

First Time In 30 Yrs, People Queue Up Outside Bakhshi Stadium On I-Day

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: First time after the outbreak of insurgency in the early nineties, Srinagar on Tuesday witnessed mass participation of people in India's 77th Independence Day celebrations.

Unlike in the past there were no curbs on public movement and no restrictions on the internet. Authorities allowed unhindered access to people in the Bakhshi Stadium, the venue of the main function where Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha presided over a customary march past and cultural extravaganza.

Bakhshi Stadium would be turned into a security fortress in the past for fear of terror strikes and people would only be allowed in with a valid security pass.

Thousands had made a beeline outside the stadium today as authorities did away with



security passes allowing unhindered access to people in the venue.

Carrying the national flag, men and women of all ages filled the stands in the Bakhshi stadium while a significant number of children could also be seen. This was the largest gathering of civilians at the stadium for an Independence Day function since 2003 when an

estimated 20,000 people had witnessed the parade.

The atmosphere was festive as many people clicked selfies in the stands to mark the occasion.

Many schools were open in the city early for flag hoisting ceremonies while shops too were catering to people in some areas of the city including Lal Chowk, in a marked

departure from the last 33 years when people would prefer staying home.

While security forces were deployed in adequate numbers to ensure law and order, traffic was moving freely in most parts of the city with only random checking of vehicles done by security forces at some places close to Bakhshi stadium, officials said.

The stadium was closed in 2018 for renovation and upgradation and the parade had shifted to Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Sonawar.

Similar scenes were witnessed in other district headquarters.

"I came here with my children. I found it very peaceful and the authorities had made enough security arrangements,"

said Shafeeq Ahmad, resident of HMT Srinagar.

Ahmad said that his kids wanted to see the Independence Day parade and he fulfilled their wish.

"We are happy that there are no restrictions and people are allowed to enter without any special passes. This is how it should have been in the first place," Abid Hussain, a young man in the stands, said.

Shaista Bano had come from Ganderbal district to witness the parade.

"I was longing for so many years to see the parade. When I heard that anyone can enter the stadium, I decided to come this time," she said.

There were no restrictions on the internet as announced by the Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri on Saturday. The Railway service between south and north Kashmir districts were also operating as usual. **More on P10**

India, Pak Troops Exchange Sweets

Press Trust of India

Jammu: Indian troops on Tuesday exchanged greetings and sweets with their Pakistani counterparts in Poonch, Jammu and Samba districts of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of the country's 77th Independence Day.

In Poonch, the Indian Army and Pakistani troops exchanged sweets along the Line of Control (LoC) in Chakan Da Bagh and another forward area, officials said. Border Security Force (BSF) personnel and Pakistan Rangers exchanged sweets at various border outposts (BOPs) under the Jammu frontier in a very cordial atmosphere, they said.

The exchange of sweets took place at all BOPs in Samba, Kathua, R S Pura and Akhnour, they said.

3 Soldiers, JK Policeman Awarded Shaurya Chakra

Agencies

Jammu: Three army officers and a Jammu and Kashmir police constable, who had participated in anti-terror operations in Jammu and Kashmir from 2020 to 2023, resulting in elimination of nearly 64 hardcore terrorists, have been awarded Shaurya Chakras 2023 for their bravery.

The President Droupadi Murmu has approved 76 Gallantry awards to Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel on eve of Independence Day.

According to a local news agency (KNO), these include four Kirti Chakra, all posthumous, 11 Shaurya Chakras, including five posthumous, two Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 52 Sena Medals (Gallantry), three Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) and four Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).

Among these Shaurya Chakra awardees three army officers exhibited inspiring leadership and exhibited exceptional courage and bravery resulting in eliminating 64 hardcore terrorists mostly operating in South Kashmir.

A JKP constable, who was killed by terrorists last year, was also awarded Shaurya Chakra for his bravery.

As per citation, Major Ravinder Singh Rawat of The Armoured Corps/44th Battalion the Rashtriya Rifles has been awarded Shaurya Chakra for exhibiting inspiring leadership during conduct of 11 successful operations, resulting in elimination of 28 hardcore terrorists since March 2020 in Shopian.

Major Vijay Verma of The Rajput Regiment/44th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles has been awarded Shaurya Chakra for exhibiting inspiring leadership and conduct of 10 successful operations, resulting in elimination of 22 hardcore terrorists. He has been operating in Shopian since October 2021. **More on P10**

India At Decisive Turning Point: PM

Says Delhi Can Shape New World Order



New Delhi: India is at a decisive turning point and has the strength to shape the new world order that was emerging in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday and assured the countrymen of a "New India" with a bright future in next five years.

Addressing the nation on the 77th Independence Day, the Prime Minister urged fellow citizens not to lose the opportunity to realise the country's potential as the decisions and sacrifices made in this period will impact the country for the next 1000 years.

"Today we have democracy, diversity, and this 'Triveni' (three factors) has the potential to make every dream of India come true," he said.

The Prime Minister said experts the world over are saying that India was now unstoppable. "As a new world order emerged after World War-2, I can clearly see a new world order, a new geopolitical equation is fast taking shape after COVID-19. I can see the strength of 140 crore Indians in shaping

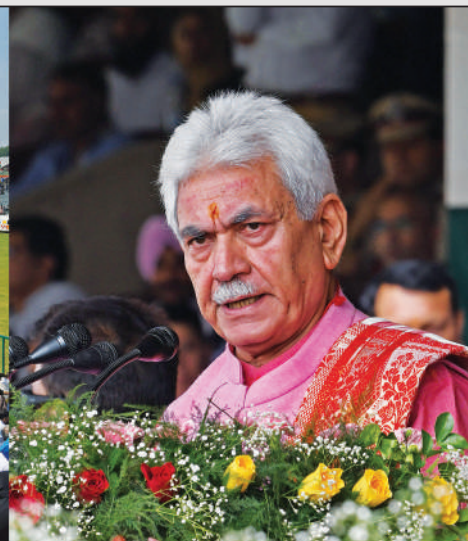
the changing world. You are at a decisive turning point," he said.

During his nearly 90-minute-long address, the Prime Minister also outlined various initiatives taken by his government in the past 10 years, including in the field of the country's security, women's empowerment and the welfare of poor and marginalised sections of the society. He also mentioned various incidents in the country, including Manipur violence and said the situation in the northeastern state was improving.

In his 10th consecutive Independence Day speech, also his last before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Prime Minister said in 2014, people decided to take the country forward.

"India was freed from the era of instability. In 2014, we were the 10th largest economy. Today with the efforts of 140 crore citizens we have become the 5th largest economy in the world... This did not happen just like that. The demon of corruption that had the country in its clutches - we stopped leakages and created a strong economy," he said.

Noting that **More on P10**



Committed to Drug, Terror & Corruption Free J&K: LG Sinha

'59% Increase In Foreign Tourist Arrivals; Negative Travel Advisories To Go Soon'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday that he has dedicated every moment of his life to usher Jammu and Kashmir into a new era of peace and prosperity, and his administration is determined to take decisive and tough action against terrorism and strike the last nail in the coffin of terrorist-secessionist ecosystem.

"Terrorism is one of the gravest threats to peace and

progress. The ideology of terrorism and separatism is cancer for society and all its forms have to be completely eliminated. We need to identify the remaining elements and isolate them. We need to stop using double standards for terrorism. A terrorist has to be called a terrorist," Sinha said in his Independence speech on Tuesday.

"Three years ago, on this day, I said to you that I have no promises to make, but I have promises to keep. I have

dedicated every moment of my life to keep those promises and to usher Jammu and Kashmir into a new era of peace and prosperity," he added.

Taking a dig at Pakistan, Sinha said this paradise on earth has been the land of all spiritual streams since times immemorial but the terrorism exported by our neighboring country had tried to destroy the tranquility and cultural richness of this soil of 'Peer Vaer'.

"We have reignited love and

brotherhood in this sacred soil of Adi Shankaracharya, Kalhana, Lalleshwari, Sheikh-ul-Alam, Syed Simnani, Mata Roop Bhavani and Sikh gurus and propagating the ageless ideals of humanism, communal harmony and peace," he said.

Referring to the overwhelming participation of citizens in the G20 meeting, annual Amarnath Yatra and Muharram procession after three decades, the LG said that these events testify the beginning of a new era of peace and **More on P10**

WITH THE TIMELESS WISDOM OF SAINTS, sufis and the spirit of brotherhood, harmony and mutual respect, we are rapidly marching forward to build Viksit Jammu and Kashmir. Today, we stand firm in our determination to build the Jammu and Kashmir of our dreams."

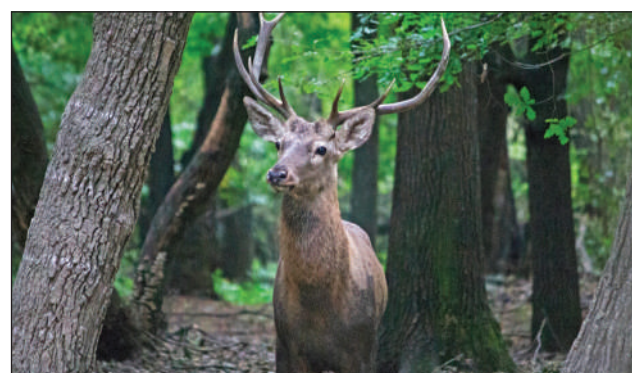
No Considerable Improvement In Hangul Population: Report

'The Species Needs Considerable Immediate Global Attention'

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: Even as the population of the Kashmiri stag, also called locally as Hangul, is stable, there is no considerable improvement in its population due to various concerns, the department of the Wildlife Protection, Jammu & Kashmir (DWLP) has said in a report.

Hangul is a critically endangered species as per IUCN, Red List Data, a Schedule I Species in Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972.



breeding. The species needs considerable immediate global attention,"

The present population monitoring exercise results show a marginal increase in population from the past estimates (2019: 237; 2021: 261; 2023: 289).

"The basic demographic ratio of male: female and female: fawn ratios are skewed. The

number of Hangul which were not distinctly identified by the participants may have also accounted for the more skewed ratios," the report adds.

Hangul was once widely distributed in the mountains of Kashmir and parts of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh in an arc 65km in width to the north and east of Jhelum and **More on P10**

Weddings On As Sense of Security Prevails

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: Until recently no family in Kashmir Valley would even imagine holding a wedding close to August 15 as the date since 1990 was marked in separatist calendar as black day.

For the first time in three decades of conflict, marriages, walimas and other family functions went on as per schedule.

Kashmir Observer spoke to at least a half a dozen people who had a marriage function slated around 15th August with many saying that it was like any normal day for them.

"..Since the situation is peaceful, we decided to keep 14 and 15 August as the marriage date of my cousin and thanks to Allah everything went so smoothly," said Sajad Ahmad Dar, a resident of Surasayar, Charoora area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district.

Dar further said that there are at least four marriage ceremonies going on in his area on this day.

His cousin, Mohammad Altaf Sheikh is getting married with Jawahara Begum of Chadoora Budgam.

According to Ghuman Nabi Sheikh, a resident of Bandipora he also decided to marry his daughter Naseerna on this date as most of his relatives were home because of the August 15 holiday.

"While many of our relatives expressed their concern for keeping this day for marriage, however I could sense that nothing was going to happen and everything passed off peacefully," Sheikh told Kashmir Observer.

Many people also drove to the countryside to spend the day with their families. Various health resorts like Pahalgam, Doodpathri and Gulmarg were clogged with people on Tuesday. Keran, situated on once dreaded military Line of Control is a new hot destination for locals and outsiders alike these days.

"There is a general sense of ease. People **More on P10**

Loan Relief For Buying House In Cities Soon: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the government will soon launch a scheme to provide relief in bank loans to those dreaming of their own house in cities. Addressing the nation on the 77th Independence Day, PM Modi said his government will soon launch the scheme for middle-class families living in cities but do not own a house. The Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) -- a flagship Mission of the Central government -- on June 25, 2015. The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has been implementing the PMAY-U scheme. According to **More on P10**

INDIA WAS FREED FROM THE ERA OF INSTABILITY. IN 2014, WE WERE THE 10TH LARGEST ECONOMY. Today with the efforts of 140 crore citizens we have become the 5th largest economy in the world... This did not happen just like that. The demon of corruption that had the country in its clutches - we stopped leakages and created a strong economy."



IIT Roorkee Pioneers Novel Catalyst To Alleviate Environmental Impact Of Antibiotics

Press Trust Of India

In a significant breakthrough, scientists at IIT Roorkee have unveiled an innovative catalyst designed to tackle the burgeoning concern of antibiotic pollution in the environment.

This pioneering strategy aims to effectively detect, mitigate, and disintegrate prevalent antibiotics such as tetracycline and erythromycin that pervade aquatic ecosystems, the researchers said.

The team noted that recurrent waves of the COVID-19 virus and its variants have resulted in a huge increase in the use of antimicrobials to control infections. These antibiotics and other antimicrobials end up accumulating in the water bodies.

This increased usage of antimicrobials and their accumulation in the envi-



ronment has exacerbated the problem of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) among microbes, they said.

Addressing this crucial concern, the

team led by Naveen Kumar Navani from the Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, devised a simple but effective

strategy by merging nanotechnology and biology.

The innovative strategy addresses three major events in the process detection of antibiotics using biosensors, removal of antibiotics and related xenobiotics using a carbon nanotubes-based magnetic system, and degradation of antibiotics using a catalytic process within 3-4 hours.

The research, published in the Chemical Engineering Journal, tackles the challenge of identifying, minimising, and breaking down two of the most commonly used antibiotics, i.e. tetracycline and erythromycin, in aquatic environments.

The team used carbon-based nanotubes and modified them to be magnetic in nature for easy extraction. Carbonaceous surfaces provide amazing sticking sites for antibiotics, which can be re-

moved or degraded further.

They genetically engineered bacteria for biosensing these particular antibiotics in such a manner that the biosensor bacteria start to glow in the presence of antibiotics.

The team found that these bacteria are really good at their job, detecting even trace amounts of these particular antibiotics.

Followed by detection, these antibiotics can be broken down by a simple strategy, which triggers a specialised free radical-based chemical reaction, according to the researchers.

This special chemical reaction was like a key that unlocked the potential of the modified carbon nanotubes and facilitated the degradation of more than 93 per cent of the antibiotics within a time frame of 3-4 hours, they said.

Gut Microbiome Linked To Increased Risk, Severity Of HIV, EBV Diseases: Research

ANI

The gut microbiome has drawn the interest of academics and non-scientists alike over the last decade. A recent study has revealed that the bacteria and other microbes in our gut aid in immunity, metabolism, digestion, and the fight against "bad bacteria" that try to infiltrate our systems. However, new research published in Nature Biotechnology by Angela Wahl, PhD, Balfour Sartor, MD, J. Victor Garcia, PhD, and UNC School of Medicine colleagues others has revealed that the microbiome may not as always be protective against human pathogens.

Using a first-of-its-kind precision animal model with no microbiome (germ-free), researchers have shown that the microbiome has a significant impact on the acquisition of Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV) infection and

plays a role in the course of disease.

"These findings offer the first direct evidence that resident microbiota can have a significant impact on the establishment and pathology of infection by two different human-specific pathogens," said Wahl, assistant professor in the UNC Department of Medicine.

This research was conducted through a collaboration with scientists at the UNC International Center for the Advancement of Translational Science and the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at the UNC School of Medicine.

For the discovery to be made, Wahl and Garcia needed to create a "humanized" mouse model that mimicked a human's immune system to conduct their study. Once exposed to a virus, the humanized models can replicate the virus like a human and could be used for study.

But researchers needed to take it one step further. Wahl and Garcia

needed to compare a conventional humanized mouse model to one without a microbiome (germ-free). This meant that they needed to create a first-of-its-kind mouse model that was humanized and free of bacteria.

Wahl, who is an expert in developing in-vivo models for human pathogens, and former UNC graduate student Morgan Chateau, PhD needed to figure out a way to humanize the animals while keeping them from encountering any germs, including those that live on our food, skin, in the air, or anywhere else in the external environment. To do so, they used a custom surgical isolation chamber, which is essentially a "big sterile bubble," with specialized glove compartments and a microscope.

