

Amit Shah Roars In Lok Sabha, Tears Into Congress Over J&K

Says Erstwhile State Suffered Due To Nehru's 2 Major Blunders

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday blamed India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's "two major blunders" -- declaring a ceasefire without winning the entire Kashmir and taking the issue to the United Nations -- for the sufferings of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

As Shah trained his guns on Nehru while replying to a

debate in the Lok Sabha on the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury interjected alleging that when it comes to the Kashmir issue, BJP leaders unnecessarily criticise Nehru.

Chowdhury asserted that Congress leaders were tired of listening to this kind of criticism and asserted that he was verbally demanding that a daylong debate be held on Kashmir and Nehru.

In his speech, Shah said if Nehru had taken the right steps, a large chunk of territory would not have been ceded and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir would have been part of India.

"I support the word that was



used here -- Nehruvian blunder. Because of the blunder that was committed during the time of Nehru, Kashmir had to suffer. With responsibility, I want to say that the two big blunders that happened during the tenure

of Jawaharlal Nehru, happened due to his decisions, because of which Kashmir had to suffer for years," Shah said.

"Kashmir had to suffer due to Nehruvian blunders. One was that when |More on P10

Modi Will Return To Power In 2024: Shah Hopes J&K To Be Terror Free By 2026

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will return to power after the 2024 general elections and hoped that by 2026, terrorism will be completely eliminated from Jammu and Kashmir.

Replying to a debate in the Lok Sabha on the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment)

Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, Shah said the government's focus is on ending the ecosystem which has been aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir for years.

He said with the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, separatism has ended in the Union Territory and terrorism has reduced significantly. "I believe |More on P10

'Pakistan Occupied Kashmir Is Ours'

Agencies

Twenty four seats have been reserved in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly for the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir as "PoK is ours," Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in the Parliament on Wednesday.

Tabling the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the Lok Sabha, Shah said that earlier, Jammu had 37 seats but now it has 43, while Kashmir had 46 seats, now it has 47 seats. He said that the Delimitation Commission, |More on P10

J&K Assembly To Get 3 More MLAs, LS Passes Bill

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to nominate two members from the Kashmiri migrant community and one representing the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to the legislative assembly.

The House also passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to change the nomenclature of a section of people who are eligible for quota in appointment and admission.

The bills were passed after more than six hours of debate spanning over two days and a spirited reply by Union

Home Minister Amit Shah.

The home minister said the two bills related to Jammu and Kashmir brought by the government will give justice to those deprived of their rights for the last 70 years and asserted that reservation to the displaced people will give them a voice in the legislature.

He said that Jammu and Kashmir has suffered due to two blunders committed by the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru -- first announcing ceasefire and then taking the Kashmir issue to the United Nations.

"Had Jawaharlal Nehru taken right steps, PoK would have been part of India now. It was a historic blunder," he said.

The home minister said a plan to |More on P10

6 HAD JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TAKEN right steps, PoK would have been part of India now. It was a historic blunder."

Rs 88,915 Cr Investment Proposals Received By J&K: GoI



Observer News Service

New Delhi: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has received investment proposals worth Rs. 88,915 crore with employment generation potential of over 3.98 lakh, while an investment of Rs 5,319 crore has been materialized to boost local economy and employment opportunities; Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

Also 31,830 vacancies, including those in J&K Bank have been filled from August

2019 till date, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai said in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

"In order to infuse an element of transparency and to speed up the recruitment process, interviews for all the posts up-to and including Pay Level 5 and some in Pay Level 6 have been dispensed with," Rai said in a written reply to a question in the house.

He asserted that the government of Jammu & Kashmir has |More on P10

Accommodation Of 'Protected Persons' HC Raps Admin Over Non-Payment Of Rs 2.25 Cr Rentals To Hotels

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Wednesday took serious exception to the non-compliance of its orders by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and Deputy Commissioner Srinagar regarding payment of Rs 2.25,85,680 as rentals to a hotel for accommodation of "protected persons".



Sreedharan observed in open court that both the officers were "prima facie" guilty of the contempt of the court as they failed to clear the rentals.

However the court ultimately took a lenient view after the officers pleaded for forgiveness and undertook to comply with the court's order immediately. The court directed both the officers to report compliance tomorrow, December 7. Earlier when the plea |More on P10



Government of Haryana

International Gita Mahotsav 2023

A Great Confluence of Spirituality, Art & Culture

7th to 24th December, 2023 Kurukshetra, Haryana

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥
भगवद्गीता 3:21







•• Programmes ••

S.No.	Programme	Date	Events Venue
1	Crafts Mela	07 - 24 December	Brahma Sarovar
2	Gita Maha Aarti	07 - 24 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
3	Cultural Programme at 48 kos Pilgrimages	07 - 24 December	48 kos Kurukshetra
4	Bhajan Sandhya	07 - 24 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
5	Regional Cuisines	07 - 24 December	Brahma Sarovar
6	International Gita Seminar	17 - 19 December	Kurukshetra University
7	Gita Book Fair	17 - 24 December	Brahma Sarovar
8	Gita Yajna And Gita Paath	17 - 24 December	Birthplace of Geeta - Jyotisar
9	Educational Competitions	17 - 24 December	Birthplace of Geeta - Jyotisar
10	Haryana Pavilion	17 - 24 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
11	Partner State Assam Pavilion	17 - 24 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
12	Grand Cultural Programmes	17 - 24 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
13	Exhibitions	17 - 24 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
14	Sant Sammelan	22 December	Purushottampura Bagh, Brahma Sarovar
15	Global Gita Chanting	23 December	Theme Park , Kurukshetra
16	48 kos Tirth Sammelan	23 December	48 kos Tirth
17	Deepotsav	23 December	Sannihit Sarovar and Brahma Sarovar




“ सभी देशवासियों को गीता जयंती की अनंत शुभकामनाएं। श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता सदियों से मानवता का मार्गदर्शन करती आई है। अध्यात्म और जीवन-दर्शन से जुड़ा यह महान ग्रंथ हर युग में पथ प्रदर्शक बना रहेगा।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी

Visit the portal or Scan QR Code for the information of events



www.internationalgitamahotsav.in
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Information, Public Relations, Languages and Culture Department, Haryana

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War Memorial (Balidan Stambh) Coming Up In Srinagar Soon

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to pay tribute to the soldiers, who sacrificed their lives in the line of duties, a war memorial (Balidan Stambh) is coming up at Pratap Park in the commercial hub of Lal Chowk soon.

"The work is going on in full swing and is expected to be completed within a month or two," Anuj Kumar Malhotra, General Manager of Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) said.

"The foundation stone of Balidaan Stambh was laid by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah on June 24, 2023 during his two-day visit to J&K. The work is going on at present and we are expecting to complete the project in the next two months," Malhotra said.

He said that a wall will be constructed alongside on which the names of the fallen soldiers will be written. "The Balidan Stambh

is dedicated to the soldiers, who have sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation," he said.

Pertinently, on the second day of his visit to J&K on June 24, the Union Home Minister laid the foundation stone of the 'Balidan Stambh' in Srinagar, an enduring symbol of courage. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi, and others were also present on the occasion.

After laying the foundation stone, Shah in a post on X, formally Twitter, had said "Jammu and Kashmir is the land of indomitable courage and bravery of nation's brave hearts. To immortalize the valor of such heroes, the foundation stone of the 'Balidan Stambh' was laid at Pratap Park in Srinagar, today. The Stambh will inspire patriotism among the youth by immortalizing the memory of the martyrs."

Empowering People, Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra Continues In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As a part of ongoing Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, awareness programs continue in Srinagar District to empower the people by making them aware about the Government sponsored flagship programs.

Today, on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad the Horticulture Department Srinagar set up awareness camps in Khonmoh Block of Srinagar District.

During the camps held at Panchayats of Khonmoh Block, the Officers of the line Departments underscores the importance of bringing government schemes closer to communities, igniting a spirit of development and reach the un-reached beneficiaries.

On the occasions, Demonstration on soil sampling, Awareness regarding various centrally sponsored schemes and HADP, Beneficiaries enlisted for K.C.C, Demonstration on pruning, besides, pamphlets/literature regarding various departmental schemes was also distributed among the beneficiaries.

During the camps, the Officers/Officials of the Horticulture Department

Programs Held At Panchayats In Khonmoh Block

Srinagar: To ensure the wide-spread awareness among rural masses and reach un-reached population, the Agriculture Department Srinagar today organized an awareness program here in Panchayats of Khonmoh-A and Khonmoh-B under ongoing Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra.

The awareness programs were conducted on the directions of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad with an aim to provide a platform for the provision of on-the-spot services related to Government schemes for Agriculture and allied sectors to the beneficiaries of Panchayat Halqas of Khonmoh-A and Khonmoh-B.

established stalls displaying benefits of the Government welfare and flagship schemes. The programs witnessed overwhelming response from the public, especially women, youth and farmers.



KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Authorities Seal 3 Houses As Land Caves In At Nowshehra

3 Families Comprising 10 Members Rescued Safely, Say Officials

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: A portion of land at Zoonimar locality in Nowshehra area of Srinagar suddenly caved in, forcing about ten members of three families to flee from their houses, which had been sealed by the authorities last evening.

Officials of the district administration said the families were safely evacuated while the residential structures numbering three were immediately sealed, following sudden caving in of a portion of land at Zoonimar locality due to the sewer leakage.

"Three residential structures were

sealed while about ten members of three families were rescued after a portion of land that also created a sink hole near a plinth area of one of the affected structures at Zoonimar locality last evening," officials told Kashmir Observer.

They said the houses had to be sealed in order to prevent fatalities due to the abrupt settling of the earth. However no loss of life or injury was reported in the incident.

The abrupt caving in of a portion of land created chaos in the area, prompting the authorities to evacuate the families to the safer locations within the vicinity.

A joint team of SDRF, police and district administration reached the spot as soon as the information about the incident was received.

"The caving in of land has created a sink hole near the plinth area of one of the houses besides deep ruts in all three structures. We are constantly monitoring the situation and appeal to the people not to panic at all," officials said, adding the road leading to the affected area has been sealed.

The incident, officials said took place around 4pm on Tuesday, prompting the families to flee from their homes in a helter-skelter manner.

Lack Of Parking Spaces Causes Frequent Traffic Jams In Karan Nagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lack of dedicated parking spaces outside medical stores in the Kaksarai to Karan Nagar area of Srinagar has led to a surge in traffic congestion and hampered the movement of ambulances.

Commuters are forced to

park their vehicles haphazardly on the roadside, causing hour's long traffic jams and creating a chaotic situation in the area. This problem compounds during peak hours.

Locals from the area said the lack of parking spaces has also become a major concern for ambulance drivers, who often find them-

selves unable to navigate through the congested streets to reach out to patients in need.

"The situation is getting worse by the day, as there is no place to park our cars, and the traffic is always jammed. It is a nightmare to get to a medical store during an emergency," said Manzoor Ahmed, a local resident.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Office Of The Assistant Director Tourism. Gulmarg
Telefax: - 01954254439/87 Email: -gulmargtourism@gmail.com

Subject:- Supply of provision/grocery items at Tourist Office Gulmarg for the year 2023-2024.

Quotations are invited from the registered provisional/grocery stores situated in Gulmarg for supply of provision/grocery items at Tourist Office Gulmarg for the financial year 2023-24. The prescribed format can be obtained from the office of the undersigned w.e.f 07-12-2023 upto 15-12-2023 (04:00 PM).

Terms & Conditions:-

- 1. The quotations should reach to the office of the undersigned upto 15-12-2023 (04:00 PM) & will be opened on 16-12-2023 (11:00 AM) in presence of the bidders and tender opening committee of this office.
- 2. No compromise will be made on the quality and hygiene of the items.
- 3. The rates quoted shall be inclusive of all taxes etc.
- 4. The rates quoted and agreed upon shall remain valid upto 31st of March-2024.
- 5. The job order in favour of the successful bidder shall be issued as and when the items are required by the department.
- 6. The payment of items provided by the shopkeeper shall be made only when the funds are available with this office.
- 7. In case of any dispute, the Director Tourism Kashmir shall be the arbitrator.
- 8. This office reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the quotations without assigning any reason thereof

NO: Gen/366/Aadtg/889-92
DIPK-13405/23 Dated: 06-12-2023

Assistant Director
Tourism Gulmarg

e-mail: adfbpr@gmail.com

Fax/Ph.No: 01957225662

Office Of The Assistant Director Fisheries District Bandipora
NOTICE INVITING OBJECTIONS IF ANY

Subject:- Preliminary conditional shortlist of applicants for selection of Motorcycle with Icebox

This office is going to select One beneficiary among 02, who have applied for award 01 Motorcycle with icebox under PMMSY (Fisheries Sector) during 2023-24. Before the list, after verification of documents is presented before the District Level Steering Committee for PMMSY for final selection of a beneficiary by draw of lots, it is informed to the Public in general and Fishermen community in particular that if any objection with regard to their selection can file their objection in the office of the Assistant Director Fisheries Bandipora upto 09-12-2023 at 3.P.M. After stipulated time NO OBJECTION WHATSOEVER SHALL BE ENTERTAINED.

