

News Digest

Militants, Forces Exchange Fire In Lolab

Srinagar: A brief exchange of fire took place between militants and joint team of police, CRPF and army in forests of Lolab area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Tuesday. According to the reports, a joint team of Police, Army's 28RR and CRPF launched a cordon-and-search-operation in Lolab forests. SSP Kupwara Shri Ram Ambarkar told GNS the exchange of fire between the joint team and the militants. However, he said, it was brief one. "More reinforcements were rushed to the forest", the SSP added

Youth 'Hangs' Self In Dooru

Srinagar: A youth allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself inside his home at Mandipora village of Dooru in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday. The 26-year-old youth (name withheld) strangled himself to death at his home early this morning, officials said. The deceased was a painter by profession. Officials said that it was not immediately known why the youth took the extreme step of ending his life. Meanwhile, police have initiated proceedings under section 174 CrPc in this regard. (KNO)

23 Discharged After Covid-19 Recovery

Srinagar: At least 23 Covid-19 patients, including 5 pregnant women were discharged on Tuesday from Srinagar's JLNH hospital on recovery from the disease Nodal Officer for Coronavirus at JLNH Hospital, Dr Bilquees said that all these patients, hailing from Srinagar were asymptomatic and were discharged after 20-25 days. "The total discharged patients from Rainawari Hospital till now are 358 while total positive patients admitted in the hospital at present are 50 in general Isolation Wards and 5 positive pregnant patients in Gynae Isolation Ward," she said.

Rape Accused BJP Panch Absconding

Srinagar: A Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) Panch from south Kashmir's Shopian district facing rape and abduction allegations has gone into hiding while four of his associates have been arrested by police, reports said Tuesday. A girl lodged a written complaint at the Police Station Hirpora in Shopian alleging that BJP Panch Latif Jagal raped her repeatedly for two days after the accused abducted her with the help of four other men, news agency KNT reported. Following the complaint, police took the girl to the court and ● P-02

Hideout Busted In Poonch

Jammu: Police on Tuesday claimed to have busted a militant hideout in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir police and recovered arms and ammunition, a senior police officer said. The hideout was unearthed during a joint search operation by troops of 16 Rashtriya Rifles and the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the police at Murrah village in the Surankote area, Senior Superintendent of Police, Poonch, RameshAngralsaid. He said a universal machine gun ● P-02

...LADAKH STAND-OFF

Army Chief Reviews Military Preparedness

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Army Chief Gen MM Naravane on Tuesday reviewed India's military preparedness in eastern Ladakh as he began a two-day visit to the region where a border clash last week left 20 Indian soldiers dead in the midst of a tense standoff with the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Soon after arriving in Leh, Gen Naravane visited an Army hospital where 18 soldiers injured in the clash in Galwan Valley on June 15 are undergoing treatment, Army officials said.

The Chief of the Army Staff interacted with almost all the injured soldiers and complimented them for their bravery, they added. A surveillance post set up by the Chinese Army on a narrow mountain trail in violation of an agreement was the trigger for the clash in Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed.

After visiting the hospital, Gen Naravane reviewed the overall security situation in the region with the ground commanders, and is learnt to have directed them to keep a high-level of alertness to deal with any Chinese misadventure, people familiar with the issue said.

The Chief of the Army Staff is scheduled to visit a number of forward areas during his two-day visit to the region.

Last week, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria made a quiet visit to Ladakh and Srinagar air bases to review the Indian Air Force's preparedness to deal with any eventualities in the region.

Before leaving for Leh, Gen Naravane attended the final session of a two-day conference of top Army commanders. The commanders extensively ● PAGE 02



Army Chief met injured soldiers after arriving in Leh on Tuesday.

India, China Agree To 'Cool Down' Border Tension

Top Chinese and Indian military commanders have arrived at a consensus on the "outstanding issues" and agreed to take necessary measures to "cool down" the situation at their borders, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday. On Monday, Lt Gen Harinder Singh, the commander of the 14 Corps, held a nearly 11-hour meeting ● P-02

Russia Rules Out Mediation

Russia on Tuesday ruled out mediating between India and China following the violent clashes in the Galwan Valley, saying the two nations do not need any kind of assistance to resolve their disputes. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks came after a virtual conference of the foreign ministers of Russia, India and China. External ● P-02

'Fake News': China On Killing Of 40 PLA troops

China on Tuesday broke its silence over its casualties in the June 15 clash between Indian and Chinese troops while terming as sure "fake news" reports that more than 40 Chinese soldiers were killed in the face-off in eastern Ladakh. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian, who repeatedly parried questions on the ● P-02

ITBP Scales Up LAC Presence

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has begun deployment of 40 fresh companies across various locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in view of the ongoing standoff and violent clashes between the armies of the two countries, officials said on Tuesday. The border guarding force is also ● P-02

No Meeting Between Rajnath, Chinese Counterpart

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will not have any bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe on the sidelines of a grand parade in Moscow, a senior official said on Tuesday. Currently, Singh is on a three-day visit to Moscow ● P-02

2 Militants, CRPF Constable Killed In Pulwama Encounter

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Two unidentified militants and a CRPF personnel were killed in an encounter in Bandzoo area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Tuesday, police said.

