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Country Will See 'Big Storm' In Politics: PM



Agencies

Prime Minister Odisha: Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that in the next six months after June 4, the country will see a "big storm" in politics with the "new disintegration" of the "family parties" as disappointment is brewing in their workers about the "leaders" who have "failed repeatedly."

Notably, on June 4, the results of the Lok Sabha polls will be announced.

The Prime Minister said that "disappointment" is at its peak among the party workers of all "family parties."

"In the 6 months after June 4, the country will catch a new pace of development. Apart from this, these 6 months are also going to bring a big storm in politics. Disappointment is at its peak among the workers of all the family parties. People of their own are questioning the family leaders who have failed repeatedly. Therefore, in the next 6 months, we will see a new disintegration in the family parties,"

PM Modi said while addressing a public rally at Kendrapara in Odisha on Wednesday.

PM Modi further batted for a "Majboot Sarkar" in the Centre as he highlighted the BJP's poll promises to the voters in Odisha.

"Odisha wants to get rid of those who are looting it. The state has decided to elect a 'double-engine' government this time. Not only Odisha, but the entire country has decided to form a 'Majboot Sarkar' for the third time," PM Modi said.

"Modi is trying to provide tap water to every house, here not everyone has got tap water. Odisha is voting to change this situation. Odisha is also voting to end the loot of BJD," he added.

The Prime Minister also took a dig at the Congress party saying that the previous governments led by Congress "saw nothing but big scams."

The country has seen decades of Congress rule as well as a decade of BJP rule. The decades under Congress rule saw nothing but big scams and the last ten years More on P6

THE COUNTRY WILL CATCH A NEW **PACE OF DEVELOPMENT.** In the 6 months after June 4, we will see a new disintegration in the family parties."

TWIN TRAGEDIES

5 Dead After Falling Into Wells In Budgam, Kupwara



KO Web Desk

Srinagar:Two people were killed and three others were hospitalised after they fell into a well in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, officials said.

Five people fell unconscious while cleaning a well in the Satboon area of Kupwara, the officials said. The victims were rescued and rushed to a hospital where the doctors declared two of them brought dead.

The doctors More on P6

SHORT-LIVED RELIEF FOR KASHMIR

Heatwave Set To Return From June 3: MeT

Agencies

Srinagar: The people across Kashmir heaved a sigh of relief on Wednesday as the maximum temperature plum-meted and settled around the normal temperature after the days of intense heat wave.

Gusty winds and light rainfall were witnessed in parts of Jammu and Kashmir after late afternoon on Wednesday, providing a respite from sweltering temperature. However, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar said that another spell of heatwave is imminent

An official from the MeT said a slight relief from the "heat wave" and "hot & dry weather" would be observed over most parts of Kashmir division for a few days ahead of the onset of another "heat wave" in J&K from 3-5 June.

Jammu

44.8 °C

Sizzles At

The weatherman also said that there would not be any respite in the hot weather and heat wave conditions during the next seven days over the plains of the Jammu division.

The temperatures across the valley plunged moderately last night compared to the previous night's mercury

ercury continued its upward trend

across the district, with Jammu city

recording the season's highest tem-

perature at 44.8 degrees Celsius,

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir, recorded a maximum temperature of 27.5 degree Celsius, which was just 1.4 degree Celsius above the normal. The station simmered at 32.6 degree Celsius yesterday. Qazigund, a More on P6

Forest Fire

Incidents On

No Change In School Timings: DSEK

irectorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) on Wednesday said the weather is pleasant and there is no plan of change in school timings in Kashmir valley. Speaking to reporters, **Director School Education** Kashmir Tasaduq Hussain said, "Weather is pleasant. It is 32 degree Celsius. We have to teach our children and make them weather-resistant." He said administration is aware of the weather conditions and if need arises the call will be

ncidents of forest fire in the areas in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri Forest Division have been on the rise this Rise In Rajouri summer season compared

China Bolsters Pak Defense In PoK

Press Trust Of India

Kupwara: Pakistan's key ally China has been actively bolstering the defence capabilities of the Pakistani army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir over the past three years which includes the construction of steelhead bunkers and the provision of Unmanned Aerial and Combat Aerial Vehicles, officials said on Wednesday.

Chinese assistance also extends to the installation of highly encrypted communication towers and the laying of underground fibre cables along the LoC.

Moreover, advanced radar systems of Chinese origin, such as the 'JY' and 'HGR' series, have been deployed to enhance medium and low altitude target detection capabilities, providing crucial intelligence support for army and air defence units, they said.

Additionally, the presence of the SH-15, a 155 mm truckmounted howitzer gun manufactured by a Chinese firm, has been noticed at various locations along the LoC.

This move is seen as part of

Hajj 2024: 19 Kashmiri Pilgrims 'Abandoned' In Makkah

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: A group of 19 Hajj pilgrims who departed from Srinagar on May 16 have alleged gross mismanagement and abandonment by authorities after they were reportedly left unattended in a Makkah hotel.

The pilgrims, belonging to Maktab No. 276 (agency managing the group) said that they were a part of a group of 322 pilgrims and their initial plan was to fly directly to Madinah from Srinagar. However, to their surprise, they were issued tickets to Jeddah and landed there before being transported to Makkah.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer. Shafiq Mir, one of the stranded pilgrims, said, "After a week in Makkah,



the pilgrims requested to be taken to Madinah as planned. However, the agency respon-

sible for managing their group allegedly denied the request, longed to the wrong Maktab." "The authorities informed

the pilgrims be-

us that this has happened due to an error that took place at the J&K State Hajj Committee responsible for the assignment of Maktabs," he added.

According to Shafig ever after repeated meetings with Indian Haj More on P6

Mehbooba Booked For 'Violating' Poll Code

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Election authorities in Kashmir have registered an FIR against former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti for allegedly violating the Model Code of Conduct, officials said on Wednesday.

The FIR has been registered against Mehbooba for violating Section 144 after she and her party workers held a protest sit-in in the Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district, the officials said.

The PDP president termed

the registration of the FIR against her as "amusing".

"Amusing to find an FIR filed against me for apparently flouting MCC. This is the price PDP has paid for speaking truth to power. Our protest was against GOI in cahoots with the local administration for detaining hundreds of PDP polling agents and workers in the hours lead-

ing up to voting," she said.
"Still not satisfied, the same administration went on to launch Cordon and Search Operations in traditional PDP stronghold areas to terrorise our voters More on P6

We'll Not Kneel Our Knees: Iltija

DP leader Iltija Mufti on Wednesday termed the registration of an FIR against ner motner and party president Mehbooba Mufti as an More on P6

JAMMU-SRINAGAR NATIONAL HIGHWAY

17 Points Identified For Urgent Repairs

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: At least 17 vulnerable points have been identified for urgent repairs along the strategic Jammu-Srinagar national highway to ensure smooth flow of traffic, with focus on the upcoming Amarnath Yatra, a senior official said on Wednesday.

A high-level team of officers on Tuesday inspected the 270-km national highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, to identify the bottlenecks hampering traffic movement amid the ongoing

four-laning project.

'The main purpose behind the visit was to inspect the vulnerable points (along the 56km stretch) between Nashri to Banihal, which needs urgent repairs ahead of the yatra," **Deputy Commissioner Ramban** Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary said.

The inspection team, which included the local police, deputv inspector general (DIG), traffic police and senior offi-cers of the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), also took stock of the traffic arrangements in Banihal town and intake capacity of 'yatri niwas' at Lamber. More on P6

DGP SUPPORTS SIA'S PROPOSAL

Terror, Narcotics Accused To Cover Ankle Monitor Cost

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police R R Swain on Wednesday visited the State Investigation Agency (SIA) here, conducting a comprehensive review of its operations and its GPS anklet tracker

technology.
The DGP also emphasised SIA's significant role in investigating terror cases and instilling a fear of law enforcement in terrorists and their associates, a spokesperson said.

During his surprise visit to the SIA headquarters here, the



DGP reviewed the agency's opthe stationed officials, they

the improvements made in



erations and interacted with

Superintendent of Police (SP) Deepika briefed him about nificant terror financing and narco-terrorism cases and introduction of the anklet monitoring programme pioneered by the CID wing.

The anklet monitoring technology, used as a stringent bail condition, remotely tracks the movement of offenders under UAPA, NDPS, and other serious criminal charges, making Jammu and Kashmir police the first in India to More on P6

Men In Khaki Assaulted in Kupwara

Police Files FIR Against Army, Army Denies Charges

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Police have registered an FIR against the personnel of Indian army after the latter allegedly broke into a police station in frontier Kupwara district late last night, wounding four cops. The army, however, has denied the charges.

The incident, sources said, took place day after a police team investigating the case against a local Territorial Army personnel raided his residence in Batpora-Kupwara in north Kashmir.

The move allegedly incensed the local army unit, which then barged into the police station, before roughing-up the cops ruthlessly.



Sources said that four policemen, including two Special Police Officers (SPOs) and two constables, were injured in the incident and were removed to Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura for treatment.

The injured cops have been identified as constables Zahoor Ahmad and Saleem Mushtaq, and Special More on P6

9 Kashmir Wetlands Fail To Meet Water Quality Standards **Auqib Javeed**

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has admitted that the water quality in nine wetlands across Kashmir fails to meet the Class B standards of Designated Best Use (DBU).

Class B of Designated Best Use refers to outdoor bathing, fishing, a healthy aquatic habitat, industrial supply, and agricultural use.

The Central Pollution Control Board has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT), after the court took cognizance of a report published in a local magazine.

The government informed the NGT that the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Potential of Hydrogen (pH) level in Dal lake and nine wetlands in Kashmir has increased.



The J&K Pollution Control Committee's analysis confirmed these findings for monitored lakes and wetlands in April 2024. The report also cited issues with solid waste management and illegal dumping

affecting several districts. The report had highlighted the issue of deteriorating con-

dition of wetlands in Kashmir and disclosed that unchecked deposition of millions of tons of sediments annually has led to shallowing of wetlands, elevated temperatures, increased Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Potential of Hydrogen (pH) levels.

The NGT had sought a report from the Central Pollution Control Board , Jammu & Kashmir Pollution Control Committee and other stakeholders.

The J&K Pollution Control Committee submitted analytical results of 11 monitored lakes/wetlands in Kashmir vizWular Lake, Anchar Lake, Dal Lake, Hokersar Wetland, Manasbal Lake, Shalbugh Wetland, Hygam Wetland, Freshkoori Wetland, Kranchoo Wetland, Chatlam Wetland &

Manibugh Wetland. The analytical reports for the parameters ph, DO of and BOD reveal that More on P6

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm) No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir



'Early Exposure To Air Pollution Linked With Poor Mental Health As Adult'

Press Trust Of India

Children exposed to air pollution could be at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems, including depression and psychosis, as youths, a new research has found. The study examined the long-term effects of children being exposed to air and noise pollution while in mother's womb, early childhood and teenage.

The effects on three common mental health problems were analysed -- anxiety, depression and psychosis, a mental state in which an individual loses touch with reality and can experience hallucinations. Researchers, led by those at

the University of Bristol, UK, found that for every 0.72 micrograms per cubic metre increase in PM2.5 pollutants in the air during pregnancy, the chances of experiencing psychosis increased by 11 per cent, while those of experiencing depression increased by 10 per cent.

For the same exposure during childhood, the chances of psychosis



were found to increase by 9 per cent. The findings are published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open.

"This is a major concern, because air pollution is now such a common exposure, and rates of

mental health problems are increasing globally," the study said.

"Given that pollution is also a preventable exposure, interventions to reduce exposure, such as low emissions zones, could potentially improve mental health," said the University of Bristol. Exposure to pollution could

be rapidly reduced by making targeted interventions available for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women and children, Newbury said.

For the study, the researchers analysed the data of over 9,000 participants from the Children of the 90s birth cohort, founded in Bristol. The cohort includes more than 14,000 pregnant women, recruited in 1991 and 1992, and were subsequently followed-up, along with their children.

The researchers compared the participants' mental health reports when they were 13, 18 and 24 years old against outdoor air and noise pollution in Bristol at those points in time.

"An increase of 0.72 micrograms per cubic centimetre in PM2.5 levels during pregnancy and during childhood were associated with elevated odds for psychotic experiences. Pregnancy PM2.5 exposure was also

lead author Joanne Newbury from associated with depression," the authors wrote.

Further, being exposed to higher noise pollution in childhood and teenage was linked with raising the chances of anxiety by 19 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.

"Childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood are critical periods for the development of psychiatric disorders: worldwide, nearly two-thirds of those affected become unwell by the age of 25.

"Our findings add to a growing body of evidence - from different populations, locations, and using different study designs - suggesting a detrimental impact of air pollution (and potentially noise pollution) on mental health," said Newbury.