"This had never been done before," said Wahl, who is also assistant director of the UNC International Center for the Advancement for Translational Science. "We humanized the mice and did our viral exposure experiments under

strict germ-free conditions. Technically, it was very challenging."

HIV is a retrovirus that primarily infects human CD4 T cells and is mainly acquired through the GI tract. Rectal exposure, for example, in men who have sex with men accounts for more than half of new HIV infections. Breastfeeding is an example of an oral exposure that can also transmit HIV to infants.

Dr. Wenbo Yao, PhD, co-first author, found that rectal HIV acquisition was 200% higher in animals colonized with resident microbiome compared to germ-free animals. Similarly, oral HIV acquisition was 300% higher in animals colonized with resident microbiota compared to germ-free animals. Researchers also noticed that animals colonized with resident microbiota had HIV-RNA levels that were up to 34 times higher in plasma and more than 1,000 times higher in tissues than germ-free mice.

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The Jammu And Kashmir Board Of School Education

New Campus Bemina Srinagar

I have passed/appeared in Secondary School Examination (Class- 10th) under Roll No. 112010108 Session: Annual Regular Year 2023 through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed by the concerned School/parent/Board against my parentage as Mustaq Ahmad Gojar Khatana instead of Mushtaq Ahmad Gojar Khatana Now, I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. New Campus Bemina, Srinagar, if any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Certificates-KD within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained.
Name: Sajad Ahmad Gojar Khatana
F/N: Mushtaq Ahmad Gojar Khatana
M/N: Shameema Begum
DOB: 02-12-2005
Residence: Ketson Aloosa



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PUBLIC NOTICE

I Abida Daughter of Gh Nabi Ganai inform to, the general public That FD in the name of Abida resident of chanapora has been lost and as such, I myself has claimed the same amount to be drawn in, my favour. If any body has any objection should report to the concern bank with in 7 days positively.. After the expiry time no objection be entertained..

Abida or J&K State Cooperative Bank Chanapora, Srinagar
 Daughter of Gh Nabi Ganai
 R/o chanapora

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PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuance of Seed & Fertilizer License . If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Lalmandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Ruquia Anwar
 W/o Sajaad Ahmad Bhat
 R/o Palhallan Pattan

FKO

From the office of Advocate Uzair Khan

License no. 502/2018

In the case of

1. Saadat Mand Durrani S/o Col. A. M. Durrani R/o Sanat Nagar, Main Chowk, Srinagar. Proprietor: Durrani Enclave At Sanat Nagar Main Chowk.
 2. Shazana Duranni D/o Saadat Mand Durrani R/o Sanat Nagar Main Chowk Srinagar

VS
PUBLIC AT LARGE
 In the matter of:
 In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Appeal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seek in obtaining some relief/order at their back /in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.
 NJ Sd/advocate

3rd Death Anniversary of
Syed Mohammad Syeed Qadri
 Shalimar, Srinagar



August 16, 2020

Time heals wounds and pain. It does to a certain extent but the pain of missing you is so deep. We don't know how many lifetime it will take to heal. Three Years has passed since you left us all alone and shattered. The vacuum will never ever be filled in our lives again. You will always be loved and remembered everyday by each of us till our last breath.

May Allah Almighty give you highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous (Ameen)

Deeply remembered by:
 Family, Relatives and Friends.

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فاتحہ خوانی 16 اگست کو ادا ہوگی



وادی کشمیر کے بلند پایہ صوفی بزرگ فقیر جناب شاہ عبدالرشید صاحب مرحوم فقیر جناب عالم شاہ ساکنہ شاہ مظہر ہرناک بہت ناگ میں 13 اگست 2023 مطابق 26 محرم الحرام 1445ھ کو اس دنیا سے فانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ مرحوم ایک اعلیٰ درجے کے مالک تھے اور اعلیٰ درجے کے درویش تھے۔ مرحوم نے اپنی پوری زندگی اللہ کی وحدانیت کیلئے وقت کر دی تھی۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس میں اعلیٰ مقام عطا کریں اور کروٹ کروٹ جنت نصیب عطا کریں۔ مرحوم کی فاتحہ خوانی ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقعہ فقیر عالم شاہ ہرناک بہت ناگ میں 16 اگست 2023 کو ادا ہوگی۔

سوگواران خاندان
 برادران محمد یوسف شاہ و محمد صابر شاہ و جاوید احمد شاہ
 برادر سستی غلام نبی الدین کو
 فرزندہ سستی ارشاد احمد شاہ
 سہ ریلہ شجاعت احمد وانی

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LG Hosts 'At Home' On 77th Independence Day

Srinagar: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, hosted an 'At Home' reception on the 77th Independence Day here on Tuesday, an official spokesperson said.

On the occasion, the LG interacted with the family members of martyrs, freedom fighters and citizens of the Union Territory and exchanged Independence Day greetings.

On I-Day People Dance, Take Selfies At Iconic Ghanta Ghar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As the country celebrated its 77th year of Independence on Tuesday, Srinagar's famous clock tower - Ghanta Ghar - was abuzz with music, dance, tricolor hoisting and other cultural activities by locals as well as non-locals.

Non-locals from various parts of Jammu and Kashmir visited the iconic clock tower and took pictures, danced and raised nationalist slogans.

The people were enthusiastic and appreciated the administration for renovating the Ghanta Ghar. They also hailed the hospitality and loving nature of the people of the valley.

A man from Gujarat was also seen painted in the tricolour and carrying the national flag there.

"It's my second visit to Kashmir. I came last year as well, and I was painted in the tricolour that time too," Arun Harani said.

Cluster University, FCS&CA, F&ES Depts Celebrates 77th I-Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Cluster University Srinagar also celebrated 77th Independence Day with the hoisting of the National Flag at the varsity's Gogji Bagh campus by Vice Chancellor, Prof. Qayyum Husain. Besides the National Anthem, patriotic songs were also played on the occasion.

Those who attended the ceremony included Dean Academic Affairs, Registrar, Principles of constituent and affiliated colleges, Deans of various faculties, Chief Proctor, Dean Students Welfare, Sports Secretary, Coordinators of IG programs, Nodal officers and Conveners of various committees besides the other administrative staff of the university.

In his address, the Vice Chancellor referred to the freedom struggle of India and the contribution of freedom fighters in ending the colonial rule. Prof. Qayyum said the country has come a long way and gained a place of power and respect in the international arena.

Underlining the significance of Independence Day, the Vice Chancellor said, "The country's strength comes from its strong democratic credentials which need to be upheld and safeguarded by every citizen."

He exhorted the Principals and faculty members of the constituent and affiliated colleges to inculcate the spirit of nation building among students.

Pertinently, the constituent colleges of the university viz., Govt. College for Women; Amar Singh College; S.P. College; Abdul Ahad Azad Memorial Degree College and Institute of Advanced Studies In Education also celebrated Independence Day with flag hoisting ceremonies led by

respective principals.

I-Day celebrations were also observed at the Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES) department at F&ES Headquarters Batamalo, here with great fervor and enthusiasm.

On the occasion, Director F&ES, Alok Kumar hoisted the National Flag.

The program was attended by Administrative officers, Assistant Director, senior officers/officials of the department, Jawans of F&ES, school children as well as staff from various schools.

Addressing the gathering, the Director paid rich tributes to the Martyrs of the Nation who sacrificed their lives to mark India as an Independent and sovereign Nation.

During the celebrations, a skit was also performed by the Jawans of F&ES department regarding fire safety measures. On the occasion, a drawing competition of School Children was also held in which the 1st, 2nd & 3rd position holders were awarded with trophies, medals and certificates by the Director.

The 77th Independence was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor at the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute's (JKEDI) Sempora, Pampore campus.

The celebrations commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by Director, JKEDI, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat followed by the soul-stirring rendition of the National Anthem.

The festivities took on an even more poignant tone with the inclusion of a ceremonial salute, executed by the brave members of B Coy from the 41st Battalion of the Border Security Force (BSF), under the leadership of Giriraj Singh Rana, Assistant Commandant.



Unprecedented scenes were witnessed in historic Lal Chowk on Tuesday with people, mostly tourists, in large numbers thronging the newly renovated city square and dancing to the tune of national songs. KO Photo

Day After Inauguration, Aesthetic Fountain Base Damaged At Lal Chowk

Group Of 70 Danced On Delicate Base; CEO Smart City Promises Action

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: The delicate tile Base of aesthetic fountains at Lal Chowk, which was renovated as part of the Srinagar Smart City Project has developed cracks and tiles come loose after a group of about 70 people, probably non-locals danced on it on the eve of 76th Independence Day on Tuesday.

The unbecoming act comes day after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the iconic clock tower amidst much fanfare at city center Lal Chowk.

It is in place to mention that hordes of people swarmed the historic Lal Chowk in Srinagar, the summer capital, since early in the morning to commemorate India's 76th Independence Day.

An official at the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) told Kashmir Observer that the base of the aesthetic fountain, comprising delicate tiles has developed cracks and tiles come loose after a group of people, probably non-locals, began dancing on it.

He said the Commissioner SMC, Athar Amir Khan who also heads Srinagar Smart

City Project as Chief Executive along with a team of officials rushed to the spot to assess the loss. He said the civic body will check CCTV cameras installed around the venue to identify

"Yes the tiles have developed cracks and at the same time come loose, we urge people not to damage the government property. It was due to the tireless efforts of the administration



those responsible for the unbecoming act.

Meanwhile, Commissioner SMC, Athar Amir Khan said that around 70 people danced on the pavement, causing damage to it. He said the dry deck fountains are aimed at adding beauty to the place where they are fitted and that dancing on it is not done.

that the Lal Chowk project was completed on time. Please do away with irresponsible acts," Khan urged the masses, adding those found damaging the government property 'intentionally' will be dealt with strictly.

He said a barrier will be erected around the fountain area so that such acts are not repeated in the future.

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- PDD: 0194-2450213
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- BIJHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



PRAYERS	
FAJR	4 :21
ZUHR	12:35
ASR	5: 22
Magrib	7:21
ISHA	8: 48

HIJRI CALENDAR
28 Muharram
1445

This Day In History

- 1940 - 45 German aircrafts shot down over England
- 1944 First flight of the Junkers Ju 287.
- 1945 Puyi, the last Chinese Emperor and ruler of Manchukuo is captured by Soviet troops
- 1946 - Direct Action Day: Widespread riots erupt in Calcutta between Muslims and Hindus over whether Pakistan should be a separate state, killing over 4,000 and leaving 100,000 homeless
- 1948 - Arabs blow up Latrun pumping station in Jerusalem
- 1948 - Israeli pound becomes legal tender
- 1953 - Shah of Persia Mohammed Reza Pahlavi & princess Soraya flee to Baghdad & Rome
- 1959 - USSR introduces installment buying
- 1960 - Britain grants independence to crown colony of Cyprus
- 1972 - Morocco King Hassan II's B727 shot during failed coup attempt by General Mohamed Oufkir. Reportedly, King Hassan grabbed the radio and told the rebel pilots "Stop firing! The tyrant is dead!", fooling pilots to break off attack
- 1984 - NASA launches Amptm
- 1987 - Astrological Harmonic Convergence-Dawn of New Age
- 1988 - IBM introduces software for artificial intelligence
- 1990 - China performs nuclear test at Lop Nor, PRC
- 1990 - Iraq orders 4000 Britons & 2500 Americans in Kuwait to Iraq
- 2003 - Cristiano Ronaldo (18) makes his debut for Manchester United and the Premier League in a 4-0 home victory over Bolton Wanderers
- 2012 - Wikileaks founder, Julian Assange is granted political asylum by Ecuador
- 2012 - 113 people are killed and over 200 wounded in a series of attacks across Iraq

From KO Archives

WIP Wazwaan & A Bridge Too Far

GHULAM MUHAMMAD

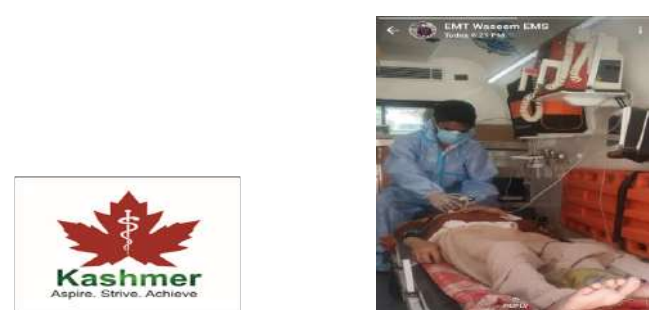
Sopore: Even as the long wait for completion of the Hathishah bridge here is over, its formal opening awaits a ministerial indulgence. For a good two months, no minister or VIP has been available to cut the ribbon to enable the people benefit from its erection. The inordinate delay & am generated resentment among the local people who have been inconvenienced due to its absence over the years.

According to reports, the authorities had slated the formal inauguration of the bridge at least thrice so far. On every such occasion, the engi-neers had to arrange the cus-tomary feast, known as wazwan, for the august guests to partake. Obviously forces alleged, the charges on this ac-count might have to be borne out of the funds provided for the main project.

Reports said the border Security force (BSF) personnel manning the security posts on filler side of the bridge were not allowing any vehicle to pass over the bridge on the plea that no minister had so far inaugurated it formally. However, they allowed some pedestrians selectively prohibiting the general public to walk over the bridge.

It may be recalled the speaker of the legislative as-sembly, Abdul Ahad Vakil, was the one to crack an occasional whip to get the work on the bridge, which had been going on at a snails pace over the years, speeded up. He held several meetings with engi-neers and even promised its completion long ago. Now that the work is complete, no minister is available to Commission Bridge.

(Kashmir Observer, August 16, 2000)



WHY TO USE CRITICAL CARE AMBULANCE

Early Intervention

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

Timely Transportation

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

Reduced Complications

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

Better Coordination

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

Improved Accessibility:

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



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Saudi Arabia Sends Message Of Moderation At Makkah Conference



Arab News

MAKKAH: The final day of the Makkah conference emphasized the need for enhanced communication, integration and stronger partnerships in Islamic affairs among departments of religious affairs, ifta and sheikhdoms worldwide to achieve unity among Muslims.

The international conference, "Communication with the Departments of Religious Affairs, Ifta and Sheikhdoms in the World," concluded in the holy city on Monday.

Held under the theme "communication and integration," the two-day conference was attended by about 150 leading Islamic scholars, muftis, religious leaders and thinkers from 85 countries.

Heads of Islamic associations and sheikhdoms, as well as academics from a number of international universities, also took part in the event, organized by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance.

The conference sends a message to the world about Saudi efforts to serve Islam and Muslims, and to promote the values of moderation.

During the conference, participants presented research papers in seven sessions that covered a range of topics. These included efforts in the service of Islam, promoting the values

of tolerance and coexistence, moderation and tolerance in the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah, combating extremism and terrorism, and protecting society from atheism and dissolution.

In the final communique of the conference, participants also emphasized that the first building block of Islamic unity was unification, a principle advocated by all the apostles. They stated that adhering to the Qur'an and the Sunnah was the foundation of the religion, which includes the importance of avoiding deviance and adhering to principles with correct understanding to prevent discord.

The recommendations also highlighted the importance of regulating fatwas in accordance with the texts of Shariah in a manner that promoted benefit and prevented corruption. Participants emphasized the significance of obtaining fatwas from reliable sources and avoiding misleading or incorrect fatwas.

The responsibility of departments of religious affairs, ifta and sheikhdoms worldwide was also emphasized in promoting the values of moderation and tolerance in the discourse of Dawah and educational curricula. This could be achieved through intensified training programs for imams and preachers, as well as efforts to combat extremism and moral decay.

Independence Day Speech: PM Modi Prescribes Several Mantras For Future Of Country

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: From the trifecta of demography, democracy and diversity to the three ills of corruption, nepotism and appeasement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech on Tuesday used several catchy phrases to drive home his government's achievements, his vision for the future and criticism of the Opposition.

