces the sowing window as well the period for plant growth. Also, if the transition to El Niño happens midway through the season, and given its usually lagged effect on actual rainfall, the resultant moisture stress could extend to the rabi winter-spring crops. Of course, these are extreme scenarios for now. But the fact remains that the Indian economy's fortunes are still tied to the monsoon, which has a bearing not just on agriculture production, but also hydro power generation and drinking water availability. And after four consecutive good monsoon years from 2019, this is one risk factor that simply cannot be wished away while making any growth projections.

The redeeming part, however, is that the overall food supply situation is fairly comfortable compared to a year ago at the height of the Russia-Ukraine war, or even two months back, when there was a lot of uncertainty over India's wheat crop and milk had turned the policymakers' next big headache. Thankfully, the yield losses in wheat from unseasonal rains weren't all that much and government agencies have procured enough grain to meet the requirements of the public distribution system. Surplus pre-monsoon showers, alongside a surprisingly mild summer so far, have been favourable for fodder growth and milk production, improving supplies to dairies and easing price pressures. The availability position is good in edible oils (courtesy of a crash in global prices) and reasonably so in pulses too (due to ample stocks of chana with the government and imports of masoor). Both the government and the RBI should keep a close watch on the monsoon, but there's no need to sound the alarm bell.

The Indian Express



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat



If our Govt is really serious about seeing our forests, rivers and lakes, mountains, grasslands, farms and urban landscapes free from plastic pollution, they must seriously work on bringing sustainable behavioural change among people to address waste management issues especially to counter plastic pollution



On World Environment Day

Plastic Pollution Needs Behavioural Solutions

Govt must work towards bringing sustainable behavioural change to counter plastic waste

Plastic is found everywhere. It has deeply impacted our lives. We see plastic as deep as 7 miles below the sea level or on top of the highest Himalayan peaks. Plastic production and consumption contribute greatly to greenhouse gas emissions. It devalues marine ecosystems, chokes the wetlands and wildlife and impacts our rivers. The effect that plastic is having on our world is difficult to fathom. It is estimated by the World Economic Forum and Ellen MacArthur Foundation that by 2050 there will be more plastic by weight than fish in our oceans by 2050? The world is facing a plastics crisis. Plastic pollution is found all around the globe. Plastics are negatively affecting people and the environment at each stage of their life-cycle – extraction of fossil fuel, production, manufacturing, use, recycling, and disposal. The impacts of plastic pollution is felt in a wide range of areas like biodiversity, climate & human health. Micro- and nanoplastics which enter into our human bodies directly or through food have harmful effects on health. The main route for microplastic entering into our bodies is ingestion, followed by inhalation and dermal (skin) exposure. Although there is no scientific certainty of the amount of plastics humans ingest, estimation guesses around 0.1-5 gram per week. Not only are our cities and towns impacted by plastic pollution but even the villages are impacted as well. This is more dangerous in villages located in Himalayan region which includes Jammu & Kashmir as well.

Plastic Pollution in J&K

The plastic in Jammu & Kashmir is not only impacting our mountains, forests and rivers but this is choking our drainage system as well which leads to flooding in urban areas like Srinagar and other towns. In villages also there is water logging as plastic has choked our rural areas. To address plastic waste in rural areas the J&K Govt

launched Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin's phase II programme but this programme is not picking up and we hardly see any district or block that can be a role model for other places in J&K.

When the Government launched a waste management programme for rural areas of J&K last year, the Govt began supplying steel trash bins to Block Development Officers (BDOs) who further provided the same to people at panchayat level. On November 21st I wrote a piece titled "A Tale of Forlorn Garbage Bins".

I had made a prediction that these trash bins would be of no use as there was no service available to clear the trash bins or collect waste at household level. It has been more than 7 months since these trash bins have been installed, but they are of no use at all? The reason is lack of service to collect the waste.

Apex Committee

Government in October 2021 constituted an Apex Committee for implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G) phase II in J&K. The eight member committee is headed by the Chief Secretary. Other members of the committee include Administrative Secretaries of Finance, Health, Rural Development, Information and Jal Shakti. Experts in the field of sanitation, hydrology, IEC, HRD, Media, NGOs shall also be the members of this high level committee. This apex committee which was constituted vide Govt order No: 1116-JK(GAD) of 2021 Dated: 21.10.2021 will be advising the Mission Directorate of SBM – Gramin J&K (Directorate of Rural Sanitation). Till date people are not aware of the number of meetings this committee organised and what kind of advises it gave to Mission Director SBM Gramin J&K.

SBM Gramin guidelines makes it mandatory for the Government to have at least one Solid Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) Consultant at the State level and one SLWM Consultant in each district to guide the preparations of the solid and liquid waste management projects for each Gram Panchayat (GP). People in rural areas haven't seen such projects prepared.

Even the District Development Council Members and Chairpersons are not aware of all this. Last year, the Chairman DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad Khan took up this issue with Ms Vini Mahajan, Secretary Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation. He wrote a detailed letter to her complaining that as Chairman Zila Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin he has no information at all about what kind of projects are being taken up in Budgam. The Secretary in fact responded back but on the ground there was no action.

The unscientific plastic waste management is not a challenge in urban areas but this is an uphill task for rural areas of Jammu & Kashmir as well.

Challenges of Plastic Pollution

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), humans produce more than 430 million tonnes of plastic annually. In addition to it 46% plastic waste is landfilled, while 22% is mismanaged and littered here and there. UNEP also adds that as per global estimates, around 75 to 199 million tonnes of plastic is currently found in our oceans and it is estimated that 1,000 rivers are accountable for nearly 80% of global annual riverine plastic emissions into the ocean, which range between 0.8 and 2.7 million tonnes per year. According to Plastics, The Potential and Possibilities report prepared in association with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Praxis Global Alliance, India generates around 3.4 million tonnes (MT) of plastic waste annually and only 30% of it is recycled. In Jammu & Kashmir the situation is worse. The plastic waste produced in tourist places like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Yusmarg, Sonamarg or Doodhpathri is landfilled inside forests. Large amounts of it is thrown in local streams as well which is dangerous.

LG Manoj Sinha's Speech

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha while addressing the World Environment Day event in Srinagar today reiterated the commitment of his administration to protect the environment and natural resources and sustainable, inclusive development. He was speaking on occasion of the programme organised by the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment in Srinagar. Manoj Sinha in his speech said:

"Humanity is facing grave challenges of plastic pollution today. Our resolution on this year's environment day is to 'Beat Plastic Pollution'. It is now the responsibility of the entire society to accomplish this resolution through the spirit of Jan Bhagidari.

Conclusion

As LG Manoj Sinha in his address on World Environment Day today said that the world cannot exist without nature and people have to accelerate their actions and bring behavioural changes in their lifestyles, I would appreciate that the Government must work towards hand holding people towards achieving it. LG Sinha must seek updates from the Rural Development Department especially about the progress of Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin Phase II wherein rural waste management programme has to be undertaken. He must also call for a review meeting of SBM urban as well and make sure all the ULBs in J&K have a scientific waste management system in place. If our Govt is really serious about seeing our forests, rivers and lakes, mountains, grasslands, farms and urban landscapes free from plastic pollution, they must seriously work on bringing sustainable behavioural change among people to address waste management issues especially to counter plastic pollution.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was published on our website on 5th of June, 2023 to commemorate World Environment Day
Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is an Anant Fellow for Climate Action

CLIMATE CRISIS IN KASHMIR

Need for Urgent Attention

Aubaid Ahmad Akhoon

A Chinese proverb goes, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."