S.N	Name of the Applicant (conditionally selected)	Parentage	Residence
01	Maqsood Ahmad Kawa	Gh Mohammad	Laherwalpora
02	Ab. Quyoum Khanday	Gh. Mohammad Khanday	Aloosa

No:-ADF/Bpr/23/3411
DIPK-13384/23 Dated:-06/12/2023

(Showket Ahmad Bhat)
Assistant Director Fisheries
District Bandipora

PUBLIC NOTICE
The mother's name of my daughter Alisa Khalid has been wrongly written in her school records as Asiya while the correct name is Maryam Jan which needs to be corrected. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal King Saud School of education Batmaloo Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Maryam Jan
Mother of Alisa Khalid
R/o Khalwari Batmaloo laa

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار کرپری
درخواست مخائب منظور احمد خوکر ولد غلام احمد خوکر ساکن کٹرہ ہالا بنڑس اجرائی
ڈیپنٹ سرفیکٹیف
اشتراہر برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری
حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئے مطابق رپورٹ پڑاری منظور احمد خوکر ولد غلام احمد خوکر
ساکن کٹرہ ہالا پینڈر سے ایک مزدور ہے سائل کٹرہ کا داد کا مانے ولادہ سے سائل کے آگاہی پڑ
انحصار کرتے ہے سائل کے پیمانہ نگار مندرجہ ذیل ہے
ختی بیگم والدہ سائل 58 سال گھر بیلوکام
بھینرہ سائل 29 سال گھر بیلوکام
زیر تعلیم -- سال 28
رومیہ بانو زویہ سائل 29 سال گھر بیلوکام
ارشدہ بانو
اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کو نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرفیکٹیف زیر بحث اجراء
کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی
کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
نائب تحصیلدار kri

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

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

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

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
22 Jumada al-Awwal
1445

PRAYERS	
FAJR	5: 53
ZUHR	12:21
ASR	3: 45
Magrib	5:25
ISHA	6: 50

This Day In History

- 43 BC - Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman orator and politician is assassinated in Formiae by soldiers under the command of Marc Antony
- 185- Emperor Lo-Yang, China sees supernova (MSH15-52)
- 1354- Margaret II Countess of Hainaut and her son William, Duke of Bavaria, sign a peace treaty ending the Cod and Hook wars between them
- 1703 - Great storm of 1703 hits Southern England - thousands killed, Royal Navy losses 13 ships and around 1,500 seamen
- 1703- The first Eddystone Lighthouse is destroyed in the Great Storm of 1703
- 1727- Physician Sir Hans Soane becomes President of the Royal Society, succeeding Sir Isaac Newton [1]
- 1741- Elisabeth Petrovna becomes Tsarina of Russia
- 1804- Naturalist Alexander von Humboldt reports his discovery of the decrease in intensity of Earth's magnetic field from the poles to the equator in a memoir to the Paris Institute
- 1808- James Madison elected 4th US President and George Clinton Vice-President
- 1836- Martin Van Buren elected the 8th President of the United States
- 1877 - Thomas Edison demonstrates his phonograph (gramophone) to the editors of "Scientific American".
- 1902 - Britain and Germany issue an ultimatum to Venezuela demanding that President Cipriano Castro pay claims for damages caused during his takeover of the government in 1899.
- 1907 Eugene Corri becomes 1st referee in a boxing ring
- 1907 - The First Egyptian Nationalist Congress meets under the leadership of Mustafa Kamil Pasha.
- 1917 - US becomes 13th country to declare war on Austria during World War I.
- 1934 - Wiley Post discovers jet stream.
- 1941 - Imperial Japanese Navy with 353 planes attack US fleet at Pearl Harbour Naval Base, Hawaii, killing 2,403 people.
- 1953 - Israel's PM Ben-Gurion retires.
- 1954 - Japanese government of Yoshida resigns.
- 1960 - Ivory Coast claims independence from France.
- 1963 - Instant replay is used for the first time in a Army-Navy game.
- 1968 - Orbiting Astronomical Observatory 2 launched into Earth orbit.
- 1972 - Apollo 17 (US), final manned lunar landing mission, launched.
- 1975 - Indonesian army occupies East Timor.
- 1976 - UN Security Council endorses Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General for second 5 year term.
- 1981 - Spain becomes a member of the NATO.
- 1987 - Palestinian uprising against Israel in West Bank.
- 1988 - 6.9 earthquake in Spitak, Armenia kills 25,000 and leaves 5,000,000 homeless.
- 1988 - Gorbachev announces 10% unilateral Soviet troop reductions at UN
- 1990 - Iraqi parliament endorses Saddam Hussein's decision to free hostages.
- 1992 - Galileo spacecraft passes North Pole of Moon (Peary Crater).
- 1995 - US space probe Galileo begins orbiting Jupiter.
- 1996 - Space Shuttle STS 80 (Columbia 21), lands.
- 2014 - Human Rights Watch Asia Division call for investigation into Indonesian security forces shooting of peaceful protesters.
- 2015 - Beijing issues its 1st ever red alert for pollution
- 2015 - US Presidential candidate Donald Trump proposes banning all Muslims from entering the US
- 2016- Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi resigns 3 days after losing a referendum to reform the constitution
- 2016- Pakistan International Airways plane crashes north of Islamabad, killing all 48 on board, including singer turned preacher Junaid Jamshed



Iran Orders US To Pay \$50 Billion For Assassinating Its Top General Qasem Soleimani

Agencies

TEHRAN: A Tehran court has ordered the US government to pay nearly \$50 billion in damages for assassinating a top Iranian general nearly four years ago, the judiciary said on Wednesday.

Then-US president Donald Trump ordered a drone strike near Baghdad airport that killed General Qasem Soleimani, 62, and his Iraqi lieutenant Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis on January 3, 2020.

Days later, Iran retaliated by firing missiles at bases in Iraq housing American and other coalition troops. No US personnel were killed but Washington said dozens suffered traumatic brain injuries.

The Iranian judiciary's Mizan Online news agency said that a Tehran court had sentenced the US government to pay \$49.7 billion in "material, moral and punitive damages" after a lawsuit filed by more than 3,300 Iranians.

The court found 42 individuals and legal persons guilty, including Trump, the US government, former secretary of state Mike Pompeo and former defense secretary Mark Esper,

Mizan added.

Qasem Soleimani commanded the Quds Force, the foreign operations arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

He was one of the country's most popular public figures who spearheaded Iran's Middle East operations and was seen as a hero of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Iranian courts have now handed down several rulings against the United States.

Last month an Iranian court ordered the US government to pay \$420 million in compensation to victims of an abortive 1980 operation to free hostages held at the US embassy.

In August, a Tehran court demanded Washington pay \$330 million in damages for "planning a coup" in 1980 against the fledgling Islamic republic.

Those suits follow a series of multi-billion-dollar compensation rulings against Tehran by US courts.

In 2016, the US Supreme Court ordered that Iranian assets frozen in the United States should be paid to victims of attacks Washington has blamed on Tehran, including the 1983 bombing of a US Marine barracks in Beirut and a 1996 blast in Saudi Arabia.

Palestinians in Gaza Living In 'Utter, Deepening Horror': UN

Dire humanitarian conditions grow worse as Israel widens its offensive



Agencies

JERUSALEM: Israel's widening air and ground offensive in southern Gaza has displaced tens of thousands more Palestinians and worsened the territory's dire humanitarian conditions, with the fighting preventing distribution of food, water and medicine outside a tiny sliver of southern Gaza and new military evacuation orders squeezing people into ever-smaller areas of the south.

The United Nations said 1.87 million people — more than 80 per cent of Gaza's population — have been driven from their homes since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, triggered by the deadly October 7 Hamas assault on southern Israel.

The UN also says that all telecom services have been shut down due to cuts in the main fibre routes.

On Tuesday, Israel's military entered Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city, in its pursuit to wipe out the territory's Hamas rulers.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military must retain open-ended security control over the Gaza Strip long after the war ends.

Around 1,200 people have died on the Israeli side, mainly civilians, killed during Hamas' October 7 attack.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory has surpassed 16,200, with more than 42,000 wounded.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70 per cent of the dead were women and children.

Currently, — Widespread sexual and gender-based crimes were committed during Hamas' October 7 attack, a rights group says. Biden calls on the world to condemn Hamas for the reported brutalities.

— Generation after generation, Israeli prison marks a rite of passage for Palestinian boys.

— In a rare action against Israel, the US says extremist West Bank settlers will be barred from America.

— The presidents of Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania and MIT defend actions in combatting antisemitism on campus.

— The UN's food agency stops deliveries to millions in Yemen areas controlled by Houthi rebels.

Here's what's happening in the war:

UN Human Rights chief urges immediate cease-fire

The UN human rights chief is demanding that the international community immediately push "with one voice" for a cease-fire in Gaza as the plight of civilians deepens.

"Palestinians in Gaza are living in utter, deepening horror," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said at a news conference in Geneva. "As an immediate step, I call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and the release of all hostages."

He added: "The international community needs to insist with one voice on a cease-fire, immediately, on human rights and humanitarian grounds."

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He added: "The international community needs to insist with one voice on a cease-fire, immediately, on human rights and humanitarian grounds."

90 Out Of 230 Newly Elected Madhya Pradesh MLAs Have Criminal Cases: Report

Agencies

BHOPAL: After the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh concluded and its results announced, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) released its report in which it was revealed that 90 newly elected MLAs out of 230 in the state, which is nearly 39 percent, have criminal cases against them.

ADR is a non-profit organisation that discloses criminal, financial, and educational backgrounds of the candidates contesting elections.

"90 winning candidates out of the 230 analyzed in 2023 have declared criminal cases against themselves. Similarly, 34 winning candidates out of 230 which is nearly 15 percent, in the state have declared serious criminal cases against themselves," says ADR report.

Of these 90 MLAs having criminal cases, 51 belong to the BJP, 38 belong to the Congress Party, and one from the Bharatiya Adivasi Party.

There is a slight downfall in the numbers this time in comparison to that of the previous 2018 assembly polls. During the 2018 MP assembly polls, 94 MLAs out of 230 had declared criminal cases against themselves while 47 MLAs out of 230 had declared serious criminal cases against themselves.

Another interesting data in the report is that 205 newly elected MLAs in the state which



is nearly 89 percent are 'crorepati'. Of these crorepati MLAs, 144 belong to the BJP and 61 belong to the Congress party.

The number of crorepati MLAs in the state has increased in comparison to that of last assembly polls as during the 2018 assembly polls, 187 MLAs were crorepatists. BJP MLA from Ratlam city constituency in Ratlam district, Chetanya Kasyap is the richest MLA in the state whose total wealth is over ₹296 crores.

Similarly, a BJP MLA from Vijayraghavgarh assembly seat in Katni district, Sanjay Sanyendra Pathak is the second richest MLA having wealth of over ₹242 crores followed by Congress MLA Kamal Nath who has a total wealth of over ₹134 crores, the report said.

Besides, 161 winning candidates are graduates or above educational qualifications. Similarly, 64 candidates have declared their educational qualification to be between class 5th pass and class 12th pass, while three winning candidates are Diploma Holders and two are just literate, the report further read.

Israel and Hamas Fight House-to-House Battles Across Gaza

Agencies

Israeli forces and Hamas are fighting house-to-house battles along the length of the Gaza Strip, with devastating consequences for the civilian population amid a complete collapse in humanitarian relief.

As the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have been fighting their way through badly bomb-damaged urban areas in northern and southern Gaza, Hamas has increasingly relied on improvised bombs to inflict casualties and slow down the assault.

Gaza's hospitals have reported a flood of civilian dead and injured, many of them women and children, as medical supplies dwindle, while the spread of ground combat to the south has stopped any delivery of humanitarian aid much further than the Rafah crossing point with Egypt.

The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry said 1,207 Palestinians had been killed since the collapse of a temporary ceasefire at the beginning of the month, and that 70% of the dead were women and children.

The focal points of the fighting over the past two days have been the Jabalia refugee camp and the Shuja'iyya district in northern Gaza and Khan Younis and Bani Suheila in the south. The IDF has taken control of most of the Salah al-Din road, the main north-south highway running down the middle of the coastal strip.



On Wednesday morning, the IDF called on residents of Khan Younis to flee the city for safer areas, noting that there would be a pause until 2pm in the bombardment of Rafah, immediately to the south on the Egyptian border.

The UN and aid agencies say nowhere in Gaza is safe any more. According to the UN, 1.87 million people, more than 80% of Gaza's population, have left their homes. Many have had to

flee shelter several times in the path of the Israeli advance.

The UN Human Rights Office said on Tuesday that "the pattern of attacks that target or impact on civilian infrastructure raises serious concerns about Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law and significantly raises the risk of atrocity crimes".

The Norwegian Refugee Council said the Gaza war "now ranks amongst the worst assaults on any civilian population in our time and age".

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, claimed that the IDF was winning the war and that more than half of Hamas's battalion commanders had been killed.

Guidelines on Search Of Journalists' Digital Devices Soon, Supreme Court Told

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Centre assured the Supreme Court on Wednesday that guidelines would be framed soon to regulate the seizure of phones or other digital devices belonging to individuals, particularly media professionals.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sudhanshu Dhulia was informed by Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju that a committee has been formed and the central government would require more time to formulate the guidelines.

The bench, however, questioned the two-year delay by the government since the filing of the petition before it and said, "When did we issue notice? Some time frame has to be followed. Two years have passed."

ASG assured the top court that the guidelines would be ready by the next week.

"Get it done," the bench said, posting the matter for hearing on December 14.

Senior advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan, appearing for the petitioners, urged the top court for an urgent need for guidelines and suggested that copies of necessary data on devices

could be taken instead of seizing the entire content.

300 journalists were raided in the recent NewsClick case, Mr Ramakrishnan claimed.

On the last hearing, the top court remarked that there should be guidelines in place to govern the search and seizure of phones or other digital devices, and media professionals could have confidential information or details about their sources on their devices.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by the Foundation for Media Professionals urging the court to establish safeguards against unreasonable interference by law enforcement agencies and create comprehensive guidelines for the search and seizure of digital devices.

The petition has stated the increasing reliance on personal digital devices by media professionals for their journalistic work, which often involves handling "confidential information of public value, private correspondence with sources and whistle-blowers, and remote collaboration to break news stories in the public interest".

It has been argued that the petitioner has a specific interest in advocating for adequate legal safeguards for the right to privacy in the digital space.

Centre Given 3 Months To Decide Representation To Ban Dangerous Dog Breeds

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court today asked the Centre to decide expeditiously, preferably within three months, a representation to ban and cancel the licence to keep "dangerous" dog breeds such as Pitbull, Terriers, American Bulldog and Rottweiler.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan asked the petitioner, who made the representation in October, to let the authorities "take a call" on the issue as they were the ones who draft the relevant laws and regulations.

During the hearing, the court also stressed the need for promoting the local breeds of dogs which are "sturdy".

"Indian breeds need to be taken care of. They are far more sturdy. They don't fall sick that often because they have acclimatized. Today we are vocal for local," the court observed.

The central government lawyer said the representation has already been sent to the department concerned and a decision will be taken after consultation with stakeholders.

"They (the authorities) shall decide representation as expeditiously as possible, preferably within three months," the bench, also comprising Justice Mini Pushkanra, ordered.

On October 5, a division-bench headed by then Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma had refused to entertain the petitioner's PIL on the issue, saying they should first approach the government authorities with its grievance.



In its petition, Legal Attorneys & Barristers Law Firm had alleged that dog breeds like Bulldog, Rottweiler, Pitbull, Terriers, Neapolitan Mastiff are "dangerous dogs" and are banned in more than 12 countries including India but the Municipal Corporation of Delhi was still registering them to be kept as pets.

The petition highlighted that there had been many incidents of such dog breeds attacking people including their owners.

"It is the need of the hour to ban and cancel the licence to keep dogs such as Pitbull, Terriers, American bulldog, Rottweiler, Japanese Tosa, Bandog, Neapolitan Mastiff, Wolf Dog, Boerboel, Presa Canario, Fila Brasileiro, Tosa Inu, Cane Corso, Dogo Argentino and cross breeds of above mentioned dogs," it had stated.

The petition had asserted that it was the duty of the Centre and the state government to act as welfare state and to take preemptive action to save the lives of the citizens from the risk of any major dog bite incident by these "dangerous" breeds.

NEWS MAKERS

Indian-American National Security Expert With Roots In Kashmir Running For US Congress

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON: Krystle Kaul, an Indian-origin foreign policy and national security expert with roots in Kashmir, has announced that she will run for the US House of Representatives from a Congressional district in Virginia with a focus on core issues like public safety, education and healthcare.

Kaul, if elected in 2024, would be only the second Indian-American woman to be elected to the House of Representatives after Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal.

Pramila Jayapal's sister Susheela Jayapal has also thrown

her hat in the race to the Congress from the third Congressional District of Oregon.

Both Kaul and Susheela Jayapal, from the Democratic Party, will have to win the party's primary next year to bag the party's nomination for the November 2024 general elections.

Fluent in eight languages, including Hindi, Punjabi, Dari, Urdu and Arabic, Kaul, the first Kashmiri-origin person to ever run for Congress, said her decision to run for the 10th Congressional District of Virginia came after Democratic Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton who has represented the constituency since 2019 an-

nounced her decision not to seek re-election.