The findings, by themselves, do not prove cause-and-effect relationships. However, other recent studies have shown that areas with low emissions appear to positively impact mental health, the authors said.

Cost of Living Doesn't Influence Salaries; Pune **Among Safest Cities for Talent: KPMG Survey**

Press Trust Of India

ost of living in a particular city does not influence the compensation packages for talent, a survey of recruitment leaders undertaken by a consultancy firm revealed.

Around 95 per cent of human resources leaders and talent acquisition heads from 40 companies across 10 sectors said "cost-of-living differences across Indian



cities do not affect compensation decisions", as per the survey by KPMG in February and March.
Also Read | Goa Statehood Day 2024 Date: Know

History and Significance of Goa Foundation Day Ahead of 37th Anniversary of State's Formation.

Earlier, there used to be a city compensatory allowance to compensate for a higher cost of living in metros or tier-I cities, but HR heads say very few employers are offering it now, it said, adding the compensation range is more or less the same for the same roles across the country. Employees consider residential rent, property

indices, local purchasing power, and overall cost of essentials like goods, utilities, and transportation when evaluating the cost of living, it said.

Also Read | Rules Changing From June 1 in India: From New Driving License Rules to Aadhaar Card Update and LPG Cylinder Price Revision, Know List of Changes To Come Into Effect From Next Month. The survey found Pune among the cities to be

excelling on the safety aspect. "Chennai, Navi Mumbai and Pune excel in safety,

attracting those seeking secure environments," the

Apart from safety, key factors which influence the quality of living include connectivity, commute time, healthcare, and air quality, the survey said.

Navi Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Chennai lead the cities with competitive commercial leasing prices, it said. The survey report also said that companies tapping into talent pool in satellite cities like Gurugram, Navi Mumbai and Noida are highly satisfied, and added that the attrition rates are low in such cities.

No. DAHK-LSNOSWP/53/2022-2(OUTSIDE SECTT)I/400247/2024 Dated: 29.05.2024

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR Directorate Of Animal Husbandry Kashmir

GOWKADAL SRINAGAR-KASHMIR 190001 Email: litigation@jkanimalhusbandry.net

Subject:- Consideration order in terms of order dated: 03.10.2018 passed in SWP No. 1608/2018 and 276/2018 titled Firdous Ahmad Ganie Versus State of J&K and others.

> **ORDER NO. 488-DAHK OF 2024** DATED: 29.05.2024

Whereas, the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Kupwara (Chairman District Level Selection Committee) vide Notification No.01-CAHO-K of 2013 invited applications for filling up of Class-IV posts in District Kupwara from the eligible candidates with qualification minimum Matric and maximum as 10+2:

Whereas, subsequently CAHO Kupwara vide another notification No.2871-74 dated 26-09-2013 directed all the applicants to submit an affidavit affirming that they do not possess qualification beyond the prescribed maximum qualification of 10+2 in the prescribed

Whereas, among others, one Firdous Ahmad Ganie also applied for the post under Physically Handicapped Category and on the basis of merit acquired during the selection process he was selected under PHC/OM category and subsequently, a provisional select list was notified by CAHO Kupwara on 01-02-2018:

Whereas, after the issuance of provisional select list one of the candidates namely Ahtisham ul Haq challenged the selection of Firdous Ahmad Ganie, selected Under PHC Category and filed a writ petition bearing no. SWP No.-276/2018 before the Hon'ble High Court of Jammu & Kashmir claiming therein that the provisionally selected candidate Firdous Ahmad Ganie possessed the qualification of B.A, B.Ed and M.A Political Science which exceeded the maximum prescribed qualification of 10+2 and had submitted a false Affidavit in affirming that his academic qualification is not more than 10+2. Accordingly, the Hon'ble High Court in its decision dated 20-02-2018 issued directions that until representation of the petitioner is not considered and decision taken thereof respondent no. 4 (Firdous Ahmad Ganaie) shall not be finally selected;

Whereas, the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Kupwara subsequently vide letter No. 2843 dated: 03-03-2018 submitted the list of selected candidates and requested for issuance of formal appointment orders in favour of the selected candidates. However, so far as selection of Firdous Ahmad Ganaie, under PHC category was concerned, CAHO Kupwara (Chairman District Level Selection Committee) intimated that selection of PHC candidate had been kept on hold in view of Hon'ble court order dated 20.02.2018 in SWP No. 276/2018; Whereas, The Chairman District Level Selection Committee Kupwara while notifying the select list had also drawn the waiting list in all the categories except PHC category;

Whereas, after issuance of the Hon'ble Court Order dated 20-02- 2018, the Respondent No.4 in the petition namely Firdous Ahmad Ganie also filed SWP-1603/2018 before the Hon'ble Court seeking therein issuance of formal Orders in his favour. The Hon'ble Court after hearing both the parties clubbed both the petitions and finally disposed of both the petitions on 03-10-2018 with the direction that the SWP No. 276/2018 was allowed and the Selection list of Class-IV posts advertised vide Advertisement Notification No-01-CAHO-K of 2013 dated 11.05.2013 in so far as it relates to the selection of the Private Respondent namely Firdous Ahmad Ganie figuring in the physically handicapped/open category was quashed. The respondents were directed to accord consideration to the selection and appointment of the petitioner (Ahtisham-Ul-Haq) as against the Class-IV post (Attendant) advertised vide Notification No.01-CAHO-K of 2013 dated 11.05.2013 on the basis of the merit secured by him in the selection process.

Whereas, vide this office letter No. DAHK/Lit/14790 dated 09-12-2018 the case was referred to Administrative Department followed by letter No. 15442 dated 31-12-2018 and 16065 dated 10-01-2019 to accord consideration to the selection of your appointment in order to file the compliance report with the Hon'ble High Court. The case remained under correspondence since then and the Hon'ble Court time & again in the instant contempt petition directed the Department to implement the Court judgement dated 03-10-2018.

Whereas, in the meantime the aggrieved candidate i.e. Firdous Ahmad Ganie filed a LPA against the judgment dated 03-10-2018 under LPA NO:159/2019 seeking setting aside of the Judgement dated: 03-10-2018 and LPA (SWP) NO: 201/2018 Seeking Condonation of

Subsequently the Hon'ble Court vide its judgment dated:15-11-2021 dismissed both the appeals filed by the Firdous Ahmad Ganaie against the Judgment dated 03-10-2018 and held as under: "For the foregoing reasons, we do not find any merit in both these appeals which are, accordingly, dismissed. Interim direction(s), if any, subsisting as on date, shall stand vacated".

Whereas, vide letter No. DAHK/ Lit/ 2022/18479 dated 19-01-2022 directions for consideration in pursuance of the judgement dated 03.10.2018 were sought from the Administrative Department and vide letter bearing No. ASH-Lit/13/2022-03 dated 10-05-2023 instructions were issued to contest the case before the Hon'ble High Court of (in light of opinion dated 10-04-2019 read with the opinion dated 17-03-2022 of Department of Law and Justice). Subsequently, vide another communication hearing no. ASHF-Lit/13/2022-APD ated 26.07.2023 the department was directed to consider the case of the Applicant in light of the petitions filed before the Hon'ble High

Whereas, in view of the above statement of facts, at this stage, it is pertinent to mention that:

The post was advertised in the year 2013, selection of any candidate was notified only after the Select List was issued by the District Level Selection Committee. The candidate so selected was then appointed by way of a formal appointment order in favour of the candidate by the Director Animal Husbandry. The Select List in all cases except the PHC category was accompanied by a waiting list. The appointment of Firdous Ahmad Ganie was recommended by the Selection Committee in the PHC Category on 01.02.2018 as per the select list issued by Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Kupwara and there was no waiting list in the said category. In case where the appointment was not to go through, a fresh recommendation was to be sought from the concerned Selection Committee.

However, in supersession of all previous rules and orders, SRO - 404 dated 15.09.2018 was notified by the General Administration Department which categorically stated that selection of Class-IV posts borne on establishment of all the Government Departments shall be made solely on the basis of a written examination to be conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board with the condition that the selection against State, Divisional and District cadre posts shall be restricted to the candidates who are eligible for selection in these cadres as per the extant rules. The relevant excerpt of the same is reproduced hereunder:

"SRO-404.- In exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to section 124 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and in supersession of all rules/ orders pertaining to the procedure for recruitment of Class IV posts, the Governor hereby directs that the selection of Class-IV posts borne on establishment of all the Government Departments shall be made solely on the basis of a written examination to be conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board with the condition that the selection against State, Divisional and District cadre posts shall be restricted to the candidates who are eligible for selection in these cadres as per the extant rules".

SRO 404 further stated that the procedure for selection for the posts where the selection process has already been initiated would continue to be governed by the rules/ orders in force on the date of issuance of the Notification. However, since the Selection Committee had already concluded the selection and notified appointment of Firdous Ahmad Ganie, the process of selection was now to be governed by the operation of SRO 404:

Whereas, finally Administrative Department vide letter No.ASHF-Lit/13/2022-03 Dated: 15.03.2024 communicated that the case of the petitioner was taken up with the GAD vide O.M.No. GAD-MTGORBIV/73/2022-09-GAD(107213) Dated: 06.03.20224 who has conveyed that:

appointment of Mr.Ahtisham-Ul-Haq for the post of Class-IV /MTS cannot be considered at this stage in light of advisory issued..." by this department vide Circular No.27-JK(GAD) of 2021 dated: 10.08.2021, having regard to the fact that the selection list has already lost its validity prior to 31.10.2019".

In view of the instructions received from the competent authority the case of the petitioner is found devoid of any merit and hence reiected.

DIPK-707/24 dated: 29-05-2024

Director. **Animal Husbandry Department**, Kashmi

OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (EO Muncipal council pattan/ Block Development Officer pattan) has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of QURAT UL AIN D/O AMANULLAH WAZA R/O FRASTHAR TILAGAM Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth, as 05/08/2021 and event has been shown to be occured at SDH PATTAN in this connection if anyone having any objection to the issuance of said registration may this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertaine

> **Executive Magistrate 1st Class PATTAN**

> > coapl3@ikpolice.gov. Fax: 0194-2303579

Ouartermaster JKAP 13th Battalion APC Humhama

AUCTION NOTICE

Attention of interested persons are invited that there will be an auction of Green Grass at Lake View Police Golf Course Environment training park Boulevard road Srinagar.

All the interested bidders are invited to participate in auction on 4th of June 2024 at 11:00 am

No.OM/AP 13th/28 DIPK-718/24 Dated. 29-05-2024

kri

Chairman **Auction Committee**

State Investigation Agency (SIA) U.T J&K, Jammu.

Phone No. 01923-266500

PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that, on 18-04-2024 The Hon'ble Court of Additional Session Judge (NIA) Poonch has ordered the sale of case property in case FIR No 90/2023 U/Sec 307/120-B/12I IPC 2/3 E and IMCO 7/25 arms Act 4/5 ESA 13/16/18 /23 UA (p) Act of Police Station Mandi (Poonch)/ SIA Jammu through public auction. The case property shall be put up for sale through public auction in the premises of Police Station Mandi, District Poonch on 31.05.2024 from 1000 hrs. to 1600 hrs.

Property for Sale on

"AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"

Items description for Auction Sale: -

1) Pouch-01 no. 2) Badam (pkt)-Ol no.3) Trouser -02 nos.4) Gloves pair -01 no.

5. Jacket -02 nos.6) Windcheater -01 no.7) Shawl -02 no.8) Inner set -01 no.

9. Mufflet-02 no.10) Apple -16 nos.11) Biscuit pkt. -13 nos.12) Namkeen pkt.-02 nos 13. Socks pair -05 nos.14) Tre food pkt. -01 no.15) Knee cap -01 no.16) Rucksack bag -02 nos.17) Walking stick -02 nos.18) Pull through with chindi-Olno.19) Battery— -16 nos.20. Syringe -01 nos.21) Watch -01 no.22) Wintogene balm --- 01 no.

23. Wire cutter -02 nos.24) Small knife -01 nos.25. Lighter -02 nos.26. Soap -01 no.

27. Bandage -06 nos.28) Dates pkt. - 02 nos.29) Doctor tap roll -01 no.30) Pen -Olno. 31. Water purifier tablet box-01 nos.32) Roti pkt -02 nos.33) Chutney bottle -01 no. 34, Empty bottle -02 nos.35) Medicine sachet -08 nos.36) Shoes lace set -01 no. Poncho -01 no.38) Bed rope -01 no.39) Needle -02 nos.40) Diary -02 nos 41. lip care -01 no.42. Salt bottle -01

All those interested in said auction may attend personally are through their duly authorized representatives on the above-mentioned

Terms and conditions of the auction: -

The sale shall be by public auction.