Kashmir, a region renowned for its natural beauty and agricultural abundance, is currently grappling with severe challenges posed by unpredictable weather patterns. Incessant rain, thunderstorms, and harsh cold waves have wreaked havoc on the agricultural sector, particularly fruit orchards, resulting in significant losses for farmers and jeopardizing their livelihoods. Immediate and decisive action from the government is imperative to address this crisis. Financial aid, technical support, and resources must be provided to help orchard owners rebuild and restore their crops. Prioritizing the recovery of fruit orchards not only safeguards the livelihoods of farmers but also ensures the continued availability of fresh produce, which is vital for the local economy and food security in the region.

The government must urgently support farmers and communities by providing financial aid, improving infrastructure, and addressing the underlying causes of the climate crisis. Comprehensive relief packages, subsidies, low-interest loans, and insurance coverage can aid in the recovery and sustainability of farmers' livelihoods. Additionally, investments in infrastructure and disaster management systems are crucial to minimize the impact of future calamities, protect lives, and ensure the well-being of residents.

While providing immediate relief is vital, it is equally important to address the root causes of the changing climate patterns in Kashmir. The global climate crisis necessitates concerted efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainable practices, and embrace renewable energy sources. By doing so, the region can mitigate the impact of climate change and safeguard the planet for future generations.



EFFORTS TO GREEN KASHMIR SHOULD INVOLVE ALL STAKEHOLDERS and align with the global agenda on climate action, including the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Local and international collaboration is paramount for achieving sustainable development goals in the region."

As stated by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, "Climate change is the defining challenge of our time and requires a global response."

The recent G20 meeting held in Kashmir, which focused on greening the region and promoting sustainability, offers a glimmer of hope amidst the challenging

climate conditions faced by the region. Global leaders had an excellent opportunity to come together, discuss mitigation strategies, and foster international cooperation. The unique ecological significance of Kashmir was recognized, and proactive measures were taken to preserve its natural resources. These measures included

adopting renewable energy sources, implementing eco-friendly agricultural practices, preserving forests and biodiversity, and promoting responsible tourism. The discussions held during the meeting have set the stage for ongoing collaborative efforts in safeguarding the environment and ensuring sustainable development in the

region.

Efforts to green Kashmir should involve all stakeholders and align with the global agenda on climate action, including the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Local and international collaboration is paramount for achieving sustainable development goals in the region. This collaboration should include engagement with international organizations, sharing of best practices, and access to funding for sustainable development projects. By working together, tangible actions can be taken to create a more resilient and environmentally conscious Kashmir.

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty adopted in 2015 with the aim of combating climate change. It has been signed by nearly every country in the world and sets out goals to limit global warming, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide financial support to developing nations.

The current climate crisis in Kashmir necessitates urgent action from the government to support farmers, mitigate the effects of extreme weather events, and address the underlying causes of climate change. The recent G20 meeting held in the region provides hope and an opportunity to promote sustainability and global cooperation. By embracing sustainable practices, engaging all stakeholders, and aligning with the global climate agenda, Kashmir can become a model for resilience and inspire similar efforts worldwide. Through collective action and a commitment to sustainability, Kashmir can safeguard the well-being of its people and protect the planet for future generations.

"Climate change is happening, and it poses significant risks to our present and future. We need to act urgently and decisively to tackle this challenge."

The author is an editor, educator and motivational speaker

Will AI really change EVERYTHING ?

NOT LIKELY

JOSEPH WILSON

Do you have AI fatigue yet? Not a day goes by without breathless commentary on the increasing power of artificial intelligence models. A deluge of new apps and services promises to disrupt everything from health care to law to education. "The future is here," we are told. "Are you ready?"

There is an endless supply of grand prognostications on exactly how artificial intelligence will "change everything." But these prophecies tend to fall into one of two camps. Either they are blindly optimistic, claiming that AI will magically solve everything from climate change to the opioid crisis, or they are darkly dystopian, warning us that AI could escape its silicon chains and destroy humanity.

Even when AI developers themselves "warn" people of the existential threats AI could pose, as they did in an open letter recently calling for a pause in development, it functions as a marketing campaign. The tech companies are essentially congratulating each other for creating something too good. Google's CEO Sundar Pichai has called AI, without irony, a technology "more profound than fire or electricity."

The public doesn't know what to believe and they're worried. A newly released poll conducted by Innovative Research Group for the 2023 Provocation Ideas Festival shows that 47 per cent of Canadians are more concerned than excited about the increased use of AI. Only 9 per cent are more excited than concerned. Even those who are more ambivalent about an AI-saturated future will become exhausted by the constant exhortations to "future-proof your career" or "become AI literate."

The reality is that most of what we read about AI is hype. In the near term, this new crop of AI tools will probably give us slightly better-written spam in our inboxes and reams of crappy, machine-generated



websites. Real, life-saving applications are indeed possible in fields such as health care and agriculture, but they'll be hard to spot amidst all the junk. Although tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney are fun to play with and can astonish us with their output, they are not operating anywhere near human intelligence. They are essentially performing a clever parlour trick.

The reason we are astonished by their output is because, as a species, we're gullible. We tend to read human characteristics into any pattern that even mildly resembles a human. We see faces in electrical sockets and spot human silhouettes in evening shadows.

We feel bad for a discarded teddy bear. And when it comes to language, we tend to attribute human intention to even the most banal sentences if they're written well enough.

Appealing to this state of heightened empathy is one of the ways technology companies have captured the public's attention in recent months. OpenAI launched ChatGPT (which generates text) and DALL-E (which generates images) online and for free so the public could play around with them. It let the public work itself into a frenzy as they identified characteristics in the programs that were previously thought to

be exclusively human: reason, humour, emotion, creativity. But generative AI can do none of these things. It has the form of human expression but no content.

The technology that runs under the hood of these tools is not fundamentally new. The mathematical models have changed in recent years and new chips are making computation cheaper and more efficient, but ChatGPT only functions like a powerful autocomplete feature. Trained on an enormous amount of data, the model predicts which words are likely to come next in a sentence. That's it. It feels like there's a human behind the curtain, but it's really just statistics.

The hype will allow tech companies to pump their valuations sky-high, further concentrating capital and technological know-how in the hands of very few billionaires. As such, the field of AI is desperately in need of regulation. This is necessary not because tech companies might unleash a mathematical model that will suddenly become conscious and take over the world, but for the very real, boring reasons that have always existed: so they don't take advantage of poorly paid temp workers, or refuse calls to be transparent with their algorithms, or flood social media with misinformation, or violate copyright laws by scraping the web for data without the permission of its owners. Sadly, these are things that Big Tech is already doing and governments have been slow to act.

Fear, as populist politicians and headline writers know well, is best evoked by appealing to the unknown. Whether it's the fear of AI-gone-rogue or the fear of falling behind in the race to the future, both function to keep consumers credulous and anxious. So the next time you hear a platitude spoken in worship of AI, feel free to roll your eyes.

The article was originally published by Globe and Mail

Explained: Why Is OPEC Cutting Crude Oil Output



Reuters

LONDON: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia, a group known as OPEC+ which pumps around 40% of the world's crude, agreed on a new oil output deal on Sunday.

Saudi Arabia, the group's biggest producer, will make a deep cut to its output in July on top of a broader OPEC+ deal to limit supply into 2024 as the group faces flagging oil prices.

A surprise announcement by OPEC+ in April to deepen production cuts helped to raise prices by about \$9 a barrel to above \$87 per barrel in the days followed.