Here are some of the key points highlighted by the prime minister in his speech: --

Demography, democracy and diversity: "This trifecta of demography, democracy and diversity has the potential to fulfill every dream of India. Today, while countries around the world are witnessing an age structure that is growing old, India is moving energetically towards a younger demography. It is a period of great pride because today India has the highest population under the age of 30. This is what we have in my country, the youth below the age of 30; my country has crores of hands, crores of brains, crores of dreams, crores of resolutions! So, my brothers and sisters, my family members, we can get the desired results."

At the crossroads: "We are at the milestone between 1,000 years of slavery and 1,000 years of a grand future that is about to come. We are at this crossroads and hence we cannot stop, nor shall we live in a dilemma anymore. Taking pride in the heritage that was once lost, gaining back the lost prosperity, let us once again believe that whatever we do, whatever step we take, whatever decision we make, will determine our direction for the next 1,000 years and



will write the fate of India."

Developed India by 2047: "During the 'Amrit Kaal' of independence, when the nation celebrates 100 years of freedom in 2047, at that time, the Tricolour should be of a developed India in the world. We must not pause even for a moment, nor should we step back. For this, awareness, transparency and impartiality are the necessary strengths. We have to provide as much nourishment to this strength as possible."

"It should be our collective responsibility to ensure that we can provide it through institutions as a citizen and as a family. And that's why if we look at the history of the last 75 years, India did not have a dearth of potential. And why can't this country, which was once called the 'golden bird', rise again with that same potential? Friends, my dear family members, I have an unwavering belief that in 2047, when the country celebrates 100 years of independence, my country will be a developed India."

Three ills of corruption, nepotism and appeasement: "If the dreams are to be fulfilled, the resolutions are to be achieved, then it is the need of the hour to

fight the three evils by grabbing the bull by its horns. Corruption is at the root of all the problems of our country. Like a termite, it has completely eaten away all the systems of the country, and all the capabilities of the country. "Secondly, dynastic politics has destroyed our country. This dynastic system had gripped the country and snatched away the rights of the people of the country. The third evil is appeasement. This appeasement has also stained the original thinking of the country and our harmonious national character."

Modi's commitment: "My dear family members, this is Modi's commitment; it is my personal commitment that I will continue to fight against corruption. These evils (corruption, nepotism and appeasement) rob our country of whatever abilities some people have. These are the things that put a question mark on the hopes and aspirations of our people. Be it our poor, be it Dalit, be it backward, be it Pasmanda communities, be it our tribal brothers and sisters, or be it our mothers or sisters, we all have to get rid of these three evils for their rights."



India, China Hold 19th Round Of Corps Commander Level Talks In Ladakh

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The 19th round of India-China Corps Commander level meeting was held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side on 13-14 August 2023, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a press statement.

The two sides had a positive, constructive and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the remaining issues along the LAC (Line of Actual Control) in the Western Sector. In line with the guidance provided by the leadership, they exchanged views in an open and forward-looking manner, the press statement said further.

They agreed to resolve the remaining issues in an expeditious manner and maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations through military and diplomatic channels.

In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity on the ground in the border areas.

The 18th round of the India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting was also held at the Chushul-Moldo border meet-

ing point on the Chinese side on 23rd April 2023.

The two sides had a frank and in-depth discussion on the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector so as to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas, which will enable progress in bilateral relations.

In line with the guidance provided by the State Leaders and further to the meeting between the two Foreign Ministers in March 2023, they had an exchange of views in an open and candid manner.

In the interim, the two sides agreed to maintain security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector. The two sides agreed to stay in close contact and maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels and work out a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest.

The two countries started holding military talks on disengagement and de-escalation of the situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh soon after the confrontation started between the two militaries.

Condemnations Pour In 2nd Terror Attack In Iran's Shiraz



Agencies

TEHRAN: After the second deadly terrorist attack in Iran's Shiraz, for which ISIL claimed responsibility, various countries, groups, and politicians have condemned it and offered their condolences to the Iranian nation and government.

Reacting to the terrorist act on Monday, Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the Sunday attack on the holy site, which was the second of its kind in the last 10 months, his spokesman told reporters.

"Acts targeting religious sites, [and] places of worship are abhorrent," Stéphane Dujarric said. The UN chief emphasized that the perpetrators of the criminal act against civilians, who were exercising their right to practice their religion freely, should be brought to justice, he added.

man, Guterres conveyed his "deepest" condolences to the bereaved families and the Iranian people, wishing a speedy recovery for those injured.

Russia strongly condemns terror attack in Iran

Russia strongly condemns the terror attack on Shah Cheragh shrine in Iran and is set to expand anti-terrorist cooperation with the Iranian partners, the Russian foreign ministry said on Monday.

"The Russian side strongly condemns the barbaric terror attack and expressed sincere compassion with the families whose relatives have faced this tragedy. We hope that those responsible for this crime will be punished," it said.

According to the ministry, there were no Russian citizens among those hurt. "We reaffirm our readiness to further cooperation with our Iranian partners in fighting terrorism," the ministry stressed.

India @77: World Leaders Underline 'Privileged' And 'Strategic' Partnership With New Delhi

Press Trust of India

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON: Russian President Vladimir Putin, his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken underlined their "special", "privileged" and "strategic" partnership with New Delhi as they wished India on its 77th Independence Day on Tuesday.

In a message of greetings to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of Independence Day, President Putin said he is confident that the two nations will continue to boost fruitful bilateral cooperation in all areas through joint efforts, as well as constructive partnership in resolving pressing issues on the regional and global agenda.

"We attach great importance to our relations of special and privileged strategic partnership with New Delhi,"

he said. President Putin emphasised that the achievements that India has made in the economic, scientific, technological, and social fields are universally recognised.

"India enjoys well-deserved authority on the international stage, playing an important and constructive role in international affairs," he stressed, and wished happiness and prosperity to all Indians.

Congratulating the Indian people on their Independence Day, French President Emmanuel Macron in a post on X, formerly Twitter, said a month ago in Paris, "my friend @narendramodi and I set new Indo-French ambitions all the way to 2047, the centenary year of India's Independence".

"India can count on France as a trusted friend and partner, always," he tweeted in both English and Hindi, accompanied by a video of Prime Minister Modi's visit to

France last month.

Extending "best wishes" to the people of India on behalf of the American people on Independence Day, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said as the world's oldest and largest democracies, America and India have created a strong bond that grows ever closer as the two countries work together for a world that is open, prosperous, secure, stable, and resilient.

"On this momentous day, we reflect on the depth and breadth of our strategic partnership, and we celebrate the proud history of the Indian people, who are the key to the bright future we are building together," Mr Blinken said in a statement.

"We stand with you in our shared commitment to tackle the most pressing global challenges to ensure the peace and prosperity of our people," he said, adding that last year has shown that the US-India relationship is deeper and more expansive than ever.

Yamuna Water Level Crosses Warning Mark In Delhi, Again



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The water level of the Yamuna crossed the warning mark of 204.50 metres in Delhi following torrential rain in the river's upper catchment areas over the past two days.

According to the Central Water Commission's website, the water level at the Old Railway Bridge rose from 203.48 metres at 3 pm on Monday to 204.94 metres at 6 pm on Tuesday.

The flow rate at the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana's Yamunanagar district stood at 30,153 cusecs -- considered moderate during the monsoon season.

An official of the Delhi government's irrigation and flood control department said low-level flooding may occur at a few places along the river but a grave situation is unlikely.

At least 53 people have been killed in Himachal Pradesh as rain caused damage in the hill state since Sunday.

Torrential rain also ravaged Uttarakhand over the past two days, destroying buildings and causing landslides that

breached the national highways to Badrinath, Kedarnath and Gangotri shrines.

Most of the rivers are overflowing due to the rain. The Ganga is flowing above the danger mark in Tehri, Haridwar and Rishikesh. The Alaknanda and the Mandakini are flowing above the danger level in Rudraprayag, Srinagar and Devprayag, the disaster control room in Uttarakhand's Dehradun said.

In mid-July, Delhi faced unprecedented flooding due to heavy rainfall in the national capital and the Yamuna river's upper catchment areas. The Yamuna swelled to a record 208.66 metres on July 13, breaching its previous record and penetrating deeper into the city than in more than four decades.

Over 27,000 people were evacuated during the floods with the losses incurred in terms of property, businesses and earnings running up to crores of rupees.

The river flowed above the danger mark of 205.33 metres for eight days on the trot, starting July 10.

NEWS MAKERS

PCB Sparks Outrage By Excluding Cricket Legend Imran Khan From I-Day Tribute Video

Press Trust of India

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) omitted former prime minister Imran Khan from a video it released on Independence Day to pay homage to the country's cricket legends and milestones despite the fact that the cricketer-turned-politician led the World Cup-winning team in 1992.

The move drew sharp criticism from fans who were stunned at how the country's cricket board could ignore star performer Khan, who lifted the World Cup trophy in 1992 -- the only one Pakistan has in one-day cricket.

Pakistan celebrated its 77th Independence Day on Monday. Khan, who founded the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

party after his retirement from international cricket, has been lodged in the Attock Jail in Punjab province since August 5 after he was convicted in a corruption case and sentenced to three years.

The Election Commission of Pakistan later disqualified the 70-year-old leader and barred him from politics for five years. The PTI, however, complained that Khan is being kept in appalling conditions in the jail.

Khan was the captain in 1992 when the Pakistani cricket team lifted the world cup but he was completely missing from the entire two-minute and 20-second video released on August 14 to mark Pakistan's Independence Day.

Khan, who has a massive following across Pakistan, is one of the most celebrated cricket-

ers in the cash-strapped country as well as across the globe. "#ShameOnPCB" was one of the top trends on Twitter on Monday evening in Pakistan.

"To PCB's current decision makers -- even when you weren't born, Khan was earning pride for the country. What you did was quite shameful. Legend Imran Khan is ruling hearts even after your low attempt but you will be ridiculed always for this," Jibran Ilyas said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"They are not showing him in the cricket history of Pakistan but it is sure when the history of Pakistan will be written, his name will be written in golden words. He will be remembered as a hero, an inspiration for millions and a great leader," Khalid Butt said on X.

He Had Refused To Poison Mahatma Gandhi. His Grandchildren Have A Request

Press Trust of India

PATNA: Grandchildren of Batak Mian, a cook who defied the orders of a British officer to poison Mahatma Gandhi during Champaran Satyagraha in 1917, still await the entire land promised later by independent India's first President Rajendra Prasad in 1952.

Mian, who had to endure brutal torture and eviction from his land at the hands of the British for his patriotic act, died in 1957.

According to popular accounts of the 1917 event, the incident took place when Mahatma Gandhi visited Motihari, the then headquarters of undivided Champaran district, to enquire about the appalling condition of indigo farmers.

Erwin (known only by his first name), the British manager of

an indigo plantation, had invited Gandhi for dinner and asked his cook, Batak Mian, to serve him milk laced with poison. However, he refused to carry out the order and exposed the plot, saving Gandhi's life.

The movement of the indigo farmers, which came to be known as Champaran Satyagraha, became a historic event in the Indian freedom struggle and finally, the British were forced to accept the demands of agitating peasants.

"Our grandfather Batak Mian had informed Gandhiji about the plot. But he had to pay heavily for his patriotic act. He was jailed and brutally tortured. He was evicted from his house and forced out of the village along with his family," his grandson, Kalam Ansari (60), told PTI.

Akshay Kumar Becomes Indian Citizen

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Actor Akshay Kumar on Tuesday announced that he has once again become an Indian citizen, a news that he shared with his fans on Independence Day.

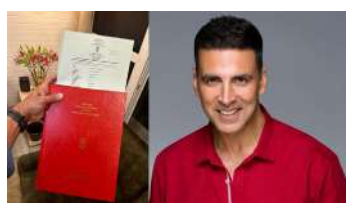
Kumar, who has often faced criticism over his Canadian citizenship, shared a photo of his Indian citizenship certificate on X.

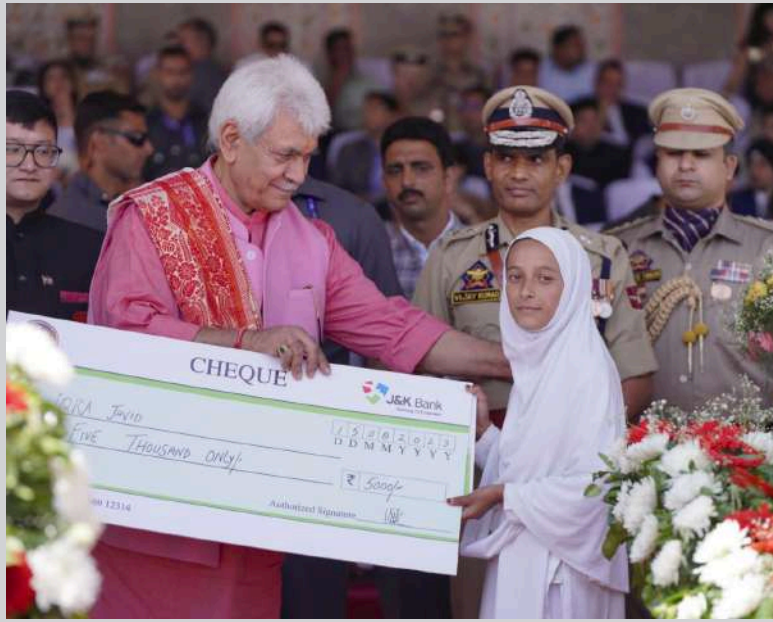
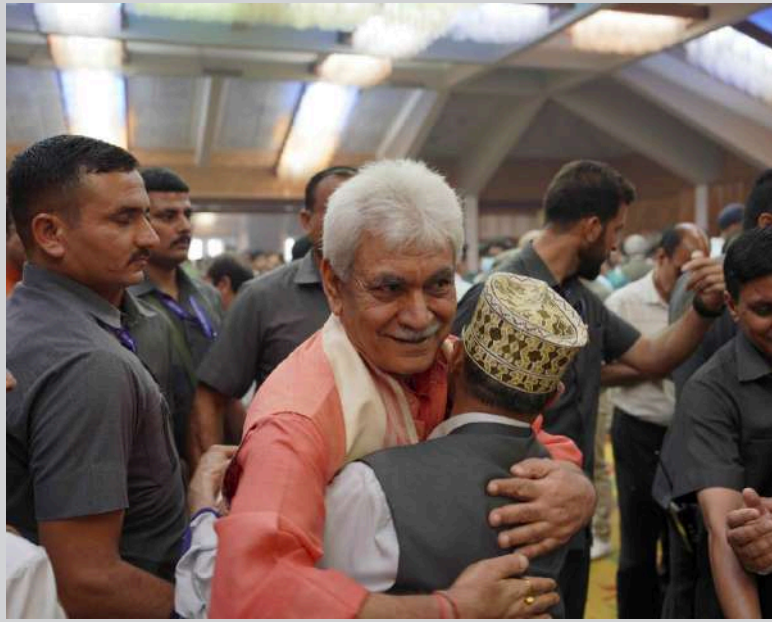
"Dil aur citizenship, dono Hindustani. Happy Independence Day! Jai Hind!" the 55-year-old actor said.

Kumar had previously said that he went through a lean phase in his career in the 1990s when he delivered over 15 consecutive flops and it pushed him to apply for the Canadian citizenship.

His citizenship status had come under intense scrutiny after he did not vote during the 2019 Lok Sabha election. The matter also became a topic of debate after he conducted a "non-political" interview of Prime Minister Narendra Modi before the election.

During an event in 2019, the actor had revealed that he had applied for an Indian passport.





J&K ADMINISTRATION LED by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Tuesday held a series of events, including cheque distribution, besides hosting 'At Home' to celebrate India's 77th Independence Day. PHOTOS, ABID BHAT, INFO DEPT

Key Facilities Not Used By Tourists Due To Restricted Entry At SKICC/ Centaur Hotel: CAG



Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has revealed that facilities built under "Swadesh Darshan" scheme were not being utilized by tourists due to highly restricted entry in premises of SKICC/ Centaur Hotel.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in its report, the CAG has stated that cruise-cum-floating restaurant completed with tendered cost of Rs 1.83 crore was handed over to J&K Tourist Department in August 2021.