Kaul has spent her professional life in the national security establishment from the Pentagon to think tanks and the defence industry.

She said education, healthcare and public safety are the "three core issues" she would focus on in her campaign.

The 10th Congressional District of Virginia encompasses parts of Virginia that have one of the highest concentrations of Indian Americans and South Asians in the state, like Loudoun County, Fairfax County and Prince Williams County.

Elaborating on her promises

to the electorate, she said: "The first foremost being is education...The second one is improving our healthcare system here.

"We have a lot of small business owners and just making healthcare more affordable and more accessible. So from prescription drugs to seeing specialists, that is something that is a concern. And the third is public safety, making sure we have safe neighbourhoods, safe schools, safe communities," Kaul, who is in her late thirties, told PTI in a recent interview.

Kaul said when it comes to national security, she would take a very strong stance on counter-terrorism.

"Roads Belong To Humans": Japan Taxi Driver Runs Over Pigeon, Arrested

Agencies

TOKYO: A Tokyo taxi driver was arrested for deliberately driving into a flock of pigeons and killing one, police said Tuesday, reportedly because he was angry that the birds were on the road.

Atsushi Ozawa, 50, "used his car to kill a common pigeon, which is not a game animal", in the Japanese capital last month, and was arrested on Sunday for violating wildlife protection laws, a Tokyo police spokesman told AFP.

Ozawa sped off from a traffic light when it turned green, ploughing his taxi into the bevy of birds at a speed of 60 kilomet-



res (37 miles) per hour, local media said.

The sound of the engine reportedly prompted a surprised passer-by to report the incident.

Tokyo police had a veterinarian perform a post-mortem on the hapless pigeon and determined its cause of death as

traumatic shock, according to local media.

"Roads belong to humans, so pigeons should have dodged out of the way," Ozawa was quoted by local media as telling investigators.

Police called his behaviour "highly malicious" for a professional driver, before deciding to go ahead with the arrest, broadcaster Fuji TV said.

"Wow, can you get arrested for running over a pigeon?", one user wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"He could've just honked his car horn or something. But intentionally killing it? That's crossing the line," another posted.

CURBING POWER PILFERAGE

MD KPDCL Asks EEs To Keep Check On Vulnerable Feeders 'Minimise Unscheduled Power Cuts, Stick To Curtailment Schedule'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Managing Director, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), Mussarat Islam, has emphasised upon the Superintending Engineers of all 06 O&M Circles of Kashmir Division to improve billing and collection efficiency which has a direct bearing on the revenue realisation and reduction in AT & C losses.

He passed these directions during a meeting held Wednesday to review the functioning of the corporation with focus on inspections and disconnections, revenue realisation, DT damages and strict adherence to curtailment schedule.

Chief Engineer, Distribution, Javed Yousuf Dar, Superintending Engineers of all O&M Circles, Executive Engineers of all Electric Divisions and SDOs attended the meeting.

Laying emphasis on strict adherence to curtailment schedule, MD reiterated the earlier directions passed by the Principal Secretary Power and impressed upon all the officers to ensure that no unscheduled power cuts are undertaken. He also laid stress on maintaining strict vigil over feeders which are vulnerable to power pilferage by way of hooking, bypass of meters and exceeding agreed load.

The meeting was informed that KPDCL has conducted 14,893 inspections during the month of November and imposed a fine of Rs.1.80 crore. As many as 995 illegal connections were regularised and a load of 2.9 MW added. The KPDCL went into overdrive in the last 10 days of November,

following complaints of large-scale hooking and non-payment of dues by defaulting consumers.

MD KPDCL and Chief Engineer (Distribution) appreciated the escalated drives of inspections and disconnections which are crucial to improvement in power scenario, especially in peak winter months.

During the current financial year, KPDCL has conducted 78,673 inspections and regularised 31,706 connections in Kashmir Division, the meeting was informed. KPDCL has also disconnected 13229 consumers for want of non-payment of energy dues, for which Rs.4.83 crore arrears were collected from defaulting consumers in November alone.

Appreciating the performance of all Electric Divisions in launching a massive drive against power pilferage, MD KPDCL advised all the Executive Engineers to improve billing and collection efficiency, which is at the core of bringing down AT&C losses. He fixed the responsibility of concerned SDOs to further improve revenue realisation, which will be continuously monitored.

Expressing concern over slight increase in DT damage rate, MD KPDCL directed all AEEs to maintain log of damaged transformers and its replacement within the timelines fixed by keying in relevant details on the newly revised designated portal.

MD KPDCL also directed SEs to prepare Circle-wise post-snow preparedness plans for real time restoration of power supply. He advised the SEs to also keep an eye on weather forecast which shall allow them mobilise men and machinery in advance.



A VARIETY OF KASHMIRI BREAD put out on display by a baker near revered shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar on Wednesday. KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Kashmir Records 7 Deaths In 2000 Fire Incidents Till Oct-2023

Srinagar Tops UT List With 400 Fire Incidents: Asst Dir F&ES

Majid Nahi

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir Valley has recorded 2000 fire incidents and seven related deaths by the end of October, with 25 percent of total incidents reported in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

People in Kashmir tend to disregard standard operating procedures (SOP's), especially when the minimum temperature falls below freezing point, and that's what has been the root cause of fire incidents during winter months in the valley, they added.

Till October end, the Kashmir valley, according to the official statistics, recorded 2000 incidents of fire, while seven deaths were also reported in the related incidents.

The highest number of fire incidents is seen during winters in Kashmir. People's contempt for standard operating procedures is the primary cause of inferno which occasionally results in tragic fire incidents, causing damage to both life and property, Aqib Hussain Mir, Assistant Director Fire and Emergency Service (FAES) Kashmir, told Kashmir Observer.

The Fire and Emergency Department in Kashmir, he said, has taken a slew of measures to reduce the frequency of fire incidents including public awareness about the cautious use of electronic devices such as heating gadgets during the



winter months.

Srinagar city, which is the capital city of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, Mir said, recorded the highest number of 400 fire incidents this year.

"Being highly congested, Srinagar has always been on the top when it comes to the fire incidents in the Union Territory. Srinagar so far has recorded 400 fire incidents alone including the tragic one in Dal Lake, in which three Bangladeshi tourists also lost their lives last month," he added.

Regarding the injuries to the civilians and firefighters, the official said, the department has been collecting the data as of now.

The moment winter sets in, we start receiving calls from Srinagar. Since Srinagar is the most crowded and congested area, it experiences the most fire accidents throughout the winter, he said.

Up to October, there had been 1900 recorded fire events

across Kashmir including Srinagar. By the end of October, however, there had been an additional 100 comparable occurrences. Three deaths involving foreign visitors were among the seven recorded deaths, he said.

By the end of November, 400 fire incidents had been registered in Srinagar, the highest in the Union Territory, according to Mir.

"We must follow the SOPs if we wish to protect ourselves as well as our families and neighbors. Such occurrences will persist until and unless we float rules. I urge the people to use electronic gadgets judiciously in winters so that fire incidents are prevented," he added.

According to Mir, people do not obey safety precautions while using heating devices during winters, which ultimately lead to electric short circuits, resulting in fires during the winter and inflict damage to both life and property.

Fake Army Major Chargesheeted For Job Fraud

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday filed a chargesheet against an impersonator posing as an Army major for allegedly duping a job aspirant in Samba district, an official said.

A 313-page charge sheet was filed against the accused Deepak Kumar, a resident of village Hiranagar-Kathua, by the economic offences wing of crime branch Jammu in the court of law for judicial deter-

mination, a spokesperson of the agency said.

He said Darshan Kumar of Mansar village of Samba in his written complaint to the crime branch Jammu had alleged that the accused by impersonating as an Army Major took away Rs 5 lakh from him on the pretext of arranging a job for his brother-in-law in Military Engineering Service (MES).

On receipt of the complaint, a preliminary verification was conducted and the allegations levelled were prima facie es-

tablished leading to the registration of a formal case under the relevant sections of law for an in-depth probe, the spokesperson said.

During the investigation, he said all material evidence in the form of documentary records was collected from concerned quarters besides statements of the complainant and witnesses were recorded.

The accused is also involved in two more cases for the commission of crime of similar nature, the spokesperson said

Coldest Night In Srinagar At Minus 2 Deg Cel

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The minimum temperature across Kashmir settled below the freezing point as the cold conditions intensified in the valley, officials said on Wednesday.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 2 degrees Celsius, down from minus 1.4 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, which serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath yatra, saw the mercury settling at minus 5.1 degrees Celsius, they said. It was the coldest area in the

Valley on Tuesday night.

Gulmarg in Baramulla district recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 2 degrees Celsius, down from minus 1.6 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

Kokernag town in south Kashmir registered a minimum temperature of minus 0.5 degrees Celsius, while Kupwara recorded a low of minus 2.7 degrees Celsius.

The meteorological office said the weather would remain partly to generally cloudy, but mainly dry till December 10 and there would be a fall in the night temperature by a few degrees.

School Bomb Scare Sends Cops Into A Tizzy

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Police on Wednesday conducted a massive sanitization operation inside a private school here after the institute received a bomb threat via a phone call, officials said.

No suspicious object was found on the school premises at Residency Road in the heart of the city and the purported threat turned out to be a hoax, the officials said.

"The Jammu Police acted swiftly on bomb threat by an unidentified caller to a private school.

"Police conducted extensive searches and sanitised the area. The threat turned out to be a hoax and an FIR has been regis-

tered," a police official said.

The officials said a police contingent along with bomb disposal squad and dog squad moved inside the sprawling school complex immediately after its management informed the police station concerned about the phone call threatening a possible bomb attack.

A thorough sanitizing operation under the supervision of an SP-rank officer was carried out but nothing suspicious was found, the officials said, adding the students were not disturbed and continued attending their classes.

They said police have started an investigation to trace the origin of the caller to bring him to book

Crimes Against Children In J&K Surge By 35% In 2022: NCRB

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a hike of 35 percent in crime against children in the last two years, reveals the latest NCRB report.

As per the report, compared to 606 cases in 2020, 920 cases of crime against children have been registered by police in Jammu and Kashmir in the year 2022.

In 2021, the Union Territory had recorded 845 cases of crime against children in Jammu and Kashmir.

At national level, a total of 1,62,449 cases of crime against children were registered during 2022, showing an increase of 8.7% over 2021 (1,49,404 cases).

As per the report last year, 316 cases have been registered under POCSO by the police in Jammu and Kashmir

A total of 318 victims were reported last year under POCSO in Jammu and Kashmir, the report said.

It said last year 513 incidents of kidnapping and abduction of children were registered by the police in Jammu and Kashmir.

As many as 534 victims were reported in these 513 incidents of kidnapping and abduction of children.

The report said that seven incidents of human trafficking of children have been reported last year in Jammu and Kashmir. The police found 10 victims who were being traf-

ficked in Jammu and Kashmir last year.

Moreover, 75 children as per the report who were missing were deemed as kidnapped last year.

The NCRB report said that 29 incidents of kidnapping and abduction of minor girls to compel her for marriage were registered by police last year under Section 366 of IPC in the union territory.

It said that two cases of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act were registered by the police in Jammu and Kashmir last year.

In addition to it, the report said that two cases of children involved in cybercrimes and the Information Technology Act were registered by the police last year.

A case of foeticide was also registered by the police last year in Jammu and Kashmir, the report said.

Pertinently the central government extended the Child Protection Services Scheme (formerly the Integrated Child Protection Scheme) to J&K in January 2018.

The Child Protection Services Scheme is aimed at providing a secure, protective environment for vulnerable children, including those in situations of abuse.

With the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, the J&K POCSO Act was repealed and replaced by the POCSO (Amendment) Act, 2019—(KNO)

Land Of Terror Associate's Family Attached

SRINAGAR: Land belonging to the family of a terror associate of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir was on Wednesday attached under the anti-terror law UAPA, police said.

The action was taken after the land was identified as proceeds of crime.

"Bandipora Police has attached 14 marla of residential

land at Ashtengoo Bandipora in case FIR No.43/2022. The land had been identified as proceeds of terrorism and was attached under the UAPA," Bandipora Police said in a post on X.

The police said the land belongs to the family of a terror associate of LeT, Irfan Ahmad Bhat.

His brother had exfiltrated to Pakistan in 2000, the police added.

One Dead After Bus Overtakes In Rajouri

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A bus overturned in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday leaving one passenger dead and 22 others, including 14 students, injured, officials said.

The accident took place near

Radha Soami Ashram in Thandikassi village along the Rajouri-Jammu national highway.

The bus was on its way to Rajouri from Manjakote and hit two cars before overturning, they said. The injured were rushed to the Government Medical College Hospital Rajouri.

Unknown Man Found Dead In Dalgate

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Body of an unidentified man was feshw21 found near Sulaiman complex in Dalgate area of Srinagar on Wednesday morning, officials said.

Quoting an official, news agency KNO reported that the body was spotted by some lo-

cals, who then informed the police.

He said that upon receiving the information, a team of police reached the spot and took the body into custody.

The official added that the body has been sent for post-mortem and will be handed over to legal heirs after identification.

Mother Of Two Breaks Stereotype To Become First Female E-Rickshaw Driver In Chenab Valley

Press Trust Of India

BHADERWAH: The world turned upside down for 39-year-old Meenakshi Devi, a mother of two, almost a year ago after her husband was diagnosed with renal failure and put on weekly dialysis, forcing the family to wrap up their business and sell their car to clear the debt.

But instead of being overwhelmed by penury, she decided to tread the hard road of driving an e-rickshaw despite being discouraged by her relatives, neighbours and also the auto-rickshaw association. Her husband too was initially apprehensive about her taking up

driving an e-rickshaw.

Despite all odds, she became the first female e-rickshaw driver in the Chenab Valley and in the process an inspiration for the village women of the region aspiring to make a living for themselves and their families.

"I remember the day four months ago when I first entered the auto stand at Seri Bazar in Bhaderwah with my e-rickshaw. Not only the passersby, but my male counterparts also looked at me as if I was an alien among them," Devi said.

Some rickshaw drivers even suggested she return home as they did not want to their customers risk their lives.

"Unfazed by the negativity, I was steadfast in my resolve and slowly gained confidence. I now earn Rs 1500 to Rs 2000 per day," Devi said. "Today one can hardly find me at the auto stand as I am busy ferrying my loyal customers, especially ladies, throughout the day."

She asserted that women prefer to ride with her rather than male drivers.

A year ago she was leading a happy life with her husband and two children in Bhaderwah town of Doda district when her husband was diagnosed with severe renal failure.

"Very soon we landed up in piles of debt due to escalating medical bills," she

said. As debts kept mounting and all their savings got exhausted, the family sold their car and wrapped their business to clear their debt.

Devi said she explored many options to earn a living till she learned that e-rickshaws were available for purchase at subsidised rates. Before long, the couple bought a three-wheeler on EMI and her husband Pammi Sharma it upon himself to teach her to drive the vehicle.

"I feel happy that my hard work has helped in paying the medical bills of my husband and fulfilling the requirements of my minor sons, one of whom is recently enrolled in a pri-

ivate school," Devi said with a sense of satisfaction.