Yet benchmark crude prices have shed those gains since, with Brent futures on Monday trading at just under \$78 a barrel. [O/R]

On Sunday, in addition to extending the existing OPEC+ cuts of 3.66 million barrels per day (bpd), the group agreed to reduce overall production targets from January 2024 by a further 1.4 million bpd to a combined output of 40.46 million bpd.

The changes, however, included lowered targets for Russia, Nigeria and Angola simply to bring them into line with current production levels.

Here are the main reasons why OPEC+ cut output:

Concerns About Weak Global Demand

Data from China has aroused fears that the economic recovery after coronavirus lockdowns by world's second-largest oil consumer is losing steam.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak has also pointed to "interference with market dynamics", a Russian expression to describe a Western price cap on Russian oil.

Fears of another banking crisis in recent months have led investors to sell out of riskier assets such as commodities with oil prices falling to near \$70 per barrel from a peak of \$139 in March 2022.

A global recession could lead to lower oil prices.

Oil prices also recently came under pressure from concerns about U.S. debt ceiling negotiations, though fears of a debt default by the world's biggest oil consumer have abated since a bipartisan deal was sealed last week.

Punishing Speculations

The planned cuts will also punish oil short sellers betting on oil price declines.

In 2020, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman warned traders against betting heavily in the oil market, saying that those who gamble on the oil price would be "ouching like hell".

Govt Asks Airlines To Devise Mechanism For Reasonable Pricing Of Air Tickets

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The government on Monday asked airlines to devise a mechanism to ensure reasonable airfares amid a surge in air ticket prices, particularly on certain routes that were earlier served by Go First.

In the case of the unfortunate Odisha tragedy, airlines have been advised to provide free carriage (cargo) services to the families of the deceased, the civil aviation ministry said.

During an hour-long meeting of the airlines advisory group, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia shared his concerns about the steep rise in airfares on certain routes.

Airlines have been asked to self-monitor airfares on routes that have seen a considerable rise in ticket prices, particularly those that were served by Go First earlier.

Go First stopped flying from May 3 and the reduction of capacity due to the crisis at the budget airline has come at a time when the peak domestic air travel period is round the corner.

A mechanism should be devised by airlines to ensure reasonable pricing within the high RBDs (Reservation Booking Designator) and the same would be monitored by the

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the ministry said in a statement.

Airfares are deregulated under the current regulatory regime.

Besides, the ministry has said that during any calamity,

"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



airlines need to keep a tight check on the pricing of air tickets "in view of the humanitarian situation and monitor and control any surge in ticket prices to/from that region".

After the 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).

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

airfare increases with an 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.

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.

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

Crisis-hit Go First is undergoing a voluntary insolvency resolution process.

'Massive Opportunities' In Indian Aviation Market: IATA

Press Trust Of India

ISTANBUL: There are "massive opportunities" in the vibrant Indian aviation market, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Director General Willie Walsh said on Monday.

Talking about the Indian market, he highlighted that there are CEOs of two Indian airlines on the Board of Governors (BoG) of IATA and it is the first time that has happened.

"It reflects the opportunity and vibrancy... there are massive opportunities and we are really excited about the future of aviation in India," he told a media briefing on the sidelines of the IATA Annual General Meeting (AGM) here.

Air India CEO and Managing Director Campbell Wilson and IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers are among the 31 airline CEOs on the BoG. On Monday, IATA announced that Elbers will serve as Chair of the BoG from June 2024.

India is one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world and Air India has embarked on an ambitious expansion plan, while IndiGo is set to fly to more international destinations.

Earlier this year, Air India placed a historic order for 470

planes with Airbus and Boeing.

On domestic routes, Indian carriers flew 5.04 crore passengers during the 2023 January-April period, as against 3.53 crore in the year-ago period, recording an annual growth of 42.88 per cent, as per latest official data.

Meanwhile, at the briefing, Walsh said airfares are often high due to factors outside



the control of airlines such as taxes and airport charges.

He was responding about high airfares in the country.

About India's stance of common but differentiated responsibilities in efforts to reduce carbon emissions, Walsh said it has been a long standing decision. "... We acknowledge and recognise the decision of India and many other countries do highlight the need to reflect differentiated responsibilities".

Last month, India said that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) should continue to be guided

by "common but differentiated responsibilities" in the efforts to achieve net zero carbon emissions for the aviation sector.

Based on "realities and infrastructure constraints", India has set a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2070, Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Bansal had said at an ICAO symposium.

He had also said that the transition towards a lower carbon and Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) will be fundamental to achieving the net zero target by 2050.

"The process of SAF legislation, regulation, production, and deployment is external to civil aviation and requires multi-agency participation. The competition for biofuels from other sectors, especially road transport poses a challenge of prioritisation.

"The application of sustainability criteria for CORSIA-eligible fuels is another area, which will require external verification bodies to apply their rules," he said.

CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reporting Scheme for International Aviation) seeks to reduce emissions in the aviation sector by way of a carbon offsetting mechanism and is being implemented in phases.



India's Services Sector Output Increases At 2nd-Fastest Pace In Close To 13 Yrs In May: PMI

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India's services sector growth eased slightly in May, but registered the second-strongest rate of growth in close to 13 years, on favourable demand conditions and new client wins, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell from 62 in April to 61.2 in May. Despite falling from April, the latest reading indicated that output increased at the second-quickest pace since July 2010.

For the 22nd straight month, the headline figure was above the neutral 50 threshold. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"The PMI data for May stand as a compelling testament to prevailing demand resilience, impressive output growth and job creation within India's dynamic service sector," said Pol-

lyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Additionally, monitored companies expanded their workforces to accommodate for higher intakes of new work.

Going ahead, services companies maintained an upbeat view that business activity would increase over the coming 12 months.

"Advertising, demand strength and favourable market conditions were among the reasons cited for optimistic forecasts," the survey said.

Meanwhile, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index -- which measures combined services and manufacturing output -- stood at 61.6 in May, unchanged from April.

"India's private sector built on the strong momentum recorded in April by posting a rate of expansion in business activity that was the joint-best in just under 13 years," the survey said.

Adani Group Pays Back Loans Worth \$2.65 Billion To Complete Prepayment Programme

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Embattled Adani Group, on Monday, said it has repaid loans aggregating \$2.65 billion to complete a prepayment programme to cut overall leverage in an attempt to win back investor trust post a damning report of a US short seller.

In a credit note released on Monday, Adani Group said it has made a full prepayment of \$2.15 billion of loans that were taken by pledging shares in the conglomerate's listed firms and also another \$700 million in loans taken for the acquisition of Ambuja Cement.

"The prepayment was done along with interest payment of \$203 million," it added.

Further, the credit update states that the promoters completed the sale of shares in four listed group entities to GQG Partners, a leading global investment firm, for \$1.87 billion (Rs 15,446 crore).

"The deleveraging programme testifies to the strong liquidity management and capital access at sponsor level even in volatile market conditions, supplementing the solid capital prudence adopted at all portfolio companies," Adani Group said in the credit update.

US short-seller Hindenburg Research in January released



a damning report alleging accounting fraud and stock price manipulation at Adani Group, triggering a stock market rout that had erased about \$145 billion in the conglomerate's market value at its lowest point.

Adani Group has denied all allegations by Hindenburg and is plotting a comeback strategy. The group has recast its ambitions as well as prepaid some loans to assuage investors.

The credit update further highlights major improvements in key financial metrics -- the portfolio's combined Net Debt to EBITDA ratio has decreased from 3.81 in FY22 to 3.27 in FY23, run rate EBITDA surged from Rs 50,706 crore in FY22 to Rs 66,566 crore in FY23.