All interested bidders are required to provide valid identification before participating in the auction. 3. All items will be sold on an "as is and where is"/ "as is what is" / "no complaint" basis.

4. The highest bidder shall be declared as successful purchaser on the same day. 5. The bidder declared successful, shall deposit the total bidding amount on the same day through cash Payment.

6. The successful bidder is responsible for the removal and transportation of the purchased items. 7. The process of auction will be conducted in the presence of Executive Magistrate First class.

8. The auction process will be conducted by CIO of the case along with SIA team members.

DYSP Raiz Ahmed (JKPS) CIO, SIA Jammu.

DIPK-721/24

dated: 29-05-2024

Lok Adalat On Traffic Challans, Power Bills On June 08 In Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In compliance with the plan of Action formulated by J&K Legal Services Authority, U.T. of J&K, Lok Adalat for amicable settlement of Pre and Post Litigation pending before the courts at District Court Complex Srinagar and also Addl. Spl. Mobile Magistrate (13th FC) Pantha Chowk Srinagar, is scheduled to be held on 08 May, 2024

The Lok Adalat is scheduled to be held under the Chairmanship of Chairman District Legal Services Authority (PDJ) Srinagar.

Meanwhile, all the concerned Judicial Officers have been requested to identify Traffic Challans and Electricity Bills to be taken up in the Lok Adalat and submit the list of the cases to DLSA Srinagar by or before 04-

The litigants who are interested to settle their dispute in the proposed Lok Adalat are directed to approach the concerned courts immediately so that their cases shall be listed for amicable settlement in the Lok Adalat.

GCE Srinagar Organizes 'Alumni Meet 2024'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Govt. College of Education (GCE) Srinagar today organized 'Alumni Meet 2024' today in the college auditorium in order to reconnect alumni with the alma mater and their old classmates and teachers.

All the alumni were received with open arms by the organizing committee and Alumni Association 'QANDEEL' headed by Dr. Shaheena Rasool.

The program witunprecedented nessed response from the alumni and dignitaries invited to grace the occasion. Their presence really made the program meaningful and colorful. Notable among them were Prof. Zamaan Azurda, Prof. (Dr) Khursheed Ah Khan, Dr Uheeda Shah, Prof. Munawara Sved Alumna, Prof. (Dr) Allaie, Prof. Gurmeet Kour.

Welcoming alumni of the College, Principal GEC, Prof. Seema Naz lauded the efforts of all the alumni and other invited dignitaries for gracing the occasion in spite of their busy schedule.

During the a beautiful cultural program was staged by the students of GCE. The program included a variety of cultural items like Group Song, Ladakhi Dance, Solo Song, Kashmiri Rouf, Duet, Gazal

singing etc.

Prof. Gurmeet Kaur also sung a gazal on the stage which enthralled and mesmerized the audiences

Prof. Zamaan Azurda, Prof. (Dr) Khursheed Ah Khan, Dr. Uheeda Shah shared their nostalgic memories of their college days and encouraged the students to study well for their better future.

Prof Zaman Azurda deliberated upon the "Qandeel" alumni meet and expressed his remarkable memories of the college. He also highlighted the importance of the event. He said that we have got fully illuminated by this institution as we give first priority to attend the functions of our own basic institution.

Prof Khusheed one of the alumni also expressed his nostalgic memories with the college, adding that it is really a hub of learning

Dr. Uheeda Shah, while narrating her memories narrated how this institution has sown seeds of success for her career advancement.

More than 120 alumni participated in this event. The Alumni Meet 2024 proved a grand success as it offered an opportunity for the alumni to network and to contribute to the development of the institution in various ways.

World Environment Day

DEERS Organizes Model Making Competition At GHSS Rainawari

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant move towards promoting Environmental Sustainability and as a prelude to World Environment Day 2024, the Department of Ecology Environment & Remote Sensing (DEE&RS) EIACP Hub Jammu & Kashmir today organized a Model Competition Making on the theme 'Waste to Wealth at Govt. Girls Hr. Sec. School (GHSS) Rainawari, Srinagar.

The event aimed to raise awareness about the effects of desertification.

Participants showcased their creativity and deep understanding of environmental issues through meticulously crafted models. Each model vividly depicted the adverse effects of desertification, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable practices to combat this growing problem.

The competition witnessed participation of 20

students, divided into 4 groups, who brought their innovative ideas to life with passion and precision.

Participants showcased their creativity and deep understanding of environmental issues through meticulously crafted models.

The top three winners of the competition will be felicitated on Environment Day, June 5th, recognizing their outstanding efforts and contributions to environmental

This initiative not only highlighted the importance of addressing desertification but also encouraged young minds to think critically about sustainable solutions. By engaging the youth in such meaningful activities, DEERS-EIACP Hub Jammu & Kashmir aims to foster a deeper understanding of ecological issues and inspire collective action towards a sustainable future.



J&K Witnesses Aquatic Boom As Educated Youth Embrace 'Pisciculture'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Mudasir Ahmad Khan (24) soon after completing his graduation in fisheries science has desired to set up his own business.

From trying out his hand in horticulture to the hospitality sector, nothing worked for him since he wanted to do something out of the box.

It was when he thought of utilizing his knowledge about fisheries sciences and took fish farming as his profession.

Two years of his reunion with the fisheries science fetched him enough revenue given his expansion of two units. "This was probably the profes-

sion I was made for. During these two years, I gained some experience from the seniors and the department and utilized it to grow my farm. I had a very good business last

This was probably

the profession I was made for. During these two years, I gained some experience from the seniors and the department and utilized it to grow my farm. I had a very good business last year

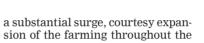
aspiring entrepreneurs in Baramulla who too imbibed his strategy to set up their fish farms.

"I have two farms- a carp and a trout farm. I sell them to the dealers in various markets of Baramulla district. Now, many youth have set up their fish farms to earn a good sum out of the business," he said.

has increased from 598 tons in 2019 to 1990 tons during the financial year 2022-23.

ment of fisheries told KNO that fish farming was getting popular among youth in Jammu and Kashmir. "We have witnessed that the majority of the educated youth have been taking fish farming as their profession. They are getting assistance from the department in the form of incentives and expertise to set up their successful ventures in their respective districts," he said.

than 2,300 in 2022-23



union territory. According to the data, the production of fish in Kashmir has increased by 5840 tons, generating 366.12 lakhs of revenue in the last four years. The production of trout

An official from the depart-

The official said the number of private fish units established in the



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PDD: 0194-2450213 FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES: 2479488,2452222,2452155

CAPD: 18001807011 SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081 Ambulance: Kashmer EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259 ANANTNAG: 01932-228243 BARAMULLA: 0194-102029 BIJBHERA: 01932-228243 PAMPORE: 01933-294132 PATTAN: 01954-293507

OAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS



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

PRAYERS

3:40

12:28

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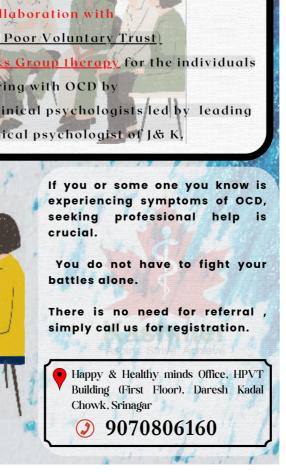
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This Day In History

- 1591- Spanish troops in Zutphen surrender to Dutch and English forces under Maurice of Nassau
- 1626- An explosion at the Wanggongchang Gunpowder Factory in Beijing destroys part of the city and kills 20,000 people
- 1631- The Treaty of Fontainebleau signed between Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria, and the Kingdom of France, establishing a secret alliance between them during the Thirty Years' War. 1635- The Peace of Prague signed between the
- Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II and the Electorate of Saxony (representing Protestant states of the Holy Roman Empire). It effectively ended the civil war aspect of the Thirty Years' War 1646 - Spain & Netherlands sign temporary cease fire
- 1783- Benjamin Tower of Philadelphia publishes 1st daily newspaper in US
- 1808- Napoleon Bonaparte annexes Tuscany and gives it seats in the French Senate
- 1814- Napoleonic Wars: War of the Sixth Coalition the Treaty of Paris (1814) is signed returning French borders to their 1792 extent.
- 1822- George Wilson and Joe LaRoche betray a planned slave revolt organized by Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina, confirming an earlier warning from Peter Prioleau. 35 Black people are later hanged. (date is approximate)
- 1842- John Francis attempts to assassinate Queen
- 1848- Second Battle at Gioto: Sardinia-Piemonte beats Austrians
- 1848- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between US and Mexico comes into force, giving California Nevada, Utah and most of Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona to the US in return for \$15 million
- 1862- Battle of Booneville MS captured Gen Beauregard evacuates Corinth
- 1864- Battle of Bethesda Church [Totopotomoy Creek], cavalry battle fought in Hanover County, Virginia, inconclusive result (US Civil War)
- 1876- Ottoman sultan Abd-ul-Aziz is deposed and succeeded by his nephew Murat V.
- 1896- First car accident occurs; Henry Wells hits a cyclist in NYC 1902- Spanish King Alfonso XII, who was elected
- as a constitutional monarch, suspends the Cortes, Spain's parliament
- 1904- The Japanese Army capture the City of Dairen after landing troops along the south coast of
- 1913- Treaty of London signed by the Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and the victorious Balkan League (Serbia, Greece, Kingdom of Bulgaria, and Montenegro) bringing an end to the First Balkan War
- 1914- The new and then largest Cunard ocean liner RMS Aquitania, 45,647 tons, sets sails on her maiden voyage from Liverpool, England to New York City.
- 1921- Salzburg, Austria, votes to join Germany 1933- Patent on invisible glass installation
- 1941- British Army enters Baghdad, chasing pro-German coup government 1943- French General Charles De Gaulle arrives in
- Algiers 1943- US troops reconquer Attu Aleutians 1946- United flight 521 crashes on takeoff at
- LaGuardia Airport (NY) 42 die 1949- East German constitution approved
- 1959 Iraq terminates milt assistance pact with US
- due to neutrality 1959 - World's 1st hovercraft (SR-N1) tested at Cowes, England
- 1966 US launches Surveyor 1 to Moon 1967 - Biafra declares independence from Nigeria
- 1967 King Hussein of Jordan visits Cairo 1971 - US Mariner 9 1st satellite to orbit Mars
- launched 1982 - Spain becomes 16th member of NATO
- 1990 135 die in a (6.4) earthquake in Peru
- 1990 Earthquake hit Peru, killing 135
- 1992 UN votes for sanctions against Serb-led Yugoslavia to halt fighting
- 1998 A magnitude 6.6 earthquake hits northern Afghanistan, killing up to 5,000.





KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Thursday | 30-05-2024

Sustainable **Tourism**

he rising temperature in the mainland is bringing more tourists to Kashmir this summer. Although the Valley itself is reeling under a heatwave, temperature is still moderate compared to other parts of the country. In Delhi, the mercury has touched 50 degrees, forcing people to head to relatively colder regions such as Kashmir. However, this surge in tourism is straining the local infrastructure, revealing an urgent need for comprehensive upgrades to ensure sustainable tourism growth and preserve the region's natural beauty.

The sheer volume of tourists is overwhelming existing facilities. Roads to popular destinations like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, and Sonamarg are congested with traffic, turning what should be a scenic journey into a stressful ordeal. Hotels and guesthouses, once sufficient for a modest number of visitors, are now fully booked months in advance. This has led to the proliferation of makeshift lodgings that often lack basic amenities, resulting in dissatisfied tourists.

To maintain the momentum of this tourism boom and ensure positive visitor experiences, there is an urgent need to invest in infrastructure. Expanding and upgrading accommodation options is critical. While houseboats and traditional guesthouses offer unique and charming stays, they alone cannot meet the rising demand. Investment in new hotels and the expansion of existing ones are necessary steps to accommodate more tourists comfortably. These establishments must meet high standards of hygiene and service to prevent the rise of substandard lodgings.

Moreover, the transportation infrastructure requires significant improvements. The roads leading to key tourist spots must be expanded and maintained to reduce traffic congestion and ensure safer travel. Investing in public transportation options, such as shuttle buses to major attractions, could also alleviate some of the pressure on the roadways.

Waste management is another pressing issue. The current systems are not designed to handle the increased volume of waste generated by the surge in tourists. The government and local authorities must implement robust waste management strategies to protect the environment. This includes setting up more waste disposal and recycling facilities, as well as launching awareness campaigns to educate tourists on sustainable practices.

Environmental conservation must remain a priority amid this tourism boom. The pristine beauty of Kashmir, which draws so many visitors, is at risk if sustainable practices are not adopted. Initiatives to preserve natural habitats and reduce the ecological footprint of tourism activities are essential. This can be achieved through policies that promote eco-friendly accommodations, responsible trekking, and conservation projects.