Her husband said he was not confident that Devi could drive an e-rickshaw in the busy market areas of Bhaderwah town. "But we were left with no other option but to give it a try for the sake of survival of the family."

"Today, I am not only satisfied but also proud of her," he said.

"Due to the ever-increasing burden of medical bills, I went into depression as I kept worrying about the future of our children. I do not know what the future has in store for me as my both kidneys are not functioning but my wife made me feel at peace now," he said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY			
E-Tender Notice			
Sr. DEN-III/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 27.12.2023 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in			
Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System	
Open	Works	Single Bid System	
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time	
05.12.2023	13.12.2023	27.12.2023/15:00 Hrs	
S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender	
1.	332-2023-24-ADEN-JUC	Replacement of existing 903 nos. steel channel sleepers with H-beam sleepers in the section under ADEN-JUC.	
		Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
		3,25,68,114.21/-	3,12,900/-
		Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
		60 Days	08 Months
		Similar nature of work :- "Fabrication and Laying of channel sleepers in running track."	
2.	333-2023-24-ADEN-II-ASR	Replacement of existing 1016 nos. steel channel sleepers with H-beam sleepers in the section under ADEN-II-ASR.	
		Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
		3,66,43,681.76/-	3,33,200/-
		Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
		60 Days	08 Months
		Similar nature of work :- "Fabrication and Laying of channel sleepers in running track."	
Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. No:- 332-2023-24-ADEN-JUC & 333-2023-24-ADEN-II-ASR Date: 05.12.2023			
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Surviving Climate Change

As the COP28 summit unfolds in the UAE, the world has one more opportunity to get serious about the need to address climate change wreaking havoc across the world. Reports from the World Food Program indicate that 56.8 million people across 12 nations faced acute food insecurity due to climate extremes in 2022. This escalating crisis has led a staggering 110 million individuals to flee their homes in 2023, driven by a combination of climate-related disasters and conflicts. Countries, like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, face many deaths in extreme heat, particularly in densely populated urban areas. What is more, the surge in extreme weather events is increasing PTSD, anxiety, and depression among survivors of hurricanes, wildfires, and floods.

Kashmir Valley has not been immune to the changes in climate as the weather events in recent years have underlined. In fact, the global climate crisis is starkly mirrored in the fragile ecosystem of Kashmir. From erratic weather patterns to heatwaves, Kashmir has been experiencing the same changes as on the global level. The changes are not mere aberrations but harbingers of a dire future if immediate actions are not taken.

For example, one of the victims of climate change has been the Valley's apple and saffron production, which have suffered irreparable damage due to soaring temperatures, causing significant economic repercussions.

On a bigger scale and which has consequences beyond the boundaries of Jammu and Kashmir, the rising temperatures have led to a rapid retreat of glaciers. Over the past six decades, Jammu and Kashmir has seen a staggering 25 percent reduction in glacier size, a trend exacerbated by the looming threat of climate change. If left unchecked, 48 percent of these vital sources of water could vanish by the end of the century.

Jammu and Kashmir boasts approximately 18,000 glaciers, including large ones like the Siachen glacier, spanning an impressive 65 kilometers in length and towering 500 to 600 meters in thickness. These glaciers are an invaluable resource, serving as a lifeline for the region, providing water for agriculture. However, with temperatures on the rise due to climate change, these glaciers are melting at an accelerated pace.

The world leaders meeting in the UAE must recognize the urgency of the global crisis and move beyond rhetoric to concrete action. Commitments to reducing carbon emissions, safeguarding water bodies, and preserving fragile ecosystems like the Himalayas should not remain mere pledges but translate into enforceable policies.

OTHER OPINION

Pleasant surprise

It also comes in the backdrop of a broadbased pick-up across most non-agricultural sectors, and there is no doubt that the full year GDP numbers have got a big flip after the latest figures. Capital expenditure, as seen in the gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) number, demonstrated good growth at 11% year-on-year. The GFCF, as a share of the GDP, rose to 35.3% compared with 34.2% in the base quarter. One of the sectors that have done very well is construction, with a 13.3% y-o-y growth. This seems to be the result of a booming real estate sector and activity in industry. Given how the space offers employment opportunities for low-skilled workers, this is great news.

The headline numbers, however, mask some pain points on the expenditure side. The most worrying of these is poor private spending as reflected in the Personal Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE), which grew at an anaemic 3.1% y-o-y, half the pace seen in Q1FY24. The PFCE accounts for close to 57% of the economy and the weakness in consumption, part of it attributed to a moribund rural economy, is disappointing. It is spending by the government—up a sharp 12.4% y-o-y—that has held up the economy.

The Q2FY24 performance has been bolstered by a sharp jump in the manufacturing sector, which grew at 13.9% y-o-y. While the growth is way above the average registered in the last eight quarters, it comes off an anaemic base of a negative 3.8% in Q2FY23. Also, whether the momentum in manufacturing will sustain is hard to tell because a fair bit has come from continued deflation in commodity prices, the effects of which will start to fade away. Some segments of the services sector haven't done well. The trade, hotels, transport, communications segment, for instance, has grown at a very disappointing 4.3% y-o-y.

Economists attribute the muted performance to a tapering of pent up demand post the pandemic, worrying because the space employs large numbers of people. The very subdued growth in the agriculture sector is also worrying because of erratic monsoon, the not-so-full reservoirs and the worries over rabi crop sowing. The rural economy is already running below potential—rural wages have been stagnant and could be further impacted. Corporate commentary for the September quarter had highlighted tepid demand for consumer goods in the hinterland with few signs of a revival. While the chief economic advisor said on Thursday rural consumers are doing better than urban consumers and that rural demand is steady, some of the high frequency data—tractor sales, for instance—don't bear this out.

The Financial Express

It's the Ideology, Stupid

The Achilles' heel for Congress and the broader opposition remains their inability to produce a pan-India leader who resonates like Modi.

RIYAZ WANI

Also, by attempting to be the BJP-lite, the Congress has undercut the credibility of its own political vision. The party falls short in providing anything unique that the BJP cannot excel at far more effectively: The saffron party adeptly merges a broad welfarist governance approach with its ideological agenda, effortlessly fulfilling even its ambitious India-remaking goals



The BJP win in three major states belied the hopes that the run-up to 2024 general elections would mimic that to 2019 national polls when the saffron lost these states to Congress. This time, the BJP not only retained Madhya Pradesh but also took Congress ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Except for its government in Himachal Pradesh, the Congress has now been wiped off the map of North India, making Arvind Kejriwal rub it in that the AAP is the largest ruling opposition party in North India with governments in Delhi and Punjab.

That said, the BJP's scintillating victories have made it even more favourite to win the upcoming national polls, now just four months away. And who knows, the Hindutva party could even surpass the 302 seats it won in 2019. The BJP is now entrenched in most of North India, also called the Hindi heartland. It rules in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, which between them send over 150 seats to parliament. The BJP may not secure all these seats in parliamentary polls, yet winning a significant number of them would put the party close to a majority, even with moderate success in other states.

The Congress party, on the other hand, has once again been humbled. The party's march towards revival following Rahul Gandhi's 4000 kilometres Kanyakumari to Kashmir padyatra last year has all but petered out. Its wins in Himachal and Karnataka that came about in the heady aftermath of the yatra seem now a thing of the past. Rahul seems to have again lost the initiative leaving the Congress adrift. In fact Rahul's predicament is emblematic of a larger dilemma faced by the Congress — a desperate need

to reinvent, reinvigorate, and present a compelling ideological alternative. It's not merely about countering Modi's charisma but about crafting a vision that transcends familial legacy and resonates deeply with India's diverse population. The need to do so has become even more urgent now. The results of five state elections have made it clear that the prime minister Modi's wave remains alive and kicking. Notwithstanding a few reverses here and there, the PM has only grown stronger despite being a decade in power.

At the same time, not all is lost for the opposition. In 2003, the then BJP government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee decided to advance the Lok Sabha poll by six months after winning Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh but suffered a defeat at the hands of a Congress-led United Progressive Alliance. However, it is also true that the BJP is now a far different party to what it was then. Under Vajpayee, the BJP was more or less indistinguishable from Congress. Vajpayee ran a tame, coalition government subject to preferences of its allies, most of whom were secular in their outlook. The BJP today is a disproportionately bigger political entity which is not only immensely more popular but is also way ahead of others in its handling of the electoral process. So, the history is unlikely to repeat.

Besides, as the elections in India over the past decade have demonstrated, they have hardly been fought over bland issues of governance, or for that matter, even those of the economy. The exercise has largely been out and out about the overarching persona of the PM Modi and Hindutva. The biggest undoing of the Congress and the broader opposition is that they have both failed to produce a pan-India leader to match the charisma of Modi and

to build an alternative narrative that rivals Hindutva. The failing has been monumental in the case of Congress, the grand old party that steered India to its freedom. Since 2014, as Hindutva became a reigning ideology of the country, the Congress has displayed a stunning lack of conviction in its foundational creed. It has chosen to play second fiddle to the BJP on ideology and peddle soft Hindutva. Congress doubled down on a mild majoritarian posturing in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in the hope that it could project itself as a more endearing alternative to the BJP's aggressive Hindutva. But as the outcome has proved, the voters preferred the bonafide purveyor of the ideology.

Also, by attempting to be the BJP-lite, the Congress has undercut the credibility of its own political vision. The party falls short in providing anything unique that the BJP cannot excel at far more effectively: The saffron party adeptly merges a broad welfarist governance approach with its ideological agenda, effortlessly fulfilling even its ambitious India-remaking goals. As against this, the ideological vision of the Congress and the other opposition parties looks vague and insipid.

It is this yawning gulf that the INDIA Alliance needs to bridge - now at a very short notice - if it hopes to credibly challenge the saffron party in the upcoming general elections. Without this concerted effort, the BJP's third consecutive win seems all but assured.

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

The author is the Political Editor at Kashmir Observer



OBSERVER
MAIL

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Space Science: ISRO's Manned Mission - Gaganyaan

After the successful and historic soft landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the south pole of the moon, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is now preparing to take a giant leap in space technology as it is planning for India's maiden human spaceflight mission namely 'Gaganyaan'. The program aims to send a three-member crew to the Lower Earth Orbit of 400 km for a 3-day mission and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in the Bay of Bengal. This ambitious mission will be accomplished through the indigenous expertise and experience of various concerned industries, the intellectual capacities

of Indian academia and premiere research organisations, and the state-of-the-art technologies of some international agencies.

The 'Gaganyaan' is a complex mission as it involves the planning, development, and execution of some critical and cutting-edge technologies such as human-rated launch vehicle to safely carry the crews to space, Life Support System to provide a habitable earth like environment in the crew module, crew emergency escape system, crew management activities etc. Some important demonstrator missions like Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT), Pad Abort Test (PAT), Test Vehicle (TV

flights etc. have also been planned by ISRO before the actual mission starts. Moreover, a humanoid female-robot called 'Vyommitra' is being developed by ISRO who will be a part of the preliminary uncrewed 'Gaganyaan' mission for the microgravity experiments, monitoring the essential module parameters, and also assist the selected astronauts in the original crewed mission by simulating human-like functions. By now, this all-important 12,500 crore ISRO mission has already completed its first phase as Gaganyaan's first Flight Test Vehicle Abort Mission-1 (TV-D1) was accomplished nicely and the Crew Escape System was performed

successfully on 21st October, 2023. On the other hand, the primarily selected astronauts are being trained at the training facility, commissioned in Bengaluru.

This inspirational manned mission will help India to stand at par with Russia, United States and China regarding the launch of their own crewed spacecrafts. Additionally, it will help in the enhancement of science and technology levels in the country, industrial growth, and international collaborations.

Dr. Prasun Halder

Market in Flux

Geopolitical Factors Unveiled

Sharif Khan

In the intricate realm of global finance, increasing uncertainties and heightened tensions across borders wield a profound impact on worldwide capital flows and financial stability. Recent geopolitical events, including strained relations between the USA and China, the Russia-Ukraine crises, and the Israel-Hamas conflict, have significantly shaped the overall stability of financial and capital markets. According to the IMF report, there has been an approximate 15 percent reduction in bilateral cross-border allocation of portfolio investment and bank claims between the USA and China since 2016. This reduction underscores the tangible consequences of geopolitical dynamics on economic interdependencies between major players, influencing investment patterns and financial relationships. The evolving landscape of international relations continues to pose challenges for maintaining the delicate equilibrium required for global financial stability. As nations navigate these uncertainties, the impact on capital flows serves as a testament to the intricate web of interconnectedness defining the contemporary financial world.

The IMF's October 2021 Outlook report estimated global economic growth in 2022 to be 5 percent. However, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected a slowdown to around 2 percent in 2023. The European Union (EU) Autumn 2022 Economic Forecast underscored the EU's vulnerability due to its proximity to the Russia-Ukraine war, resulting in lower growth. Heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels, Europe's economy is projected to grow around 0.3 percent in 2023 and 1.58 percent in 2024. This uncertainty poses challenges for India, necessitating a well-structured policy to navigate these turbulent times.

The Middle East's pivotal role as a major oil provider underscores its capacity to trigger global disruptions, notably through substantial geopolitical risks. The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict casts a substantial shadow on the global economy, with Bloomberg's analysis indicating a potential surge in oil prices, potentially reaching USD 150 per barrel. This projected spike has the potential to adversely impact global economic development, potentially resulting in a 1.7 percent decline. The interconnectedness of geopolitical events with vital economic factors, such as oil prices, highlights the far-reaching consequences of regional conflicts on the broader international economic land-



scape.

The rise in crude oil prices carries the prospect of triggering heightened inflation in importing nations such as the United States, India, and China. This escalation could result in increased production expenses across various industries, impacting businesses and individuals alike. Experts posit that the surge in crude oil prices might materialize, particularly in the event of any disruption in the crucial Strait of Hormuz. The implications of this scenario extend beyond economic sectors, touching the daily lives and operational costs of businesses. The intricate balance of global energy supply and demand becomes more precarious, with potential consequences resonating through the economies of major importing nations, emphasizing the sensitivity of these nations to disruptions in the oil market.

Initially, the financial market experienced a period of disturbance in response to the ongoing conflict. However, the prevailing belief is that the scope of the conflict will likely remain confined to the borders of Gaza and Israel. Anticipated turbulence in financial markets is not expected unless the conflict extends to more geographical areas, complicating predictions about a broader impact on the capital market. In Israel's financial market, there was an immediate and pronounced reaction, characterized by substantial declines in major stock indices, nearly 7 per-

cent lower. This reaction underscores the sensitivity of regional financial markets to geopolitical events, especially those involving conflict, as investors react swiftly to uncertainties, reshaping the landscape of stock indices and impacting market stability.

Additionally, there was a notable three percent decline in government bond prices. Reports suggest that, in response to these economic shifts, the Central Bank of Israel declared its intention to sell USD 30 billion in foreign exchange reserves. This strategic move is designed to bolster the domestic currency, the Shekel, and counteract fluctuations in its exchange rate. The impact of these financial adjustments extended beyond Israel, as the Tadawul All Share Index in Saudi Arabia concurrently experienced a decline of approximately 1.35 percent. These interconnected developments underscore the intricate and global nature of economic mechanisms, where actions taken by one nation's central bank can reverberate through international financial markets.