The credit update further states that the banking lines of Adani Group continue to show confidence by disbursing new debt and rolling over existing lines of credit. Moreover, rating agencies both domestic and international rating agencies have reaffirmed their ratings in all the group companies.

10 Day Exhibition-Cum-Mega Sale At Kashmir Haat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Monday inaugurated 10 day Exhibition-cum-Mega sale of products made by beneficiaries financed by J&K SC, ST and BC Development Corporation at Kashmir Haat, here.

The event is being sponsored by National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC), Union Ministry of Minority Affairs and organised by J&K SC, ST & BC Development Corporation.

Addressing the participants from different parts of J&K, Advisor Bhatnagar said that the main objective of organizing this exhibition is to provide a platform to the beneficiaries of the Corporation to display and sale their products. He added that present administration is giving prime focus on self employment and various schemes have been started in that direction.

Advisor highlighted that under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the government's aim is to uplift the lowest strata of the society by providing

them good governance at their doorsteps. He added that the government is committed to provide marketing platform as well as any kind of help to the beneficiaries associated with J&K ST, SC and BC Development Corporation.

Advisor Bhatnagar called upon the management of the Corporation to increase the targets of providing financial help to beneficiaries besides a digital platform should be established for loan applications and disbursement.

Advisor appreciated the role of Managing Director and asked the officers of the Corporation to gear up their efforts to make the Corporation an ideal service institution. He asked for creating awareness about the schemes among the targeted group so that the schemes of the Corporation may reach to the deserving persons at grass root level. He also asked the participant beneficiaries to give wide publicity of the schemes/programmes of the Corporation in their respective areas.

In her speech, MD, J&K SC, ST & BC Development Corporation, Ulfat Jabeen, gave details about achievements recorded by the

Corporation, so far. She informed that the Corporation is working for socio-economic and educational upliftment of weaker sections of the society, i.e. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Notified National Minorities, Safai Karamcharis and Persons with Disabilities. She added that the Corporation provides soft loans to the unemployed persons of the target group in collaboration with six National Level Corporations of Government Of India including National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) for establishment of income generating units to improve their socio-economic condition.

MD further said that the Corporation also provides Educational Loan at very low rate of interest to the students of the target group families who are pursuing Technical and Professional Courses in India and abroad. She also informed that the Corporation under its various schemes, so far, has provided loan assistance to the tune of Rs.320.52 crore to 41383 beneficiaries for setting up of income generating units.

DC B'pora Inaugurates J&K Bank's Cash Recycler Machine

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: With an aim to provide the latest banking facilities to the general public, Jammu and Kashmir Bank on Monday operationalized cash recycler machines (CRM) at two locations including J&K TP Bank and auto stand Bandipora.

The CRM at TP Bank was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Dr. Owais hmad. He was accompanied by Nodal Officer Coordination Mohd Ashraf Hakak and Zonal Head Bandipora, Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat.

LDM Bandipora Shabir Ahmad Dar, Branch Manager Wullar Branch Nisar Ahmad Janwari, Branch Manager TP Branch Fayaz Ahmad and other concerned were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC appreciated the efforts of J&K Bank for its contribution in rendering quality services to people of J&K.

He said that the CRM facility will help people of the area in depositing cash beyond banking hours without visiting the bank branches.

Dr. Owais said that the CRM has the latest technological banking facility and asked people to take advantage of this facility at their convenience.

He said this is a customer friendly effort and will help in reducing the customer footfall at the bank branches.

The general public on the occasion hailed the efforts of J&K bank for making banking services easy for people.

Automobile Retail Sales See 10% Growth In May: FADA

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Automobile retail sales rose 10 per cent in May on the back of robust demand across segments including passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and tractors, automobile dealers' body FADA said on Monday. The total automobile retail sales jumped to 20,19,414 units last month, from 18,33,421 units in May 2022.

Passenger vehicle sales rose by 4 per cent to 2,98,873 units in May, as compared to 2,86,523 units in the year-ago period.

The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) President Manish Raj Singhania said improved availability of vehicles coupled with pending order list and the robust demand for new launches drove a positive momentum, helping the passenger vehicle segment rebound after a slump in the previous month.

Two-wheeler retail sales last month rose 9 per cent to 14,93,234 units, as compared to 13,65,924 units in May 2022.

"The two-wheeler sales were positively influenced by seasonal factors like the marriage season, changes in the FAME subsidies ef-



fective from June, and the recovery of rural demand," Singhania said.

Commercial vehicle retail sales rose by 7 per cent to 77,135 units last month, as against 71,964 units in May last year.

Three-wheeler retail sales rose 79 per cent to 79,433 units last month, as compared to 44,482 units in the year-ago period.

Tractor sales rose to 70,739 units, up 10 per cent, as compared to 64,528 units in May 2022.

On business outlook, FADA said that the anticipated stable interest rates by RBI's Monetary Policy Committee could maintain vehicle demand and positively impact auto sales.

However, supply chain issues, demand-supply dynamics, and regulatory changes also play a role in shaping the auto retail outlook, it added.

India Committed To Minimising Digital Health Divide: Niti Aayog's VK Paul at G20 meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad: Niti Aayog member (Health) Dr VK Paul on Monday said India is committed to minimising the digital health divide by promoting digital solutions and innovation to aid universal health coverage.

Addressing an event related to the 3rd Health Working Group of G20 India here, Dr Paul said India's digital goods are for the world and that the country's digital infrastructure and capabilities are enablers of global economic growth and human development.

He gave the keynote address for the event titled 'Digital Health Innovations and Solutions to Aid Universal Health Coverage and Improve Healthcare Service Delivery' during the second day of the G20 meet in the city.

"India as the voice of Global South is committed to minimising the digital health divide by promoting digital

solutions and innovation to aid universal health coverage," Paul said.

Quoting a previous statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Digital India, Paul said, "I dream of a digital India with quality healthcare is accessible right up to the remotest regions powered by e-healthcare."

He said deliberations in the health working groups suggest that digital technologies can play a very critical role in achieving universal health coverage and combating health emergencies.

Digital health, through initiatives such as telemedicine and mobile apps, can enable universal health coverage by increasing access to people irrespective of location or socio-economic status, he said.

The G20 Health Working Group is deliberating to create a global digital health initiative to provide a platform to promote equitable access to digital tools and technologies among

the countries concerned towards ensuring universal health coverage, he added.

"There is concurrence among the participating countries and multilateral agencies that a global system of this nature should be created that should become an enabler of universal health coverage through technologies," Paul said.

Digital technologies are playing a crucial role in healthcare and are changing rapidly from artificial intelligence to 5G virtual reality and block chain, he said.

Paul said that there is an agreement that to build a platform where digital health tools are stored in a repository and are made accessible to any country or a partner.

He cited the example of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and said that "it brings together state governments, Union government, laboratories, insurance providers, health

tech companies, doctors, NGOs' programme managers, other stakeholders keeping the citizens at the centre of the endeavours".

"Let us envision a world where a comprehensive package of digital health tools and services are accessible to all, where digital health is for all by 2035," he added.

The G20 will focus on finalising the ministerial declaration ahead of the fourth working group ministerial meeting scheduled for August. Fifteen countries have given written comments on the zero draft declaration document that was circulated in the last meeting held in Goa.

"Discussions were held on the first draft and the delegates urged India to organise two or four video conferencing meetings before the August meeting. Those who did give a comment are able to refine the changes," said an official, adding that the presidency hopes to have a 90 per cent ready

document ahead of the ministerial meeting.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr Christopher Elias, President, Global Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said the world has seen momentum in development of lower and middle-income countries in the last decade, especially after the Covid pandemic.