State forces launched a cordon and search operation in Bandzoo area of Pulwama after receiving specific information about the presence of militants in the area, a police official said.

He said the search operation turned into an encounter after militants fired upon a search party of the forces, who retaliated.

Two militants were killed during encounter, the official said, adding that one CRPF trooper was also killed in the exchange of firing. ● PAGE 02



Pic: Shah Junaid

Cross-LoC Shelling In Macchil Sector

The armies of India and Pakistan on Tuesday resorted to cross- Line of Control (LoC) shelling in Macchil sector of the frontier Kupwara district. "On June 23, in the afternoon hours, Pakistan initiated an ● P-02

Pak Trying To Push Militants Into Kashmir: DGP

SRINAGAR: Pakistan is trying to push militants into Jammu and Kashmir under the cover of ceasefire violations by its troops along the Line of Control, police chief Dilbagh Singh said on Tuesday.

"Pakistan is making efforts to send more Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Toiba cadres into Kashmir. For that, they are trying to use the International Border sector in Jammu or the LoC in Nowshera sector (in Rajouri district)," he said.

"Efforts are also being made in Kupwara and Baramulla to push more militants into this side under the garb of ceasefire violations. The Army is foiling these efforts there," Singh told reporters on the sidelines of the wreath-laying ceremony of a CRPF jawan here. ● PAGE 02

India Downgrades Diplomatic Ties With Pakistan

Asks It To Reduce Embassy Staff By 50% In 7 Days

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday asked Pakistan to reduce its staff in its high commission here by half within the next seven days and announced a reciprocal trimming of Indian strength in Islamabad, in a significant downgrading of diplomatic ties.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the Charge d' Affaires of Pakistan High Commission was summoned and informed about the decision which was based on instances of alleged involvement of Pakistani officials in "acts of espionage" and dealings with terrorist organisations.

In a statement, the MEA also cited the recent abduction of two

Indian officials in Islamabad and the "barbaric treatment" meted out to them by Pakistani agencies as reasons for downgrading of the diplomatic ties.

"The behaviour of Pakistan and its officials is not in conformity with the Vienna Convention and bilateral agreements on the treatment of diplomatic and consular officials. On the contrary, it is an intrinsic element of a larger policy of supporting cross-border violence and terrorism," the MEA said.

Therefore, it said, India has taken the decision to reduce the staff strength in the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi by 50 per cent.

"It would reciprocally reduce its own presence in Islamabad ● PAGE 02

THE BEHAVIOUR OF PAKISTAN AND its officials is not in conformity with the Vienna Convention and bilateral agreements on the treatment of diplomatic and consular officials. On the contrary, it is an intrinsic element of a larger policy of supporting cross-border violence and terrorism,"

Delhi HC Grants Bail To Jamia Student Safoora Zargar

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Delhi High Court Tuesday granted bail to Jamia student Safoora Zargar, who is pregnant and was arrested under anti-terror law UAPA in a case related to communal violence in northeast Delhi during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta did not oppose it on humanitarian grounds. At the outset of the hearing, Mehta, representing Delhi Police, submitted that Zargar can be released on regular bail on humanitarian grounds and the decision has not been taken on merits of the case and should not be made a precedent.



Justice Rajiv Shakdher, who conducted the hearing through video conferencing, released Zargar, who is 23-week pregnant, on bail on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 10,000 and surety of like amount.

The court said she shall not indulge in any activity for which she has been charged with and shall not hamper the investigation or influence the witnesses.

Missing PhD Scholar Has Joined Hizb: IGP Kashmir

'Won't Arrest Him If Family Brings Him Back'

Agencies

SRINAGAR- Hilal Ahmad Dar, a PhD scholar from Bemina area of Srinagar who went missing on June 14 during trekking to Gangbal Ganderbal, has joined Hizbul-Mujahideen, Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar said on Tuesday.

The top police officer made the statement while talking to reporters at RTC Humhama here on the sidelines of the wreath laying ceremony of a CRPF trooper who was killed along with two militants in a gunfight in Pulwama district early today.

The IGP also made an offer of not arresting Hilal Ahmad Dar, if



the family brings him back.

"We won't arrested him if his family brings him back," he said. The family has been protesting from last week, seeking whereabouts of Dar. Dar had gone on a trekking expedition to ● PAGE 02

Govt Gears Up For Annual Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu on Tuesday reviewed the preparedness for Amarnath Yatra, even as uncertainty over the annual Hindu pilgrimage remains due to coronavirus fears.

An official spokesperson said that though the decision about the annual pilgrimage shall be taken appropriately in due course of time, LG Murmu today reviewed Yatra preparedness. In the review meeting, LG insisted to make sure all basic preparations including health, infrastructure, ration/LPG supply, power, drinking water, security arrangements, telecommunication, Disaster management etc.

While briefing the LG, CEO Shrine Board, Bipul Pathak said that the

camp at cave is already established and the snow clearance work has been completed.

"The Base Camp Baltal and the Neelgrath helipad are likely to be ready within next week. SASB is making arrangements for the live telecast of the morning and evening Aarti with Doordarshan," Pathak informed the meeting.

LG's advisor Baseer Ahmad Khan gave a detailed presentation on arrangements done by various departments, the official spokesperson said.