The EGX30 Index in Egypt recorded a substantial decrease of nearly 5 percent, reflecting the heightened market turbulence. Simultaneously, the Nifty index in India experienced a marginal decline of approximately 0.7 percent. On that particular day, the Indian markets faced a downturn, with both the Nifty50 and the SENSEX declining by around 1 per-

cent during the initial trading session. This downward trend raises concerns about potential adverse effects on Indian retail investors, particularly if the existing conflict were to escalate, drawing in the participation of other regional states. The intricate dynamics of global markets highlight the interconnectedness of economies, where geopolitical events in one region can reverberate across borders, impacting diverse financial indices.

As a result of the aforementioned geopolitical event, investors may explore secure investment options such as gold and treasury bonds. The spot gold price had a 1.2 percent increase. Similarly, US gold futures rose by 1.2 percent. In addition to these factors, the Indian equity market experienced a substantial outflow of USD 2.2 billion from Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) in September 2023.

This withdrawal represents a notable monthly decline, unmatched since January 2023. However, the swift divestment from Indian equities occurred due to the sustained rise in US 10-year bond yields. Indian equities, often perceived as higher-risk assets, lost attractiveness for investors amid the changing global financial landscape. The shift in investment patterns underscores the impact of broader economic indicators, influencing decisions in the dynamic realm of international finance.

Heightened apprehensions regarding a possible intensification of geopolitical

tensions in West Asia compelled Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) to persist in selling their Indian equity holdings not only throughout October 2023 but also in the subsequent months. This prolonged divestment reflects the cautious stance of investors in response to the evolving geopolitical landscape. Furthermore, the stock prices of Indian pharmaceutical, oil marketing, and IT businesses with operations in Israel face potential impacts in the event of a crisis escalation. The interconnected nature of global markets underscores the susceptibility of specific sectors to geopolitical developments, highlighting the need for strategic risk management in navigating the intricate dynamics of international investments.

The future outlook appears bleak amid the intricate web of geopolitical uncertainty, casting substantial repercussions on global financial markets. The intricate and unpredictable nature of the relationship between international politics and the global economy becomes unmistakably evident when scrutinizing the aftermath of recent conflicts. As these geopolitical tensions persist, financial markets grapple with the challenge of adapting to the evolving landscape. The gravity of these uncertainties underscores the imperative for market participants to exercise vigilance, as the delicate balance between risk management and capitalizing on potential opportunities becomes increasingly complex. Navigating this intricate network requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between geopolitical forces and economic dynamics, as the world awaits a clearer trajectory for peace and stability or the potential disintegration of critical components.

Financial markets showcase remarkable resilience and adaptability. Amidst the evolving landscape, market participants grapple with the persistent challenge of striking a delicate balance between risk management and seizing potential opportunities. The outcome of this geopolitical puzzle remains uncertain – whether peace and stability will endure or if there will be a breakdown of components. A definitive answer to this question eludes us, and only the passage of time will reveal the ultimate resolution. The intricate interplay between global events and market dynamics underscores the complexity of predicting the future course of financial stability.

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

Is the definition of retirement getting blurred?

Asha Iyer Kumar

A tenuous truce has just ended, resuming the orgy of death and destruction in one part of the world. Closer home, the world has converged to discuss what needs to be done to save the planet from an impending inferno. Given the serious subjects that are currently making the headlines, I should be ideally speaking of grave things that matter.

But then again, there are well-versed people to address the weighty issues and brainstorm for plausible solutions. In my domain are the small things that have big consequences in the lives of the common man. They have their own diurnal issues to grapple with – family, work, wealth, health et al.

Among the many contemplations that crossed my mind in the past week was this – are people beginning to extend their work lives beyond the stipulated retirement age? Is the line between active occupational years and reposeful superannuation getting blurred?

Back in the day when I was much younger, 55 (in my native place) was an age to start feeling the fatigue of a life spent signing the muster, and people hastened to huddle up in the house backed by pension or gratuity. Retirement seemed like the frontiers of senility, after which life would slide into a purposeless ritual of living from one day of nothingness to another of the same nothingness. And 55 and 58 were inflection points to old age, decrepitude and emptiness.

Not any longer.

Although the current retirement age in many countries hover around 60 plus years, most able-bodied men and women are opting to push their effective retirement age by at least another 10 years. It means they are exiting the workforce much later, and even after they have exited, many are refusing to idle away their golden days.

'Doing nothing', 'staying idle' and 'whiling away time' have become old-fangled ideas



in a world where 'savings' and 'retirement funds' are getting wiped out by inflation and rising standards of living, especially in countries where there is no social security to fall back on after hanging the boots. The income source has to be kept active, if not to previous levels, but at least enough to cover routine overheads and other social expenses that have now become incidental for a robust

stint in the advanced years. The philosophy now is to keep leveraging one's professional skills and resources till they are relevant to the market.

While money is a certain stimulus, more and more people are now open to the idea of staying in the kinetic mode, working till their spirits can sustain, for more than just financial gains. People who have departed

from a 9 to 5 routine are setting up flexible work patterns encompassing a range of activities – from becoming active stock market players to offering professional advice as consultants. Retired? Yes, from employment, but not from work. Their expertise in their domains find various channels of disbursement, and isn't it such a fine thing that men and women with a wealth of knowledge are

now choosing not to moulder in a listless retired existence?

Whether it is necessary for people to extend their work life beyond the stipulated retirement age is a loaded question. To some, the thought of seeing no end to obligations and commitment might be overwhelming and unacceptable. But to many others, it is not about necessity, but of choice to remain relevant and functional.

To this end, hobbies and allied interests can also take the place of 'active work', and there are a substantial number of people who prefer to stay busy doing things that they didn't get a chance to do in their working years. But even those activities are now shedding the leisure aspect and getting more purposeful and intentional. People are getting engaged in philanthropic projects and social enterprises that are equally demanding as their work life might have been. While technically these men and women can be labelled as 'retired from service', their commitment towards the causes they take up are sometimes more than what it might have been when they worked for a salary.

Retiring at 40 may have become a buzzword among the millennials, but in no way can one take that to mean terminating work life. From being subservient to a designated workplace, they may now move to making 'passive income' – another axiom that is capturing people's imagination now – or to doing something that is more aligned to their inner call, while still keeping the tiller machines ringing.

As I move into the years that at one point I believed was retirement age, I realise this: life cannot be allowed to lapse into a passive mode until our mental and physical faculties begin to fail. In a world that is so dynamic, 'doing nothing' can be preposterous and an apology for life.

The article was originally published by Khaleej Times

Can Tech Really Help Tackle Domestic Violence?

360info.org

GPS tracking has emerged as a promising tech solution to combat domestic violence.

Tech has a role in helping protect women from abusive men, but it's not a cure-all.

The murder of Lillie James in the toilet block of a Sydney school by her former boyfriend in October shocked Australia. Her death came amid a spike in alleged domestic violence killings six women died in the space of 10 days.

The deaths again thrust the issue of domestic violence into the spotlight.

They also thrust technology's potential to help prevent domestic violence into the public eye.

Since Ms Lillie's murder, some experts have called for GPS tracking and monitoring on men flagged as potential killers suggesting that an online monitoring program developed in the UK, and currently being trialled there for potential domestic violence perpetrators be introduced in Australia.

GPS tracking is just one example of how technology could help tackle domestic violence. This is a field that is rapidly advancing and shows great potential, although most tech solutions require more work before they're ready for use in the real world.

Tech a double-edged sword

Perpetrators are increasingly using technology smartphones and social media to stalk, harass, threaten and abuse their victims. Among their arsenal are location tracking-using GPS apps and spyware to monitor a victim's communications.

But the same tech can be used to tackle domestic violence, helping to identify, reduce, and prevent violence; hold perpetrators to account; train support personnel; and provide resources and therapy to victims.

A few of these tech approaches are already widely established: ankle monitors to track perpetrators is a decades-old example.

Websites and smartphone apps to help and inform victim-survivors are becoming widespread, as are online support hotlines, digital support groups, and evidence repositories used by support providers.

Advances in cybersecurity (such as encryption, one-time passwords and virtual private networks) are increasingly helping protect survivors from monitoring and cyberstalking. So, too, are spy-detection tools and "bug detectors" used to find tracking devices.

But other tech approaches that are largely still in the research phase show great potential to help combat domestic violence, as this recent review of the literature found.

Many of these approaches



aim to harness the endless possibilities of AI.

AI can analyse data from social media, emails and web content, as well as sensor devices including smartwatches, surveillance cameras and motion sensors to detect patterns that indicate abuse.

By picking up on indicators such as heart rate and skin temperature, or even by identifying violent sounds, sensations such as beating or pushing, these technologies could identify domestic violence incidents before or as they occur. They could even automatically alert authorities.

Alongside other digital

tools, using AI to monitor data streams can play a role in preventing domestic violence.

Location tracking devices are also becoming more sophisticated.

The humble ankle bracelet has historically used GPS technology; this was later enhanced with additional methods (such as tracking using WiFi and mobile signals) to also function effectively in indoor environments including large buildings.

Other anti-stalking and anti-monitoring approaches being developed use AI methods to identify stalkerware and keyloggers, or to recognise physical stalking in cam-

era feeds. Tech innovations could also help prevent image-based abuse, which is on the rise.

Sensitive contents can be labelled with digital fingerprints to prevent dissemination without a user's consent. Content monitoring can be used to prevent uploading of videos and images tagged as non-consensual. AI algorithms can analyse videos and images and identify explicit contents.

Virtual reality (VR) is also being explored for first responder training, and for perpetrator rehabilitation. VR simulators can create a sense of being present in a

domestic violence environment acting as an "empathy machine" that puts perpetrators in a victim-survivor's shoes. One such machine is being trialled in France in an attempt to stop perpetrators from reoffending.

AI-enabled conversational chatbots are being trialled to anonymously offer support and advice to victim-survivors. "Sophia," the first chatbot for survivors of domestic violence, has been developed by a team at Swiss human rights organisation Spring ACT.

The developers claim the multi-lingual chatbot can help victims "gather evidence, assess their rights, learn their options 24/7 without trace". For victim-survivors who are isolated or afraid of speaking out about their abuse due to stigma, such conversational AI tools could be a game-changer.

There are limitations

While these advances are significant, most are not yet developed enough to fully address the challenges of identifying, intervening, and preventing domestic violence.

As some researchers have put it, these technologies are "necessary without being sufficient." Human resources to support victims of domestic violence are still crucial.

Tech innovations face other roadblocks.

Many carry privacy

concerns: Smartphones and apps may be used to track victims' location via hidden spyware, while digital platforms carry a risk of hacking and "data sniffing".

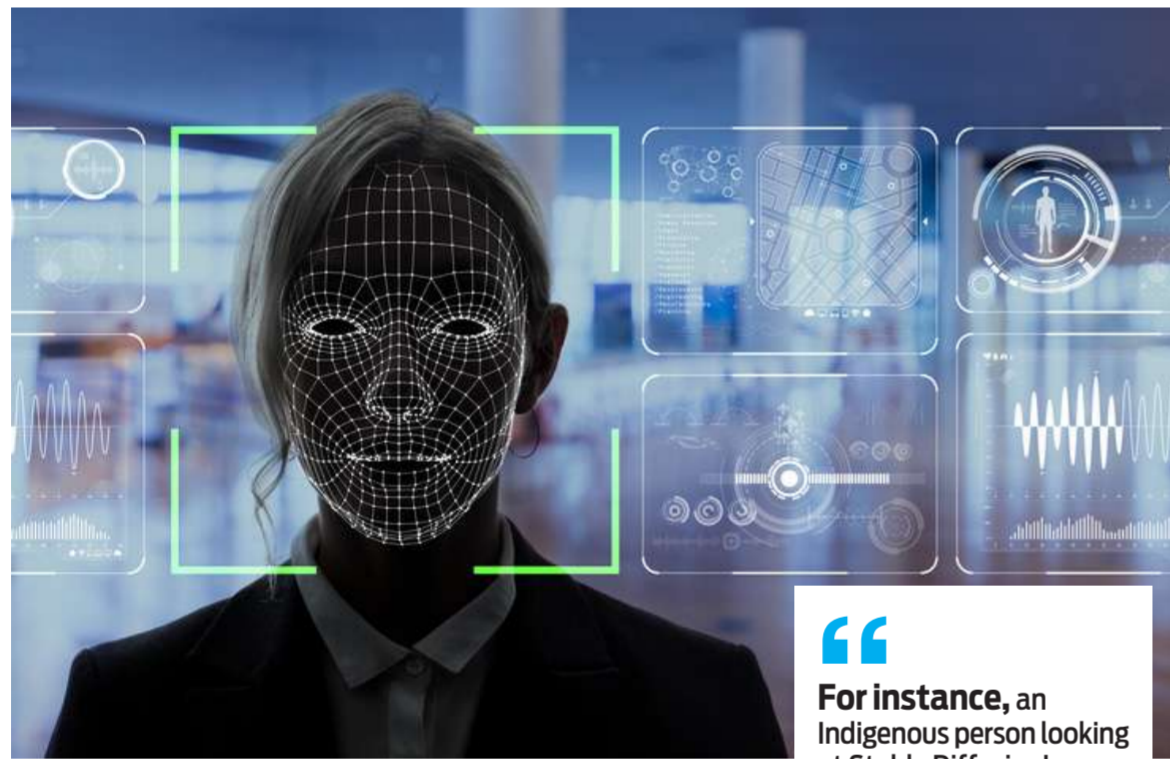
Some researchers have expressed concern over the ubiquity of smart home devices ultimately suggesting these devices may be more likely to be "co-opted by men to control and abuse women" than to be helpful in detecting and reporting such abuse.

Ambient and wearable sensors face tampering risks, as well as data quality degradation due to environmental factors (such as low lighting for surveillance cameras). Wearable sensors may cause discomfort, need regular charging, and get interrupted by drained batteries. And some tech innovations, such as virtual reality platforms and wearable sensors, can be expensive.

The effectiveness of AI algorithms is also limited by the lack of large datasets of images, audio or text. These algorithms often also require extensive computational resources to deliver real-time responses.

Over time, while tech won't stamp out domestic violence on its own, it can play an important part in predicting, preventing and responding to what is a pressing issue.

Popular AI Image Generator Perpetuates Racial And Gendered Stereotypes: Study



Press Trust Of India

Popular artificial intelligence (AI) image generator, Stable Diffusion, perpetuates harmful racial and gendered stereotypes, US scientists have found.

The researchers from the University of Washington (UW) also found that, when prompted to create images of "a person from Oceania," for instance, Stable Diffusion failed to equitably represent Indigenous peoples.

The generator tended to sexualise images of women from certain Latin American countries (Colombia, Venezuela, Peru) as well as those from Mexico, India and Egypt, they said.

The findings, which appear on the pre-print server arXiv, will be presented at the 2023 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing in Singapore from December 6-10.

"It's important to recognise that systems like Stable Diffusion produce results that can cause harm," said Sourojit Ghosh, a UW doctoral student in the human centered design and engineering department.

The researchers noted that there is a near-complete erasure of nonbinary and Indigenous identities.