World Health Organization official Dr Alain Labrique said "quality, efficiency, equity and inclusion" of global health systems will depend on how the group works together.

"We must as a group invest strategically. This will enable cross border exchange of credential health information now available to all member states," said Dr Labrique, Director, Department of Digital Health and Innovation, WHO.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that all countries need to be adequately prepared for the next

pandemic and must act with "a sense of urgency". He urged all stakeholders to come together and act for 'One Earth, One Family, One Future', theme of India G20 Presidency.

The 3rd Health Working Group meeting as part of G20 India Presidency is being held at Hyderabad from June 4-6 and will focus on the three key priorities of the G20 health track.

One of the priorities is health emergency prevention, preparedness and response with a focus on anti-microbial resistance and the 'One Health' framework.

The other is strengthening cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector with a focus on access and availability to safe, effective, quality and affordable medical countermeasures. The third is digital health innovations and solutions to aid universal health coverage and improve healthcare service delivery.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Airlines Told To

in a statement.

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LG Calls For Stringent

highlights the UT administration's zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics," Sinha said.

He called for stringent action against the drug traffickers, increased IEC activities, involvement of communities and capacity building of police officers and drug enforcement agencies.

Higher Education and School Education department and concerned officers were directed to intensify awareness campaigns and make Nasha Mukh Panchayat Abhiyaan a mass movement.

Instructions were issued to District officers to ensure effective use of the Nidaan portal and to follow the directions of the NCORD meeting in letter and spirit.

During the meeting Special DG (Crime) A.K.Choudhary briefed the chair on the agenda points and the measures put in place to effectively tackle the menace of drugs.

R K Goyal, ACS, Home Department; RR Swain, Special DG CID; Dr

Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; ADGPs; Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, SSPs and other senior officers of Police and Civil administration also attended the meeting.

'Historic G20

his administration to protect the environment and natural resources and sustainable, inclusive development.

"We cannot exist without nature. This day reminds us to accelerate our actions and bring behavioural changes in our lifestyles. It should be the priority of all stakeholders to free our forests, rivers and lakes, mountains, grasslands, farms and urban landscapes from plastic pollution," he said.

"This decade is going to matter the most in preventing catastrophic climate change and mitigating biodiversity loss. By 2040, we will be able to reduce plastic pollution by 20% only by adopting the strategy of circularity economy," he added.

The LG called for the need to follow an integrated approach, circularity economy-Reuse, Recycle, Reorient and Diversify to reduce plastic pollution.

"It is high time we should incentivize and promote sustainable alternative materials for redesign and repackaging of products to protect the environment," he said.

He also suggested creating a mechanism to generate employment opportunities from such transformation.

Speaking on the successful conduct of G20 Tourism Meet in Jammu Kashmir, the LG said the historic event has firmly placed the UT on the international tourism map.

"Our natural heritage of snow-capped mountains, magnificent peaks, rich forests, picturesque alpine meadows, serene lakes and streams needs to be protected from the threats of climate change," the LG said.

"We are truly fortunate that nature has selflessly given us everything that is necessary for a better life and it is our bounden duty to show sensitivity towards nature and make efforts to conserve natural resources," he added.

The LG also highlighted the efforts of the central government and the UT Administration to reduce the impact of plastic pollution.

"Cohesive efforts in urban development and planning policies are determining the future of our cities. In the last three years, there has been a rapid increase in awareness about environment, especially among the youth," he said.

The LG lauded the Forest Department for the continuous efforts to spread awareness and reduce the adverse effect of climate change on the environment through the initiatives like 'Har Gaon Haryali', 'Ped Lagao Beti

Ke Naam', Green Life Contest, Mission LiFE and encouraging Jan Bhagidari in environment protection campaigns.

Sinha also called for exploring all the possibilities to put to use the Green Technology and eco-friendly models showcased by the innovators and entrepreneurs from across the country and students from different schools during the exhibition

Under Mission LiFE, 10 lakh people participated in the 41,000 events organized across the UT, it was informed.

Earlier, the LG administered the LiFE-Lifestyle for the Environment pledge to the officers, students, and citizens from different walks of life present on the occasion.

He also felicitated the winners of the Green Life Contest 2.0, and the organizations, citizens, members of plantation committees and schools for their extraordinary contribution in environment protection campaigns.

The occasion also witnessed the launch of the Mobile app BIRD 1.0 for status and monitoring of Forest Boundary Pillars, developed by Ecology, Environment and Remote Sensing department.

Reports on Climate Resilient City Action Plan for Srinagar and Jammu, and Forest Density-based Area Treatment Prioritization were also released by the dignitaries.

Administrative Secretaries, PRI Members, HoDs, Senior Officers, Students and people in large numbers were present.

MeT Predicts

8.5°C on the previous night and it was 2.2°C below normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 7.2°C against 3.6°C on previous night and it was below normal by 1.5°C for the popular skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

Jammu recorded a low of 22.5°C against 21.0°C on the previous night and it was 3.2°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal recorded a low of 10.6°C (below normal by 2.7°C), Batote 13.3°C (2.1°C below normal), Katra 20.1°C (2.0°C below normal) and Bhaderwah 9.7°C (below normal by 2.9°C). Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of 3.0°C and 7.7°C respectively, he said.

From June 5-12, he said, mainly dry weather is expected but a brief spell of showers and thunderstorms mainly towards evening can't be ruled out. "There would be a gradual increase in temperature. Warmer days are ahead."

Dying Dal Lake

Srinagar to produce more than 20 thousand tons of organic manure.

"Every year, thousands of tons of waste is generated from Dal Lake,

which poses problems for local people in the area and adds pollutants to the environment. We are aiming to resolve this problem at the root level," said Maninder Singh Nayyar, Founder & CEO of CEF Group.

He further said that they have the technology, expertise and experience of converting this extracted waste into 24,000 tons of organic manure annually.

"It will help farmers go organic farming and serve waste management purposes for people involved in jobs at Dal Lake. Moreover, organic manure produced from the waste will be available at local farmers' disposal, boosting their yield and promoting organic farming in the region," Nayyar added.

Notably, the farmers of Kashmir pay heavy prices for organic manure as currently it is supplied from states like UP and Haryana because of which they have to bear high transportation costs.

"With this project, organic manure will be available to farmers at reasonable costs. In addition, the waste processing plant will generate employment opportunities for local people," he said.

Lake waste like weeds, lilies, and others accounts for 70,000 tonnes of waste every year in Dal Lake hindering boat movements in the lake and causing problems for locals earning from Dal Lake tourism.

"With the help of CEF Group's waste processing plant in Srinagar, Kashmir, these wastes will be extracted and provided to the company at their project site to convert them into usable organic manure and allied products," Nayyar added.

Dr. Bashir Ahmad Bhat (IRS), Vice Chairman of Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA), said, "Lake waste has been a long-time problem, and we are glad that CEF Group and NAFED in collaboration are providing sustainable solutions. In addition to waste processing, organic manure will be produced in the state itself, which will benefit local farmers and communities financially. Local employment by the company will aid the earnings of the area's local people. We hope to take this collaboration to a greater height so that rising climate change concerns are addressed."

The efforts to reduce waste from Dal Lake will contribute mainly to reducing carbon footprints and access to high-quality organic manure for the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Kamlendra Srivastava, ED, NAFED, said "We need to increase such collaborations and innovative solutions to achieve our climate change goals and promote green growth in the country. We believe that the Dal Lake waste processing plant will inspire other states to incorporate such partnerships

and promote environmentally sustainable solutions for waste management."