You can invest in gold through a Gold ETF?

Did You Know?

Irshad Mushtaq

Gold ETF, or Exchange-Traded Fund, is a type of investment fund that is traded on stock exchanges, just

Investing in a Gold ETF allows you to gain exposure to the price of gold without actually owning physical gold. This means that you can benefit from fluctuations in the price of gold without the hassle of storing and securing the physical metal.

One of the advantages of investing in a Gold ETF is the ability to do SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) in gold. This means that you can invest a fixed amount of money at regular intervals, rather than making a lump sum investment. This can help you take advantage of cost averaging and reduce the impact of market volatility on your investments.

Furthermore, investing in a Gold ETF through a mutual fund can provide complete hedge in gold. This means that your investment is protected against fluctuations in the price of gold, providing a level of stability and security to your portfolio.

Another benefit of investing in a Gold ETF is the transparency of prices. Since Gold ETFs are traded on stock exchanges, the prices are readily available and updated in real-time. This transparency can help you make informed investment decisions and track the performance of your investment easily.

In conclusion, investing in a Gold ETF can be a smart and efficient way to gain exposure to the price of gold. Whether you choose to do SIP in gold, invest through a mutual fund, or hedge your investments in gold, a Gold ETF can provide a convenient and transparent way to invest in this precious metal.

Learn from the insights of writer and investor, founder of MI Securities and business partner at Sharekhan. Reach out to him at Irshad@bp.sharekhan.com for valuable knowledge on financial matters

Illegal Riverbed Mining

The Harm Spreads to Fisheries Industry

Illegal riverbed mining is impacting our fisheries industry now. Over 2500 trout fish were killed due to it and the perpetrators haven't been taken to task till now



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

eerzada Rayees from Sail Beerwah in Central Kashmir's Budgam district has been in search of justice for more than a week now. Last year, Rayees set up a fish farm with the support of the Department of Fisheries, J&K. He was planning to sell his crop towards the end of May but before he could do so, his entire crop of trout fish died during the intervening night of May 23rd and 24th, as the fresh water supply to his farm was diverted by people involved in Illegal riverbed mining in Sukhnag river. The average weight of the fish was between 200 to 350 grams. Till date neither has any FIR been registered against the accused people nor has any senior officer from administration visited his farm. Rayees and his brothers had made an investment of Rs 9 lakhs on this farm but before they could reap its benefits, the entire fish population in his farm had perished.

The fish farm named Peerzada Brother's Trout Fish Farm is located on Beerwah Tosamaidan Road at Dooen Kuel Bagh, village Sail Tehsil Beerwah of District Budgam. Rayees had done his Masters Degree in Chemistry and when he couldn't get a Government job he started a fish farm in March 2023. His brothers were assisting him in this business and in a few weeks they were planning to sell the first crop on the eve of Bakra Eid.

Until May 23rd night, the water supply to the fish farm was normal but the same was cut down in the wee hours of May 24th. On Friday/ May 24th 2024, Rayees' brothers woke up around 4:30 am and found a large number of dead fish in the tanks. When the family inquired how the water supply was seized they came to know that people who were involved in illegal riverbed mining had cut the supply line to enable them to take out boulders and other riverbed material. A lot of muddy water had also entered the tanks initially and that was also responsible for the death of fish. For the last 6 days Rayees has been moving from Pillar to Post but there is no action at all. Even the Police Station Beerwah hasn't filed any FIR in this case till date, even as Rayees tried to lodge a complaint at the police station twice.

This author also highlighted this issue on social media and posted the pictures of dead fish on X/ formerly Twitter.

No action has been taken by the District Administration Budgam even as I had tagged the District Magistrate Budgam and officers of Geology and Mining Department.

On Wednesday afternoon, the aggrieved filed a written complaint before Sub Divisional Magistrate-SDM Beerwah who marked the representation to his subordinate officer i.e Tehsildar Beerwah. This author spoke to Teshildar Beerwah who reassured that action will be taken and that he would personally visit the farm in the next few days. The officers of Fisheries Department told Rayees that they can only forward his case to the higher ups and advised him to file a complaint in the online portal of the Lt Governor's grievance cell.

Illegal Riverbed Mining in Sukhnag

The construction company-NKC Project Pvt Ltd which was involved in illegal riverbed min-



ing in Shali Ganga at Panzan village in Chadoora around 2021 has now shifted its operation to Sukhnag river which is around 30 kms from Panzan. In September 2022, the National Green Tribunal-NGT banned mining in Shali Ganga after this author moved a formal application against NKC Projects Pvt Ltd in 2021. It took me almost 1 year to persuade the NGT that NKC company was using heavy machinery during mining which isn't allowed. My counsel produced the GPS photos which proved that heavy earthmovers, JCBs and L&T cranes were being used by the company and in fac the said company tried to lie before the tribunal that they were not using machines. In-fact they challenged the NGT order in Supreme Court of India, which vacated the stay but then they again had to undertake the riverbed mining manually using labourers. The company preferred to move to another location Sukhnag river, Sail Beerwah.

For more than a year, NKC Projects Pvt Ltd has been taking out boulders and other riverbed material - at least 100 dumpsters (big trucks) per day in Sail Village Beerwah in Budgam. No Environmental Clearance -EC has been obtained by this company from J&K State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority-SEIAA which is mandatory as per the guidelines of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change -MoEF.

In Budgam only two streams have been e-auctioned for riverbed mining, Shali Ganga and Doodh Ganga, and the said work has to be done manually as per the specific and standard guidelines of J&K State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority- JKSEIAA. The work of this authority in J&K has been assigned by MoEF Govt of India to the Department of Environment Ecology and Remote Sensing but this department is also not able to do justice as they are not taking action against the violators due to a dearth of staff and other logistical issues. In Shali Ganga and Doodh Ganga, the use of heavy machines has been curbed after NGT's intervention last year but in places like Sail, Beerwah as well as other districts, the loot and plunder is rampant. Moreover, the government officials are unmoved



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Minor Mineral Concession Rules 2016

In order to control illegal mining, the J&K Govt in 2016 came up with a new set of rules called the Jammu and Kashmir Minor Mineral Concession, Storage and Transportation of Minerals and Prevention of Illegal Mining Rules 2016. In an order dated March 19, 2019 the Industries and Commerce Department decided to allot mineral blocks through e-auctions. District-level e-auction committees were constituted, headed by District Magistrates. Senior officers and engineers from the PWD. Irrigation and Flood Control, Geology and Mining and Finance departments are members of these committees. The Department of Geology and Mining has also moved from open auctions to e-auctions. So far, more than 173 mineral blocks across Jammu and Kashmir have been notified for the e-auctioning but Sukhnag river doesn't figure in that list at all. Before 2016 the Geology and Mining Department would only take royalty from the people involved in the mining trade including truck drivers carrying the riverbed material (RBM) like sand, boulders, nallah bajri etc. Infact, the allotments made through e-auction also prohibit contractors from using heavy machinery. The Minor Mineral Concession Rules 2016 say that riverbed mining is to be done manually or maximum use of semi mechanised machines is allowed. The Earth Movers, JCBs and L&T cranes are highly mechanised machines and their use is completely illegal. This has been authenticated by several SC court orders, NGT orders, High Court judgements and Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines 2016. These guidelines were passed by none other than the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Heavy riverbed mining leads to the increase of velocity of the flowing water, thereby eventually eroding the riverbeds. The sand aquifer helps in recharging the water table and its progressive depletion in the river is accompanied by the lowering of the water table in the nearby areas. Sand depletion in the streambed or riverbeds causes rivers to deepen. This enlarges the river mouths and coastal inlets.

The impact of illegal riverbed mining is not only causing depletion in the water table, drying up of springs or defacing of the river landscape but this is impacting our fisheries industry as well. The livelihood of fishermen living around Rambiara in Shopian and Pulwama, Doodh Ganga in Budgam and Srinagar or Vaishav in Kulgam district has been impacted. Now the fish farms which get water supply from the nearby rivers and streams are also under threat. Irony is that the companies and contractors who are involved in illegal riverbed mining are not reprimanded or taken to task by Govt officers. It is only on the orders of NGT that authorities are acting against illegal riverbed mining and in majority of the areas the administration including police are acting as mute spectators. The case of Rayees is before us. The authorities have neither arrested anyone nor has an FIR been filed till date against the perpetrators of the crime that led to the death of 2500 fish. Is any one listening?

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is Founder & Chairman of J&K RTI Movement. He is also Anant Fellow for Climate Action

Building a Healthier Future

Prioritizing Quality in Healthcare Delivery

Dr. Abdul Rouf

n today's global healthcare landscape, the pursuit of quality has become paramount, crossing borders and transforming traditional approaches. From developed nations to emerging economies, governments and healthcare institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of quality assurance in healthcare delivery. Accreditation systems have emerged as a cornerstone in this quest for excellence, providing a structured framework for assessing and improving healthcare standards. India, with its vast and diverse healthcare ecosystem, stands at the forefront of this transformative journey towards quality-driven healthcare. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), in collaboration with the National Health Mission (NHM), has embarked on a comprehensive accreditation process to elevate the quality of healthcare services, particularly in public health facilities.

At the heart of this initiative lies the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS), a meticulously crafted framework designed to align with the specific requirements of public health facilities. Developed in 2013, NQAS draws inspiration from global best practices, setting rigorous standards across eight key Areas of Concern: Service Provision, Patient Rights, Inputs, Support Services, Clinical Care, Infection Control, Quality Management and Outcome. These standards, accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua), reflect a commitment to excellence and serve as a benchmark for healthcare providers nationwide.

The implementation of NQAS is spearheaded by the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), which



oversees capacity building initiatives and training programs aimed at empowering healthcare professionals. Through continuous learning and skill development, NHSRC fosters a culture of quality improvement within healthcare facilities, ensuring that standards are not just met but exceeded. Accreditation under NQAS serves as a testament to a facility's commitment to quality and patient safety. It not only enhances the credibility of healthcare providers but also instils confidence in patients and stakeholders alike. However, despite the strides made in improving healthcare standards, challenges persist, particularly in regions like Kash-

Efforts to bolster accreditation rates under NQAS

hold the promise of elevating healthcare standards in Kashmir. By prioritizing quality assurance, stakeholders reaffirm their commitment to providing standardized, evidence-based care that prioritizes patient safety and satisfaction. Moreover, enhancing quality standards aligns with broader objectives of strengthening the health system and advancing public health initiatives.

As Kashmir celebrates milestones such as the elimination of Tuberculosis (TB) in five districts, attention turns towards addressing the gap in accreditation under NQAS. While progress has been made in combating both communicable and non-communicable diseases and infant and maternal mortality the need to ensure consistent, safe, and effective healthcare services remains paramount.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has set a target to achieve NQAS certification for all public healthcare facilities by December 2026. In Kashmir, there are approximately 2000 public health facilities, but fewer than 10 have received NQAS accreditation. While some facilities are in the process of obtaining certification, a significant amount of work remains to meet the national

While the road ahead may pose challenges, the resolve to deliver quality healthcare remains unwavering. Notably NQAS accreditation can be achieved within existing budgets and human resourc-

es of public health facilities but resources require careful planning and alignment of objectives. Yet, as history has shown, with dedication and collective effort, Health Care workers in Kashmir have overcome challenges in the past, setting new benchmarks in healthcare delivery.

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

 $The \ author \ is \ National$ Assessor (NQAS) and is presently working at Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College Srinagar and can be reached at a.rouf.dr@gmail.com

Confounded by Politics

Faizan Bashir

tone-carved promises, emotional appeals, and compensatory talks are a common sight these days. From making up for the losses to providing employment, from eliminating trivial troubles to easing grave aggravations—the world of politics is in full swing. Bent on delivering enigmatic provisions once voted to power, politicians seem to have devoured a pill of divinity: each of their omissions and commissions crafted with fastidious care.

Where one gets hilariously perplexed is when they pit arguments against each other for wrongdoing. 'Political party A has been feeling drowsy thus far, and we will awaken them and make policies for the welfare of the poor citizens. Political party B has been capitalizing on the emotional inclinations of the destitute; they have been amassing money while siphoning off public wealth, so it's a word to make this piece of the planet a piece of heaven.'

Amidst such a political play, a citizen like me gets confused about whom to pin our hopes on and whom to discard as a sheer play of smart words and theatrics. When it comes to the only monopoly the poor have, it's trust. We have countless examples to showcase that people here have been deprived of such a monopoly. Over and again. Numerous promises shot forth, covetous power in the hands, and tad work done. I'm not apolitical, but have we done enough to deserve public votes every time?

How many bridges are awaiting construction, how much trash is lying on the roads, how compact are the drainage channels, how many unemployed youths are reeling under the tentacles of inflation, and how many more stand languishing within the four walls of the room, puffing away at coffin nails, and awaiting the construction of libraries? We have not been able to get to the basics of the more complex problems; how is it possible for us to fill our Kashmir with divine fragrance and butterflies?