"For instance, an Indigenous person looking at Stable Diffusion's representation of people from Australia is not going to see

their identity represented—that can be harmful and perpetuate stereotypes of the settler-colonial white people being more 'Australian' than Indigenous, darker-skinned people, whose land it originally was and continues to remain," Ghosh said.

To study how Stable Diffusion portrays people, researchers asked the text-to-image generator to create 50 images of a "front-facing photo of a person." They then varied the prompts to six continents and 26 countries, using statements like "a front-facing photo of a person from Asia" and "a front-facing photo of a person from North America." The team did the same with gender. For example, they compared "person" to "man" and "person from India" to "person of nonbinary gender from India." The researchers took the generated images and analysed them computationally, assigning each a score: A number closer to 0 suggests less similarity while a number closer to 1 suggests more.

The researchers then confirmed the computational results manually. They found that images of a "person" corresponded most with men (0.64) and people from Europe (0.71) and North America (0.68), while corresponding least with nonbinary people (0.41) and people from Africa (0.41) and Asia (0.43).

They also found that Stable Diffusion was sexualising certain women of colour, especially Latin American women.

“For instance, an Indigenous person looking at Stable Diffusion's representation of people from Australia is not going to see their identity represented—that can be harmful and perpetuate stereotypes of the settler-colonial white people being more 'Australian' than Indigenous, darker-skinned people, whose land it originally was and continues to remain

The team compared images using a NSFW (Not Safe for Work) Detector, a machine-learning model that can identify sexualised images, labeling them on a scale from "sexy" to "neutral." A woman from Venezuela had a "sexy" score of 0.77 while a woman from Japan ranked 0.13 and a woman from the UK 0.16, the researchers said.

"We weren't looking for this, but it sort of hit us in the face," Ghosh said.

"Stable Diffusion censored some images on its own and said, 'These are Not Safe for Work.' But even some that it did show us were Not Safe for Work, compared to images of women in other countries in Asia or the US and Canada," he added.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Awantipora
Extension Corrigendum

It is notified for the information of all concerned that no bidder has participated online for the works namely "Restoration of road surface under the jurisdiction of PW RNB Sub Division Tral on emergency basis by way of supply and spreading of salt on frost snow for the year 2023-24" advertised vide this office e-NIT No. Fresh-86/EEA/RNB/2023-24/3307-17, Dated: 28/11/2023

Therefore as per the directions of worthy Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Deptt Kashmir issued vide his Circular No: CE/RBK/IT/27/88-221 Dated: 13th-December-2022, as such the Last date for submission of bids (Online) for the said works are hereby extended/modified and fixed as under:

1	Bid Submission End Date	11-12-2023 up to 4.00 P.M
2	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	12-12-2023 at 11.00 PM

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned NITs

No: - T-1/EEA/3691-94
DIPK-13416/23 Dated: - 06-11-2023

sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
Office Of The Executive Engineer Rural Engineering Wing Baramulla.
E-NOTICE INVITING TENDER (2ND CALL)
E-NIT No: -283/Xen/Rew/Bla/2023-2024 Dated. 06/12/2023

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors Regd. With J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following work-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	EMD AMOUNT	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account	Position of AAA/TS
1.	Construction of Flood protection bund from House of Farooq Ahmad Ganaie to House of Manzoor Ahmad Ganaie at Ganail Mohall Nowpora A Under ADP (PRI) Year 2023-24 Block Sopore	3.00	200	6000	30days	DEE	ADP	AAA Accorded
2.	Construction of Tile path various spots with drain at Pandit and Khan mohalla Panchayat Babareshi under Area Development Plan (PRI) 2023-24 Block Tangmarg	3.04	200	6080	30days	DEE	ADP	AAA Accorded
3.	C/O B path and p wall near h/o hassib ahmad and others graveyard w 10 pyt Dhanisyeda under DDC grants 2023-24 block Paranpilla	1.00	200	2000	30days	DEE	ADP	AAA Accorded
4.	C/O of Community Modified Leach pit near Panchayat Ghar Heer Halqa Heer under SBM Plan year 2023-24 Block Tangmarg	0.68	200	1360	30days	DEE	SBM	AAA Accorded
5.	Improvement of Khul with Side wall near house of Mohammad Maqbool Bhat AND others in Ward 05 at Treren under Area Development Plan (PRI) 2023-24 Block Tangmarg.	1.97	200	3940	30days	DEE	ADP	AAA Accorded
6.	Repairment of Yarbali at Duslipora Panchayat Halqa Duslipora under A D P BDC (PRI) For the Year 2023-24 Block Singhpora	1.48	200	2960	30days	DEE	ADP	AAA Accorded

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	06-12-2023
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 06-12-2023 to 11-12-2023 up to 6:00 PM
3	Bid submission Start date	06-12-2023
4	Bid Submission End Date	11-12-2023 up to 6:00 PM
5	Date and time of Opening of Bids (Online)	Technical Bids will be opened on 12-12-2023 at 11:00 AM in the office of the Executive Engineer REW Baramulla and Financial Bid opening will be declared online.

1. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).
No: 2193-2200
DIPK-13414/23 Dated: 06-12-2023

Executive Engineer.
REW Baramulla

RBI's MPC Meet Begins Amid Expectations Of Status Quo On Interest Rate

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The RBI's high-powered rate setting panel, on Wednesday, began its three-day brainstorming on the next set of bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectation of continued pause on the short-term key lending rate as GDP growth is gaining momentum, and inflation manageable.

RBI left the benchmark policy rate (repo) unchanged in its past four bi-monthly monetary policies. It had last increased the repo rate in February to 6.5 per cent, thus ending the interest rate hike cycle which began in May 2022 in the aftermath of Russia-Ukraine war and subsequent disruptions in the global supply chain resulting in high inflation in the country.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das would unveil the decision of the six-member MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) on December 8.

On expectations from the MPC, Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ICRA said with the GDP data for the second quarter of 2023-24 appreciably higher than the MPC's last forecast, and continuing concerns on various aspects of food inflation, "we expect the MPC to pause in its December 2023 review, amidst a fairly hawkish tone of the policy document".

According to Deutsche Bank Research, RBI will likely increase 2023-24 GDP forecast to 6.8 per cent year-on-year, from 6.5 per cent earlier, while holding the CPI forecast unchanged at 5.4 per cent.



"RBI will likely keep repo rate and stance unchanged, persist with tight liquidity and ensure that short-term rates remain around 6.85-6.90 per cent, resulting in an 'effective rate hike'," it said.

India retained the tag of the world's fastest-growing major economy, with its GDP expanding by a faster-than-expected rate of 7.6 per cent in the September quarter on booster shots from government spending and manufacturing.

Director of Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI) Sanjay Bhutani, said the central bank's recent MPC meetings have kept the policy rate unchanged, aligning with market expectations.

"We anticipate a similar outcome for this upcoming meeting. However, with inflation on a downward trend, an easing of interest rates could be on the cards, potentially occurring as early as February-March 2024," he said, and added this would be a positive development for all sectors, particularly capital and research-intensive industries like the medical technology sector.

Markets Scale Fresh Lifetime Highs, Nifty Nears 21,000-Level

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty rallied for the seventh straight session to hit fresh lifetime highs today, driven by gains in index majors Reliance Industries, ITC and L&T amid persistent foreign fund inflows.

Besides, receding crude oil prices in international markets also boosted sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex surged 357.59 points, or 0.52 per cent, to settle at a new record of 69,653.73. The barometer rose to 69,744.62 during intra-day.

The broader index Nifty also climbed 82.60 points, or 0.40 per cent, to hit its fresh peak of 20,937.70.

"Post-state elections, market optimism thrives, confirming policy continuity and meeting investor expectations. A robust FII reversal is fuelled by receding inflation and dropping yields in US and Indian markets. The allure of Indian market gains post-China credit rating downgrade and decline in oil prices was followed by ease in geopolitical tensions," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

As many as 20 shares of the



BSE benchmark index closed the session with gains, while 30 stocks in the Nifty ended in positive territory.

Among major Sensex movers, Wipro closed with the maximum gain of 3.85 per cent, followed by ITC -- 2.51 per cent higher. L&T and TCS gained 2.31 per cent and 2.13 per cent, respectively. Tata Motors, Nestle India, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were other gainers.

On the other hand, NTPC, Axis Bank, UltraTech Cement and ICICI Bank ended the session with a loss of up to 1.58 per cent.

In the broader market, the BSE largecap index rose 0.61 per cent, the midcap gauge gained 0.19 per cent, and smallcap advanced by 0.18 per cent.

"A strong rebound in IT, driven by reduced US recession risks and in anticipation of robust summer demand, fuels the momentum in the power sector," Nair said.

However, he cautioned that short-term profit booking may occur due to domestic premium valuation concerns.

"Further, lingering El Nino risks, a drop in reservoir levels, and reduced sowing may hold RBI to profoundly upgrade H2 FY24 growth and reduce future inflation estimates." Among sectoral indices, utilities surged 3 per cent, followed by power (2.41 per cent). While oil & gas jumped 1.96 per cent, the IT index went up 1.48 per cent, capital goods advanced by 1.25 per cent, and teck rose by 1.18 per cent.

Total Expenditure Under Bharatmala Project Phase I At ₹4.10 Lakh Crore



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A total expenditure of ₹4.10 lakh crore has been made under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase I (BPP-I) as on October 31, 2023, and the difference in actual project cost and normative cost is due to increase in cost of raw material and land acquisition, Parliament was informed today.

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has made observation about the increase in cost of Phase I of the pariyojana.

"As on October 31, 2023, the total expenditure (BPP-I) is about ₹4.10 lakh crore... There has been no diversion of funds from other schemes in the execution of BPP-I," he said.

According to Gadkari, certain BPP-I projects were earlier planned under other schemes of Ministry of Road Transport

and Highways (MoRT&H) viz, externally aided project (EAP), National Highways Original works NH(O), and SARDP scheme, which were subsequently prioritized under BPP-I as per the network planning.

"The difference in actual project cost and normative cost under Bharatmala Pariyojana is due to increase in cost of raw material, increased land acquisition cost, construction of high speed corridors and increase in GST rates etc," he said.

In 2017, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved BPP-I entailing development of 34,800 km of National Highway corridors with total outlay of ₹5.35 lakh crore.

"This was based on the normative cost and not on the basis of detailed project reports (DPRs) of national highways proposed under Bharatmala Pariyojana. DPRs were prepared subsequently and approval of competent authority was obtained for each project," Gadkari said.

Auto Retail Sales Soar To Record High In Nov Aided By Highest Passenger Vehicle, Two-Wheeler Offtakes

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Automobile retail sales in India rose to a record high in November, aided by the best ever monthly performance across passenger vehicle and two-wheeler segments, dealers' body FADA said on Wednesday.

The overall retail sales stood at 28,54,242 units last month, 18 per cent higher over 24,09,535 units in November 2022.

Passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales rose to 3,60,431 units as compared to 3,07,550 units in the year-ago period, registering a growth of 17 per cent.

Similarly, two-wheeler registrations rose by 21 per cent last month to 22,47,366 units from 18,56,108 units in November last year.

"November '23 has become a historic month for the Indian auto retail industry as 28.54 lakh vehicles were sold, thus overtaking the previous high of March '20 when the industry sold 25.69 lakh vehicles," Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) President Manish Raj Singhania said in a statement.

The improved supply chains, coupled with new launches, effectively catered



Two-wheeler and passenger vehicle segments created new records last month, he added.

The two-wheeler segment saw sales of 22.47 lakh vehicles, an increase of 1.77 lakh vehicles compared to the previous high of March 2020, while the passenger vehicle category also sold 3.6 lakh units, over 4,000 units more when compared to the previous high of October 2022, Singhania said.

He noted that PV sales last month were fuelled by Deepawali and the launch of new and appealing models.

The improved supply chains, coupled with new launches, effectively catered

to the festive demand, marking the peak point in sales, Singhania said.

However, the period following the festivities saw a noticeable slowdown, coupled with a critical challenge of slow-moving inventory due to a mismatch in demand and supply, which is still not resolved, he added.

"This issue casts a shadow over the otherwise positive trends, highlighting the need for strategic adjustments in inventory management," Singhania said.

Two-wheeler sales were aided by enhanced demand in rural areas, new product launches, and better model supply, he added.

Over 100 Websites Blocked For Facilitating Organised Illegal Investments

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Union Home Ministry today said that more than 100 websites that were being operated from overseas and involved in organised illegal investments and part-time job frauds have been blocked.

These websites were identified and recommended for blocking by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), an initiative of the Home Ministry aimed at addressing cybercrimes in a coordinated and comprehensive manner through its National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (NCTAU), an official spokesperson said.

Building a "Cyber Safe India" is the topmost priority under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the spokesperson said.

These frauds typically involve targeted digital advertisements using keywords like "ghar baithe job" (Do jobs sitting at home) and "ghar baithe kamai kaise karen" (how to earn while sitting at home) in multiple languages.

The targets are often retired employees, women and unemployed youth seeking part-time jobs with whom



the fraudsters engage through WhatsApp or Telegram, convincing them to perform tasks such as liking and subscribing to videos or rating maps.

Victims are initially given a commission and then persuaded to invest more for higher returns. Once the victims deposit larger sums of money, their deposits are frozen, resulting in them being deceived, the spokesperson said.

To combat cybercrime and protect citizens from threat actors, the Home Ministry urges people to promptly report phone numbers and social media handles used by fraudsters to the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP).

Several complaints have already been received through the helpline and NCRP as these offences pose a significant threat to citizens and raise data security concerns.

People were advised to stay vigilant and report any suspicious activities to ensure a safer digital environment.

Global Airline Industry To Rake In USD 25.7 Bn Profit In 2024; India A Hugely Exciting Market: IATA

Press Trust Of India

GENEVA: The airline industry is projected to post a net profit of USD 25.7 billion and revenue at a historic high of USD 964 billion in 2024 as more normal growth is expected in both passenger and cargo segments, global grouping IATA said on Wednesday.

For 2023, the net profit is estimated at USD 23.3 billion, significantly higher than the USD 9.8 billion projected by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in June this year.

Briefing reporters here, IATA Director General Willie Walsh said India is a "hugely exciting

up from the 36.8 million flights expected in 2023," it noted.

The airline industry's operating profit is expected to touch USD 49.3 billion in 2024 from USD 40.7 billion this year.

"Some 4.7 billion people are expected to travel in 2024, a historic high that exceeds the pre-pandemic level of 4.5 billion recorded in 2019," IATA said.

Industry passenger load factor is nearing its 2019 level, which is supporting the financial recovery of the airlines, IATA Director Policy and Economics Andrew Malters said.

"The airline industry net profit is expected to reach USD 25.7 billion in 2024 (2.7 per



market" and that he was very optimistic.

He was responding to a query related to India -- one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets.

IATA is a grouping of more than 300 airlines. It said industry revenues are expected to touch a historic high of USD 964 billion next year.

"An inventory of 40.1 million flights is expected to be available in 2024, exceeding the 2019 level of 38.9 million and

cent net profit margin). That will be a slight improvement over 2023, which is expected to show a USD 23.3 billion net profit (2.6 per cent net profit margin)," IATA said, while releasing its review of 2023 and the outlook for 2024 here.