"He informed that the 80% work on Baltal track is done. Five out of seven bridges are launched, verification of service providers by Police has been done and they are ready to be deployed. A new helipad at Lower Cave (1.2 km short of the Holy Cave) is being constructed by ● PAGE 02

2 More Covid-19 Patients Die In Kashmir, J&K Toll 87

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- An 85-year-old Covid-19 positive man from Kulgam district of south Kashmir died at SKIMS Soura here on Tuesday, taking the number of deaths due to the disease in Jammu and Kashmir to 87, officials said.

The octogenarian, hailing from Kadar area of Kulgam, died at SKIMS Soura hospital on Tuesday morning, the officials said.

They said the patient was admitted to the hospital on June 5 and was a known case of "complete heart block with hypertension. He was on temporary pacemaker.

Earlier, a 58-year-old woman from Natipora area of Srinagar, who had tested positive for Covid-19, passed away at ● PAGE 02



File Pic: Anand Bhat

24 Soldiers, 8 Cops Among 148 Test Positive

Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday recorded 148 new cases of coronavirus, including 24 soldiers and eight policemen, taking the number of infected people across the Union Territory to 6236. "148 new Covid-19 cases were detected in J&K. While 128 of them are from Kashmir, 20 are from Jammu," the officials said. Among fresh cases, 45 cases were ● P-02

Woman Delivers Baby In Open After Hospital 'Denies Admission'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a shocking incident of alleged medical apathy, a pregnant woman on Tuesday delivered a baby in the compound of a government hospital in north Kashmir's Bandipora district prompting district authorities to order a probe after a massive public outrage.

On Tuesday morning, a pregnant woman from Anderkoot village of the district was brought to the Community Health Centre (CHC) Sumbal by her family after she complained of labour pains, eyewitnesses told Kashmir Observer. However, the doctors there allegedly refused her admission over Covid-19 test.

Around noon, witnesses said, the woman gave birth to a baby outside the hospital building after

the locals formed a human chain and spread a huge shit to help the woman deliver the baby.

"Since 8am, we pleaded before the doctors to admit her. They didn't pay any heed to our repeated requests. They remained adamant on coronavirus test," an attendant said.

She alleged that the woman delivered in open amidst stones and bricks after denied treatment by the doctors.

"The pregnant woman's mother wrapped the newborn in her cloak and went to the doctor's chamber to plead before her. Later, the mother and baby were given admission," she said.

"Denying treatment to expecting mothers is grave injustice. Such incidents are shameful, to say the least," she added.

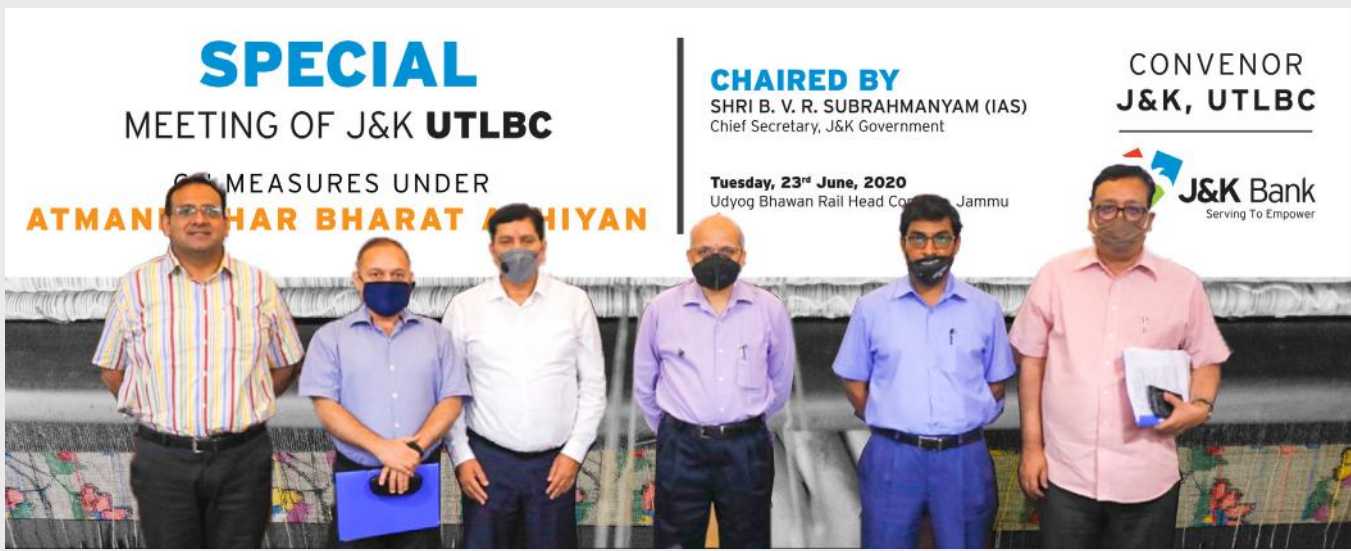
The incident triggered massive outrage and evoked sharp ● PAGE 02

J&K Fully Geared To Implement Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

CS Urges Banks To Have Time Bound Implementation Of Schemes

JAMMU: Under the rolled-out Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL) scheme – part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package for businesses/ MSMEs affected by the ongoing pandemic – the banks operating in the Union Territory of J&K have sanctioned Rs 914 Cr in favour of 24000 beneficiaries. The Scheme wherein 20% additional funding of outstanding credit as on 29th February, 2020 is provided by banks to eligible MSMEs/ business enterprises is likely to benefit 3.20 lakh eligible borrowers in the UT of J&K qualifying for an additional credit of Rs 2600 Cr.