Haji-2023: Space

has been designated at our airport for the convenience of pilgrims going on Haj. You can change into Ahram in this designated area in the SHA just before boarding the flight," Singh tweeted.

According to the officials, the first flight of Haji-2023 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir would leave for Jeddah International Airport on Wednesday, June 7. (KNO)

Employer Can't

employer invites applications for filling up a large number of posts, a large number of unemployed youth apply for the same, they spend time in filling the form and pay the application fee and thereafter, spend time to prepare for the examination, as also money to travel to the place, where tests in furtherance of the selection process is held," the court said, adding, "If they qualify the written test, they may have again to appear for interview and medical examination and travel again and those, who are successful and are declared to have qualified, have a reasonable expectation that they will be appointed and no doubt...this is not a vested right, yet the employer or the State has to give justifiable non-arbitrary reasons for not offering such successful qualified candidates' appointment, particularly, when the employer is State, as it is bound to act and follow the mandate of Article 14 of the Constitution."

The State, the court said, cannot without any reason decline to fill up a post without any lawful justification, which justification must not only be reasonable, should as well be not arbitrary, capricious and whimsical."

Subsequently, the court directed the State Sports Council to offer appointment to the petitioner against the post of Driver and admit him to all the consequential benefits.

Govt Transfers

posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Kokernag, against an available vacancy.

He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Kokernag, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Ghanshyam Basotra, JKAS, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Kathua, is transferred and posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Ramsoo, against an available vacancy. He shall also hold the charge of the post of Sub-Registrar, Ramsoo, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Dr. Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi, JKAS, District Mineral Officer, Kupwara, is transferred and posted as Executive

Officer, J&K State Haj Committee, on deputation basis, for a period of two years or until further orders, whichever is earlier. During his deputation, the officer shall retain lien and promotion prospects in his parent cadre i.e. Jammu & Kashmir Administrative Service.

Falling Tree

the horse died on the spot, they said. The incident is being probed, they added.

Govt Employee

found dead on roadside in his village.

He said a police team was rushed to the spot and his body was shifted to hospital for postmortem.

"The deceased was an employee in the Animal Husbandry department", official said, adding that cause of death is being ascertained.

Mughal Road Partially

On May 31, heavy rains triggered a major landslide on Mughal road near Ratta Chamb bridge, blocking traffic movement in the region.

Drug Peddler's Property

and three others were also arrested from his residential house in Sheikh Mohalla Bandipora on 25 August 2022.

Waza's wife Poshia Begum, also a notorious female drug peddler, the officials said, however managed to flee from the spot but was later arrested by the police on 28 September 2022.

Waza was subsequently booked under Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and is currently behind bars.

According to police, a residential plot of Waza measuring 1 kanal 1.5 marlas worth a market value of Rs. 44 lakh and two vehicles worth Rs 12 lakh have been seized as illegally acquired property through sale of narcotic drugs.

A police official told Kashmir Observer that Waza's entire family is involved in drug peddling and has been on the radar of police for a long time.

The police official said Waza was a repeated offender and many cases were already registered against him.

"He was into drug trade since 2012 but we weren't able to apprehend him with a commercial quantity," said the official.

Notably, the district police have launched a massive war against the drug peddlers and have registered more than 40 cases in the first five months of this year.

The official further said they will target the big fishes in coming weeks.

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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Srinagar Premier League Begins



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The 2023 Srinagar Premier Football League kick started on Monday with two matches played at Synthetic Turf TRC.

In the opening match, Star Kashmir FC went head-to-head against LoneStar KFC, exhibiting their exceptional skills and determination. Both teams fought hard to gain an upper hand in the match. However, the game ended in a 1-1 draw, with Waris scoring for LoneStar in the 45th minute.

The second match of the day showcased the talent of J&K Bank

XI, who faced a formidable opponent in ARCO FC. However, the J&K Bank players dominated ARCO and won by a convincing 3-1 scoreline. Aakif Reshi from J&K Bank was awarded player of the match by Chairman JKFA Wasim Aslam in presence of Syed Amjad Rizvi.

Earlier, the opening ceremony of the league witnessed a dynamic participation from various administrative figures from JKFA, JKSC, DFA Srinagar, as well as the civil administration and J&K Police. Prominent footballers and coaches of the Valley were also present on the occasion.

World Environment Day: YSS Organises Sports Events



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Department of Youth Services & Sports (YSS) on Monday observed the World Environment Day by organising various initiatives across multiple districts.

Speaking about the importance of celebrating such days, Joint Director Kashmir YSS Waseem Raja said that young people should voluntarily take part in keeping their surroundings neat and clean.

In Bandipora, under the guidance of Nazir Ahmad Bhat, DYSSO Bandipora, series of activities, including rallies, debates, painting competitions, and sanitation works, were organised, engaging approximately 8,000 students from different schools. The district also witnessed the Inter Zonal District Level Yogasana event for U-14/U-17 Boys at HSS Nadihal.

In Kupwara, Zahoor Ahmad Wani, District Youth Services and Sports Officer, led the organization of Zonal Level Activities. These activities encompassed U-14 badminton competitions, Kho Kho Girls competitions, and sports and recreational activities

for tribal communities, promoting sportsmanship and teamwork.

DYSSO Baramulla actively promoted environmental awareness through a Bicycle Rally organised by Zone Dangerpora and Zone Sopore, emphasizing major environmental issues.

Diverse sports activities were held in Ganderbal, Budgam, and Srinagar. Ganderbal celebrated World Environment Day under the Beat Plastic Pollution Campaign, conducting cultural programs, rallies, and seminars across various schools. Budgam organised rallies, debates, seminars, and inter-school competitions in different zones. Srinagar conducted inter-school competitions in Chess, Carom, and Badminton across multiple zones.

YSS Pulwama organised a grand sports mela for tribal athletes, attracting a massive gathering. YSS Anantnag held sports competitions for tribal youth and inter-school badminton tournaments. YSS Shopian conducted cricket matches and Kho Kho matches, while Kulgam observed World Environment Day with a special event at Girls Model Higher Secondary School.

National Kun Bokator Championship Begins In Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The two-day long National Kun Bokator Championship began in Indoor Sports Hall Polo Ground on Monday. The championship is being organised by the Kun Bokator Federation of India.

Around 12 states from across the country are participating in the championship with a total of 200 participants. In addition, two

coaches from Cambodia will also be present to share their expertise and knowledge of the sport with the participants.

Prior to the championship, there was a four-day national level Kun Bokator Seminar for coaches and referees from 1st to 4th June 2023. The seminar was aimed at enhancing the skills of the coaches and referees and ensuring that the championship is conducted smoothly.

India Batters Must Grind In WTC Final: Rohit



Agencies

LONDON: India's batters should be prepared to grind out runs in tricky English conditions against Australia's fiery pace attack in the World Test Championship (WTC) final at the Oval, skipper Rohit Sharma said on Monday. Facing a prodigiously swinging Dukes ball fired by Pat Cummins or Mitchell Starc would be a totally different experience for Rohit's team mates most of whom were busy in the Indian Premier League T20 c9ompetition until last week.

Rohit mastered these conditions during the 2019 World Cup when he smashed five hundreds in nine innings and, two years later, stroked a match-winning century in an Oval test

against England. "England, in general, is pretty challenging conditions for the batters, but as long as you are prepared to have a good grind you can have some success as a batter," he said ahead of the WTC final beginning on Wednesday.

The key was not to be lulled into any false sense of security while batting, he said. "One thing I realised batting here was you are never in actually, because the weather keeps changing a lot.

"So you've got to keep concentrating for longer periods of time and that is the challenge of this format." "You'll get that intuition when it is your time to take the bowlers on and that is when you should be ready for it."