The report, however, states that the jetty constructed in SKICC/Centaur Lake View Hotel premises could not be utilized by tourists due to highly restricted entry in SKICC/Centaur premises being guarded round the clock by the CRPF.

Similarly, it has pointed out that musical fountain with

multimedia laser and video show on water screen at SKICC, Srinagar adjacent to Centaur Lake View Hotel premises completed at a cost of Rs 8 crore in August 2017, could not be used regularly for tourists due to frequent events held for high ranking officers and dignitaries in SKICC/Centaur premises.

In its response to CAG, Tourism Department, J&K stated that despite VVIP movements and the fountain remaining closed, the fountain show had attracted tourists.

"For cafeteria, it stated that initially the cruise was supposed to operate from the banks of Chaar Chinaari Ghat to Nehru Park Ghat and as such two jetties along with rescue boats and ambulance boats were provided to the cruise. The jetties were portable and could be dragged in water to the place of choice," the report states—(KNO)

Minor Girl Drowns To Death

SRINAGAR: A minor girl died on Tuesday after falling into a stream in Chassana area of Reasi district.

Two-year-old Rashida, daughter of Raj Mohd resident of Channa Bagai Tehsil Chassana District Reasi fell in Nallah

at Channa Bagai while she was crossing it with her elder sister on Monday evening, an official said. He said that the girl died on spot and body has been recovered.

Further proceedings in this regard have been taken up. (KS)

Man Dead, 2 Injured In Anantnag Road Accident

SRINAGAR: A man died while two others were injured in a road accident in Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday.

An official said that a vehicle hit a bike, resulting injuries to three persons who were riding on the bike.

He said that all the injured were taken to SDH Bijbehara for treatment where one succumbed to his injuries.

He has been identified as Mehraj-ud-din Para son of Ghulam Rasool Parra of Sumbal Bandipora.

The injured have been identified as Waseem Ahmad Bhat son of Ali Mohd Bhat and Mohd Yaseen Parrey son of Bashir Ahmed—both residents of Sumbal.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognisance of the incident—(KNO)

53 Dengue Cases Reported In J&K So Far: Official

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Dengue cases are going to rise as monsoon culminates in Jammu and Kashmir with 53 cases reported this year so far.

State Surveillance Officer, Dr Harjeet Rai said that this year, 53 cases of dengue have been reported in Jammu and Kashmir including 3 from Kashmir division.

Officials told a local news agency KNO that dengue cases are projected to surge post monsoon in Jammu and Kashmir and advised people to take 'preemptive measures' to combat the painful mosquito-borne disease in the absence of any vaccine.

They said dengue caused by viruses carried by infected mosquitoes has always been a health concern especially and people need to take precautions to protect themselves from falling prey to the virus.

They asked people to use mosquito repellents and wear full sleeves shirts so as to save themselves from the Aedes mosquitoes bite, which they said

choose to breed in stagnant water accumulated by water logging mainly during monsoon.

"The better way to keep ourselves away from dengue is to prevent mosquitoes from accessing egg-laying habitats by environmental management and modification, disposing of solid waste properly and removing artificial man-made habitats that can hold water and covering, emptying and cleaning of domestic water storage containers on a weekly basis besides applying appropriate insecticides to water storage outdoor containers," they said

"The Aedes aegypti mosquito is considered the primary vector of dengue. "It could breed in natural containers such as tree holes and bromeliads but nowadays it has well adapted to urban habitats and breeds mostly in man-made containers including buckets, mud pots and discarded containers and used tyres, storm water drains etc which must be cleared and cleaned frequently," officials added.

J&K Witnessing New Era Of Peace, Progress: LG's Advisor

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the rise of a new era in the last four years which promises harmony, development and affluence, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, the advisor to the Lieutenant Governor said on Tuesday.

Bhatnagar, who hoisted the tricolour at the main Independence Day function here, said Jammu and Kashmir has undertaken a journey towards peace, progress, and prosperity in the last four years.

"Notable advancements have been made in establishing new

enterprises and the agricultural sector. Villages are progressing, and essential infrastructure is being reinforced," he said while talking about the need of strengthening of democracy at the grassroots level in the union territory.

Outlining the development initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir, he highlighted the implementation of projects worth Rs 7,000 crore in the healthcare sector.

He noted that the AIIMS in Jammu is set to be completed this year, while the AIIMS in Kashmir will reach completion by 2025. Additionally, seven

medical colleges and 15 nursing institutes are already operational.

He underscored that Jammu and Kashmir is rapidly moving towards comprehensive development in all sectors of life, particularly during the 'Amrit Kaal' period.

Bhatnagar also emphasised that the region is evolving into a realm free from fear and corruption.

The fact that the G20 summit is being hosted in the union territory serves as a testament to the emergence of the new Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

Empowerment Of Youth & Women

CS For Time Bound Implementation Of LG's Directions

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In follow up of commitments made by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on the eve of 77th Independence Day Tuesday regarding the empowerment of youth and women of Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta enjoined upon the departments and the Deputy Commissioners to formulate plans at their end to meet both these objectives in right earnest.

Reiterating the views of the LG, the Chief Secretary impressed upon all the Departments to work in coordination to ensure that every youth in J&K is given confidence that there shall be no dearth of new opportunities/possibilities for them in their lives.

He also stated that in line with another commitment of the LG regarding all round empower-

ment and economic upliftment of half of our population comprising women, each Department should make it a focal point to come up with innovative ideas to find ways of achieving it in a time bound manner.

Dr Mehta observed that when the nation is celebrating its 77th Independence Day the concept gains much significance as the nation can not afford to lag behind any of the world powers. He said that the past of the nation had been great and our future ought to be equally bright.

The Chief Secretary further remarked that both the women and youth form the important constituents of the population whose contribution is pivotal in taking the nation up the ladder of development. He stated that empowering them to achieve their full potential in their lives would unleash positive energy to propel the

nation to excel in every possible field.

He called upon all the Departments including the Deputy Commissioners of the UT to formulate action plans in this regard and ensure that these are implemented in right earnest in a time bound manner.

He emphasised on fixing short, mid and long term targets in order to pick the low hanging fruits first and fixing timelines for accomplishment of others. He maintained that J&K has been successful in achieving every single target, howsoever difficult, fixed for itself from the last couple of years.

He encouraged all of them to start taking initiatives from this historical day itself to be successful in fulfilling this task as well. He added that he is hopeful that by same synergy, coordination and collective efforts these two objectives are going to be met soon.

OMAR'S POSER TO J&K GOVERNMENT

'When Can People Queue Up Outside Polling Booths?'

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Tuesday offered a backhanded compliment to the Jammu and Kashmir administration, saying the "queues" outside the Independence Day function venue were "excellent" but asked when assembly elections will be held.

"Excellent. So when can

these same people expect to be queueing outside polling booths for assembly elections?" Omar said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Abdullah was responding to media reports about long queues outside Bakshi Stadium here, the venue of the main Independence Day function in Jammu and Kashmir.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti

also extended good wishes on the 77th Independence Day.

"Happy Independence day to my fellow countrymen. May the idea of INDIA that binds us together triumph," she said in a post on X.

The PDP president also posted a photograph of Mahatma Gandhi, India's first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad walking together.

IMA & NPIC, AIIMS- New Delhi Conduct Exclusive Virtual CME Programme

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Indian Medical Association (IMA) in association with BASF India Ltd & National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC), AIIMS- New Delhi conducted an exclusive virtual Continued Medical Education (CME) programme for more than 360 doctors and medical students.

In a statement, a spokesman said that the objective of the training/awareness programme was to provide a refresher on the diagnosis & treatment protocols and support the medical fraternity on handling and man-

aging incidents of accidental agrochemical poisoning, as per approved protocols. Agriculture, with its allied sectors, is the largest source of livelihoods in India. 70 percent of India's rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood and with more than 100 million farmers in India there are instances of accidental agrochemical poisoning incidents.

Doctors and medical staff at the primary health centers and local hospitals are the front-line respondents for managing and tackling such unfortunate incidents. Therefore, it is impera-

tive that accurate identification, proper diagnosis and prompt treatment is done within the first few hours of any incident.

Dr. Debabrata Kanungo, a global expert on medico toxicology, human health risk assessment and food safety conducted the in-depth training. Through specific case studies he explained the protocols on handling various poisoning scenarios and the corresponding treatment. The training also offered vital information on the principles of diagnosis, management & treatment of accidental agrochemical poisoning.

DIPR Celebrates 77th Independence Day

Director Info Hoists National Flag At Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) on Tuesday celebrated the 77th Independence Day at Media Complex here.

To mark the occasion, Director Information, Minga Sherpa hoisted the National Flag to commemorate this momentous event which underscores the values of unity, diversity, and national pride that the flag represents.

This symbolic gesture of hoisting the national flag served as a reminder of the country's rich history, the sacrifices of its people, and the bright prospects that lie ahead. Senior officers of DIPR and



other officials of the department also participated in flag hoisting ceremony.

BSF Jawans Celebrate I-Day At LoC

Press Trust Of India

NAUGAM SECTOR: Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on Tuesday celebrated Independence Day in this remote area close to Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district.

The national flag was unfurled by the commanding officer of the battalion as the jawans raised patriotic slogans to mark the 77th Independence Day of the country.

Commanding Officer Mohammad Israil said, "Our battalion is posted at the LoC along with three army units. We are fortunate that we are given the duty to protect the borders of the country and we are very proud of it. I want to assure my countrymen that they are safe and secure. The enemy cannot go through us."

Inspector General of BSF Kashmir Frontier, Ashok Yadav, said the alert level along the LoC was heightened ahead of the independence day to foil the evil designs of the enemy.

"Whenever there is a national event, the threat level goes up. BSF, which is posted with the Army along the LoC, is discharging its duties with alertness. We ensure that there is no infiltration from across the LoC. We devise our patrolling and ambushes so that all vulnerable patches are covered and no terror activity can take place. We have done some good operations in which we have stopped several infiltration attempts," Yadav said.

He said as the snow melts along the mountain passes of the LoC, the chances of infiltration increase as well.

"When the snow melts, the vulnerability -- in terms of infiltration -- increases. The threat perception increases and it is in this season that we see more infiltration attempts. Based on intelligence inputs from our sister agencies, we plan our operations with the Army accordingly and ensure that we foil all infiltration attempts," he added.

KVK Ganderbal Celebrates 77th Independence Day

Team KVK Appreciated with Excellence Awards

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Krishi Vigyan Kendra Ganderbal celebrated the country's 77th Independence Day on Tuesday with utmost zeal and enthusiasm.

In the week preceding Independence Day, series of events under Meri Maati Mera Desh campaign were organized to honour & appreciate the martyrs of the country and celebrate the strides made by Nation in different fields.

Under this campaign, the KVK organized awareness programmes, interaction sessions, painting/debate/essay competitions, plantation drives and pledge ceremonies to instill a sense of national pride and promote patriotism among the youth and school children.

Dr. Ishfaq Abidi, Senior Scientist & Head hoisted the Tiranga at the Kendra in presence of KVK Staff, representatives of local bodies, students and farmers of the district and conveyed Independence Day wishes to the gathering. This was followed by singing of the National Anthem in unison.

Dr. Abidi described that Inde-

pendence Day is an occasion to commemorate the sacrifice of freedom fighters and recalled the prime sacrifices of the martyrs who laid down their lives to protect the sovereignty of the country. He further revealed that Meri Maati Mera Desh is an idea to celebrate India's soil & valor and described this initiative as a unique way of celebrating India's free-dom.

On the occasion, he gave a brief deliberation of the achievements of Nation in Agriculture and allied sectors and the future demands to be fulfilled to meet nutritional requirements of the country.

Dr. Abidi motivated the staff to work with utmost selflessness and honesty to build a strong nation and reiterated the mission of KVK to work for the welfare of people of the district. During the District level function of Independence Day held at Qamaria Park, Ganderbal District Administration felicitated Team KVK Ganderbal for painstaking efforts to install technological upscaling in Agri-culture & Allied sectors and exemplary services in delivering duties.

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Wednesday | 16-08-2023

PM's I-Day Speech

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2023 Independence Day speech delivered from the Red Fort had a distinct political undertone, setting the stage for the upcoming 2024 parliamentary elections. In his address, the PM outlined key issues that he believes are critical for India's future growth and development. He underlined the urgent need to bolster "probity, transparency, and impartiality" to propel India toward becoming a developed nation by 2047. The PM identified corruption, nepotism, and appeasement as detrimental forces that have impeded the country's progress.

Corruption emerged as a central concern in Modi's speech, with him likening it to a termite that erodes the foundation of the nation. Nepotism within political parties also came under scrutiny as Modi condemned the preference for familial connections over merit and talent. The practice of appeasement, according to Modi, undermines social justice and weakens the fabric of the nation. He urged citizens to resist appeasement and its detrimental effects on societal aspirations.

The PM drew a connection between his previous electoral victories and the nation's desire for change and progress, exuding confidence in securing a renewed mandate in 2024, based on his government's performance and vision. As things stand, the PM's party, the BJP, still looks favourite to win the next year's all-important election. Modi remains the sole, overarching, pan-India leader who continues to retain his charisma and appeal. But recently, the BJP is facing a challenge from a combined opposition which sees a defeat in the next year's polls as an existential threat. Over two dozen political parties have come together to form an alliance named "INDIA" with the aim of challenging the BJP. The alliance, forged to safeguard democracy and the Constitution, vows to uphold the core principles that define the nation as enshrined in the Constitution.

The "INDIA" represents a diverse array of regional and national parties, which have historically been rivals but have set aside their differences for a common cause: to address the pressing issues affecting the country and challenge the BJP's nationalist platform. Led by Mallikarjun Kharge, the president of the main opposition Congress party, the alliance stands for "Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance," with its primary focus being on combating rising prices and unemployment that have plagued the nation, more so after the Russian invasion of Ukraine early last year.

But the PM Modi continues to rule the hearts of the majority of masses. As India goes into the election mode, the PM's address sets the tone for a discourse that will likely shape the nation's trajectory in the years to come. Here's hoping that the discourse leading up to the election unites rather than polarizes the nation.

OTHER OPINION

Dealing with the surge

The sharp surge in vegetable prices over the past few weeks had indicated that overall inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, would edge upwards in the months of July and August, breaching the upper threshold of the Reserve Bank of India's inflation targeting framework. Anticipating this rise, the central bank, in the last monetary policy committee meeting, had raised its inflation forecast for the second quarter to 6.2 per cent, up from its earlier expectation of 5.2 per cent. On Monday, data released by the National Statistical Office confirmed those fears. Headline retail inflation rose to a 15-month high of 7.44 per cent in July, up from 4.87 per cent in June. While this surge was anticipated, the magnitude of the rise has surpassed expectations.

The disaggregated data shows the rise is driven by higher food prices. The consumer food price index rose to 11.51 per cent in July, up from 4.55 per cent the month before. Within the food category, inflation was driven by vegetables (37.3 per cent), spices (21.6 per cent), pulses and products (13.2 per cent) and cereals and products (13 per cent). There are, however, expectations that this surge in vegetable prices will be temporary. Prices are likely to correct with fresh market arrivals. On its part, the government has also been taking measures to control inflation. It has decided to offload five million tonnes of wheat and 2.5 million tonnes of rice from the Food Corporation of India's stocks in the open market. On the other hand, core inflation, which excludes the more volatile food and fuel components, has moderated as per ICRA. And according to Crisil, both goods (excluding food) and services inflation have softened.