Politics was meant to be a noble calling, a vehicle to peek into the deepest, darkest troubles of people and have a dialogue with them. We, the politicians of the present times, have upended the essence of it, reducing it to dramas, dances, and distress and ripping the solemn public trust apart at that.

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

How To Make Sure Your Leftovers Are Safe To Eat

¬ating leftovers can be a great way to save money, diversify your cooking repertoire and reduce food waste.

But eating leftover food can also be risky as these foods have already been exposed to bacteria in the environment. If you haven't stored and re-heated leftovers correctly, you could be putting yourself at risk of potentially life-threatening food poisoning.

That doesn't mean you should start avoiding leftovers, however. By following the the correct food safety practices, you can ensure you avoid harm when eating left-

How quickly should leftovers be refrigerated or frozen?

Bacteria exist everywhere in our world, including in kitchens – and the foods within them. The bacteria that cause food to spoil can grow rapidly with the right nutrients, moisture and temperatures. Some double in numbers in as little as 20 minutes.

It's important that any leftovers are put into the fridge or freezer as quickly as possible and within two hours maximum. This time advice is based on how quickly bacteria can grow in food at non-refrigerated temperatures, and means leftover food become less safe to eat the longer it is left at more than 5°C. You should also make sure that leftovers are covered. Clingfilm and airtight lids help prevent air from getting at the food. This is important, as most pathogens need oxygen to grow.

How long are refrigerated leftovers safe to eat?

Your fridge should be kept at a temperature of between 0 and 5°C, as this inhibits the growth of food poisoning bacteria on leftovers.

Leftovers must be eaten within two days, as any longer gives harmful bacteria more time to grow. Indeed, pathogens such

as Listeria, which can cause flunot, don't eat it. in refrigerated temperatures and are more likely to grow beyond two days – which is why this is

Leftover foods should be re-

heated to an internal temperature of at least 165°F (74°C). For sauces, stews, soups and gravy, they reach an internal tempera-

ture of 74°C before eating. Reheating food using a slow cooker is not a good idea because

wave, you should also make sure any harmful bacteria to start to meal may be a food poisoning

This then makes it harder for heat kill all the pathogens present the next time you warm up ready touched or partially eaten it (which introduces bacteria to the food). But if you didn't handle the

food much and refrigerated it within two hours of purchase, then the takeaway is safe to reheat – provided the next time it's eaten it's first heated to a piping hot temperature of at least 74°C. It also shouldn't be stored in the fridge for more than two days.

There are some takeaway foods that you should be careful about saving as leftovers. Cooked rice dishes are possibly the most risky to save. Uncooked rice may contain spores of Bacillus cereus, a bacterium that causes food poi-

While the parent bacterium is killed when rice is cooked, its spores can survive the temperature of boiling water. If rice is not refrigerated within two to three hours of cooking, the spores can grow into bacteria which in turn release the rice toxins which give rise to food poisoning symptoms such as diarrhoea, abdominal pain and vomiting. The longer contaminated cooked rice is left to stand at a non-refrigerated temperature, the more Bacillus cereus will be present and the more unsafe the dish becomes.

If cooked rice needs to be saved, it should be covered once cooked and cooled quickly (ideally within 2 hours), then stored and refrigerated for no more than 24 hours. Cooked rice leftovers should be piping hot when reheated, and should never be reheated more than once.

Leftovers can be safe to eat so long as you take the right precautions. But if you're ever in doubt, or don't think you'll eat them within two days, storing them in the freezer will give you more flexibility than storing them in the fridge.

By arrangements with The Conversation



the recommended time limit for storing your leftovers.

If you don't think you'll eat your leftovers within that timeframe, consider freezing them. Leftovers can be kept for up to three months if frozen at -18°C.

What is the safest way to re-heat your leftovers?

When you reheat leftovers, you must ensure the food is piping hot all the way through. If

it's best to bring them to a full boil, stirring for at least three minutes. These practices will kill most bacteria and inactivate any heat-sensitive bacterial toxins that are present.

If reheating leftovers in the oven, set the oven temperature to at least 325°F (163°C or gas mark 3) and bake long enough to completely heat the food through to at least 74°C. If reheating leftovers in the micro-

if foods stay at a temperature less than 165°F for several hours, this can permit bacterial growth - increasing your risk of food poisoning.

Can you reheat leftovers more than once?

You really should not reheat leftovers more than once. Each time a food warms and cools, it provides the right temperature and amount of time needed for

Can you reheat a takeaway? Whether you can safely re-

the leftovers. If you don't think

you'll eat all your leftovers with-

in two days, consider freezing

heat takeaway foods depends on how you stored it.

If it was stored warm in the back of your car or left at room temperature in your home for more than two hours, then the

Implement intensive measures to curb malpractices & facilitations of tourists: Div Com to officers

Over Rs 14 lac realized from erring transporters, service providers since January

SRINAGAR, MAY 29: In an intensive effort to further leverage the blooming Tourism Industry of Kashmir and eliminate malpractice of overcharging tourists, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today convened a meeting of Officers to address the issue through proactive enforcement and regulations.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners and SSPs of Srinagar, Ganderbal, Baramulla; Director Tourism; Tourism Enforcement; RTO Kashmir; ADC Anantnag; Traffic Srinagar; CEOs of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Development Sonmarg Authorities.

Addressing the meeting, Div Com directed officers and enforcement agencies to put more efforts in action to curb the overcharging of tourists, and enforce



the rates fixed by Tourism and Transport departments.

He directed concerned to keep strong vigil on the service providers particularly on Maxicab transporters, Houseboaters, Shikara wallas and Poniwallas to curb malpractice of overcharging.

Div Com also directed concerned Officers to display fixed rates on hoardings at tourist places and at shikara ghats.

He further directed for creation of dedicated Whatsapp number for registration of complaints round the clock.

On the occasion, the SSP Tourism Enforcement informed the meeting that an amount of Rs 143480 was realized till date during the current year from erring transporters on account of cheating and overcharging while FIR has been lodged in five cases. Besides, he informed that 170 complaints were received by the department of which 105 were disposed off.

Moreover, to give impetus to transport facility ferrying tourists to Shankar Achariya Temple and Pari Mahal, Div Com directed RTO Kashmir to start the shuttle service on both routes immediately to reduce the crowding at tourist places along boulevard road.

He also emphasized on initiating the prepaid counters and QR service for transporters and Poniwallas as a measure to curb exploitation of visitors

The meeting also deliberated on an issue of oil-pilferage in Dal Lake from motorized Shikaras and decided that action should be taken in accordance with the law. It was given that Shikaras are not allowed to use motors.

Div Com also instructed CCTV installation at all tourist resorts to ensure security of tourists and service providers.

Power Curtailment Schedule withdrawn with immediate effect

24x7 power supply in Smart metered areas: MD JPDCL

JAMMU: Managing Director JPDCL Vikas Kundal today issued a Public Notice in which the curtailment schedule has been withdrawn with immediate effect. The Public Notice issued by the MD JPDCL read that:

"In view of the improvement in power infrastructure by way of Capacity addition and repair of 2x50MVA, 132/66KV Power Transformer at Grid Station Samba and 10MVA, 33/11kV Power Transformer at Miran Sahib, the curtailment schedule for Summer 2024, issued by Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL vide no: CEJ/TS-II/906-20 dated: 27-05-2024,stands withdrawn. JPDCL will provide 24x7 power supply in smart metered areas and up to 20 Hours power supply in other areas. However, JPDCL will have to resort to distressed curtailments in order to

safeguard the critical power infrastructure as and when required.

The general public is requested to exercise prudence in electricity usage due to the soaring demand of electricity driven by the unprecedented rise in temperatures and the severe heat wave.

The public is further advised to pay their electricity dues in time through online/ offline mode.

The Managing Director JPDCL also visited the State Load Dispatch Corporation office and reviewed the availability of power for Jammu region and said that with the purchase of additional 200 MW of power, JPDCL shall be able to supply smooth and uninterrupted power to the smart metered areas and also provide relief to the rural areas by reducing the curtailment hours.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Country Will

under the Modi government were all about development," he said.

Raising concerns on the health of Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, PM Modi said that after coming to power in the state, the BIP would inquire into the reason behind the BJD chief's deteriorating health.

The Prime Minister's remarks came days after a video of Odisha Chief Minister went viral in which the CM's close aide and BJD leader VK Pandian grabbled Naveen Patnaik's trembling

hand during an election rally.
"Those who are the well-wishers of Naveen Patnaik, today, they are worried about his health conditions. Several people who have known Naveen Patnaik for decades told me that he is facing several difficulties. They also suspect that there could be a conspiracy behind the sudden degrading of his health," he said.

"BJP is very serious about this, the party has decided that once the BJP government is formed here, an investigation will be conducted on this issue. A special committee will be formed to investigate this and will bring the truth to the front," he added.

Odisha is seeing simultaneous polls to both Lok Sabha and the assembly. The assembly and Lok Sabha polls in the BJD-ruled state are being held across four phases, from May 13 to June 1.

Navin Patnaik, who has been in power as the chief minister since 2000, is seeking a record sixth term in simultaneous state elections. The counting of votes for all phases in the state and elsewhere in the country will be held on June 4.

In the last assembly elections in 2019, the BJD won the maximum number of seats, winning 112 out of the 146 seats. The BJP won 23 seats, while Congress had to be content with just 9.

While in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJD won 12 seats, the BJP finished a close second at 8, and the Congress bagged just a lone seat. (ANI)

Heatwave Set

gate way of Kashmir, was the hottest in Kashmir at 28.6 degree Celsius which was followed by Kokernag where the day temperature settled at 28.3 degree Celsius.

Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination, recorded a maximum temperature of 25.6 degree Celsius while Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded 27.9 degree Celsius. Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort, recorded a maximum temperature of 19.0 degree Celsius. Unlike Kashmir, Jammu areas continued to re-

cord the intense heat wave while Jammu recorded the hottest day of the season at 44.8 degree Celsius today. Katra station also recorded the hottest day of the season at 40.3 degree Celsius.

As per the data, shared by the Meteorological department. Banihal has recorded a maximum temperature of 30.8 degree Celsius while Batote and Bhaderwah recorded 31.9 degree Celsius and 29.4 degree Celsius respectively.

Meanwhile, Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy on May 30 and 31st while there is a possibility of light rain and thunder at isolated places as well.

On June 1 & 2, partly to generally cloudy weather with light rain and thunder at isolated places is expected, he said, adding that the weather conditions would improve from June 03 as the weather would remain generally dry on June 03 and 04.

However, he added that from June 5-June 7, generally cloudy with light rain and thunder is expected at scattered places.

"Slight relief from heat wave and Hot & dry weather conditions during 30-31May & 1-2nd June over most parts of Kashmir & few hilly areas of Jammu Division," it reads.

Another spell of heat wave is expected during 3-4 June over Kashmir division, it said, adding that avoid heat exposure during 12 noon to 3 PM & drink lot of fluid and water especially vulnerable people (Elderly people, infants and children)

Jammu Sizzles

nearly 5.7 notches above the average, the Meteorological Department said on

The region has been reeling under an extreme heatwave for the past week, with temperatures consistently rising above 40 degrees Celsius since May 16, the MeT department officials said.

The day temperature in Jammu city was nearly 5.7 degrees Celsius above the season's average and 5 degrees Celsius higher than Wednesday's 39.3 degrees Celsius, they said. Katra, the base camp for Mata Vaishno Devi

shrine, recorded 40 degrees Celsius, while Leh city clocked 21 degrees Celsius, the MeT department said.

Kathua, which houses the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir, recorded 46.1 degree Celsius, followed by Samba at 44.7 degrees Celsius, Udhampur at 42 degrees Celsius and Reasi 41.7 degrees Celsius, according to the department.

Srinagar's maximum daytime temperature was 32.6 degrees Celsius.

In view of the heatwave, the district administration pressed water tankers into service to sprinkle water jets on the roads for the second consecutive day. Police tankers have also joined this initiative.

Several organisations set up stalls providing water and lemon water to people in various areas of Jammu city.

Forest Fire Incidents

to last year, says an official. According to Balwant Singh, Assistant Director, Forest Protection Force, Rajouri, 8 incidents of forest fire have been reported to date from the area.