This was stated today at a special meeting of J&K Union Territory-Level Bankers' Committee (UTLBC) in Jammu chaired by the Chief Secretary J&K Government B V R Subrahmanyam (IAS) to discuss initiatives and measures under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. Financial Commissioner (Finance) Dr Arun Kumar Mehta (IAS), Principal Secretary (Housing and Urban Development) Dheeraj Gupta (IAS), Principal Secretary (Agriculture Production/Animal/Sheep Husbandry/ Fisheries) Navin Kumar Choudhary (IAS), Principal Secretary (Revenue), Dr Pawan Kotwal (IAS), Chairman J&K Bank (Convenor J&K UTLBC) R K Chhibber,



Regional Director Reserve Bank of India, Thomas Mathew, Commissioner/Secretary, Labour& Employment Saurabh Bhagat (IAS) and other senior functionaries of State Government, RBI, NABARD, Banks and Insurance Companies attended the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary said, "The measures announced by the Government of India under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan are key to the revival of the economy, which has been adversely affected during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Emphasizing that the scheme

is time-bound and shall cease to exist after 31st October, 2020 or exhaustion of specified fund allocation, the Chief Secretary said that the banks should expedite sanctioning of cases under GECL, so that all the eligible borrowers in UT of J&K are benefited.

"J&K Government has already constituted various Task Forces for implementation of initiatives, schemes and relief measures under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan", he added.

Stating that the components of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan are mostly related to the

bank credit with defined timelines and specified fund allocations, he impressed upon the banks and the Government agencies to be proactive and work in a coordinated manner for timely and successful implementation of already rolled out Schemes. The additional funding is aimed at meeting the operational liability built up, procuring raw material and re-starting businesses.

He also advised all the stakeholders to be in a state of preparedness for implementation of the schemes, which are being

rolled out by Govt. of India under the Abhiyan.

Earlier at the outset, Convenor UTLBC, Chairman and Managing Director J&K Bank R K Chhibber welcomed the participants and informed the house that the special UTLBC was being called for monitoring the measures taken in the direction of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

During the deliberations in the meeting, the house was informed that the Special Credit Facility for Street Vendors with an initial working capital up to Rs.10,000/- which has been

announced by GoI under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, shall be rolled out by the banks on 1st of July, 2020. In J&K, around 30,000 Street Vendors are likely to be benefitted under the Scheme with a total aggregate disbursement of Rs. 30 Crore by 31st August, 2020.

With a view to increase credit flow to Agriculture Sector and bring all the farmers of the UT including those associated with Allied Agricultural Activities, viz. Dairy, Sheep, Fisheries, Poultry etc. within the ambit of revised Kissan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme, the house also stipulated to scale up coverage of farmers under KCC to ensure saturation of 10 lakh PM Kissan beneficiaries, with 2.5 lakh fresh KCCs to be issued by 15th July, 2020. The house also approved a target to cover 75,000 farmers associated with Allied Agricultural Activities under KCC Scheme.

In order to give a fillip to issuance of KCCs, the house was informed that the Agriculture Production Department is organizing "Kissan Pakhwada" from 7th July, 2020 across the UT of J&K. During the fortnight the banks will focus on issuance of KCCs accepting/ examining the applications for rural credit and final disbursement

in next two weeks. All HODs of concerned departments shall associate themselves with the "Kissan Pakhwada" and help eligible beneficiaries to approach bank branches for issuance of KCCs.

The house observed that the progress achieved in Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) was not satisfactory. Assigning a target of covering 7000 beneficiaries by August, 2020, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the banks and Housing & Urban Development Department to identify the bottlenecks and take necessary measures for creating awareness among the people to avail benefits of the Scheme. He also advised to provide credit-linkage to all Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) by 31st August, 2020.

On the occasion, various Sub-Committees were formed to suggest measures for improving performance under Primary Sector, CLSS and Self Help Group Schemes.

In his concluding remarks, the Chief Secretary impressed upon banks and all other stakeholders to put in their collective efforts to revive the economy of UT of J&K back to its normal under the aegis of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

Army Chief Reviews Military

deliberated on the situation in eastern Ladakh.

In Leh, Gen Naravane was also scheduled to hold an extensive meeting with Lt Gen Harinder Singh, the commander of the 14 Corps that takes care of the sensitive border with China.

On Monday, Lt Gen Singh held a nearly 11-hour meeting with Commander of the Tibet Military District Maj Gen Liu Lin. In the meeting, the two sides arrived at a "mutual consensus" to "disengage" from all the friction points in eastern Ladakh.

The first round of the Lt Gen talks were held on June 6 during which both sides finalised an agreement to disengage gradually from all the standoff points beginning with Galwan Valley.