The central bank also expects this rise in inflation to be transitory. As the RBI Governor, Shaktikanta Das, has said, "vegetable prices may see a significant correction after a few months". However, with this inflation print, there is the risk of the RBI's forecast for the second quarter not being met — inflation would have to average 5.6 per cent over the next two months. There are also risks to food inflation beyond vegetables. Moreover, crude oil prices have firmed up. In its last meeting, the monetary policy committee had done well to look through this surge in inflation. However, considering that sustained high food inflation can influence household expectations, the committee must remain vigilant

The Indian Express



Kashmir is Breathing Bad, Govt Must Wake Up



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Our planet earth is facing several challenges like global warming, climate change, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, and pollution. This is more challenging in Himalayan region especially in a place like Kashmir valley which is surrounded by mountains with glaciers, forests and high altitude lakes.

Deforestation and pollution in our water bodies of Kashmir due to urbanisation has been a great challenge for people and authorities now the air pollution is also threatening not only our environment but this is impacting human health as well.

10,000 deaths every year

Last year, the Director of Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences-SKIMS Dr Parvez Koul said that 10,000 deaths were attributed to air pollution in J&K. He also said that Srinagar City has the highest incidence of lung cancer in India and a large number of people were suffering from chronic lung diseases in J&K.

Dr Koul called for an urgent need to act and control air pollution by countering measures and initiatives like afforestation around Srinagar city especially growing more trees on the hills surrounding Srinagar city like Hari Parbat and Zabarwan mountains which can reduce the air pollution in Srinagar city especially. SKIMS Director said this during a function held in Srinagar in December last year. The function was held to launch the J & K chapter of Doctors for Clean Air and Climate Action at SKIMS.

The Department of Pulmonary Medicine SKIMS in association with Lung Care Foundation and Doctors for Clean Air and Climate Action have already decided to work towards reducing air pollution in Jammu and Kashmir and they have devised several programmes for the same. Prof. (Dr.) Arvind Kumar, Founder Trustee Lung Care Foundation and Chairman - Institute of Chest Surgery, Medanta, Gurugram gave a detailed presentation on "Understanding air pollution and its health ill effects".

He said air pollution has become a national health issue that has hazardous effects on the health of people damaging lungs and other vital organs including brain, heart etc.

During his presentation in the technical session the SKIMS Direc-

tor said that around ten thousand deaths were attributed to particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) exposure and there is a need to control it by reducing the air pollution. He also said that the increasing number of vehicles, construction sites, brick kilns, cement factories which emit pollutants and significantly pollute our air and affect health makes air pollution a health issue.

Professor Farooq Lone from Environmental Studies SKAUST Srinagar said biomass burning in Kashmir was a major source of air pollution besides other sources like unregulated establishment of cement factories, brick kilns and overload of vehicular traffic within cities.

Investing in Planet Earth

This year World Earth Day which was celebrated on April 22 had a beautiful theme "Invest in our Planet". This emphasizes the importance of investing in planet earth for a sustainable future. But are we really serious about this? Are authorities at the helm of affairs thinking about the future?

At a time when our mother earth is facing serious climatic challenges, it demands immediate action as well. Are we serious about air pollution in Jammu & Kashmir? Is the J & K Pollution Control Committee cracking its whip on illegal

yan states have to be more cautious while building roads, highways, railways and tunnels through high altitude mountains and around the glaciers. While doing this they must think about the mountain ecosystem as well.

As air pollution is increasing day by day the J&K Govt and its institutions have to be more serious about it. There has to be a complete moratorium on setting up new cement plants or brick kilns in J&K. The pollution causing vehicles should be penalized heavily and mere checking pollution papers isn't enough at all.

Black Carbon in environment

A study conducted by Earth Sciences Department of Kashmir University around 2014-15 revealed that Kashmir has three times more black carbon in the atmosphere than neighbouring states. The presence of high concentrations of black carbon is considered to be the major reason for the melting and shrinking of glaciers in the region.

As per the Earth Sciences department's report more than 20% glaciers have vanished in Jammu & Kashmir during 60-65 years. According to a report published in 2015 in several local newspapers of Srinagar quoting Prof Shakeel Romshoo the then head of the Earth

their fast meltdown.

The Earth Sciences Department of the University of Kashmir has studied 30 glaciers in Jammu and Kashmir of 100 plus glaciers. The study conducted around 8 years back revealed that two or three glaciers have completely vanished and all others have shrunk considerably. In fact during my recent trip to Pir Panjal mountains in the upper part of Doodh Ganga valley bordering between Budgam and Poonch this author saw huge layers of black carbon having polluted the snow layers and glaciers. I had filed a detailed video report on this issue in my weekly Inkshaf programme last month

Conclusion

At a time when 10,000 people die every year in J&K due to air pollution and when black carbon concentration has increased manifold impacting our glaciers, the Govt institutions like Central Pollution Control Board, Pollution Control Committees, Environment and Ecology departments have a great role to play.

It's especially unfortunate that the J & K Pollution Control Committee is granting fresh permissions to set up brick kilns in Kashmir valley on agricultural land.

The Govt needs to revamp the Pollution Control Committee and

At a time when 10,000 people die every year in J&K due to air pollution and when black carbon concentration has increased manifold impacting our glaciers, the Government institutions like Central Pollution Control Board, Pollution Control Committees, Environment and Ecology Department have a great role to play

brick kilns, cement factories and other factories in J&K which emit a lot of toxic gases?

In addition to the Government, NGOs, individuals and business communities have a role to play as well but unless governments don't act seriously, commemorating the days like World Earth Day, World Water Day, World Forest Day, World Biodiversity or World Environment day with some attractive themes is meaningless.

I appreciate the initiatives taken by our Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry -KCCI which has set up a dedicated environmental committee and the present chamber office bearers are all conscious about environmental degradation in Kashmir.

Unfortunately the governments across the world especially in South Asia are more concerned about promoting the industries that cause pollution rather than taking steps to protect ecology or environment.

The Governments in Himal-

Sciences Department Kashmir University who is presently the Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Sciences and Technology -IUST said that glaciers in the Kashmir were melting at a faster pace than the other glaciers in the rest of the Indian Himalayas.

"We are studying this but so far we have found that black carbon levels are three times more than the atmosphere in other neighbouring states", said Dr Romshoo

The black carbon is made up of ultrafine particles produced by the inefficient combustion of all kinds of fossil fuels. Even the wood, kerosene, diesel and emissions from brick kilns produce black carbon. The black carbon produces a dark soot, which efficiently absorbs light and converts it into heat. This property of black carbon to absorb heat makes it the second biggest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide. The black carbon has not only been found in air but it settles down on glaciers as well and helps

post environmental engineers and scientists in this organisation rather than sending forest officers on deputation to run this organisation.

I appeal to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to take suo moto cognizance of air pollution in J&K and seek an explanation from J&K Pollution Control Committee in this regard who are working very casually when it comes to control air or water pollution in J&K. The Doctors for Clean Air and Climate Action must also hold more consultations on air and water pollution in J&K so that more sensitization and capacity building on this subject is done.

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

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is also Anant Fellow for Climate Action, Anant National University Ahmedabad

BEYOND NUMBERS

Debunking The Myth Of Intelligence Quotient

Shahid Qureshi

If you ask someone how intelligent they are, they would normally respond by rating themselves on a scale of 1-10. I have never encountered anyone in my life who would ever see the flaw in the question itself. This is because people assume intelligence to be a fixed measurable trait that expresses itself through certain abilities such as Mathematical, logical and linguistic and can be quantified on a numerical scale. This definition of intelligence runs through our culture. It's at the heart of the idea of academic ability, is the basis of entry into educational institutions and employment and stands as a foundation of the idea of IQ. These simple words mean that we could quantify intelligence and rely on IQ and other standardized tests to identify who among us is truly intelligent and how much by giving him a number on a numerical scale. For decades, intelligence quotient (IQ) has been considered the gold standard for measuring intellectual capabilities.

While these tests can of course provide insights into certain aspects of intelligence, they fail to capture the full range of human capabilities. As we delve deeper into understanding the complexities of human intelligence, it becomes evident that reducing it to a mere number falls far short of capturing true nature and essence of human intelligence. Even, Alfred Binet, one of the creators of the IQ test, intended to identify children with special needs so they could get appropriate forms of schooling. He never intended it to identify de-



grees of intelligence as such. In fact, Binet himself said that the scale he created does not permit the measure of intelligence, because intellectual qualities are not superposable, and therefore cannot be measured as linear surfaces are measured.

Nor did he ever intend it to suggest that an individual could not become more intelligent over time. History throws enormous stories of successful people excelling in various spheres of activity who had

never been good at school or could never have scored high on the scale of IQ and standardized tests.

We know at least three features of intelligence. The first is that intelligence is diverse. We perceive the world in many ways. Intelligence encompasses a wide array of skills, including emotional intelligence, creativity, social intelligence, and practical intelligence, which IQ tests often overlook. Psychologist Howard Gardner proposed the theory

of multiple intelligences, suggesting that intelligence is not a single entity but rather a combination of various abilities. Gardner identified eight types of intelligence-linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Although, this theory emphasizes that individuals possess different strengths and excel in diverse areas, challenging the narrow focus of IQ testing, yet if we only look at the ex-

traordinary richness and complexity of human culture and achievement. We could safely agree that we can't ever capture all of this in a single theory with merely eight separate categories of intelligence.

The second is that intelligence is distinctive. Everyone's intelligence is as unique as his fingerprint. No two individuals could ever have the same level of intelligence. I believe that intelligence is as vast as the human population itself. Thirdly, intelligence is dynamic and wonderfully interactive. Intelligence is not a fixed and static trait. It never remains constant in a person's life. It is a malleable entity that can evolve through interaction with the external environment.

To move beyond the limitations of IQ, it is essential to adopt a holistic view of intelligence. Recognizing and valuing diverse forms of intelligence can help individuals better understand their unique strengths and areas for growth. By embracing this broader perspective, we can foster a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of human intelligence.

While IQ tests have long been considered a reliable measure of intellectual abilities, they fail to capture the full range of human intelligence. Understanding that intelligence encompasses multiple dimensions, including emotional intelligence, practical intelligence, and various other forms, is crucial. By moving away from the narrow focus of IQ, we can embrace a more inclusive and accurate understanding of human potential and abilities.

The author is an Educator

WHO Thwarts Our Perception Of e-cigarettes

Smoking is injurious to health. Recall the number of times you have read it on a packet of cigarettes and yet spotted someone or the other smoking their way to happiness. With e-cigarettes, you can see many vaping to happiness. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines e-cigarettes as electronic devices that heat a liquid that contains nicotine and produce an aerosol, or mix of small particles in the air.

While they come in many shapes and sizes, they have a battery, a heating element and a place to hold liquid. A vaper usually inhales the e-cigarette aerosol into his lungs. Others who are breathing in this aerosol exhaled by the smoker also end up passive smoking in the process. While these come in various shapes and sizes, they are mostly battery-operated. Due to the presence of substances as harmful as nicotine, it is not considered safe for kids, teens and young adults.

Despite these basic facts about e-cigarettes, their sales have only gone up higher over the years. Sample this: in the period between November 2016 and August 2019, the sales of e-cigarette units in the US went up by 300 per cent. The pandemic proved to be a turning point as the market witnessed an increase in sales of combustible cigarettes, as many began avoiding e-cigarettes due to an increase in taxes, bans on flavoured products and questions on if they really were safer than

the combustible options. Now, a brand-new report by the World Health Organisation has rung alarm bells on the use of e-cigarettes. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that while nicotine itself is harmful, the electronic nicotine delivery systems present in e-cigarettes could be potentially more harmful and must be regulated carefully.

These observations come in the wake of the WHO report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2021 which takes stock of new products. It observes that these need to be very closely regulated and their uptake by children and young adults need to be monitored precisely for the aforementioned reasons. If the use of e-cigarettes among the younger population is a cause of concern, it is only because many ENDS manufacturers target them with different flavours, offering it as a substitute to the combustible versions. For the longest time, the confused messaging around e-cigarettes had many believe that it is a 'safer' option.

Vaping became the new-age smoking. But as technologies evolve and present a plethora of choices to us, it is not only the governments' but also individual responsibility to use these products with caution. This is the idea at the heart of the report.

The article was originally published by Khaleej Times



NCCF, NAFED To Sell Tomatoes At Rs 50 Per Kg Amid Fall In Wholesale Rates



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Centre has directed cooperatives NCCF and NAFED to sell tomatoes at a reduced rate of Rs 50 per kilogram from Tuesday in view of the decline in prices in the wholesale markets.

Since July, both NCCF and NAFED have been selling tomatoes at a discounted rate on behalf of the consumer affairs ministry in Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar to boost domestic availability and contain price rise.

Initially, the ministry had asked the two cooperatives to sell tomatoes at a subsidised rate of Rs 90 per kg and later reduced the price to Rs 80 per kg. Further, the price was cut to Rs 70 per kg.

"The latest reduction to Rs 50 per kg will further benefit the consumers," the ministry said in a statement.

So far, a total of 15 lakh kg of tomatoes have been procured by the two cooperatives which are being continuously disposed of to the retail consumers in major consumption centres in the country.

These locations include Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan (Jaipur, Kota), Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow,

Kanpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj) and Bihar (Patna, Muzaffarpur, Arrah, Buxar).

Over the past few days, National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF) had substantially increased the quantity of tomatoes supplied to the retail consumers by stationing its mobile vans across 70 locations all over Delhi, and 15 locations in Noida and Greater Noida.

In addition, NCCF is doing retail sale of tomatoes through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform.

NCCF and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) are procuring tomatoes from mandis in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra for simultaneous disposal in major consumption centres where retail prices have recorded the maximum increase in last one month.

As per the data maintained by the ministry, the all-India average price of tomatoes has declined to Rs 9,195 per quintal in Monday from Rs 9,671 per quintal on July 14.

The prices of tomatoes have come under pressure due to heavy rains in the key producing centres that has resulted in supply issues.

Agri-Drones To Women SHGs Will Help Modernise Farm Sector: Experts

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Cooperative major IFFCO and industry players on Tuesday said the government's decision to provide agri-drones to women self help groups will go a long way in modernising the farm sector through use of latest technology.

Addressing the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said 15,000 women self help groups (SHGs) would get agri-drones, as well as training for operating the unmanned aerial vehicles and repairing them.

IFFCO MD U S Awasthi termed the announcement a great example of women empowerment.

He said IFFCO is also purchasing 2,500 agricultural drones as a spray solution for Nano liquid urea and Nano DAP.

Secretary General of industry body Assocham, Deepak Sood said the decision has reaffirmed the government's commitment to women empowerment, ease of living and leveraging the power of technology for holistic development.

Use of drones is catching up among farmers for spraying of pesticides, nano-fertilizer, and crop management.



Agri-drone maker IoTech-World Avigation co-founder and director Deepak Bhardwaj said the decision will revolutionise India's agriculture landscape.

"It is likely to speed up adoption of drone technology in the field of agriculture and will lead to substantial employment generation and agribusiness opportunities in rural areas," he said.

Anoop Upadhyay, who is also co-founder and director of IoTechWorld, said India is witnessing adoption and promotion of technology like drone in the agriculture sector by agro-chemical companies.

Preet Sandhu, MD of Gurugram-headquartered AVPL, which is into drone business, also welcomed the announcement saying it will empower women and boost application of drones in the farm sector.

India Getting Ready For 6G, Task Force Already Set Up: PM Modi

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday hailed the swift roll out of 5G technology in the country and said India is now getting ready for 6G and a task force has been set-up for the same.

Addressing the nation on the 77th Independence Day PM Modi said the internet is now reaching every village and the country is now gearing up for quantum computers.

"My country is the fastest country to roll out 5G. We have reached more than 700 districts and now we are getting ready for 6G. We have formed a task force," PM Modi said from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

He said the world is going to be influenced by technology and even developed countries are willing to learn about the success of Digital India.

PM Modi said the government is working on a new scheme to push technology in the agriculture sector, under which thousands of self-help group's women will be trained and equipped with drones.

"I see the potential of science and technology among our rural women. Therefore,



we are thinking of a new scheme to bring technology to the agriculture sector."