Rohit is particularly keen to

capitalise on his strength square off the wicket. "We know that this is probably one of the best batting wickets, as well you get value for your shots, you know the square boundaries are quite quick," he said.

With Jasprit Bumrah recovering from a back surgery, Mohammed Shami will lead the pace attack for India who were beaten by New Zealand in the inaugural WTC final in Southampton two years ago. Indian have yet to make up their mind about fielding second spinner Ravichandran Ashwin along with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja but Australia's Steve Smith ruled out being complacent against them.

"They've got a good mix of quality seam bowlers," he told reporters.

Will Continue Our Fight: Wrestlers Rubbish Reports Of Their Withdrawal



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Olympic medalists Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia on Monday said they will continue their fight for justice, asserting that none of the wrestlers have backed down and rubbished reports of their withdrawal from the protest as attempts to "sabotage" the movement.

The news of our withdrawing from the movement is just a "rumour", Punia said, adding that the report of women wrestlers taking back the FIR is also "false".

Bajrang, Sakshi along with fellow Olympian and World Championship medalist Vinesh Phogat have been protesting against outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, demanding his arrest on allegations of sexual harassment against seven wrestlers, including one minor. Singh has denied all the charges.

"This news is completely wrong. In the fight for justice, none of us has backed down, nor will we. Along with Satyagraha, I am fulfilling my responsibility in Railways. Our fight continues till justice is served. Please don't spread any wrong news," Malik tweeted.

Reacting to the reports, Punia said, "This news is being spread to harm us. We have neither retreated nor have we withdrawn from the movement. The news of women wrestlers taking back the FIR is also false. The fight will continue till justice is served."

Their reactions came amid reports that both of them have withdrawn from the protest, dealing a big blow to the more than two-month-old protest.

Asked if she has distanced herself from the movement since she resumed her duties in the Railways, Sakshi told reporters, "Let me make it clear, we are making our strategy to take our fight forward.

We will ensure that there is no violence, how we can take the protest forward, we are working on that.

"I am (an) OSD (officer on special duty) first and I have a lot of responsibilities, so as long as we are making our strategy and not sitting on the protest, I will take care of my official duties."

On the reports that the minor girl has withdrawn her FIR, she said, "This is all fake news to weaken our Satyagraha and our protest to alienate us from the public. This is wrong. We have not gone back on our fight and we will not do so. Till we get justice, the fight will go on."

On the meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, she said: "It was a normal conversation. No final solution has emerged. Our stance will remain the same, arrest the accused. Vinesh, Bajrang and I are together in this fight and till we get justice, we will remain united."



Messi Keen On Rejoining Barcelona, Says Father

Agencies

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi, who last week played his last game for Paris St Germain, is open to making a return to LaLiga side Barcelona, the Argentine forward's father said on Monday. Barca were forced to let their talisman leave in 2021 because his high wages coupled with strict LaLiga financial rules could have jeopardised the club's future.

Messi, who joined Barcelona's youth set-up aged 13 and went on to become the club's all-time top scorer and appearance maker with 672 goals in 778 games in all competitions, moved to PSG as a free agent on a two-year contract. Barcelona's finances have slightly improved since then, but according to La Liga, they are still over the cap and remain unable to register new contracts signed months ago, including defender Ronald Araujo and midfielder Gavi.

The LaLiga champions' president Joan Laporta has often spoken of his desire to bring Messi back to Camp Nou, but any move for the 35-year-old would likely further complicate their ability to adhere

to Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules.

"Leo wants to return to Barca and I would also like him to return. We are confident that Leo can come back," Messi's father Jorge said in an interview with Twitch channel Jijantes FC.

Messi, who led Argentina to the World Cup title in Qatar and also boasts a record seven Ballon d'Or awards, won the Ligue 1 title in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons with PSG as well as the French Super Cup in July 2022. However, he opted not to renew his deal with the Ligue 1 champions.

His future has been the subject of much speculation recently, with a source close to the Argentine captain telling Reuters that he had received a formal offer to join Saudi Arabian club Al-Hilal next season. A move to Saudi Arabia would see him once again playing in the same league as rival and Al Nassr star Cristiano Ronaldo, while Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema is also expected to complete a move to the Middle Eastern nation.

The United States' Major League football club Inter Miami have also been touted as a possible destination for Messi.

Global Chess League Unveils Six Franchises

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Global Chess League (GCL) on Monday unveiled the six franchises that will participate in the inaugural edition of the tournament to be held in Dubai from June 21-July 2.

A joint venture between Tech Mahindra and the international chess federation (FIDE), the competing teams will play a minimum of 10 matches each in a double round-robin, rapid format.

The GCL will see men, women, and U21 players compete as a team.

The league will commence with a players' draft where franchise owners will select players

Leading players in the world, including Viswanathan Anand, Ding Liren, Magnus Carlsen, Ian Nepomniachtchi, Hou Yifan and Kateryna Lagno among others, will come together in the league.

FIDE president, Arkady Dvorkovich, said he was looking forward to a successful inaugural edition. "We are heading towards its actualisation, we have found the right partners who believe in the vision. (We) look forward to making the league a big success," said Dvorkovich in a statement on Monday.

Jagdish Mitra, chairperson, GCL Board said, "the tournament will blends traditional chess with the new era" and will aim to "enhance



for their respective teams.

The six franchise owners and their teams are U SPORTS (up-Grad Mumbai Masters), Insurekot Sports (Ganges Grandmasters), Punit Balan Group (Balan Alaskan Knights), Triveni Engineering & Industries Ltd (Triveni Continental Kings), Chingari App (Chingari Gulf Titans), and APL Apollo-led SG Sports (SG Alpine Warriors).

fan experience through digitization, innovation, and technology." The tournament will introduce a mixed-team format, wherein each of the six franchises will engage in a total of 10 matches played in a double round-robin style. The winner of each match will be determined through a best-of-six board scoring system, played simultaneously.

Undercover Observers Track Racism, Discrimination At European Football Games

Agencies

DUSSELDORF: Blend in. Stay alert. Feign excitement if you must.

Among the thousands of fans in the stands at Europe's biggest football games are a few people operating undercover. Trained volunteer observers listen for racist chants and watch for extremist symbols on banners.

"You have to be aware of the environment and fit in without standing out. You have to be discreet," one observer, who has worked at games involving some of football's best-known clubs and national teams, told The Associated Press.

"Obviously nothing gets published on social media. You have to be anonymous. You have to be just sort of blend in. Don't engage in conversations with anybody."

The observer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the job requires it, is part of a program run on be-

half of European football's governing body, UEFA, by the Fare Network, a prominent anti-discrimination group. Fare monitors about 120 games per season in Europe's main three men's club competitions, executive director Piara Powar told the AP, and more around the world in national team events like World Cup qualifying.

Evidence from the program, including photos taken surreptitiously from the stands, is used in disciplinary cases against clubs or national teams whose fans display racist behavior in European competitions like the Champions League.

It's not a career, but a way to make football better for the future, the observer said.

Observers work on a volunteer basis, with expenses covered, and are expected to keep tabs on hardcore fan groups' social media to track where incidents may occur.

Inside the stadium, an observer watches the stands for signs of racist, homophobic,



sexist or other discriminatory chants or banners, while also keeping an eye on the action on the field, which shapes what happens among fans.

"If you get a disgruntled fan base and they're getting beaten 5-0 and they get knocked out of a competition that they felt that they were going to progress in, then that could be an-

other catalyst," the observer said. "You have to constantly read the situation as it unfolds."