However, the situation along the border deteriorated following the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15 as the two sides significantly bolstered their deployments in most areas along the 3,500-km de-facto border. On Sunday, the government gave the armed forces "full freedom" to give a "befitting" response to any Chinese misadventure along the LAC. The Army has already sent thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the border in the last one week. The IAF has also moved a sizeable number of its frontline Sukhoi 30 MKI, Jaguar, Mirage 2000 aircraft and Apache attack helicopters to several key air bases including Leh and Srinagar following the clashes. The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated after around 250 Chinese and Indian soldiers were engaged in a violent face-off on May 5 and 6. The incident in Pangong Tso was followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9.

Prior to the clashes, both sides had been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it was necessary to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

India, China Agree To 'Cool

with Commander of the Tibet Military District Maj Gen Liu Lin in an attempt to lower the temperature between the two sides. The talks were held in the midst of escalating tension between the two countries following the violent clashes in Galwan Valley last week that left 20 Indian Army personnel dead, significantly escalating the already volatile situation in the region.

Asked for the details at what transpired at the meeting of the top commanders held at the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said the two sides expressed the wish to control the situation through dialogue and consultation. "On June 22, the Chinese and Indian border troops held the 2nd commander-level meeting at the border areas. This is also the first commander level meeting since the Galwan Valley clash happened on June 15," he said. "This meeting showed that the two sides wish to control and alleviate the situation through dialogue and consultation. "During the meeting and based on the consensus reached at the first commanders level meeting (on June 6), the two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on the outstanding issues and agreed to take necessary measures to cool down the situation, Zhao said. The two sides agreed to continue with the dialogue and jointly work for the peace and tranquillity of the border areas, he said. To a question that Indian Army has stated that two sides have agreed to disengage the troops and whether he can confirm it, Zhao said the specific measures are under discussion by the border troops of the two sides on the ground, I have no further information to release on this.

When asked about the Chinese casualties, he said China and India are in dialogue and talks with each other to resolve this issue through diplomatic and military channels. "As for what you saw in the media, for example some people alleged that casualties on the Chinese amounted to 40. I can tell you for sure this is fake news," he said. This is the first time China has commented on the casualties. The spokesman, however did not elaborate.

Ever since the clash on June 15 at the Galwan Valley between the Indian and Chinese troops, Beijing has consistently declined to reveal the details of the casualties on its side, while the official media editorials have said that China too suffered casualties. The Indian and Chinese armies are engaged in the standoff in Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie in eastern Ladakh. A sizeable number of Chinese Army personnel even transgressed into the Indian side of the de-facto border in several areas including Pangong Tso. The Indian Army has been fiercely objecting to the transgressions, and demanded their immediate withdrawal for restoration of peace and tranquillity in the area. Both sides held a series of talks in the last few days to resolve the border row.

Russia Rules Out Mediation

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also attended the conference.

The conference was held amid escalating tension between India and China following the violent clashes in Galwan Valley on June 15 that left 20 Indian Army personnel dead, significantly escalating the already volatile situation in the region. "I do not think that India and China need any help, any kind of assistance specifically aimed at helping them to resolve disputes," Lavrov said.

"As soon as the border incidents took place, meetings were held and contact was established between the military command on the ground and the foreign ministers," Sputnik News quoted Lavrov as saying. "As I understand, these contacts are ongoing, and neither party has made any statement indicating a lack of willingness to negotiate based on generally acceptable approaches. We naturally expect it to continue

that way," Lavrov said. India and China have rejected any role for other parties in finding a peaceful resolution to their boundary issue. Russia has maintained close ties with both China and India. Russia last week expressed concern over the clashes but hoped that both of its close allies can resolve the conflict themselves. Indian defence minister Rajnath Singh is currently in Moscow to attend Wednesday's parade on Red Square marking the 75th anniversary of the Nazi defeat in World War II.

'Fake News': China On Killing

casualties suffered by the People's Liberation Army since the incident occurred, reacted to the remarks of former army chief and Minister for Roads and Transport Gen (retd.) V K Singh who said, if we lost 20 soldiers, more than double the number were killed on their [Chinese] side. Asked for his reaction on Tuesday at the media briefing, Zhao said. China and India are in dialogue and talks with each other to resolve this issue through diplomatic and military channels. "As for what you saw in the media, for example some people alleged that casualties on the Chinese amounted to 40. I can tell you for sure this is fake news, he said, without giving any further details. This is the first time China has commented on the casualties.

Though China has not revealed its casualty figure, there were reports that a commanding officer of the Chinese army was among those killed in the clashes. There is no official confirmation about it. Ever since the clash on June 15 at the Galwan Valley between the Indian and Chinese troops, Beijing has consistently declined to reveal the details of the casualties on its side, while the official media editorials have said that China too suffered casualties.

ITBP Scales Up LAC Presence

moving its mechanised column assets like SUVs, all-terrain vehicles, snow scooters and trucks to forward locations in the midst of the projected increase in the number of troops at border units and fresh directives to undertake "additional" patrols. They said all these units, with an operational strength of about 4,000 mountain-warfare trained troops, are being withdrawn from internal security duties from various parts of the country. About 40 ITBP companies are being withdrawn and are being mobilised to various locations along the LAC in various sectors including Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, official sources said. They said the frontier formations of the force have been asked to prepare quarantine facilities for these new units as they are coming from the mainland and their exposure to the coronavirus pandemic cannot be ignored. These troops, during their two-weeks quarantine, will also have the opportunity to prepare and acclimatise for high-altitude deployment along LAC that is marked by freezing temperatures and thin oxygen levels, they said. A "good number" of officers who command companies and battalions are also being posted at the two newly operationalised commands of the force – western headquartered at Chandigarh and eastern at Guwahati, they said.