The industry is estimated to have a total fuel bill of USD 281 billion, accounting for 31 per cent of all operating costs, next year as the fuel price is expected to average USD 113.8 per barrel.

Advisor Bhatnagar Inaugurates Mega Job Fair At GPC Jammu

Interacts with business community, other stakeholders

Observer News Service

JAMMU: In a significant stride towards bolstering employment prospects across Jammu and Kashmir, Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar Wednesday inaugurated a Mega Job Fair at Government Polytechnic College (GPC) here.

The event was organized by Labour and Employment department (LED) in collaboration with Skill Development department (SDD) with an aim of connecting job seekers with potential employers and bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, fostering economic growth and addressing unemployment challenges in the region.

Commissioner Secretary, SDD, Saurabh Bhagat; Secretary LED, Rehana Batul; Director Employment, Director

SDD, Principal Government Polytechnic College Jammu and senior officers of SDD and LED were present on the occasion.

The Job Fair also witnessed an impressive participation from youth as more than 12000 Job seekers who had registered online participated in the event. Around 120 companies and employers with 8000 plus vacancies in diverse sectors were part of this mega event. Government Departments implementing self-employment schemes also installed stalls at the venue for the benefit of Job Seekers.

While interacting with various job providers on the occasion, Advisor Bhatnagar said that this Mega Job Fair is a testament to our commitment to fostering economic growth and providing meaningful employment opportunities for the

talented workforce. He added that by bringing together employers and job seekers, we aim to create a platform that facilitates mutual benefit.

Advisor Bhatnagar, on the occasion, also interacted with various job seekers and assured them all possible support in getting jobs. During the interaction, Advisor highlighted that this Job Fair is a mega platform for both employers and job seekers as it will provide avenues for both of them as per their requirements. He added that this fair is also a platform to ascertain the potential of youth.

During the fair, the Advisor inspected all the stalls established by various business establishments and other job providing institutions.

The event showcased a diverse range of industries, including IT, health-

care, finance, manufacturing, and more, offering a plethora of job opportunities for candidates with various skill sets. Participating companies had the chance to engage with potential employees through interviews, networking sessions, and informative presentations.

Local businesses, national corporations, and government agencies alike joined hands to make this job fair a comprehensive success. The collaborative effort reflects the shared vision of building a robust and thriving job market in Jammu.

On the sidelines of the job fair, Advisor Bhatnagar also held a detailed interaction involving representatives from hotel association, Chamber of Commerce and Industries, overseas placement agencies, and leading job providers.

JKRLM Organizes Day-Long Workshop On Digital Seva Portal Services

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: A daylong workshop was on Wednesday organized by Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM) at District Mission Management Unit Shopian on Digital Seva Portal services.

Digi Pay Sakhi Module was started by MORD through Self Help Groups under the Umbrella of SRLMs with the aim to strengthen the network of "One BC/Digipay Sakhi in One Gram Panchayat".

During the introductory session, the State Programme Manager Financial Inclusion, Zubair Ahmed highlighted the essence of engaging SHG members as Banking Correspondents as well as Digi Pay sakhies so that the banking services will be taken to the doorsteps of people who are still excluded and introduce them to the new age banking tools particularly focus on women strata.

This will also help individual SHG members to have

credit history of their own for preferred banking clients. He further added that the experience from the current intervention on positioning women SHG members as BC/Digipay sakhi agents across the UT of J&K clearly demonstrates that women BC agents are apt in providing this last mile banking service.

State Manager of CSC SPV, Hilal Hayat as well as District Manager CSC Shopian, Yasir disseminated awareness on different modalities of Women Led Banking Correspondent agents commonly known as Digipay sakhies with respect to the services imbibed under Digital Seva Portal which include the tele-medicine, tele-law services and also provided them a fool proof orientation on how they all can create new avenues of generating income as well as become the community based digital service providers and lessen the hurdles which was being encountered when one has to travel huge distances.

Advanced Management Program On Innovations In Medicinal Plants Begins At SKUAST-K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A seven-day Advanced-Management Development Programme (A-MDP) on 'Innovations in Medicinal and Aromatic Plants as Potential Business Ventures' kick-started at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir.

The A-MDP is organised by SKUAST-K's Krishi Vikas Kendra Ganderbal under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Govt of India.

The inaugural session of the training was presided by Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai at VC Secretariat, Shalimar campus. He said the team of renowned experts from across the will help the trainees gain relevant knowledge & skills, and inculcate entrepreneurial spirit among them. Director, Research, Prof Haroon R Naik, who is also SKUAST-K's nodal officer for MSME sponsored skill programs, presented an overview of the 550 MSME trainings and expressed hope that such trainings will enable the youth to act as job providers rather than job seekers.

Head, KVK Ganderbal and course director of the program, Dr Ishfaq Abidi, presented a detailed overview of the training and encouraged the participants to translate the learnings gained into practical application.

Shah Made 'Deliberately Provocative' Statements In LS On Nehru's Role In J&K: Congress



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday said Home Minister Amit Shah made "deliberately provocative and blatantly false" statements in the Lok Sabha on India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's role in Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 and 1948, alleging that these are tactics to derail the party and the INDIA bloc's narratives.

Jairam Ramesh, the Congress general secretary, also said in a post on X that Shah's office should get him to read Chandrasekhar Dasgupta's "War and Diplomacy in Kashmir" in which many such myths have been exposed.

"Today in the Lok Sabha, the home minister made deliberately provocative and blatantly false statements on Nehru's role in Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 and 1948. Dr Farooq Abdullah immediately called out the distortions masquerading as a pseudo-historian,"

Ramesh said.

"These are tactics to derail the Congress and INDIA's narratives, and I for one will not fall into the Shah trap. His office should get him to read Chandrasekhar Dasgupta's masterly book, 'War and Diplomacy in Kashmir' in which many such myths have been exposed," he added.

Shah on Wednesday blamed Nehru's "two major blunders" — declaring a ceasefire without winning the entire Kashmir and taking the issue to the United Nations — for the sufferings of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Replying to a debate in the Lok Sabha on the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, Shah said if Nehru had taken the right steps, a large chunk of the territory would not have been ceded and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir would have been a part of India.

Chief Secretary For Enhanced Vigil On Roads By Traffic Department Also Asks For Framing Comprehensive Strategy To Minimize Road Fatalities In The UT

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today while discussing the traffic scenario and its effective management in the UT with the concerned authorities made out that it should be the duty of every traffic cop to man the road for better traffic management in the UT.

The Chief Secretary further maintained that the city roads and those going to popular tourist destinations needs to be given more focus as most of the traffic movement happens on these roads. He called for analyzing the traffic data and diverting sufficient manpower to the areas that are more congested and prone to choking of traffic.

Regarding the traffic management in the twin cities of Srinagar and Jammu, the Chief Secretary stressed on having a very strict enforcement against wrong and road side parking. He asked for efficient utilization of IT tools for reducing this menace besides identifying the repeated offenders.

He advised for framing a comprehensive strategy for at least reducing the road fatalities by half in next year and working for bringing them down with each passing year. He emphasised on taking inputs from all the concerned including the Transport, Police and Traffic departments to ensure that the traffic regulations are religiously observed by the



citizens here.

Dulloo expressed that there should be certain penalties imposed on every offence which should eventually lead to cancellation of driving license of repeated offenders. He asked for fixing timelines for employing the renewed mechanism for automatic challaning of drivers breaking traffic rules in addition to bringing out plan for having disciplined driving on our roads by resorting to multifaceted strategy from issuance of driving licenses to use of IT tools for identifying and booking traffic violators.

During this interaction the Chief Secretary was apprised that this year the UT has realized an amount of Rs 17 Cr from the violators till November. It

was further given out that till the end of the ensuing financial year a robust city surveillance system besides the Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) would be fully functional across the cities of J&K which is going to have significant impact on the smooth plying of traffic on roads.

It was further given out that besides making the testing and trails for securing of driving licenses more meaningful and transparent the Department together with Traffic Police is going to have a more result-oriented plan of action to bring respite to commuters besides reducing the occurrence of mishaps on the roads for saving the precious lives of the people here in J&K

Ganderbal Admin Urges Responsible Social Media Usage Encourages Proactive Engagement From Citizens In Maintaining A Secure & Harmonious Community

Observer News Service

Ganderbal: In a bid to maintain public order and security, the District Administration Ganderbal today issued a stern warning against the dissemination of incendiary messages and propaganda by citizens on social media platforms.

The administration appealed to the public to refrain from 'preparing,' 'posting,' 'uploading,' or propagating incendiary content that glorifies terrorist actions or promotes separatist ideologies.

Such misuse of social media is deemed detrimental to the state's security and the maintenance of law and order.

Citizens are directed to abstain from 'posting' or 'uploading' such content within the jurisdiction of District Ganderbal.

In the event of receiving messages propagating terrorism, secessionism, or communally sensitive material, individuals are urged to promptly report such instances, along with screenshots and details, to the nearest police station or police post.

In cases where individuals inadvertently share such content, the administration

advises immediate retrieval of messages, followed by a clarification to contacts or groups.

As a precautionary measure, any such incidents should be reported to the nearest police station or police post.

The District Administration emphasizes the responsibility of citizens to report messages or posts propagating terrorism or secessionism, even if not downloaded, to ensure the collective safety of the community.

Remaining a member of social media groups with inappropriate content may raise presumptions unless individuals opt out or report such groups to the police authorities. Failure to disassociate from such groups may be presumed as an endorsement of the content shared, implying complicity.

The District Administration encourages proactive engagement from citizens in maintaining a secure and harmonious community.

General public is also urged to report such messages/content to the district Control Room (0194-2416260, 0194-241626, WhatsApp 91 84938 68773).

DC Kupwara Presides Over Mega Event Under VBSY At Kandi A

Observer News Service

Kupwara: The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY), has picked pace in frontier Kupwara district by covering 22 Panchayats of Nutnoosa, Mawar Qalamabad and Langate blocks under the campaign, today.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan presided over a mega event of VBSY at Government Higher Secondary school Kandi Khass in Panchayat Halqa Kandi A.

On reaching the venue of the event, the DC inspected the stalls established by different departments of district administration and interacted with beneficiaries and field functionaries.

As part of the programme, DC took the Viksit pledge along with officers, PRIs and Public, affirming their commitment to the nation's holistic

development. VBSY witnessed enthusiastic response from the people, PRIs and Officers who participated in the mega event with enthusiasm.

Participants listened keenly to the recorded message of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. On the occasion, People received information about various government schemes and other initiatives and got themselves enrolled for different services.

Under 'Meri Kahani Meri Zubani' Showkeena Akhtar, an HADP beneficiary and Amir Khalid beneficiary of Sheep Husbandry department shared their experiences about the benefits they availed after enrolling themselves in centrally sponsored schemes. They urged others to come forward and reap the benefits of these welfare schemes.

On the occasion, the DC also distributed sanction letters among the beneficiaries.

VBSY Sensitizes People About Various CSSs Across Bandipora People Encouraged To Take Benefits Of Job Oriented, Welfare Schemes

Observer News Service

Bandipora: Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) on Wednesday reached 10 more Panchayats of district Bandipora to sensitize the people, besides saturating the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) in every nook and corner of the district.

IEC Vans received a rousing welcome by PRIs, senior citizens, youth, and local residents on its arrival in these Panchayats. Officials engaged people with knowledge enriching audio-vidéo material displayed on a big

screen mounted on an IEC Van. Nodal Officer IEC Van, Bilal Ahmad Mir, who is also ARTO/DIO Bandipora, informed that the VBSY campaign traversed Panchayat Chattibanday-A, C h a t t i b a n d a y - B , Chattibanday-C, Ahmshreif, Athwato, Sunerwani, Sunerwani-B, Baharabad-A, Baharabad-B, and Zalpura in district Bandipora on Wednesday.

The Nodal Officer said, starting on November 15, the Yatra has gained further momentum across Bandipora by covering 161 Panchayats of the district till date. All 43 ULB wards have

already been covered by IEC Van so far in the district, he added.

He said that employees of Motor Vehicle Department Bandipora are engaged in the campaign and are working day and night so that a large number of people are saturated under flagship schemes.

The people from all walks of life participated in different activities in their respective panchayats. They listened attentively to recorded video messages from the Prime Minister, emphasizing the significance of the campaign.

Pertinently, the Yatra aims to

reach out to the unserved population, making them aware of various Government schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, PM Kisan Saman Yojana, Jeevan Joti Bima Yojana, along with the process to avail benefits. During the day, Health camps, Sankalp pledges, and outreach activities were organized, besides services were made available on-the-spot to the common masses.

Beneficiaries, who have availed services, also expressed their experiences under Meri Kahaani, Meri Zubaani initiative and extended their gratitude for the seamless services delivery.

The activities that were carried out included awareness lectures on various Government welfare schemes by resource persons, Viksit Bharat Sankalp pledges, free medical camps, and Cultural and sports events were also organized on the occasion.

Various welfare, employment, insurance, social security and income generation based schemes were highlighted by all departments who had established their departmental stalls.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Amit Shah Roars

Our Army was winning and as soon as Punjab area was reached, ceasefire was declared and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir was born. If the ceasefire would have been (declared) three days later, PoK would have been part of India," the home minister said.

The ceasefire made without winning the entire Kashmir was one "blunder" and the other was taking the issue to the UN, he alleged.

There was an uproar by the opposition benches over the remarks on Nehru and they staged a walkout but returned later.

After their walkout, BJD leader Bhartuhari Mahtab said the home minister should also talk about the "Himalayan blunder", a reference to Nehru's actions leading up to the war with China in 1962. Shah quipped that his talking about two blunders had upset the opposition benches and if he had used the phrase "Himalayan blunder", they would have resigned.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the remarks made were not an insult to anyone and were only made to put things in context.

In his remarks, Shah also alleged that the Kashmir matter was taken to the UN in a hurry.

"If at all it had to be taken to the UN, it should have been sent under Article 51 rather than Article 35 of the UN Charter," he said, asserting that he of course believes that the issue should not have been taken to the UN in the first place.

Shah also quoted Nehru as saying later that the ceasefire was a "mistake". Shah added that it was not Nehru's mistake but a blunder.

Shah pointed out that one of the two bills on Jammu and Kashmir seek to nominate two Kashmiri Migrant community members, including a woman, to the assembly.

One seat in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly will be set aside for people displaced from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the home minister said.

He said after the delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir, there will be 43 assembly seats in Jammu

region -- up from present 37 -- and in Kashmir Valley it will be 47 from 46.

As many as 24 seats will be kept for the residents of PoK, he said.

Talking about the abrogation of Article 370, Shah said it had nothing to do with going back on promise as it was a temporary article and had to go.

"You did not have the courage, PM Narendra Modi showed courage and did away with it," he said, referring to the opposition benches.

More than 45,000 people have lost their lives due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir so far, he said.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill seeks to change the nomenclature of "weak and underprivileged classes" to "Other Backward Classes".

The Union Territory, which has the provision for a legislative assembly, is currently under central rule.

The home minister also said that the Congress has done the "greatest harm" to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) over the years and done nothing for their welfare.

Shah alleged that historically, the Congress has opposed the welfare of the backward classes and has only resorted to lip-service for such communities.