"This time, the number of forest fire incidents reported is more than those reported in the same period in the last year. Summer season is at its peak and hence we are seeing such forest fires. To date, 8 incidents have taken place," Balwant Singh told ANI. He said that the department has established fire control rooms at different locations in the area to ensure

"Our staff reach the site timely. We have made fire control rooms at different locations to ensure accessibility, we are alert and taking action actively for the safety of the forest area," he said. Singh said that when the preceding year sees fewer forest fires, the following year will have more forest fires due to the accumulation of pine needles, which are prone to fire. In Jammu and Kashmir, amid soaring temperatures, the Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority has predicted an 'extreme forest fire' risk in the next seven days across the Himalayan region. Akashvani Jammu Correspondent reports that JKDMA said that the people are requested to report the fire incident on 112 for prompt response and any help.

On May 23, the Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority predicted an 'extreme forest fire' risk in the next seven days across the Himalayan region. On Wednesday, the IMD forecast a high of 41 degrees in Jammu and a high of 19.7 degrees Celsius in Srinagar. The MeT department also said that the heat wave over the plains of Jammu and Kashmir was likely to continue till May 31. (ANI)

China Bolsters

strengthen China's ties with Pakistan and safeguard Chinese investments in Pakistanoccupied Kashmir, particularly related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Though the presence of senior PLA officials at forward posts, as was detected in 2014, was not found, some intercepts suggested that Chinese troops and engineers were setting up infrastructure along the LoC, including building underground bunkers, officials said.

Chinese experts were engaged in tunnel construction in the Leepa Valley of Pakistanoccupied Kashmir (PoK), signalling preparations for an all-weather road to connect with the Karakoram highway, they said.

This strategic move is linked to Beijing's ambitious 46-billion-dollar CPEC project, aiming to establish a direct route between Gwadar Port in Pakistan and Xinjiang province in China through the Karakoram highway, an area under the illegal occupation of China.

In 2007, a Chinese telecom company had taken over a Pakistani telecom company and formed China Mobile Pakistan (CMPak) -- a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of China Mobile Communications Corporation.

August 2022, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), while renewing the mobile licence of CMPak (Zong) for PoK, gave permission to expand Next Generation Mobile Services (NGMS) in the region.

While the Indian Army has maintained silence on the matter, intelligence agencies are reportedly being kept informed of the developments.

The continued presence of Chinese military personnel in the region has raised concerns, with India voicing objections to Chinese activities in Gilgit and Baltistan areas in the

As tensions persist, India remains vigilant and prepared to thwart any potential threats emanating from across the border, officials

Hajj 2024: 19 Kashmiri

Office officials in Makkah, the issue was only resolved on May 28th. The remaining group was transferred to the correct Maktab and taken to Madinah. However, the 19 pilgrims were inexplicably left behind in Makkah.

Shafiq further said that the pilgrims' pleas for assistance were ignored, with even the designated Khuddams (guides) abandoning them in Makkah while accompanying the rest of the group to Madinah. Another pilgrim, Syed Shafat, echoed these sentiments, highlighting their numerous attempts to rectify the situation, all in vain.

"We were not taken to Madina for none of our fault and we are currently passing through

a traumatic situation," Shafiq said. Another pilgrim, Syed Shafat, echoed these sentiments, highlighting their numerous attempts to rectify the situation, all in vain.

"We made all efforts and went from pillar to post to get along with the group to Madinah but no one came to help us," Shafat said.

"Promises were made by Hajj committee

members in Srinagar that excellent arrangements would be in place for all pilgrims this year. However, the reality on the ground is quite different. Five people are crammed into a small room with inadequate washrooms in Makkah. The accommodation has poor Wi-Fi connectivity and lacks basic facilities like washing machines," he added.

"We are caught in a pathetic situation and it clearly indicates gross mismanagement om the start, right from our departure from Srinagar. At the eleventh hour, we were informed that we would be going to Jeddah instead of Makkah, causing significant inconvenience and mental distress up to this point."

The pilgrims said that they went to the Indian Haj Office in Makkah to find 'solution' to their woes but received a "lazy response" with officials refusing to assist them.

"We have been left on the mercy of Allah." Efforts by Kashmir Observer to reach J&K Hajj Committee Chairperson Safina Baig for comment proved unsuccessful despite repeated attempts.

Mehbooba Booked

and prevent them from exercising their right to vote. Ulta chor kotwal ko daante (the pot calling the kettle black)," Mehbooba said in a post on X.

The former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday staged a protest outside a police station in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, while polling was underway in the Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary seat in the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections.

She was protesting against the alleged detention of her party workers and polling agents. The officials said the protest was a "gross violation" of the MCC.

"The huge group of PDP workers also blocked the main road and staged a protest at main stop Bijbehara (for) more than one hour which amounts (to) violations of the Section 144 CrPc which was imposed in the constituency," the FIR said.

Election authorities had imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC from 6 pm on May 23 till 6 pm on May 25 in the wake of the polling in the constituency and to uphold the sanctity of democratic principles.

The prohibitory order imposed a ban on unlawful assembly as per section 144 of the IPC and any procession or rally to prevent any law and order problem.

We'll Not Kneel

"intimidation", but said they will not take it lying down.

She said such tactics by the administration will not stop the party from speaking truth. Police filed an FIR against Mehbooba on May 25, the day she protested against the detention

of the PDP workers and election agents. "An FIR has been registered against Mufti for MCC (model code of conduct) violation. This is intimidation and we are not going to take it lying down," Iltija, People's Democratic Party (PDP) media adviser, told reporters here.

"We will not kneel our knees. We are here to speak truth," she added.

Referring to the sit-in protest by Mufti on Saturday when polling was going on in Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat of Jammu and Kashmir (J-K), Iltija said her mother did not want to create a scene. Mehbooba wanted to protest against the detention of her party workers and election agents, she said.

"When a former chief minister has to hit the streets, what does it say about democracy?" she questioned.

The PDP leader alleged that hours before the voting, police picked up the PDP activists and election agents and then labelled them as over ground workers (OGWs) of the militants.

Like the 1990s, police picked them up on the night before polling. Cordon and search operations were launched in only those places which were traditional bastions and strongholds of the PDP, Iltija said.

"Then they were labelled as OGWs. How dare you slander our boys?

"These boys play an important role in mobilising voters. They want to keep the flag of democracy high but you are labelling them as OGWs," she added.

Iltija said the Centre, in "cohorts" with the J&K administration, wanted to "create terror in the areas, which have been traditional bastions of the PDP, to decrease voting". Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home

Minister Amit Shah congratulated the people on the polling percentage but the truth is that they tried to keep the polling percentage low, she alleged. "You played mischief in Pulwama also," Iltija

said, adding the government wanted to "tacitly rig" the elections in South Kashmir because She asked the administration not to detain

the PDP workers. "You dare not touch our boys. We will not allow you to take out the funeral of democracy,"

she said. **5 Dead After**

at the Kupwara hospital said the men had fallen unconscious due to lack of oxygen, they

The deceased were identified as Bashir Ahmad and Fareed Ahmad, they said.

In a separate incident, three men, who fell into a well in Khansahib area of Budgam district, were pulled out dead after over six hours. officials said.

An official said that a man had accidentally fallen into the well following which a rescue operation was started during which two more persons slipped into it.

He said that after over six hours all three of them were pulled out dead.

The deceased have been identified as Amjid Ali, Momin Dar, Gulam Hassan Wani- all resi-

dents Gotipora Khansahib. 17 Points Identified

The 52-day annual pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas is scheduled to start on June 29 and conclude on August 19.

"At least 17 critical spots have been identified between Nashri and Banihal for urgent repairs, while it was also decided to macademize the Banihal market road. The work will be completed within a week followed by a dry run so that the pilgrims, tourists and commuters have a smooth journey," the deputy commissioner said.

A majority of the four-lane construction work that started in 2016 on the highway has been completed but there are still some tunnels, bypasses and flyovers, especially in the Ramban district, where the work is in progress.

The deputy commissioner said the security of the pilgrim convoys was also discussed, while it was also decided to enhance the capacity of the 'yatri niwas' at Lamber and activate all facilities for short-stay of pilgrims, tourists and commuters, in case of road closure.

The entire stretch in the Ramban and Banihal sector is prone to landslides, which leads to disruptions on the highway during monsoon season besides the movement of nomads in search of greener pastures for their livestock.

Terror, Narcotics

implement such a system, the spokesman

The DGP agreed to SIA officials' proposal that

those granted bail in connection with terrorism, secessionism, narcotics, land mafia, and gangsterism should bear the cost of the anklet, which is around Rs 50,000, instead of the public, he said.

The agency focuses on property attachments, freezing bank accounts, executing nonbailable warrants, and issuing lookout circulars to exert social and financial pressure on

Men In Khaki

Police Officers (SPOs) Imtiyaz Ahmad Malik and Rayees Ahmad Khan posted at Kupwara police station.

Police have registered an attempt to murder and case of abduction besides charging the accused army personnel under various other sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) including 182 and 332 and set investigation into motion.

"The number of army troops that stormed into the police station was impossible to count because it was dark outside. Some waited outside, but they were around fifteen. The angry army men weighed down the cops, injuring them critically," sources told Kashmir Observer.

They said the case is of a criminal nature that might have enraged them, when questioned why the raid on the home of a local TA man did not augur well with the army, leading them to break into the police station and attack cops

Refuting the allegations as baseless, the army in a statement said the minor altercation

between the two sides led to arguments. "An altercation between police and Army personnel and beating up the police personnel therein are misfounded and incorrect. Minor differences between the police personnel and a territorial army unit on an operational matter have been amicably resolved," the statement

9 Kashmir Wetlands

water bodies didn't qualify the Class B standards of Designated Best Use (DBU) water qual-

ity criteria for the month of April, 2024 The JKPCC in its report to NGT also submitted the status of monitoring done by Divisional Officer and factual report of waste dumping in

many districts. In Srinagar, the JKPCC said The dumping of un-segregated Solid Waste was seen at different unfenced collection centers which is afterwards

transported by SMC to landfill site at Achan. In Budgam, the report said Soild Waste dumps/carcases were seen deposited in the Hokersar Wetland which surely comes from the adjoining residential areas enroute the feeding area of Hokersar that finally find its drainage point in the wetland of Hokersar. Grit screen retention nets and barriers are provided but proper management of Municipal Solid Waste is lacking. No cleaning or removal of retained solid waste/ plastic waste has been witnessed since long.

In Ganderbal, the report said that the dumping of unsegregated and untreated Solid Waste at Kohistan Colony Safapora by the concerned ULB/Authority has been witnessed which is approximately one kilometer from the Manasbal lake. Besides, a few dumps of unattended solid wastes near Iharoka park on the Bank of the Manasbal lake at Rather Mohalla also seen.

"The scientific solid waste management is lacking in the area as reported by the field team," the report said.

In North Kashmir's Bandipora district, the report said, during inspection dumping of non segregated and untreated solid waste by Municipal Council Bandipora has been witnessed on the Bank of Wullar Lake at Nussu Zalwan Bandipora. The site at which crude dumping of solid waste that too without segregation and treatment is not even fenced and stray animals have easy access to the dumping site.

"Dumping site is at an approximate distance of 100 mts from habitation and at an approximate distance of 200 mts from the educational institute" and in Baramulla, during the inspection no solid waste dump and illegal activities were seen in the area of wetland because the water level of area is very high.

No Change

accordingly.

"When extraordinary weather conditions arise, the administration will take a call on change in school timings accordingly," Director School Education Kashmir said. (KNS)

Govt to Support IFS Efforts on Infertility Awareness, Research

SRINAGAR: In recognition of Dr Syed Sajjad's achievement as the first doctor from Jammu & Kashmir elected to the Governing Council of National Indian Fertility Society (IFS) as its Additional Joint Secretary, Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah, today felicitated the leading IVF expert.

The felicitation ceremony, organized by the Indian Fertility Society, witnessed participation of over 90 gynaecologists from various medical institutions of the valley including LD Hospital, SKIMS Trust Hospital, SKIMS MCH, JLNM Hospital and other district hospitals of Health Services Kashmir.

The ceremony also marked installation of a new IFS Kashmir Chapter team with Dr Samiya Mufti, a reputed gynae-cologist and Head of Unit at LD Hospital, assuming the role of Chapter Secretary.

The highlight of the evening was a captivating performance by a group of girls from the J&K Cultural Academy, adding a cultural flair to the proceedings.

In his address, IFS President, Professor Pankaj Talwar, who was the guest of honour at the



Health Secretary Reviews Department Functioning in Baramulla

KO NEWS SERVICE

BARAMULLA: Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, on wednesday convened a meeting to review the functioning of the Health department in the district.

Dr. Sved Abid emphasized the importance of efficient healthcare delivery and the need for continuous improvement in medical facilities. He reviewed the current operational status, challenges and achievements of various healthcare units working within the district.

The meeting also had discussion on implementation and compliance with the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC and PNDT)

strict adherence to the PC and PNDT Act to prevent its misuse and ensure ethical medical practices.

Dr. Abid Rasheed directed the officers to provide best possible healthcare facilities to the people of Baramulla. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that all residents have access to quality healthcare services, regardless of their socio-economic status.