An Inspector General (IG) was given the charge of the command in Chandigarh recently while the one at Guwahati is being looked after by an IG based in Delhi. The commands are supposed to be headed by Additional Director General (ADG) rank officers but the nearly-90,000 personnel strong force, at present, has none. It is understood that the force has sought the Union home ministry's intervention in filling up vacant posts at the senior level. Sources said while 15 ITBP companies were recently withdrawn from various locations of the country including Jammu, the rest are being pulled out from Delhi, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh and few other locations.

Apart from these 40, it is expected that 20 more such units could be withdrawn over a period of time so that an "optimum" presence of the force is maintained across 180 border posts and over 50 'staging camps' or temporary bases along the 3,488 km LAC that stretches from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh. ITBP Director General (DG) S S Deswal also reviewed the deployment of the force in the Ladakh area after he visited the north-west frontier based in Leh along with senior army commanders on Saturday. The sources said the DG reviewed the COVID-19 quarantine and mountain acclimatisation facilities available with the force in this area and directed that freshly recruited and young troops in the age group of 35-40 years should be sent to those locations that have harsh climatic conditions and are witnessing standoffs like the Galwan valley and Pangong Tso areas.

Deswal had told PTI last month that the force has delayed the annual battalion changeover plans in view of the coronavirus outbreak and for two battalions of the force deployed in "extremely hard areas" the decision was to be taken after July.

However, officials said, this changeover may further be delayed as the units guarding the border posts and present along with the army troops in view of the present standoff and clashes with Chinese troops, have been asked to undertake more short-range and long-range patrols. The ITBP will keep doing its job and in view of the ongoing tension especially after the violent clashes that led to 20 army troops laying down their lives in the line of duty, the force will assist the army as directed, the sources said.

The force was raised in the aftermath of the 1962 Chinese aggression and about 35 of its 60 battalions are deployed for border guarding along the LAC and its posts are located between 9,000 feet-18,700 feet in the western, middle and eastern sectors of this front.

No Meeting Between...

to attend the grand military parade on Wednesday to mark the 75th

anniversary of the Soviet victory over Germany in the Second World War. Chinese State Councilor and Defence Minister Wei Fenghe is also expected to attend the parade. A Chinese media report said Wei and Singh are attending the event in Moscow and they are likely to meet there over the border tension in eastern Ladakh. "Our Defence Minister would not be meeting the Chinese Defence Minister," Defence Ministry Spokesperson Bharat Bhushan Babu said when asked about the Chinese media report. The defence minister's visit to Russia comes in the midst of an escalating border standoff between India and China, particularly after the killing of 20 Indian Army personnel by Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley on June 15. Officials said Singh went ahead with the visit, notwithstanding the border row with China, due to India's decades-old military ties with Russia. Russia has been one of India's key suppliers of arms and ammunition. A tri-service 75-member Indian military contingent has already reached Moscow to participate in the parade. The Indian team will participate in the parade alongside armed forces personnel from at least 11 countries including China.

"The visit of the defence minister will strengthen the longstanding special and privileged strategic partnership between India and Russia," the defence ministry said on Saturday. "The Indian participation in the victory day parade will be a mark of tribute to the great sacrifices made by Russia and other nations in the Second World War in which Indian soldiers also participated and made supreme sacrifice," it said.

India Downgrades...

to the same proportion. This decision, which is to be implemented in seven days, was conveyed to the Pakistani Charge d'Affaires," it added. The MEA said the Charge d' Affaires of Pakistan High Commission was summoned to the ministry and informed that India had repeatedly expressed concern about the activities of officials of its High Commission. "They have been engaged in acts of espionage and maintained dealings with terrorist organisations. The activities of the two officials caught red-handed and expelled on May 31 was one example in that regard," it said. It said Pakistan has engaged in a sustained campaign to "intimidate" the officials of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad from carrying on their legitimate diplomatic functions. "The recent abduction at gunpoint of two Indian officials and their severe ill-treatment underlines the extent to which Pakistan has gone in that direction," it said. "These officials who have returned to India on 22 June 2020 have provided graphic details of the barbaric treatment that they experienced at the hands of Pakistani agencies," the MEA added. Pakistan had expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad following India's decision to withdraw special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August last year.

Missing PhD Scholar Has...

Naranag in Ganderbal district along with his friends on June 13 and has been reported missing since then.

There were speculations that he was one of the three militants killed in an encounter on June 21 in the Zoonimar area of the city. The family of the missing youth has denied that Dar had any links with the militants. They claimed that he was working in a private company in Gurgaon and had returned home only due to the coronavirus lockdown.

Pak Trying To Push Militants

The CRPF jawan was killed during an encounter between militants and security forces in Pulwama district this morning. Two unidentified militants were killed in the encounter.