Observers are expected to be familiar with symbols used by nationalist groups, especially the logos and number codes — like 88 for Heil Hitler — they use to send surreptitious messages.

Games are given risk ratings to determine how many ob-

servers are needed, and up to three observers can work at the highest-risk games.

Sometimes a game rated "medium-risk" can "blow up in your face" unexpectedly, the observer added. That sets off a scramble to document the evidence and send it to a UEFA delegate in the stands — not always easy on overloaded stadium Wi-Fi.

That documentation can then be used by the UEFA disciplinary unit for "further investigation and possible proceedings," the European football governing body said in a statement to the AP.

Hooliganism incidents have decreased in European football in recent decades, but some fan groups have a reputation for racist behavior and violence. For security reasons, the identity of the observers at a game are known to as few people as possible.

The observer described feeling "ill at ease" in some situations, but never in personal danger. Observers are not expected to infiltrate close-knit, hardcore fan groups, but to watch from a distance.

"You need to get as close as you can, but be as far away as your safety requires," the observer said.

Fare's work isn't always welcome. In a case at the Court of Arbitration for Sport over a banner at a 2019 game that was

judged to contain a coded racist message, Georgian club Dinamo Tbilisi sought to challenge Fare's assessment, arguing that the observer collecting the evidence was "professionally trained to recognize potentially racist symbols and is therefore biased."

The panel rejected the argument and pointed out that even if the banner's message wasn't clear to most fans, it still broke rules against racist messages.

Like referees, Fare observers can't work at games involving clubs they support. The observer said the goal is to make the atmosphere at games safer and more inclusive for the future.

Over several years working games, the observer has seen change for the better, but so far only "baby steps." "It's a professional endeavor. It's not going for the sake of it," the observer said. "I'm indifferent to the results. When a goal's scored, sometimes I have to stand up to feign excitement, but they are teams that I have zero emotional moments with."

NIRF 2023

IIT Madras Best Institution For Fifth Consecutive Year, IISc Bengaluru Best University'

Agenceis

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras retained the top spot among institutes in the country for the fifth consecutive year, while the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru was adjudged the best university and research institution, according to the ministry of education's National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).

The rankings were announced by Union Minister of State for Education Rajkumar Ranjan Singh on Friday.

Seven IITs—Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Roorkee and Guwahati—figured in the top 10 in the overall rankings.

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), which was ranked ninth last year, improved its ranking to sixth this year, while Jawaharlal Nehru University retained its tenth position in the overall category.

The ranking framework, now in its eighth edition, evaluates institutions on five broad generic groups of parameters of teaching, learning and resources, research and professional practice, graduation outcomes, outreach and inclusivity and perception.

Ranks are assigned based on the total sum of marks assigned for each of these five broad groups of parameters.

In the universities category, IISc Bengaluru bagged the top spot, followed by JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia at second and third ranks. The trio were on the same positions last year too.

Banaras Hindu University, which was ranked sixth last year in the category, improved its rank and bagged the fifth spot.

Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore, Calcutta University, Vellore Institute of Technology, Aligarh Muslim University and University of Hyderabad bagged the subsequent positions in the universities category.



Eight IITs—Madras, Delhi, Bombay, Kanpur, Roorkee, Kharagpur, Guwahati and Hyderabad—were in the top 10 ranks in the engineering institutions category.

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Tiruchirapalli slipped by one spot this year and bagged the ninth rank, while Jadavpur University made its entry in the top 10 in the category and bagged the 10th position.

Among colleges, Miranda House, Hindu College and Presidency College-Chennai retained the first and second and third positions.

IIM Ahmedabad and Bangalore retained the first and second ranks respectively among the B-Schools in the country. IIM Calcutta, which was at the third spot last year, slipped to the fourth position while IIM Kozhikode bagged the third position.

In the pharmacy category, the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad rose to the first spot from second position while Jamia Hamdard which was on first position last year slipped to the second spot.

In the medical colleges category, AIIMS, Delhi bagged the top spot, followed by PGIMER Chandigarh and Christian Medical College, Vellore. The trio bagged the same positions last year.

Among the dental colleges, Saveetha Institute of Medical And Technical Sciences-Chennai, Manipal College of Dental Sciences and DY Patil Vidyapeeth-Pune retained the top three positions.

SPELL IT OUT

Paris' Iconic Champs-Elysees Hosts Mass Dictation Event



Over 50,000 people applied to participate in the event.

Agenceis

Paris: Not to be outdone by US-style spelling bee extravaganzas, Paris's most famous street the Champs-Elysees was transformed into an open-air mass "dictation" spellathon Sunday, pitting thousands of France's brainiest bookworms against one another.

Revealing a very French love affair with words, over 50,000 applied to participate in the event, a world first, in which hopefuls attempt to faithfully and without error transcribe a text read to them.

Over 5,000 applicants aged 10-90 were chosen to participate in three sessions led by novelist Rachid Santaki.

With 1,779 desks laid out on

Paris' most famous boulevard in each session, organisers had sought to break the world record for a dictation spelling competition.

In the first round, an excerpt of La Mule du Pape by renowned French writer Alphonse Daudet was read by journalist Augustin Trapenard, of Libraries Without Borders.

Silence fell when the first session started, but for 10-year-old Samson, the dictation was "too fast". He gave up.

In his final year of primary school, top student Antoine attended with his father and, despite being a star pupil, he had struggled to fill his page.

"It was impossible! The dictation was for adults," he said.

His father Adrien Blind, 42, was equally relieved when the

session wrapped, saying he "was in a state of stress and worry".

But 65-year-old retiree Touria Zerhouni was more upbeat.

"I only made two mistakes! I expected it to be much harder," she said.

The competition went beyond the French classics, with a sport themed round read by rugby player Pierre Rabadan, and another with a contemporary flavour read by writer and journalist Katherine Pancol.

Marc-Antoine Jamet, president of the Champs-Elysees Committee which hosted the dictation during, said the event went beyond spelling.

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"Dictation helps us to live together. It's unifying," he said.

Deadly Heart Attacks More Likely To Occur On Monday: Study

Press Trust of India

Serious heart attacks are more likely to happen at the start of the working week than at any other time, according to a study.

The researchers at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland analysed data of 10,528 patients across Ireland admitted to hospital between 2013 and 2018 with the most serious type of heart attack.

This is known as an ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) and occurs when a major coronary artery is completely blocked.

The research, presented at the British Cardiovascular Society (BCS) conference in Manchester, UK, found a spike in rates of STEMI heart attacks at the start of the working week, with rates highest on a Monday.

There were also higher rates of STEMI than expected on a Sunday, the researchers said.

"This study adds to evidence around the timing of particularly serious heart attacks, but we now need to unpick what it is about certain days of the week that makes them more likely," said Professor Nilesh Samani,

Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation.

"Doing so could help doctors better understand this deadly condition so we can save more lives in future," Samani said.

Scientists have so far been unable to fully explain why this "Blue Monday" phenomenon occurs.

Previous studies suggesting that heart attacks are more likely on a Monday have highlighted an association with circadian rhythm the body's sleep or wake cycle.

There are over 30,000 hospital admissions due to STEMI each year in the UK. It requires emergency assessment and treatment to minimise damage to the heart, and this is normally performed with emergency angioplasty a procedure to re-open the blocked coronary artery.

"We've found a strong statistical correlation between the start of the working week and the incidence of STEMI. This has been described before but remains a curiosity," said Jack Laffan, who led the research at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

"The cause is likely multifactorial, however, based on what we know from previous studies, it is reasonable to presume a circadian element," Laffan added.



Quick eats for busy people



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