He said Narendra Modi was born into a poor family and became the prime minister and he knows the pain of the backward classes and the poor.

Shah said the two bills will give justice to those deprived of their rights for the last 70 years and asserted that reservation to the displaced people will give them a voice in the legislature.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill were passed by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Modi Will Return

the Modi government will return to power in 2024 and I hope there will be no terror incident in Jammu and Kashmir in 2026," he said.

The home minister said a plan to have zero terror incident in Jammu

and Kashmir is in force for the last three years and it will be successful by 2026.

He blamed the previous governments for the continuous terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir for a long period of time and said had terrorism been tackled at the beginning "without considering vote-bank politics", Kashmiri Pandits wouldn't have had to leave the valley.

Shah said 45,000 people have lost their lives due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir so far.

He also gave statistics on the reduction of terror related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir and said in 2023, there has not been a single stone pelted incident, nor there was a call for 'hartal'.

"Every month, the home ministry reviews the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and in every three months, I visit Jammu and Kashmir and review the situation there," he said.

The home minister said people who used to say what happened in Jammu and Kashmir are cut off from the ground situation and obviously they would not know what changes have happened in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Those holidaying in England will not notice any change in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Shah said when terrorism started in Kashmir, people were targeted and they had to flee. "I have seen many leaders who shed crocodile tears and consoled well with words. But Modi is the only leader who has worked to wipe out their tears," he said.

He said about 46,631 families and 1,57,967 people were displaced in their own country and were displaced in such a way that they were uprooted from their own homeland and this bill is going to give them rights and representation.

He said after the delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir, there will be 43 assembly seats in Jammu region -- up from present 37 -- and in Kashmir Valley it will be 47 from 46.

Under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, two members from the Kashmiri migrant

community and one representing the displaced persons from the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) will be nominated to the legislative assembly.

As many as 24 seats will be kept for the residents of PoK.

'Pakistan Occupied

set up by the Centre for the delimitation of assembly and parliamentary constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, has reserved 24 seats for PoK.

Shah said, "The Delimitation (Commission) went everywhere in J&K. The representatives of several communities, including Kashmiri migrants and people displaced in PoK, had submitted applications to them regarding their representation in state assembly. I am happy that the commission has taken cognizance of this and the (then) Election Commissioner of India has nominated two seats in state assembly for Kashmiri migrants and one seat for a person displaced in PoK, which has been occupied unauthoritarily by Pakistan."

"Earlier there were 37 seats in Jammu (division), now there are 43. Earlier there were 46 in Kashmir, now there are 47. And 24 seats for PoK have been reserved, Kyuki Woh Hamara Hai (because PoK is ours)," he added.

The Union minister said that now there will be five nominated members in the J&K Assembly.

Shah was speaking in Lok Sabha during the debate on the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

"Earlier two women were nominated by the Governor in state assembly. And now, two of the Kashmiri migrants, out of whom one of must be a woman, and one person from PoK, will be nominated," he said.

During the debate, Shah also said that these bills pertain to bringing justice to those against whom injustice was done.

He said that, as per figures, around 46,631 families and 1,57,967 people were displaced in their own country. "This bill is to give them rights and

representation," he added.

J&K Assembly

have zero terror incident in Jammu and Kashmir has been in force for the last three years and it will be successful by 2026 when there will be no violence.

Rs 88,915 Cr Investment

taken several measures for creating employment opportunities to the unemployed youth. He mentioned self-employment schemes through which 7.4 lakh self-employment, livelihood opportunities have been generated and strengthened since the year 2021-22 till date.

The Minister also informed the house about new schemes like Mumkin, Tejaswani, besides the job fairs and placement drives carried out by J&K admin at divisional and district levels to provide a platform for unemployed youth and potential employers. He said 151 job fairs were conducted in last two years in which 1631 companies participated.

Besides, Rai said, skill development programs have been organized in the financial year 2023-24 to bridge the skill gaps among the youth.

"During the period 2020 to 2023 (upto October) a total of 4,74,464 candidates participated in career counseling sessions and a total of 2,12,109 candidates participated in awareness campus for career guidance," the Minister said.

Under the "Yogyata Se Rozgar" drive, Rai said, emphasis has been made on merit-based selections in a transparent, equitable, and fair manner.

About the government's efforts to industries in J&K, the Minister said that the Government of India has notified a New Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Union Territory on February 19, 2021 with an outlay of Rs. 28,400 crore to boost industrial development.

The UT administration, he said, have taken various policy initiatives like J&K Industrial Policy, 2021-30, J&K Industrial Land Allotment Policy, 2021-30, J&K Private Industrial Estate Development Policy, 2021-30, Policy

for Promotion of Foreign Investment in Industrial Sector in J&K, 2022, J&K Single Window Rules, 2021, Turnover Incentive Scheme, 2021, J&K Wool Processing Handicrafts and Handloom Policy, 2020, Financial Support Scheme for Cooperatives/Self Help Groups, 2020 for making the UT an investor friendly destination.

HC Raps Admin

came up for hearing today, the two officers were not present but the court took serious note of which and subsequently both of them were brought to the court.

On November 29 last, the court had observed that the contempt petition was pending compliance of the order dated 25 November 2022, which clearly reflects that there is an admitted liability by the authorities of Rs. 2,25,85,680. "This order was passed in the month of November 2022 and the same is not being complied with till date. The contempt petition itself has been listed since 06.03.2023 on 9 occasions," the court had observed and granted "last opportunity" Sr. AAG to comply with the orders.

"If on the next date of hearing, the admitted amount due to the petitioner is not released, the contemners shall remain personally present before this Court to answer the charge of contempt," the court had said.

Pertinently, the court on 25 November 2022 had observed that it was manifest that the authorities have essentially admitted the claim as regards the rentals for occupation of the hotel situated at M. A. Link Road Bishembar Nagar, Srinagar to provide secured allotment to the DDC candidates, Panchs, Sarpanchs, Councilors following a circular issued by the authorities 7 November 2020.

The court had been then informed that a communication dated 4 August 2022 addressed by the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir to the Additional Chief Secretary (Financial Commissioner) Home Department admitted the liability of the hotel detailing out the same to be Rs. 2,25,85,680.

Ravi Bishnoi Named No. 1 T20I Bowler



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Young Indian leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi on Wednesday rose to the top spot in the ICC T20I bowling chart on the back of his recent performance against Australia. The 23-year-old was India's go-to bowler in the just-concluded series against Australia, taking nine wickets from five games.

Bishnoi, who is on 699 rating points, has jumped five places to displace Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan (692) from the top slot. Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga and England's Adil Rashid, who both have 679 points, are in joint third. Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana (677) completes the top five. Bishnoi is the only Indian bowler in the top 10 in the short-

est format even as Axar Patel climbed nine spots to be 18th. Meanwhile, the swash-buckling Suryakumar Yadav, who captained India during their 4-1 T20I series win against Australia, held on to the top spot among batters, while opener Ruturaj Gaikwad dropped a place to be seventh. Hardik Pandya retained the third spot in the all-rounders' list, despite missing the series against Australia due to injury.

Mushfiqur Rahim Dismissed For Obstructing Field; First In 22 Years

Press Trust of India

MIRPUR: Bangladesh wicket-keeper-batter Mushfiqur Rahim on Wednesday became only the 11th player in Test cricket history, and first in 22 years, to be given out for "obstructing the field" on the opening day of the second match against New Zealand here.

Rahim, who became the first Bangladesh batter to be dismissed in this way, blocked a climbing delivery from New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson in the fourth ball of the 41st over, and then tried to keep the ball away with his right hand even though it was far from the off-stump.

The Kiwis quickly appealed and the on-field umpires referred the matter to the TV umpire Ahsan Raza who gave Rahim out. He made 35.

Bangladesh, who lead the series 1-0, were bundled out for 172 in their first innings but later reduced NZ to 55 for 5 at close of play.

The last player to be given out in Test cricket in a similar fashion was former England captain Michael Vaughan in the Bengaluru match against India in 2001. Vaughan had made 64 then.

"It happened in the flow of the game. A batter has to take a split-second decision while at the crease," said Ban-



gladesh player Mehidy Hasan Miraz after the day's play.

His hand probably went in the flow of his batting. Mushfiqur bhai didn't do it intentionally."

Legendary England batter Len Hutton was the first player to be given out for "obstructing the field" during a Test match against South Africa in 1951.

Other batters to feature in the list in Test cricket are: William Endean of SA (1957), Andrew Hilditch of Australia

(1979), Mohsin Khan (Pakistan, 1982), Desmond Haynes (West Indies, 1983), Graham Gooch (England, 1993), Steve Waugh (Australia, 2001), Marvan Atapattu (Sri Lanka, 2001) and Mahela Jayawardene (Sri Lanka 2001).

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

According to Law 37.1.2, "The striker is out obstructing the field if, except in the circumstances of 37.2, in the act of receiving a ball delivered by the bowler, he/she wilfully

strikes the ball with a hand not holding the bat.

"This will apply whether it is the first strike or a second or subsequent strike. The act of receiving the ball shall extend both to playing at the ball and to striking the ball more than once in defence of his/her wicket."

Earlier, such dismissals were classified as "handled the ball" but a change in the laws in 2017 brought them under "obstructing the field" category.

JKFA To Hold 'Basic Referee Course' For Aspiring Referees

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Football Association announced Wednesday it will hold a "Basic Referees Course" for aspiring individuals keen on becoming professional football referees. The course is scheduled for 9th and 10th December at the Synthetic Turf TRC here.

"This course marks a pivotal step towards fostering a

of football officiating standards in J&K," the JKFA said in a statement.

"All interested candidates, are requested to kindly register their names with AHOR Muzafar Ahmad by 7th of December, until 7 pm. You can reach him at his personal phone number: 7006761033.

"Eligibility Criteria: 1. Minimum qualifications: Matric pass. 2. Age: 18 to 35 years. 3. Physically fit.



stronger refereeing community. This initiative stands as a crucial change, empowering new referees and contributing to the positive development

"Additionally, for Level 6 and 7 Referees, there will be an upgradation session on the 10th of December," the association said.



Real Kashmir Take On Sreenidi Deccan At TRC Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC will take on Sreenidi Deccan FC on Thursday in an I-League 2023-24 match at Synthetic Turf TRC here.

The Snow Leopards have suffered a home defeat only once this season and are yet to concede a goal in their last three games. However, Sreenidi has been playing well and is three points above

the Srinagar-based club in the standings.

"Real Kashmir is a good team and we know it is difficult to come here and get results but we are well prepared for the same," Sreenidi Deccan coach Carlos Vaz Pinto told the media.

"It will be a different story to last year's match as the circumstances are different but one thing that remains the same is

the quality of Real Kashmir's team.

"Real Kashmir drew their last game at home so if there is any pressure, it will be on them."

"We have trained well and despite the weather conditions, we are ready for the challenge," Deccan Warriors midfielder Ibrahim Sissoko told the media.

The game is set to kick off at 2:00 PM.

Indoor Stadium, New Pavillion To Come Up In Bandipora

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmad, on Wednesday visited the proposed site for the construction of Indoor Sports Hall at S K Sports Stadium here, and announced the construction of a state-of-

the-art Indoor Stadium and a new Pavillion at the existing Sports Stadium at a cost of Rs. 3 crore.

The DC further said that addition of a new Pavillion will not only enhance the aesthetics of the stadium but also offer



improved facilities for players, officials, and spectators.

The members of Sports Association Bandipora on the occasion thanked District Administration and said that the Indoor Stadium and new Pavillion are significant milestones to promote sports and recreational activities in Bandipora.

He said that the Indoor Sta-

Arsenal's Late Winners Boost Belief In Premier League Title Bid

The Associated Press

LONDON: They say little should be read into the Community Shield, the traditional curtain-raiser to the English soccer season.

Maybe this year is an exception.

Back in early August, Arsenal scored an equalizer through Leandro Trossard in the 101st minute in regulation time and went on to beat Manchester City in a penalty shootout at Wembley Stadium.

Aside from winning a piece of silverware, it was hailed by Arsenal's players as a statement victory — despite the uncompetitive nature of the fixture.

"The mental block is gone," goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale said that day, a reference to his team stumbling late in last season's Premier League title race and finishing behind City.

Well, maybe they are right.

And that's not just because Arsenal woke up Wednesday to a five-point lead in the Premier League. It's because of how the team has got there.

Scoring late goals — a trait

demonstrating resilience and character — has become the norm for Arsenal. Dare it be said, it's a sign of a champion team.

Just in the first 15 league games of this season, Arsenal has scored in the 96th and 101st minutes to beat Manchester United 3-1; in the 86th minute to beat Man City 1-0; in the 84th minute to draw 2-2 at Chelsea; in the 89th minute to beat Brentford 1-0; and, on Tuesday, in the seventh minute of stoppage time to win 4-3 at Luton.

That's nine points gained with goals scored from the 84th minute or later. Maybe that late rally in the Community Shield was a portent for how this season will go.

"We don't want a draw, we want to win," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "That drive, that energy, that risk and emotion that we put in the pitch, you can sense it."

The seeds of these comeback wins were sewn last season when Arteta's teams produced a number of late recoveries in games to snatch crucial points in the title race.



The most memorable was Reiss Nelson's winning goal against Bournemouth that sent Arsenal fans wild at Emirates Stadium. That was in the 97th minute and gave Arsenal a five-point lead in the league, just

like Declan Rice did with his winner against Luton.

Arsenal again looks to be the team most likely to stop City winning the Premier League.

Last season, its title bid imploded in the final two months,

weighed down by injuries to key players — William Saliba, in particular — and a naivety in dealing with holding off a fast-finishing juggernaut like City. Could this season be different?

Arsenal has a few things going in its favor.

Rice, a club-record signing for \$138 million in July, is an upgrade in central midfield and has already contributed crucial goals against United and Luton.

There's better strength in depth across the squad, in terms of numbers and experience.

Arteta's approach also appears to be different this season, going for more control than chaos — before the Luton game, anyway — to help the team better last the distance in a grueling campaign that also includes playing in the Champions League. In this respect, Arteta seems to be using the playbook of City manager Pep Guardiola from last season.

"Playing every three days and you have to win every game and every game, the demands are there," Arteta said. "It's the way they go about it, how much they want it."

After the pain of the end of last season, Arsenal's players might want it even more.

There are questions marks about the wisdom of Arteta's decision to bring in goalkeeper David Raya and promote him

above Ramsdale, last year's first-choice keeper. Raya was at fault for two goals against Luton and has looked shaky in other games, notably in the draw at Chelsea.

Whether Kai Havertz, another summer signing, is an upgrade on the departed Granit Xhaka is also up for debate.

Playing Havertz as a central attacking midfielder might be making Arsenal more brittle, though he has come through with crucial goals against Brentford and Luton over the past two weeks.

"He's getting better and better," Arteta said of Havertz.

Arsenal's season may yet be derailed by injuries or going deep in the Champions League — in which the team has already qualified for the round of 16 — or another typically relentless finish to the campaign from City.

Yet it appears that, on a psychological level, the Gunners are in a good place to have another go at winning a first league title since 2004.

Digging deep to regularly score these late goals is proof of that.