There has been a spurt in Pakistani shelling along the border in Jammu and Kashmir this year with over 2,027 cases of violation of a ceasefire agreement being reported till June 10. Singh said the security grid at the border as well as in the hinterland were working in tandem to defeat the efforts against peace in the union territory. "The border grid and the hinterland grid are working in synergy to foil these designs," he said. The police chief also claimed that the Jaish-e-Mohammad was planning to carry out a major IED-based attack on security forces, and added that the grid was prepared to tackle it. "We foiled a major vehicle-laden IED attack on 28th of last month. Jaish is now planning to have some big IED incident against the security forces. We are fully alert at all levels against such plans, I am sure our alertness will take care of those plans," he added.

Asked about the recent successes in operations against militants, the Director General of Police (DGP) said the security forces were carrying out nearly two dozen operations everyday based on the intelligence inputs they receive. "There are around two dozen operations underway every day and sometimes one or two operations click and sometimes none. Our effort is that we act on all information we get about militant and their activity," he said.

2 Militants, CRPF Constable

The slain CRPF man has been identified as Sunil Kale, a resident of Pangoon village in Barsahi tehsil of Solapur district in Maharashtra, the officials said. They said the authorities were working to bring his mortal remains to his native place. He joined the service in 2000 and was posted in Jammu and Kashmir since some time, the official said.

Cross-LoC Shelling In...

unprovoked ceasefire violation along the LoC in Machil sector by

firing mortars and other weapons," army officials here said.

They said the Indian Army gave a befitting response to the ceasefire violation. However, there were no casualties reported in the incident.

Govt Gears Up For Annual...

Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA) for which the Lt Governor asked to get it ready by 30th June, 2020," the official spokesperson said. Khan further informed the meeting that the requisite arrangements by various line departments are underway and the ground level staff will be mobilized within couple of days. Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam asked the SASB and Tourism Department, the nodal departments for the Yatra, to put in place all the facilities and arrangements required for the Yatra. "The LG further directed that all the rituals with morning and evening Pooja/ Arti shall take place at the Holy Cave with effect from 5th July (Vyas Poonima) to 3rd August (Raksha Bandhan). He exhorted upon all the officers to put in their best efforts to make the arrangements ready for the Yatra and appreciated the work already done," the official spokesperson added.

2 More Covid-19 Patients ...

Chest Disease (CD) hospital on Monday night, the officials said. "The woman was diabetic, hypertensive and had bilateral pneumonia. She was shifted from SMHS hospital to the CD hospital on Monday evening and died later died at the hospital," they said. With this fatality, the death toll due to the pathogen has risen in Jammu and Kashmir to 87– 77 in Valley and 10 in Jammu division. Srinagar, with 20 deaths tops the list of Covid-19 fatalities followed by 14 in Baramulla, 11 in Kulgam, 10 in Shopian, seven in Jammu, six each in Budgam & Anantnag, five in Kupwara, four in Pulwama and one each in Bandipora, Udhampur, Doda and Rajouri districts. (with GNS inputs)

24 Soldiers, 8 Cops Among

reported from Pulwama, 28 from Srinagar, 16 each from Kulgam & Baramulla, seven from Kupwara, six from Anantnag, five each from Bandipora, Ganderbal, Ramban & Kathua, three from Reasi, two each from Doda, Udhampur & Samba and one from Jammu, they said. While 74 new cases were confirmed at SKIMS Soura, 33 fresh cases were reported by the Chest diseases hospital here. SKIMS Bema also reported eight new cases of Covid-19, officials said. Among the new cases, include 24 soldiers, all posted in south Kashmir's Pulwama district and associated with army's counter insurgency units of 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 49 Rashtriya Rifles. Besides it, five cops from Police Training School (PTS) Manigam, two from District police lines (DPL) Baramulla and one from DPL Kulgam tested positive for Covid-19, officials said.

The number of confirmed cases has now reached 6,236 out of which 4,840 are in Kashmir, while 1,396 are in Jammu, the officials said.

There are 2,507 active cases of the coronavirus disease in J&K – 1,994 in Kashmir and 513 in Jammu – and 3,642 (2,769 from Kashmir and 873 from Jammu) patients have recovered, according to officials.

The J&K has witnessed 87 Covid-19 (77 from Kashmir, 10 from Jammu) deaths so far.

Woman Delivers Baby...

condemnation from the locals and other patients and their attendants. The mounting public pressure prompted the district authorities to order a probe.

In an order issued today, the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sumbal has been appointed as enquiry officer to probe the alleged medical negligence.

"Sub Divisional Magistrate, Sumbal shall enquire into the incident of delivery of a pregnant lady outside the premises of CHC Sumbal and alleged medical negligence. He shall submit a detailed report in 3 days positively along with concrete recommendations," the order reads.

Rape Accused BJP Panch...

got her statement recorded.

The accused BJP Panch is the resident of Chek Amshipora village of Shopian.

A senior police official said that the accused Panch is evading arrest while four of his associates have been arrested.

"We have constituted a team to nab the accused Panch. He is still absconding. A formal FIR has been registered at police station Hirpora Shopian in this regard," the police official told KNT.

Hideout Busted In Poonch

along with 222 rounds of ammunition was recovered from the hideout.

He said the search operation was launched Monday on a tip-off about the presence of a hideout in the hilly village.