"Agriculture should get a boost. Therefore, we will impart training of drone pilot, drone repair to the women self-help groups. Thousands of such women self-help groups will be provided with training, we are going to start drone flight with 15,000 women SHG," PM Modi said.

He said that the youth of the nation have huge capability and the government is working on policies to provide them abundant opportunities.

"Today our youth have placed India among the top

three start-up systems globally. Global youth is surprised with this capability and power India," PM Modi said.

He said that the government is using technology to get rid of corruption.

"Today the internet is reaching every village. India is getting ready for quantum computers. Today farmer producer organisations are being created, we are also going to make semiconductors," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister said internet data was very expensive before 2014 and at present the lowest spend is on data, and has resulted in savings for every family.

Modi Promises More Measures To Control Inflation, Vishwakarma Scheme For Workers

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday promised more measures to rein in rising food prices, and said a new scheme with up to Rs 15,000 crore outlay will be launched next month to boost livelihood opportunities of carpenters, barbers and other such people engaged in traditional professions.

Modi reiterated his prediction of India becoming the third largest economy in the world in his third term in office and said the country will be counted among developed nations when it celebrates its 100th year of independence in 2047.

"We have to take more steps to minimise the burden of inflation to the people of the country," Modi said in his independence Day address from the ramparts of the 17th-century Red Fort here. "And we will definitely take steps. Our efforts will continue."

His remarks came a day after official data showed retail inflation, which is the measure of change in retail prices of goods and services that households pay for their daily consumption - rose to its highest in 15 months in July mainly because of a surge in food and vegetable prices.

Retail inflation at 7.44 per cent in July compared with 4.87 per cent in the previous

month.

Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had while continuing a pause on interest rates, raised its inflation forecast for the current fiscal year to 5.4 per cent from 5.1 per cent earlier. In the September quarter, it now sees inflation at 6.2 per cent, higher than 5.2 per cent it had forecast previously.

In his last Independence Day address before the general elections next year, Modi said his government had taken several measures to contain price rise.

While the government-controlled oil companies held on to retail petrol and diesel prices despite a spike in cost, fertiliser continues to be heavily subsidised.

"Compared to the previous period, we have also had some success (in controlling inflation), but we cannot be satisfied with that... We have to take more steps to minimise the burden of inflation on people. We will take those steps. Our efforts will continue," he said.

He also recounted welfare measures of his government - from easy loans for small businesses to cash dole to farmers.

"Today, the world is facing an inflation crisis. Inflation has gripped the economies around the world. We also import goods and it is unfor-

tunate that we also end up importing inflation," he said.

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. It also imports roughly half of its natural gas needs as well as a host of consumer electronic goods.

Prime Minister announced that a mega scheme, called Vishwakarma Yojana, with an outlay of Rs 13,000-Rs 15,000 crore, will be launched next month to help carpenters, goldsmiths, mason, laundry workers, barbers and other people engaged in such traditional professions.

The scheme, mainly benefiting people belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, will be launched on Vishwakarma Jayanti which falls on September 17, he said.

He said the various schemes ranging from housing for the poor, provision of Rs 50,000 crore to street vendors through the PM SVANidhi scheme, and many more such programmes have aided 13.5 crore people to rise above the hardships of poverty.

A full-majority government for two successive terms has helped unleash an array of reforms - from digital payments to developing startup ecosystem, checking leakages in the delivery of government benefits to people, Rs 2.5 lakh crore given to farmers under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

Apple AirPods To Be Made In India At Foxconn Hyderabad Factory

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: iPhone maker Apple will start manufacturing its wireless ear buds AirPods at Foxconn's Hyderabad factory, according to sources.

Foxconn has approved an investment of USD 400 million for Hyderabad plant which is expected to begin mass production by December 2024.

"Foxconn Hyderabad factory will make AirPods. The factory is expected to begin mass production by December," a source told PTI.

The information was confirmed by one more source who is privy to the development.

An email query sent to Apple and Foxconn did not elicit any reply.

AirPods will be the second product category after iPhone that will be made in India.

Apple's AirPods leads TWS (true wireless stereo) market



globally.

It led the global TWS market with about 36 per cent market share in the December 2022 quarter, according to research firm Canalys.

Apple was followed by Samsung with 7.5 per cent market share, Xiaomi 4.4 per cent, Boat 4 per cent and Oppo 3 per cent.

Xiaomi started making its TWS in India this year at Optimus Electronics plant in Noida.

India's Imports From Russia Doubled To USD 20.45 Billion In April-July Period

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India's imports from Russia doubled to USD 20.45 billion during the April-July period of this fiscal due to increasing inbound shipments of crude oil and fertiliser from that country, according to the commerce ministry data.

With this, Russia has become India's second largest import source during the first four months of this fiscal.

The imports were USD 10.42

billion during the period under review from USD 17.16 billion in April-July 2022. The imports from UAE too contracted to USD 13.39 billion during April-July 2023 as against USD 18.45 billion in the same period last year.

On the export front, India's exports to seven of its top 10 destinations have recorded a negative growth rate during the period.

During the first four months of this fiscal, the country's merchandise exports to the US,



billion during April-July 2022.

From a market share of less than 1 per cent in India's import basket before the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia's share of India's oil imports rose to over 40 per cent.

India, the world's third-largest crude oil importer after China and the United States, has been buying Russian oil that was available at a discount after some in the West shunned it as a means of punishing Moscow for the invasion of Ukraine.

The ministry's data showed that imports from China dipped to USD 32.7 billion during the April-July period as against USD 34.55 billion in the same period last year.

Similarly, imports from the US declined to USD 14.23 bil-

lion during the period under review from USD 17.16 billion in April-July 2022. The imports from UAE too contracted to USD 13.39 billion during April-July 2023 as against USD 18.45 billion in the same period last year.

On the export front, India's exports to seven of its top 10 destinations have recorded a negative growth rate during the period.

During the first four months of this fiscal, the country's merchandise exports to the US,

UAE, China, Singapore, Germany, Netherlands and Italy have dipped.

However, the exports to the UK, Netherland, and Saudi Arabia have recorded a positive growth.

India's exports contracted by 15.88 per cent, the sixth month in a row, to USD 32.25 billion in July this year due to a global slowdown and fall in shipments of key sectors like petroleum, gems and jewellery.

Imports during the month also declined by 17 per cent, the eighth month in a row, to USD 52.92 billion from USD 63.77 billion in July 2022. This led to a narrowing of the trade deficit to USD 20.67 billion against USD 25.43 billion in July 2022.

Regulator DGCA Forms Panel To Suggest Ways To Ensure Gender Equality In Civil Aviation Sector

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Civil aviation regulator DGCA has set up a four-member committee to provide suggestions for achieving gender equality in the aviation sector in India.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued an order on August 10, 2023 stating that the objective of this committee is to suggest steps that DGCA should take to bring gender equality in the aviation sector.

The four senior officers appointed as members of the committee are Survita Saxena, Director (Operations); R P Kashyap, Director (Training); Pavan Malviya, Deputy Director (Administration); and Kavita Singh, Deputy Director (Aircraft Engineering

Directorate).

They are supposed to formulate norms and submit them to DGCA which the regulator will further circulate among aviation stakeholders to adopt and bring in practice for gender equality.

"The committee will submit its report/recommendation within six months from the date of its constitution," the order said.

The initiative is in line with the commitment of International Civil Aviation Organisations (ICAO) which aims to promote participation of women and achieve an aspirational goal of 50-50 (women-men) by 2030 at all professional and higher levels of employment in the global aviation sector.

Aviation professionals,

operators and stakeholders have lauded the constitution of the committee and said the move will help create new opportunities for women in this field.

They said that the Indian aviation sector already has a fair presence of female workers in certain professional categories such as pilots.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also acknowledged this fact in his address to the nation from the rampart of Lal Quila on the 77th Independence Day when he said that India has the highest number of women pilots in the world.

However, experts said that there is still a huge scope to encourage and skill women to join and contribute their role in the business of flying.

IndiGo Co-Founder's Family To Sell Shares Worth Over 3,000 Crores: Report

Reuters

NEW DELHI: The family of IndiGo's co-founder Rakesh Gangwal will sell operator Interglobe Aviation's shares worth over ₹3,000 crores (\$450 million) via a block deal on Wednesday, CNBC-TV18 reported on Tuesday, citing sources privy to the developments.

The offer floor price for the sale by Rakesh Gangwal and wife Shobha Gangwal is set at 2,400 rupees per share - nearly a 6% discount on the current market price.

IndiGo did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

In June, CNBC Awaaz had said in a report, citing sources, that the family was likely to sell between 5% and 8% of its stake worth up to 75 billion rupees. Rakesh Gangwal and Shobha Gangwal hold 13.23% and 2.99% respectively in Interglobe as of March 31, while their Chinkerpoo Family Trust holds a 13.5% stake, according to exchange data from June.

Shobha Gangwal had cut her stake in the company by over 4% in February.



Ola Electric Launches Entry Level E-Scooter At Introductory Price Of Rs 79,999

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Ola Electric on Tuesday launched its new entry level electric scooter S1X with introductory price of Rs 79,999 as it accelerates its challenge to conventional engine counterparts.

The company also showcased its four electric four electric motorcycles which will be launched towards the end of 2024.

The new S1X electric scooter comes in three variants, S1X (with 2kwh battery), S1X with 3kwh battery and S1X+ also with 3kwh battery but with more connected features.

The S1X with 2kwh battery variant has been launched at an introductory price of Rs 79,999 for the first week and will be priced at Rs 89,999 afterwards, he said.

Bookings will start immediately and deliveries will begin by December, Aggarwal said, adding the entry level electric scooter is aimed for daily commutes of around 10-20 km.

The S1X variant with 3kwh battery has been launched at an introductory price of Rs 89,999 for the first week and afterwards it will be tagged at Rs 99,999.

The variant can be booked immediately and deliveries will begin in December, he said.

The S1X+ has also been launched at an introductory price of Rs 99,999 for the first week and afterwards it will be priced at Rs 1,09,999. He said customers can book the model immediately and deliveries will be by the end of September.

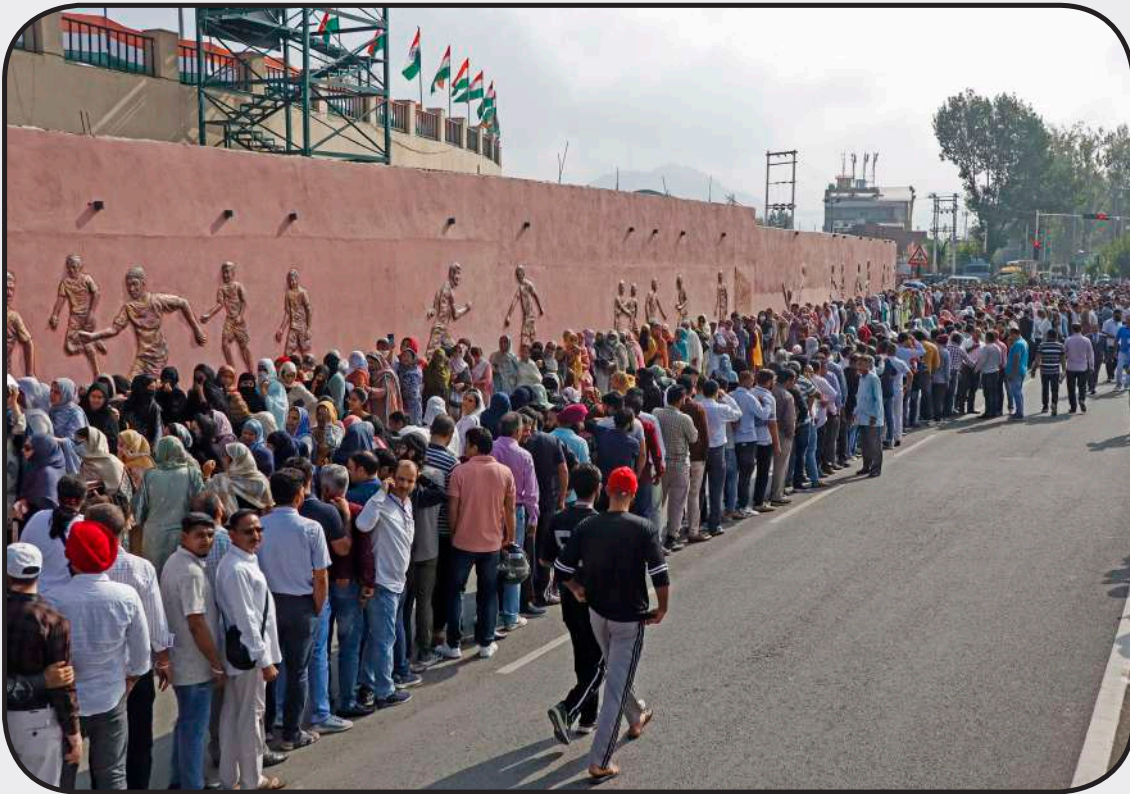
Aggarwal said the S1X and the S1X+ are differentiated in software and connectivity features.

The S1X has a range of 151 kilometres on a single charge and can reach the top speed of 90 km/hour.



How Kashmir Marked 77th Independence Day

Photos by Abid Bhat, Info



Yamuna's water level crosses danger mark in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: The Yamuna's water level crossed the danger mark of 205.33 metres in Delhi on Tuesday following torrential rain in the river's upper catchment areas over the past two days.

According to a Central Water Commission official, the water level at the Old Railway Bridge crossed the warning mark of 204.50 metres at 3 pm on Tuesday and rapidly rose to 205.39 metres at 10 pm.

The water level is predicted to reach 205.50 metres by 5 am and rise further during the day, he said.

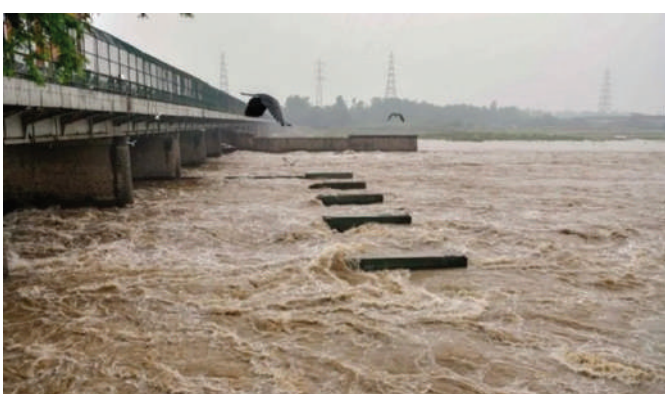
"However, the river may not

swell to the evacuation level of 206.00 metres in Delhi unless the hilly region receives more rain," he said.

The flow rate at the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana's Yamunanagar district stood around 27,000 cusecs at 9 pm -- considered moderate during the monsoon season.

An official of the Delhi government's irrigation and flood control department said low-level flooding may occur at a few places along the river but a grave situation is unlikely.

At least 56 people have been killed in Himachal Pradesh as rain wreaked havoc in the hill state since Sunday.



Torrential rain also ravaged Uttarakhand over the past two days, destroying buildings and causing landslides that breached the national highways to Badrinath, Kedarnath and Gangotri shrines. Most of the rivers are

overflowing due to the rain. The Ganga is flowing above the danger mark in Tehri, Haridwar and Rishikesh. The Alakananda and the Mandakini are flowing above the danger level in Rudrapur, Srinagar and Devprayag, the disaster control room in Uttarakhand's Dehradun said.

In mid-July, Delhi faced unprecedented flooding due to heavy rainfall in the national capital and the Yamuna river's upper catchment areas. The Yamuna swelled to a record 208.66 metres on July 13, breaching its previous record and penetrating deeper into the city than in more than four decades.

Over 27,000 people were evacuated during the floods with the losses incurred in terms of property, businesses and earnings running up to crores of rupees.

The river flowed above the danger mark of 205.33 metres for eight days on the trot, starting July 10.

Experts attributed the flooding in Delhi to encroachment on the river's floodplain, extreme rainfall within a short span of time and silt accumulation that has raised the riverbed.