The meeting provided a platform for Block Medical Officers to present their reports, discuss issues and propose solutions for further enhancing healthcare services. Key topics discussed included resource allocation,

training, patient care standards and effective implementation of the PC and PNDT Act.

The Secretary exhorted upon the concerned to ensure that the benefits of Ayushman Bharat should reach to all eligible beneficiaries in the district. He directed the BMOs to identify any remaining targets and ensure that they are covered within a month.

Dr. Abid Rasheed highlighted the necessity of maintaining high standards of healthcare and asked the officers to focus on areas requiring immediate attention. He assured them of the department's support in ading service delivery.

event, lauded Dr Syed Sajjad as the "backbone of the Indian Fertility Society", underscoring his vital contributions to the field.

Founder Secretary, IFS Kashmir, Dr Syed Sajjad in his vote of thanks was overwhelmed with the gracious presence and assurances of the Secretary Health and Medical Education in spite of his very busy schedule. He emphasized the strengthening of fertility care on grassroots level where the Indian Fertility Society will be on forefront with the health and medical education department of JK UT.

In a bid to address the pressing issue of Infertility in Kashmir, Dr Syed also assured and showed his readiness in starting weekly one day free IFS Infertility camps at LD Hospital Srinagar in addition to other district hospitals of Kashmir.

The Health Secretary pledged ongoing coordination and logisti-cal support for the IFS to sustain their academic activities and infertility awareness camps across J&K.

Furthermore, plans were unveiled for an International Conference on ART & Reproductive Medicine to be held in Srinagar, with international delegates from USA, Europe and Canada participating in the event.

Admin Prohibits Polythene Bags In Gurez



KO NEWS SERVICE

BANDIPORA: In order to eradicate the effects of polythene bags and to keep Gurez Valley shipshape and tidy, the Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate, Bandipora, Shakeel ul Rehman Rather on Tuesday imposed a complete ban on entry, sale and carrying of polythene bags in Sub Division Gurez.

The move is aimed to reduce the hazardous effects of polythene bags and other non-biodegradable wastes in the ecologically fragile Valley.

During recent field tours/ inspections by various officials from District Administration Bandipora, it was found that there is rampant use and littering of polythene at various tourist spots in Gurez Valley in view of huge influx of tourists/ local travelers which is posing grave threat to the local ecology and environment.

Now, therefore, in view of the

above and in the interest of conservation of ecology and environment of Gurez Valley and as part of eco-tourism and sustainable tourism measures, Deputy Commissioner/ District Magistrate, Bandipora in an official order instructed that there shall be complete prohibition on entry, sale and carrying of polythene bags in Sub Division Gurez.

The DC also directed Sub Divisional Magistrate, Gurez, to ensure strict compliance of these instructions. Rather also urged to take immediate steps to not allow polythene bags at all entry points enroute Gurez Valley on Bandipora-Gurez Road, and to also constitute market check-

ing teams in this regard. The DC also appealed to the public in general and tourists in particular to avoid usage of polythene bags and to cooperate in complete eradication of this menace so that organic set up of the ecologically fragile Valley can be preserved.

J&K Bank Signs MoU With RCJ Auto Forge Pvt. Ltd.



KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: In line with its proactive approach towards ecofriendly transportation solutions, Jammu & Kashmir Bank today entered into a tie-up with RCJ Auto Forge Pvt. Ltd. to provide the customers of both organizations an access to easy financing options for all variants and models of electric three-wheelers manufactured and marketed by the company.

Under this agreement, RCJ Auto Forge Pvt. Ltd. will extend preferential treatment to the Bank's customers across India by offering an upfront discount of Rs 5,000 on all models of L3 and L5

Deputy General Manager (Corporate Banking/MSME) Nishikant Sharma signed the agreement on behalf of J&K Bank, while Managing Director, Amit Jain put in his signatures for RCJ Auto Forge Pvt. Ltd. in presence of DGM (Consumer & Commercial Banking) Arshad Hussain Dar, AGM Suhail Ahmad Lone, Head (eV Sales RCJ) Amarbir Singh, Chairman Total Vehicleades (an RCJ Dealer) Dr. Mehboob and other senior officials from both the organizations during a signing ceremony

Driver Allegedly Kills

Wife in Tangdhar

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A tragic incident has

occurred in North Kashmir's

Kupwara district, where a driv-

er has allegedly killed his wife.

Ahmad, son of Ab Rasheed Mu-

ghal, a resident of Shartpalla

Tangdhar, has been accused of

An official said that Amjid

held here at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters.

Commenting on the occasion, DGM Nishikant Sharma emphasized the importance of customer convenience and environmental responsibility. "As a responsible financial institution, we are committed to providing products and services that cater to our customers' preferences while supporting sustainable initiatives. This MoU with RCJ Auto Forge Pvt. Ltd. underscores our dedication to making eco-friendly transportation accessible and affordable for our customers. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration that benefits both our customers and the environment," he said.

Speaking on the partne MD Amit Jain said, "We are extremely delighted and confident that our collaboration with J&K bank for providing retail financing solution will further benefit our customers. With its extensive branch presence pan India and strong presence in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, J&K Bank will help us expand our customer base. Both RCJ Auto Private Limited and J&K Bank are committed to deliver the best customer service by making the experience delightful."

killing his wife, Sobia Begum.

The official stated that the in-

cident took place at their resi-

dence in Shartpalla Tangdhar,

where Amjid Ahmad allegedly

The police have arrested the

accused, and further investiga-

tion into the matter is under-

strangulated his wife.

way. (KNS)

Intensify Measures To Curb Tourist Malpractices: Div Com To Officers

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: In an intensive effort to further leverage the blooming Tourism Industry of Kashmir and eliminate malpractice of overcharging tourists, the Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today convened a meeting of Officers to address the issue through proactive enforcement and regulations.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners and SSPs of Srinagar, Ganderbal, Baramulla; Director Tourism; SSP, Tourism Enforcement; RTO Kashmir; ADC Anantnag; SP Traffic Srinagar; CEOs of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonmarg Development Authorities.

Addressing the meeting, Div Com directed officers and enforcement agencies to put more efforts in action to curb the overcharging of tourists, and en- erring transporters on account force the rates fixed by Tourism and Transport departments.

of cheating and overcharging while FIR has been lodged in

He directed concerned to keep strong vigil on the service providers particularly on Maxicab transporters, Houseboaters,



Shikara wallas and Poniwallas to curb malpractice of overcharging.

Div Com also directed concerned Officers to display fixed rates on hoardings at tourist places and at shikara ghats. He further directed for cre-

ation of dedicated Whatsapp number for registration of complaints round the clock.

On the occasion, the SSP Tourism Enforcement informed the meeting that an amount of Rs 143480 was realized till date during the current year from five cases. Besides, he informed that 170 complaints were received by the department of which 105 were disposed off.

Moreover, to give impetus to transport facility ferrying tourists to Shankar Achariya Temple and Pari Mahal, Div Com directed RTO Kashmir to start the shuttle service on both routes immediately to reduce the crowding at tourist places along boulevard road.

He also emphasized on initiating the prepaid counters and OR service for transporters and Poniwallas as a measure to curb exploitation of visitors.

The meeting also deliberated on an issue of oil-pilferage in Dal Lake from motorized Shikaras and decided that a tion should be taken in accordance with the law. It was given that Shikaras are not al-

RTIM, Mech Alfa Organize **Picnic For Senior Citizens** In Budgam

BUDGAM: Jammu & Kashmir and Al Fallah Machinery group RTI Movement in association with Mech Alfa Kralpora Chadoora organized a picnic for senior citizens and other persons from economically weaker sections of society. Around 40 senior citizens and other couples from economi-

Kralpora Mr Shahbaz for sponsoring this trip " said Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat Chairman RTI Movement

It was a great experience to host this event as we always support such kinds of work. We have been watching the work of the RTI Movement group



mostly hailing from Chadoora and being a commercial ortrip to Yusmarg.

This programme was organized by the volunteers of RTI Movement in association with Mech Alfa Kralpora. "The aim of this trip was to make sure that senior citizens and other weaker sections of society are taken out for an outing as they hardly get a chance to visit such places due to obvious reasons. I

obligation to handhold economically weaker sections of society. Instead of giving paid advertisements to social media influencers we deemed it fit to sponsor the work of social organizations. This helps them to do good work and it gives us some commercial benefits also " said " Mubashir Bashir spokesman of Mech Alfa, Al Fallah Machinery Kralpora

IUST Announces Admission To B.Tech Robotics And Automation trial automation, and IoT. robust growth, with the mar-

KO NEWS SERVICE

AWANTIPORA: The Department of Mechanical Engineering, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) launches B.Tech. in Robotics and Automation.

Dr. Ovais Gulzar, Head of the Department, said that the course has been curated keeping in view the growing demand for professionals in the automation and Industry 4.0 domains. He said that the programme features a cuttingedge curriculum that combines theoretical and practical learning in areas like robotics, mechatronics, control systems, CNC, 3D printing, indus-

Prof A H Moon, Dean Academic Affairs, said that IUST boasts of state-of-the-art lab-

oratories equipped with the latest technology, Academiaindustry collaborations and internships that provide realworld experience. He said that the course will be led by experienced faculty with extensive academic and research backgrounds.

Dr. Ovais also said that the Automation and robotics are revolutionizing industries globally and the global demand for professionals in the area is at an all-time high. He added that in India, the automation sector is experiencing

ket expected to reach USD 11.8 billion by 2026, growing at a CAGR of 14.5% from 2021. Regionally, Jammu and Kashmir are poised to benefit significantly from advancements in automation and robotics. With the government & focus on boosting industrial growth and creating job opportunities, the introduction of the B.Tech program in Robotics and Automation at IUST is timely. It aligns with regional development goals and addresses the local demand for a skilled workforce capable of driving technological innovation and industrial modernization.

am grateful to CEO of Mech Alfa **CUKashmir's HoD Mathematics**

KO NEWS SERVICE

Deptt Registers Design Patent

GANDERBAL: Dr. Haribhau R. Bhapkar, Head, Department of Mathematics, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) and his team have achieved a significant milestone by securing registration of "Design Patent for Innovative AI-Based Street-Cleaning Vehicle."

innovative patent This features a novel shape and configuration designed to optimize street cleaning services, which are essential for maintaining clean and orderly communities and preventing

Street cleaning is traditionally labor-intensive, requiring large teams of workers. However. with technological advancements, a single AI-based vehicle could potentially replace eight to ten human cleaners. This innovation not only optimizes efficiency, but also has global applicability, given the universal nature of street cleaning tasks. With millions of individuals working in cleaning-related fields worldwide, the introduction of AI technology in this sector holds tremendous potential

waste accumulation.

for societal impact. **Police Affixes Gps Tracking Device**

On Bailed Out Let Aide In Bla

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A bailed-out militant associate, affiliated with the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit, was affixed a GPS-enabled anklet in north Kashmir's Baramulla district to track his movement.

As per the news agency CNS, police in a statement said, "In compliance to an order received from Court, police in Baramulla today affixed a GPS tracking device on an under trial terror associate who was

enlarged on bail in a UA(P) case of Police Station Uri."

They further added that the accused was arrested in case FIR No 104/2023 under section 13, 18, 18B, 20, 23, 40 UA(P) Act,120 B IPC, 7/25 Arms Act of Police Station Uri and has been enlarged bail by the Court.

"The GPS anklet will be used to monitor the movement of the said terror associate and ensure that he doesn't violate the bail conditions, reads the statement," said police in the statement.

Low Demand For Apples Continues To Mar Growers, Traders In Kashmir

PULWAMA: The apple growers and traders in Kashmir are grappling with heavy losses due to continuous low demand in various markets. Typically, cold storage units are cleared by the end of April, but this year, a large percentage of apples remains stored due to the sluggish market demand.

Speaking to the news agency, growers and traders expressed concern over the situation. They said that based on current trends, Controlled Atmosphere (CA) units might continue to store last year's apples until mid-July. "The

creased compared to the rates during the main apple season in October-November 2023," they lamented.

The increasing presence of South African apples in retail supermarkets and on ecommerce platforms across the country has exacerbated the situation. This influx has further reduced demand for Kashmiri apples, driving prices down and causing substantial losses for growers and traders," they said.

Sameer Ahmad, a grower, said that in previous years, they received around Rs 1500-2000 per apple box in Indian

ever, this year, there is almost no demand, and prices are declining daily, leading to significant losses, he said, adding that while there was good demand during October-November last year, the current year

has seen a sharp decline. Growers also criticised the government's slogan of "Sab Ka Sath Sab Ka Vikas" (Together With All, Development For All), claiming that despite promises to ban apple imports, the ground reality remains unchanged. They urged the government to take immediate steps to address the issue.