The Yamuna river system's catchment covers parts of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

The low-lying areas near the river in Delhi, inhabited by around 41,000 people, are considered prone to flooding. Encroachments on the river's floodplain have occurred over the years, despite the land belonging to the Delhi Development Authority, the revenue department and private individuals.

The city's northeast, east, central and southeast districts are most affected by floods in the city. A study on "Urban Flooding and its Management" by the irrigation and flood control department identifies east Delhi under the floodplain region and highly vulnerable to floods.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

First Time In 30 Yrs

on Tuesday. Earlier a large number of people, mostly tourists from different states, gathered at historic Lal Chowk in the morning hours and began dancing and waving the tricolour. It was an unprecedented scene in Srinagar city centre. (With PTI inputs)

3 Soldiers, JK Policeman

Another officer namely Major Sachin Negi of The Grenadiers/ 55th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles has been awarded Shaurya Chakra.

As per citation, since November 2020, Major Sachin Negi has exhibited exceptional professionalism and bravery in six successful operations resulting in elimination of 14 terrorists in Pulwama sector.

A police constable and encounter specialist Saifullah Qadri of Anchar locality of Soura, Srinagar was also awarded Shaurya Chakra (Now Posthumous) for his courage.

On May 24 2022, terrorists opened fire on Saifullah Qadri, a police official, in the Soura area of Srinagar.

Hours after the firing, he succumbed to his injuries. His 9-year-old daughter, who was with him, received bullet injuries as well.

She was taken to JVC Hospital, Bemina. As per sources, Qadri was taking his daughter to tuition classes at the time of the attack. Later that day, the late police officer's wreath-laying ceremony took place.

Moreover, Major Rajendra Prasad Jat of The Dogra Regiment/ 62nd Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles has been awarded Shaurya Chakra for exhibiting unparalleled valour and exceptional leadership in 'Operation Watrehal' leading to elimination of three hardcore terrorists. Naik Bhim Singh of The Rajputana Rifles/ 9th battalion of the Rashtriya Rifles has been awarded Shaurya Chakra in 2023.

As per citation, Naik Bhim Singh, has been serving as Combat Team Commander. On 26 September 2022, on receiving intelligence about the presence of a terrorist group in a village in south Kashmir, he led the initial team of cordon and search operation.

Naik Bhim Singh positioned himself in a tactically critical location while civilians were being evacuated from the operation area, the terrorist opened indiscriminate fire and lobbed grenades towards civilians and injured an officer. Displaying exceptional situational awareness, Naik Bhim pinned down the terrorist with accurate fire and extricated the injured officer towards safety.

Rifleman Kulbushan Manta of the Jammu And Kashmir Rifles/ 52nd battalion of the Rashtriya Rifles awarded Shaurya Chakra (Posthumous) for capturing a terrorist and saving own troops during Operation Rakshak (Jammu and Kashmir) --(KNO)

India At Decisive

"Nation First" was the bedrock of his government's policies, Modi said people formed such a government in 2014 and 2019 gave him the strength to pull off reforms.

India is a part of the global supply chain, Modi said and asserted that he was confident that whatever the nation has achieved had brought a guarantee of stability to the world.

"Now, neither in our minds nor that of the world are any ifs and buts, a trust has been developed. Now, the ball is in our court. We should not let go of this opportunity," the Prime Minister said.

Among others, the Independence Day celebration at the Red Fort was attended by over 2,000 guests comprising ministers, diplomats, members of the US Congressional delegation, 400 sarpanches of the vibrant villages programme, 50 nurses and their families from across India and 50 exceptional school teachers.

India's progress is not only fuelled by Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai and the youth of our tier-2 cities are also creating an equal impact in our nation's progress, he said, adding his policies of reform, perform and transform are changing the country.

"My message to the youth is -- there is no dearth of opportunities, this country is ready to give you as many opportunities as you want," he said.

Asserting that it was certain that India's capability and possibilities are going to cross new heights of trust, he said these new heights of trust will go ahead with the new capabilities.

Today, India has received the opportunity to host G20 Summit and in the past year, the manner in which several events of the G20 were held in every corner of the country has made the world aware of the capability of India's common man and India's diversity, he said.

He also urged the nation to get rid of three evils of corruption, nepotism and appeasement to take the nation forward.

"Corruption has badly affected India's capability and it is the commitment of Modi's life that I will keep fighting against corruption," he said.

Confluence of demography, democracy and diversity empowers India to fulfil its dreams: PM Modi

India has demography, democracy, and diversity and the confluence of these three empowers the country to fulfil all its dreams, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

Addressing the nation on its 77th Independence Day, Modi said India is the world's largest democracy and from the population perspective it is now widely acknowledged that the country is in the first position.

Modi said India has the highest population of people under 30 years and through the power of youth, the country can achieve all its goals.

"While in many countries the population is ageing, in India, we are moving forward with youthful energy," he said from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

"With young minds below the age of 30 years and by possessing countless arms to work, boundless intellects to innovate, and innumerable dreams and aspirations, we can achieve all our goals," the prime minister said.

According to United Nations estimates, India has become the most populous country in the world with over 142 crore people. However, the government is yet to conduct a census for an official figure.

PM Modi calls for collective fight against corruption, nepotism, appeasement

Decrying corruption, nepotism and appeasement as the three evils that have harmed the country immensely, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said it is a collective responsibility to promote "suchita (probity), pardarshita (transparency), nishpakshita (objectivity)" to make India developed.

Addressing the 77th Independence Day celebrations from the ramparts of Red Fort, Modi said that corruption has badly affected India's capabilities and the country has to resolve to not tolerate it in any form.

"It is Modi's life-long commitment to keep fighting against corruption... My government weeded out 10 crore fake beneficiaries of welfare schemes, seizure of ill-gotten assets rose by 20 times," he said.

He also said that the politics of appeasement has inflicted the most harm on social justice.

Modi, addressing his 10th independence day speech, said that democracy has been affected by the ills of nepotism and alleged that dynastic parties work with the mantra of "party of the family, by the family and for the family".

Committed to Drug

tranquility for the Union territory.

"With the timeless wisdom of saints, sages and the spirit of brotherhood, harmony and mutual respect, we are rapidly marching forward to build Viksit Jammu and Kashmir. Today, we stand firm in our determination to build the Jammu and Kashmir of our dreams," he said.

However, he added that we also need to remember that sacrifices were not limited to the freedom struggle in the past but we have to rededicate ourselves to serve the poorest of the poor and contribute to our nation's progress.

He also urged the people to ponder upon several questions, including the sacrifices they have made in building Jammu and Kashmir of their dreams, what has been their contribution, and what have they done for the welfare of society?

"These questions will inspire each one of us to serve the nation with renewed passion and vigor," Sinha said, adding "I call upon everyone in Jammu and Kashmir to realize their full potential and contribute in the resolution of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047."

He asked people to take resolve to work together to fulfill the vision and PanchPran of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He expressed optimism that the collective efforts will result in far greater prosperity for Jammu and Kashmir.

Terming year 2023 as a golden year for the Union territory, the LG said that the successful G20 meeting, which saw massive public participation, testifies that the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir have broken their shackles and they are raring to scale new heights.

"Notwithstanding the conspiracies and attempts of the neighboring countries to disturb the event, representatives from 27 countries participated in this historic summit - a loud and clear message to our adversaries. The international community, for the first time experienced peace, prosperity, stability

and aspirations of the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir, and witnessed the all round progress of the Union Territory," he said.

The G20 meeting, he said, not only strengthened diplomatic ties, but also opened new avenues for global partnership that will help in tapping the tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir.

"I am proud to inform you that since the G20 event, there has been an increase of 59% in foreign tourist arrivals in Kashmir Valley, as compared to the previous year. Further, we have welcomed 1.27 crore tourists till July this year, another record in the history of the tourism sector," he said.

He called the ongoing Amamath Yatra as another milestone in the list of achievements.

This year's yatra marks the longest pilgrimage of Baba Barfani in history. The message of peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir has attracted devotees not only from various parts of the country but also from abroad, fulfilling the decades old wishes of local & foreign citizens," Sinha said.

"Our Shia brothers were able to take out the procession on traditional routes to pay tribute to the sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) on Muharram after 34 years," he added.

Speaking about the developmental activities undertaken by his administration, the LG said that J&K government has adopted pragmatic approach to promote sustainable and equitable development to build a vibrant society and have achieved remarkable progress on all parameters of development.

Better infrastructure, improved connectivity, rejuvenated tourism, new beginnings in the agriculture and allied sectors, emphasis on modern education, digital governance, energy security, health for all and preservation of heritage of handicrafts have been the hallmarks of our journey," he said.

These achievements, he said, have led to inclusive and sustainable development and created a robust economy that offers equal opportunities, generates more income in rural areas, access to appropriate technology, access to institutional credit, created wealth for society and ensured effective and efficient public service delivery system.

The Union Territory, Sinha said, was witnessing fast economic development and rapid social change. He said GST collection during the financial year 2022-23 was Rs. 7300 crores, and SGST cash collection in the last quarter has shown a remarkable 35% increase. Similarly, he said, stamp duty collection has registered a growth of 10.8% during the current financial year.

He also said that the new Jammu and Kashmir Excise Policy 2023-2024 has facilitated revenue collection of Rs. 767.89 crores, registering a whopping increase of 66.23%.

"Over the last three years, we have diligently infused new momentum in projects that were stalled for decades. Under the Prime Minister's Development Program, 32 projects, out of the sanctioned 53, have been completed and out of the remaining 21 projects, 13 projects shall be completed during the current financial year," the LG said.

He said that his administration is spending Rs. 519 crores per month on roads, buildings, macadamization and construction of rural bridges

"Today, infrastructure projects worth Rs. 1.5 lakh crores are under execution. The construction of 15 road projects under PMDP, 21 new tunnels, 39 new flyovers, 26 bypasses and 2 ring roads will prove to be the new foundation of modern and Aatm-Nirbhar Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Speaking about the investment scenario in J&K, the LG said that industrial investment of over Rs 27,000 crores has been approved so far, including record private investment of Rs 2153.45 crores in the last financial year.

J&K, he said, has received investment proposals worth over Rs 80,000 crores till July 31, 2023.

The first Foreign Direct Investment proposal in the Union territory was approved earlier this year. Land has been allotted to Emaar Group for constructing a 1 million sq. ft. shopping mall in Srinagar and land for construction of two IT towers, one each in Srinagar and Jammu has also been allocated to the Emaar group," he added.

Sinha also mentioned that J&K has been ranked second among Union territories in NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Ranking.

Talking about the anti-encroachment drive that was launched by his administration earlier this year, Sinha said that illegally occupied land has been retrieved from the influential people who had encroached upon these valuable resources.

"Regressive land laws have been abolished. Land owners have been empowered while strict action is being taken against land mafia. The land that has been freed from encroachers shall be used for the welfare of the poor

and downtrodden. I have always emphasized that the poor and deprived has the first right on Government resources," he added.

Sinha also reiterated his government's commitment to uplift the people from marginalized section of the society. To fulfill their dreams of owning a house, he said, the administration has decided to allot 5 marlas land to each landless eligible Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (G) beneficiary that will ensure the house is constructed under the scheme.

"Overall, 3.39 lakh houses have been sanctioned under PMAY(G) scheme and construction of 1.74 lakh houses has been completed. In the year 2023-24, sanction has been accorded to the construction of 1.99 lakh houses under the PMAY (G) scheme," he said.

"I believe it is our sacred duty to empower the deprived sections of society and provide them with new opportunities so that their potential can be harnessed and channelled in the right direction for nation building," he added.

In his speech, the LG also highlighted the pivotal role played by the three-tier Panchayati Raj system in the developmental journey of Jammu and Kashmir. He also listed the empowerment of women through different government schemes as the achievements of the UT administration.

"Around 6.5 lakh women associated with Self-Help-Groups in Jammu and Kashmir have transformed the rural economy, creating jobs and some have also shown the potential to scale-up their enterprises. 7000 village organizations and 503 cluster level federations have been constituted to bolster the women entrepreneurship," he added.

The LG also spelled out a series of measures and interventions his administration has made to boost Agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors.

Sharing details of reforms brought in the health sector, Sinha said that around 4000 health facilities have been developed and five new medical colleges have been made functional.

In the field of medical education, he said, 500 MBBS seats have been increased to 1300, while 3000 health and wellness centers have also been set up.

"83 lakh golden cards have been issued. Under various healthcare programmes, Rs 2 crores per day is being spent on the healthcare of the people. In the category of universal health insurance coverage, Jammu and Kashmir has been adjudged the top performer among all UTs," he said.

The LG said that the power sector has been transformed in J&K and Pakal Dul, Kiru, Rattle and Kwar Mega Hydro Projects are progressing at a breakneck speed, and are likely to be completed by 2025-26.

With the completion of these projects, he said, J&K will gain an additional power capacity of about 3400 MW that will significantly reduce our energy constraints.

"2345 MVA capacity has been added in the distribution sector to provide better power supply to the people. 8550 new distribution transformers have also been installed in a record time of four months," Sinha said.

"The implementation of Smart Metering is a significant step towards reducing losses, better demand management and achieving 24x7 power supply for all," he added.

The LG also mentioned about the welfare of tribals, digital governance initiatives, and measures of the UT administration to boost tourism by bringing virgin tourist spots on the map, in his speech.

He also reiterated his administration's commitment to ensure justice to Pandit community members whose land and houses were illegally occupied and to those who had to sell their land under duress.

"The process of construction of houses for Kashmiri Pandit Government employees has been expedited and we are committed to execute all the projects within the time-frame. The issues of Kashmiri Pandit community, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and West Pakistan refugee families are being resolved through the Special Governance Camps, for which, programmes were organized in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Pune, Haridwar, Chandigarh and Pathankot," he said.

Making a passionate appeal to the people, the LG said that we need to think about the kind of world we want to leave for our youth. He called upon every section of society to create new opportunities for youth, in which every department will play an active role.

"Let us build a Jammu and Kashmir which has only one religion -- India; let us build a Jammu and Kashmir which has only one caste - Humanity; let us build a Jammu and Kashmir which has one goal - Unity and Integrity of the country; let us build a Jammu and Kashmir, where different languages sing one tune -Vijay Vishwa Tiranga Pyaara. Let us together build a glorious future of Jammu

and Kashmir," Sinha said while concluding his speech.

Loan Relief For Buying

the ministry, around 1.18 crore houses have been sanctioned under PMAY (Urban) till July 31 this year, out of which 76.02 lakh have been delivered to the beneficiaries. (PTI)

No Considerable

lower Chenab rivers. During the recent past, the distribution range of Hangul appears to have been drastically reduced, possibly due to habitat fragmentation and associated factors. Some small or relic populations are also reported to be present in some areas in Kupwara, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Pulwama and Anantnag Districts, according to the survey.

The Department of Wildlife Protection, Jammu & Kashmir (DWLP) in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and local research institutions, has been regularly monitoring the Hangul Population in the Dachigam landscape since 2004 through scientific methods.

The report says that till date nine such annual exercises have been carried out during March of 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021. The Hangul population estimates in the past were 197 (2004), 153 (2006), 127 (2008), 175 (2009), 218 (2011), 183(2015), 214(2017), 237 (2019), 261(2021).

The survey further revealed that the population of Hangul has shown a marginal increase. However, due to Habitat fragmentation and poaching, Livestock Grazing, Ecological threat, Predation etc there is no considerable increase in population numbers.

The report notes that owing to the large scale biotic interferences in Hangul's habitat, in the form of excessive livestock grazing in its erstwhile summer habitats, grass cutting, fuel and firewood collection, human trampling owing to men and vehicles of paramilitary (CRPF) forces camped inside Park and employees of more than six other Government departments in lower Dachigam and poaching have contributed largely to the Hangul habitat degradation and hence decline of the Hangul during the recent past.

It further says that the livestock grazing in Upper Dachigam has been considered to prove harmful to Hangul in the long run. Apart from competition for food resources, chances of transmission of disease also exist as there has been confirmed evidence of transmission of John's Disease to Hangul in Dachigam in 1978.