Experts say there are mul-

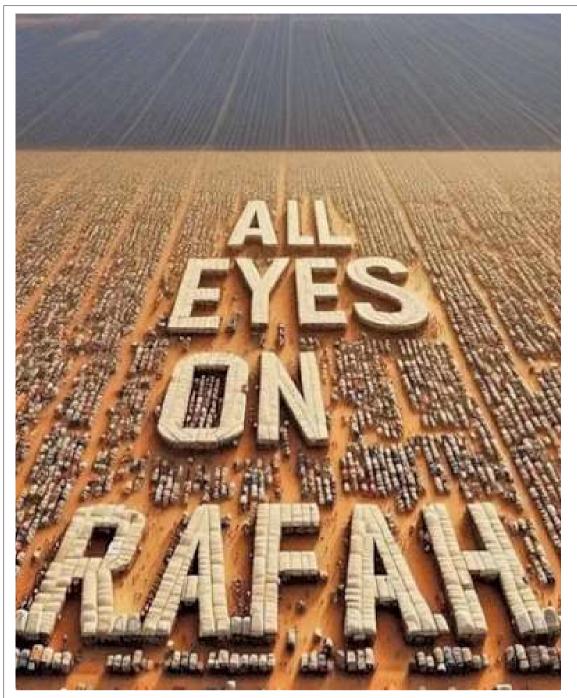
tiple reasons for the down market. 'The import of apples from various countries, including Africa and Iran, is a major factor," they said, adding that there is a need for strategic interventions to support apple growers during this critical period.

CA unit holders said they are also facing challenges as their stores remain occupied. They said that with the upcoming harvest of peaches, cherries, and other products, they need to clear the apple produce to make space.

"Currently, around 25-30 percent of the produce is still in cold storage units. We hope for an increase in demand to fetch better returns. However, the market remains very low," said one of the CA unit holders, wishing anonymity.

Notably, approximately 3 lakh metric tons of apples are stored in different CA storages across Kashmir. On average. Kashmir produces over 20 lakh metric tonnes of apples annually, sometimes reaching up to 25 lakh metric tonnes.

According to the 2017 economic survey in J&K, half of Kashmir's population is directly or indirectly dependent on the apple industry, with over 3.5 lakh hectares under apple cultivation—(KNO)



'ALL EYES ON RAFAH' Image Shared by Millions on Social Media

Agencies

a s pressure on Israel grows over its military assault on the southern Gazan town of Rafah, an image with the words All Eyes on Rafah has gone viral on social media.

The image, which according to Al-Jazeera is Al-generated, was reportedly shared more than 37 million times on Instagram in less than 24 hours, along with the hashtag #All-EyesOnRafah.

It depicts tents in a camp across a vast plain with tents in the center spelling out "All Eyes on Rafah".

It has been shared largely through Instagram's Stories feature with celebrities and others of influence also posting the image.

HORRIFIC AIRSTRIKE

On Sunday night, at least 50 Palestinians were killed in an airstrike on a camp for the displaced in Rafah. The horrific attack caused a fire that spread rapidly through the camp. Footage showed charred bodies, as well as a man holding a beheaded baby as screams were heard all around him.

Israeli forces intensified its attacks on Gaza despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Friday which ordered Israel to immediately halt its ground invasion of Rafah.

On Tuesday, at least 20 people

were killed and many others wounded in another massacre carried out by the Israeli occupation army, which bombed a camp for displaced people in the Al-Mawasi area of Rafah.

Rafah housed more than 1.5 million displaced Palestinians before the ground invasion began on May 6. Many had fled their homes in areas across the besieged enclave which was attacked by Israeli forces.

ONE MILLION FLEE

According to the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), nearly one million Palestinians have fled Rafah in the past three weeks.

"This happened with nowhere safe to go & amidst bombardments, lack of food & water, piles of waste & unsuitable living conditions," UNRWA said on X on Tuesday.

The UN agency added, "Day after day, providing assistance & protection becomes nearly impossible."

becomes nearly impossible."

While the All Eyes on Rafah image has spread quickly, NBC News reported, video footage from Rafah "posted by Palestinian journalists has been restricted and in some cases removed from social media for depicting the graphic aftermath of Israeli strikes."

"An Instarram spalesparson said

"An Instagram spokesperson said the company removed the content due to its violent and graphic nature, which it said violated the platform's policies," according to the report.

OVER 36,000 KILLED

Currently on trial before the International Court of Justice for genocide against Palestinians, Israel has been waging a devastating war on Gaza since October 7.

According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, 36,171 Palestinians have been killed, and 81,420 wounded in Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza starting on October 7

Moreover, at least 11,000 people are unaccounted for, presumed dead under the rubble of their homes throughout the Strip.

Palestinian and international organizations say that the majority of those killed and wounded are women and children.

The Israeli war has resulted in an acute famine, mostly in northern Gaza, resulting in the death of many Palestinians, mostly children.

The Israeli aggression has also resulted in the forceful displacement of nearly two million people from all over the Gaza Strip, with the vast majority of the displaced forced into the densely crowded southern city of Rafah near the border with Egypt – in what has become Palestine's largest

mass exodus since the 1948 Nakba. Israel says that 1,200 soldiers and civilians were killed during the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation on October 7. Israeli media published reports suggesting that many Israelis were killed on that day by 'friendly fire'.



Nikki Haley Writes "Finish Them" On Israeli Bombs Days After Rafah Strike

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Former US presidential hopeful Nikki Haley has been photographed writing "Finish Them" on an Israeli shell as she toured sites near the northern border with Lebanon.

The photograph was posted on X on Tuesday by Danny Danon, a member of the Israeli parliament and former ambassador to the United Nations, who was accompanying Haley on her visit.

"'Finish Them'. This is what my friend the former ambassador Nikki Haley wrote," Danon said in his post that showed a kneeling Haley writing on a shell with a purple marker pen.

Haley was a hawkish UN envoy under Donald Trump, and her term overlapped with Danon.

The Gaza war was sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,189 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on the latest Israeli official figures.

Militants also took 252 hostages, 121 of whom remain in Gaza, including 37 the army says are dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 36,096 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the territory's health ministry.

Haley, 52, abandoned her White House bid in March after heavy defeats in Republican primary contests to Trump, and last week said that she would vote for him in the election.

Trump has ruled her out of contention to be his vice president, but she is a potential presidential runner in 2028.

The White House said Tuesday that President Joe Biden has no plans to change his Israel policy following a deadly weekend strike on Rafah but that he is not turning a "blind eye" to the plight of Palestinian civilians.

France's Macron Urges A Green Light For Ukraine To Strike Targets Inside Russia With Western Weapons

Agencies

PARIS: France's president has joined the head of NATO in pushing for a policy shift that could change the complexion of the war in Ukraine — allowing Kyiv to strike military bases inside Russia with sophisticated long-range weapons provided by Western partners.

The question of whether to allow Ukraine to hit targets on Russian soil with Westernsupplied weaponry has been a delicate issue since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

Western leaders have mostly shrunk from taking the step because it runs the risk of provoking Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has repeatedly warned that the West's direct involvement could put the world on a path to nuclear conflict.

But the war has been going Russia's way recently as the Kremlin's forces have exploited Ukrainian shortages in troops and ammunition after a lengthy delay in US military aid, and Western Europe's inadequate military production slowed crucial deliveries to the battlefield.

Russian missiles and bombs have pummeled Ukrainian military positions and civilian areas, including the power grid. Ukraine is facing its hardest test of the war, and untying its hands on long-range weapons could spur a fightback and upset the Kremlin.



Macron said that France's position is that "we think we must allow (Ukraine) to neutralize the (Russian) military sites from which the missiles are fired."

"If we tell (the Ukrainians) you do not have the right to reach the point from which the missiles are fired, we are in fact telling them that we are delivering weapons to you, but you cannot defend yourself," Macron said late Tuesday on an official visit to Germany.

His remarks came a day after NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg urged the alliance's members to lift some of the restrictions on Ukraine's use of Western weapons.

"The right to self-defense includes hitting legitimate targets outside Ukraine," Stoltenberg said at a NATO meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria on Monday.

Already, at the start of

May, Moscow interpreted as a threat UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron's comment that Ukraine could use British long-range weapons, such as the Storm Shadow cruise missile, to hit back at Russia.

That, and Macron's comments that he doesn't exclude sending troops to

clude sending troops to Ukraine, prompted Russia to announce it would hold drills involving tactical nuclear weapons. Russia also warned the UK government that its decision could bring retaliatory strikes on British military facilities and equipment on Ukrainian soil or elsewhere.

The leaders are choosing their words carefully. Macron underlined that only Russian bases used to launch missiles against Ukraine should be regarded as legitimate targets — not other Russian bases or civilian infrastructure.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, speaking alongside Macron, was as usual more guarded and noncommittal, noting that Ukraine "is allowed to defend itself" under international law.

Scholz's spokesperson, Steffen Hebestreit, clarified Wednesday that the chancellor meant that Ukraine's defense "isn't limited to its territory." He declined to say what agreements with Ukraine on weapons supplied by Germany stipulate, insisting they are confidential.

Scholz has insisted on avoiding steps that could end up drawing NATO into a battlefield confrontation with Russia. Other Western leaders have expressed similar fears of a creeping, high-stakes escalation.

His concerns are shared in Washington. Over the past

two years, the US has gradually ceded to Ukrainian requests for support, sending tanks and long-range missile systems that it initially hesitated to provide, but with a caveat on aiming them at Russian soil.

"There's no change to our policy at this point," US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Tuesday. "We don't encourage or enable the use of USsupplied weapons to strike inside Russia."

Western leaders are keen to put pressure on Putin, whose forces have recently been pushing hard against Ukrainian defenses in eastern and northeastern Ukraine.

This week has brought a cascade of new European aid, with Belgium and Spain each pledging around 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in new military support to Ukraine. Sweden announced Wednesday it will donate aid worth 13 billion kronor (\$1.23 billion) — the largest package Sweden has donated so far. It will include air defense systems, artillery ammunition and armored vehicles.

Ukraine has recently been under intense pressure from Russian attacks in the northeastern Kharkiv region and in the partially occupied eastern Donetsk region.

Putin has said he wants to establish a "buffer zone" in Kharkiv to halt cross-border Ukrainian assaults. Analysts say the Kharkiv push also draws depleted Ukrainian forces away from Donetsk.

Yemen's Houthis say they downed US MQ-9 drone in Yemen's Maareb



Agencie

CAIRO: Yemen's Iranaligned Houthis said they downed a US MQ-9 drone in Yemen's southeastern province of Maareb, the group's military spokesman said in a televised speech on Wednesday.

Houthis's spokesman Yahya Sarea said that this drone "is the sixth UAV that has been shot down so far." On May 21, Houthis shot down another drone over Al-Bayda province in

Southern Yemen.

The group, which controls Yemen's capital and most populous areas of the Arabian Peninsula state, has attacked international shipping in the Red Sea since November in solidarity with the Palestinians in the war between Israel and Hamas militants, drawing US and British retaliatory strikes since February.

Yemen Targets 6 Vessels Amid Escalating Anti-Israel Campaign

Agencies

Yemen's Armed Forces have targeted six ships in waters near the country as well as the Mediterranean Sea as part of their operations against Israel and its backers the United States and Britain.

In a statement, spokesman Yahya Saree said they hit three ships in the Red Sea, namely LAAX, MOREA, and Sealady.

The spokesman said the operations were carried out using naval and ballistic missiles and

drones.

They also staged missile and drone attacks on the American ships ALBA and Maersk Hartford in the Arabian Sea, according to

The sixth operation hit the ship MINERVA ANTONIA in the

Mediterranean Sea with several winged missiles.

"All the aforementioned ships were targeted for violating the ban on visiting the ports of occupied Palestine," he said.

The Yemeni spokesman said they would target all the Israelilinked ships in the declared area of operations, regardless of their destination.

US military MQ-9 Reaper drone downed

In another statement, Saree said that Yemeni armed forces shot down another US military MQ-9 Reaper drone with domestic missiles in the east of Ma'rib province.

Images published online also showed the MQ-9 on its belly in the desert, its tail assembly disconnected from the rest of the drone's body.

Since October last year, the Yemeni armed forces have been launching attacks on ships linked to Israel or en route to the Israelioccupied territories in the Red or Arabian seas in solidarity with the Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

The Arab country expanded its operations early this month in what was described as the fourth phase of anti-Israel operations.

The fourth phase is intended to impose a total naval blockade on the Israeli regime, with the Yemeni forces attacking any ship arriving at the regime's ports in the Red Sea or the Mediterranean Sea.

Yemen says its operations won't stop unless the regime halts its brutal aggression against Rafah and other parts of the Gaza Strip.