The report says that the recent scientific studies on the current Hangul population trend have indicated that the species could go extinct if serious management and Conservation interventions are not made immediately.

The studies indicate that besides biotic interferences, some of the major ecological issues, concerning the decline in the population and long-term conservation and survival of the Hangul are Low breeding and disturbed viability. The ideal ratios of 40-50 Male/100 female & above 60 fawn/100 female reported in Red deer populations, however in case of hangul it is significantly skewed.

It further notes that the recent sightings of Hangul based on camera trap evidence in Tral Wild- life Sanctuary is encouraging, 14 individuals were camera trapped recently. Likewise, the photographic evidence captured by the officials of Dept. of Wildlife Protection in Wanganat Conservation Reserve also shows that the habitats outside Dachigam National Park can be promising to hold a contiguous population of Hangul at Landscape level.

"The upper reaches of this landscape if properly managed and made available for Hangul can have an immense positive impact on hangul in terms of increasing the number and sustaining a genetically viable population," reads the report.

It further adds that the habitat improvement measures and Landscape level planning approach taken up by the Department in the recent past (shifting of sheep breeding farm, notification of Tral WLS) will have long term conservation benefits for Hangul and for other wildlife as well.

"However, these measures need to be augmented by the existing conservation efforts of successful captive breeding. There is still a dearth of vital information on basic ecological knowledge on this important species. Research is needed to understand the skewed demographic ratios and the reasons associated," the report said.

Weddings On As

have largely accepted the new reality", said Muhammad Iqbal, a retired Executive Engineer. He however hastened to add that there are many factors which have led to this changed public perception.



Downtown Heroes Take On FC Goa In Durand Cup Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: After a disappointing 2-1 loss to Shillong Lajong FC in their Durand Cup opener, Downtown Heroes FC will look to mend their ways when they take on FC Goa on Wednesday, August 16, at SAI Stadium Kokrajhar in Assam.

The Heroes, led by veteran coach Hilal Rasool Parray, had a golden opportunity against a ten-man Shillong Lajong side on August 13. But the team failed to convert their chances and capitalise on a man advantage that lasted for well over 86 minutes of the game.

Downtown Heroes took the lead through an own goal, but two goals by Shillong Lajong meant the Heroes will have to fight their way through the next set of matches in the prestigious competition.

FC Goa, meanwhile, have played two matches in Group D of the 132nd edition of Durand Cup.

The Goans will prove to be a tough challenge for Downtown Heroes, who will need to rise to the occasion and muster all their talent to get the three points.

Downtown Heroes FC is grouped alongside Shillong Lajong FC, FC Goa and Northeast United FC in Group D of the 132nd edition of Durand Cup.

Srinagar Premier League Announces Round 10 Fixtures



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The 2023 Srinagar Premier League on Tuesday announced its Round 10 fixtures, with the league set to resume on August 17 at Synthetic Turf TRC.

A total of 14 football clubs remain in the competition.

As per the fixtures list, August 17 will see two matches take place at TRC. In the first game, Ali Jana FC will take on Star Kashmir FC at 3:00 PM. In the other game of the day, AG's Office XI is set to lock horns with Lonestar Kashmir FC at 7:30 PM. August 18 will witness SCFA

Srinagar play JK Bank Academy at 8:00 AM. The final match of the day will see a rescheduled Round 9 match up between J&K Police XI and ARCO FC at 7:00 PM.

Saturday, August 19, matches include Iqbal Sports FC against STFC Natipora at 8:00 AM, while in the other game, JK Bank FC will take on Novelty FC at 4:45 PM.

August 20 fixtures involve Galaxy FC vs. Kashmir Maharaja FC at 4:00 PM, and Jehlum FC vs. Kashmir Avengers FC at 7:00 PM. The tournament is organised by DFA Srinagar in collaboration with J&K Football Association and J&K Sports Council.

Dir. YSS Unfurls Nat'l Flag At Sports Complex Wazir Bagh

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director Youth Services & Sports (YSS) Subash C Chibber unfurled the National Flag at Sports Complex Wazir Bagh on Tuesday and addressed officers and officials of the department on the occasion.

The YSS Director highlighted the role of Union and JK UT Governments in tapping and channelising sports talent of the youth of J&K. He further said that every possible step is being taken to develop world-class

sports infra for the sports lovers and players of Jammu and Kashmir.

He also administered the oath of Panch Pran to all the participants of the function.

Joint Director Kashmir of the Department Waseem Raja, District Youth Services and Sports Officer Srinagar Ghulam Hassan Lone

ZPEOS, PELs, PEMs, PETS, REKS, NYCs and other members of the field staff were present in the programme. Proceedings were conducted by Muzaffar Ahmed.

Cummins Eyes Return During India ODIs



Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Recovering from a left wrist injury, Australia captain Pat Cummins on Tuesday said he is eyeing a return to international cricket during his side's three-match ODI series against India in late September, ahead of the World Cup. Cummins, who fractured his wrist during the fifth Ashes Test at the Oval (July 27-31), has been advised rest for six weeks.

The pace bowler is set to miss Australia's five-match ODI series against South Africa between September 7 and 17. Australia will play ODIs against India on September 22, 24 and 27.

"I'll head over to South Africa at the back-end of that

leg. But we're probably looking more at those one-dayers (against India) ahead of the World Cup.

"It shouldn't be too bad. Another few weeks and it'll be right," said Cummins, sounding hopeful of him playing in the World Cup to be held in India from October 5 and November 19.

Cummins said he would probably assess his role as ODI captain after the World Cup.

"The captaincy for the ODIs, we've kind of shared around a little bit. We'll get over there, and have a look at that," he said.

Cummins said Mitchell Marsh, who has been appointed as Australia's T20I captain, is the logical choice to succeed him in the role of the ODI

leader.

"The good thing is we have a few options. (Mitchell Marsh) is probably the most obvious one if he's doing the T20s as well. Off the field, he's just a great people-person. His energy's infectious, he's great to hang around with, always good fun."

Cummins had taken over as Australia's 50-over format captain last year from Aaron Finch but since then he had led only in two of the six ODIs they played. He missed one match against England as Josh Hazlewood stepped in. Steve Smith led Australia in a three-match ODI series against India earlier this year as Cummins returned home following the death of his mother.

PCB Issues Show-Cause Notice To Pakistan Players In USA

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board has issued show-cause notices to its players participating in the minor leagues in the USA without obtaining the mandatory no-objection certificate (NOCs). The PCB has acted after Test player Fawad Alam moved to the USA to play cricket and with the eventual aim of settling down in the country.

At present, several notable players — including those who have represented Pakistan on international circuit — including Sohaib Maqsood, Arshad Iqbal, Hussain Talat, Ali Shafiq, Imad Butt, Usman Shanwari, Umaid Asif, Zeeshan Ashraf, Saif Badar, Mukhtar Ahmed and Nauman Anwar are playing in the USA. These players did not obtain PCB NOCs before heading to the USA.

Apart from Alam, other Pakistan players in some leagues in the USA are Hassan Khan, Sami Aslam, Hammad Azam, Salman Arshad, Musadiq Ahmed, Imran Khan Junior and Ali Nasir. However, a source in the board confirmed a few players including Alam had visit visas and had informed the board before going to the USA.

A well-informed insider said some of the players, including Alam, have already applied for that category of visas which



would eventually give them green cards within a year-and-a-half, allowing them to settle down in the USA. Alam's father in law — a former Pakistan batsman — Mansoor Akhtar is also a USA national and settled in Houston.

In the past, former players Sami Aslam, Hammad Azam, Nauman Anwar, Ramiz Raja had settled in the USA and are green card holders now. According to the rules and regulations of the USA Minor League, a player is only eligible to play as a local once he has retired from international cricket and from his home domestic cricket.

Players who don't want to retire from international or their home domestic seasons are only entertained as "guest" players and their teams don't apply for green card status for them.

Initially, the US Minor League

used to function as an organisation and call players to the USA on their quota of work-based visas, which eventually led to them getting the green card. But now, the teams in the league have to directly invite players from their quota of visas.

The PCB had previously implemented a stipulation of \$10,000 for procuring a NOC prior to participating in foreign leagues, but apparently the teams in the USA Minor League have been reluctant to make such a heavy payment.

"Besides the minor league, other cricket matches and tournaments are held year round especially at long weekends and players remain busy with playing and coaching. And with the launch of the USA Major League USA is now a feasible destination for some Pakistani players who are overlooked at home," the source said.

Neymar Joins Saudi Club Al-Hilal From PSG

Agencies

RIYADH: Brazil forward Neymar has signed for Al-Hilal from French champions Paris St Germain, the Saudi Professional League (SPL) club announced on Tuesday.

No details were disclosed but the transfer was reported to be for a fee of about 90 million euros (\$98.24 million) plus add-ons and subject to a medical for the 31-year-old. Neymar joined PSG in 2017 from Barcelona for a world record fee of 222 million euros. He scored 118 goals in 173 appearances for the Paris club and won numerous trophies, including five Ligue 1 titles.

"It is inevitably difficult to say goodbye to a club legend, which Neymar will always be," PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi said in a club statement. "I will never forget the day he arrived at Paris Saint-Germain, nor what he has brought to our club and our project over the last six years."

"We've had some extraordinary moments and Neymar will always be part of our history. I would like to thank him and



his family." Al-Hilal also tried to sign Neymar's former team mate France striker Kylian Mbappe and Lionel Messi, but the Argentine eventually opted for Major League Soccer's Inter Miami.

The most successful club in Saudi Arabia and Asia, Al Hilal have won 66 trophies and hold the record for number of league and Asian Champions League titles with 18 and four respectively. Strengthening the squad is a priority for the Riyadh-based club after the Saudi Public Investment Fund announced in June an investment and privatisation project for sports clubs involving league champions Al-Ittihad, Al-Ahli, Al-Nassr and Al-Hilal.

De Bruyne Sidelined For Up To Four Months - Guardiola



Agencies

MANCHESTER: Kevin De Bruyne could be out of action for up to four months after suffering a hamstring injury in the opening Premier League game of the season, manager Pep Guardiola said on the eve of their UEFA Super Cup clash against Sevilla.

The Belgium international left the field in the 36th minute of City's 3-0 win at Burnley on Friday. De Bruyne, who was left out of City's squad for their Super Cup game, also limped off during the Champions League final in June and Guardiola confirmed the midfielder had suffered a recurrence of the same injury.

"It's serious. We have to decide surgery or no surgery but he will be out for a few months," Guardiola told reporters on Tuesday. "A decision on surgery will be taken in the next few days. It will be three or four months."

Asked if De Bruyne's injury occurred because he was rushed back into action before he was ready, Guardiola said: "We could say 'don't play' but this injury could happen later. Before I took the decision I spoke to the doctor, the physio and him. He said he felt good."

"We will see (about signing a replacement for De Bruyne). After what happened we will see the possibilities."

GUARDIOLA WARY OF 'DANGEROUS' SEVILLA

City will play Europa League

winner's Sevilla in Athens in their first-ever appearance in the UEFA Super Cup. The Premier League champions qualified for the Super Cup after clinching their maiden Champions League title in June following years of heartbreak on Europe's biggest stage.

Asked how he felt about finally winning the Champions League with the Manchester club, Guardiola said: "It is a relief for the club. It's always difficult to win. Of course it is a relief but it is not enough otherwise we would be at home. We are hungry enough to compete and challenge ourselves. If someone wants to take out three crowns they will have to fight to take it."

City can add another European title to their trophy cabinet on Wednesday with a win over Sevilla — who have won the Europa League a record seven times. Sevilla have lost five out of the six Super Cups they have contested, but Guardiola stressed that it was "not easy" to qualify for European football's curtain-raiser, adding that City will be wary of the threat posed by the Spanish team.

"Sevilla have special character, it's something in the DNA that makes this team different. They will be dangerous against us," Guardiola said. "You cannot imagine how happy that we are to play the Super Cup because we won the Champions League. Who knows when we will come back here to win this tournament?"

AC Milan, Inter & Juventus Aim To Bring Serie A Title Back North After Napoli Success

Agencies

MILAN: Figuring out which team will challenge Napoli for the Serie A title is anyone's guess.

AC Milan is going through an off-season overhaul with a host of new players. Inter Milan is still missing a center forward with Romelu Lukaku and Edin Dzeko both gone. Juventus remains a question mark after a highly disappointing season last year. Roma and Lazio appear a step behind, while Atalanta has made waves on the transfer market.

Before Napoli won last season, no team beside the Milan clubs and Juventus had claimed the title since Roma in 2001 and they'll be eager to bring the trophy back up north.

With the Italian league due to start on Saturday, here's a look at the top challengers:

AC MILAN

No team in Italy has made as many big signings as Milan has, with six significant additions, including United States stand-out Christian Pulisic.

Yunus Musah, another U.S. international, has joined Pulisic in Milan in a return to the country where he spent a large portion of his childhood. Other notable signings include Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Noah Okafor, Tijjani Reijnders and Samuel Chukwueze.

But questions remain at center forward with only the 23-year-old Okafor to back up 36-year-old Olivier Giroud following the retirement of Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

The spending spree was largely funded by the sale of midfielder Sandro Tonali to Saudi-backed Newcastle for a reported fee of more than \$75 million.

The aggressive approach to the transfer market came after former Milan captain Paolo Maldini was let go as Milan's technical director following a reported rupture with Milan's new American owners, investment firm RedBird Capital Partners led by Gerry Cardinale — with baseball's New York Yankees a minority investor.

Having reached the Champions League semifinals last season after winning Serie A in 2022, Milan will look to com-



bine its recent experience with the new players and hope that 2021-22 league player of the year Rafael Leão continues to develop into the consistent star that the team expects. Maldini's last major impact with Milan was extending Leão's contract through 2028.

INTER MILAN

Coming off a run to the Cham-

pions League final, Simone Inzaghi believes his club can do better than its third-place result in Serie A last season.

But until a replacement is found for Lukaku and Dzeko to put alongside Lautaro Martinez — who contended with Napoli's Victor Osimhen for the league's top striker honors last season — nothing is certain for the Nerazzurri.

New arrivals like David Frattesi (23), Marcus Thuram (26) and Yann Aurel Bisseck (22) make Inter younger, and together with former Juventus veteran Juan Cuadrado, should add speed and creativity.

Veteran Switzerland international Yann Sommer has replaced Andre Onana in goal after the Cameroon international was sold to Manchester United

for 51 million euros (\$57 million), but at 34 Sommer isn't as mobile as Onana.

JUVENTUS

A 10-point penalty for legal issues stemming from a false-accounting case. A seventh-place finish and then a UEFA ban that will keep Juventus out of the Europa Conference League.

Hardly anything went right for Juventus last season.

Coach Massimiliano Allegri has much higher hopes for this season, with Federico Chiesa and Dusan Vlahovic returning to full form. U.S. international Weston McKennie back after a midseason loan to Leeds and U.S. winger Tim Weah — the son of former Milan standout and current Liberia President George Weah — joining from Lille to replace Cuadrado.

Vlahovic has remained with Juventus after fans protested following speculation involving a possible acquisition of former rival Lukaku.

Veteran defender Leonardo Bonucci, however, has been removed from the squad, with

the captain's duties handed to Danilo — making the Brazil right back the Bianconeri's first foreign captain in 60 years.

With no midweek European games, Juventus will have its full focus on Serie A.

ROMA

Roma ended last season mired in protest after its loss to Sevilla in the Europa League final, amid speculation about Jose Mourinho's future at the club.

Mourinho, however, has stayed to serve out of the third and final year of his contract. But because of financial fair play constraints, Roma has not so far met Mourinho's demands in the transfer market.

Defender Roger Ibanez is gone, with 23-year-old Evan Ndicka brought in as a replacement from Eintracht Frankfurt.

The only other new players are midfielder Houssein Aouar and right back Rasmus Kristensen.

Roma's biggest "move," however, may be if it manages to keep key forward Paul Dybala — and to keep him healthy, after a continuous stream of injuries. (AP)