However, no one was arrested during the operation, the officer said.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PHE DIVISION SOPORE

TENDER NOTICE

E- NIT /GIST. E-NIT No. 03 of 06 / 2020, issued under No. 708-34 Date: 20/06/2020

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, J&K Union Territory e-tenders (in Double Cover System) are invited on item wise from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Union Territory Govt., for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Earnest Money (in Rupees)	Cost of T/Doc (in Rupees)	Time of Completion in days	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account	Position of Funds	Provision of AAA
01	Laying and Fitting of 40, 25 mm dia G.I Service Line to Gulabad Arampora for WSS Zaingair. Under Languishing Programme	Rs. 0.16 Lacs	Rs. 320.00	Rs. 50.00	05 Days	30-06-20 11:00 AM	DEE	Languishing	Assured	Accorded

The N.I.T of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

The eligibility criteria for Self Help Group of Engineers for participation in tendering process shall strictly be Governed by the Guidelines for S.H.G of Engineers laid down in the Government Order No. 14-L&E of 2017, dt. 20-02-2017 and Govt. Order No. 49-L&E of 2018 Dated 06/06/2018, and the amendments if any issued from time to time.

Condition for Languishing Programme JKIDFC:

01. Key Construction Material.

For the works under JKIDFC Programme, the key construction material like cement and steel (all sorts) shall have to be arranged by the contractor at his own. The brand of the cement to be used on the work shall be of OPC 43 grade manufactured by JK cements Ltd, or any other brand concerned to be specified by Asstt. Ex. Engineer concerned if non availability of JK Brand whereas steel of all sorts shall have to be obtained from SAIL or any other tested brand to the stratification of the concerned Asstt. Ex. Engineer.

Bids must be uploaded on jktenders.gov.in with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Receipt/e-Challan in favour of Executive Engineer PHE Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money /Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR /Bank Guarantee pledged to Executive Engineer PHE Division Sopore (Tender receiving authority).

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

01	Date of Issue/Uploading of Tender Notice .	22-06-2020 (01:00 pm)
02	Start of Downloading	22-06-2020 (03:00 Pm)
03	Bid Submission Start Date	22-06-2020 (03:00 Pm)
04	Bid submission end date	29-06-2020 (04:00 pm)
05	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	30-06-2020 (11:00 am)

DIPK-2060/20

SD/=Executive Engineer, PHE Division Sopore

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost the RC of my vehicle Maruti Suzuki K-10 Bearing Registration No JK05H-5682 Somewhere. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if any body having any objection int his regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Habibullah Lone S/o Ghulam Rasool Lone R/o Seriguo- Dangerproa Pattan

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE DIVISION KULGAM

E-mail:xenphekgm@gmail.com. Phone/Fax:01932260550

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS

E- NIT No:07/PHEK/2020-21

For & on behalf of President of India , e-tenders are invited (in single cover system) “on item rate basis” from Registered contractors /SHGs whose registration cards are valid in terms of standing rules for the following works:-

SNo	Name of work	Adv. Cost (Rs.in lacs)	Earnest Money	Class of Contract	Time for Compl.	Cost of tender Document	MH of Account
1	Desilting of SR and PST of WSS Khull	0.32	640/=	DEE	07days	50/=	M&R
2	L/F of pipes for raw water main lines of WSS Nassu under languish programme	1.17	2340/=	DEE	15days	200/=	Languish
3	L/F of 150,mm dia DI supply main balance portion at Damhal WSS Damhal under languish	1.76	3520/=	DEE	15days	200/=	-do-

Position of AA : Accorded Position of funds: Demanded

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website:

WWW.jktenders.gov.in

As per the Schedule of dates given below:

I	Publishing date of NIT	22-06-2020	4.00 PM
II	Download start date	22-06-2020	4.00 P.M
III	Bid submission start date	22-06-2020	4.00 P.M
IV	Bid submission end date	29-06-2020	5.00 P.M
IV	Bid opening date	30-06-2020	10.00 A.M

2. Bids must be accompanied by with cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan shown against the each item advertised and credited to MH 0215 –PHE Government Account as per the devised format attached with the NIT and earnest money in the shape of CDR /FDR pledged to the Executive Engineer Spl.PHE Division Kulgam.

10. Other terms and conditions shall be the same as laid down in the PWD form-25 double/tender document.

11. In event of any disruption of any water supply scheme as a consequence of any damage the concerned AEEs shall submit requisite damage report to the Divisional office within 24 hours alongwith geo-tag photographic evidence

12. No action at site shall be initiated prior to information and subject to approval of Executive engineer.

No: PHEK/536-56

Dated: 22 -06-2020

Executive Engineer

Spl.PHE Division Kulgam

DIPK-2063/20

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

JKPCC LTD. MECH UNIT

Brick & Tile Factory Premises, Opposite SRTC Yard, Pampore, Kashmir-192121

Fax No:01933-222273, Email:-dgmmmechSrinagar@jkpsc.com

No: Mech/K/ DATED: / /

Gist of E-NIT NO: JKPCC/MU/K/12 of 2020-21

Issued under endorsement no: Mech/K/346-51, dated: 19-06-2020

On behalf of the Managing Director J&KPCC Ltd. E-tenders are invited from Principle manufacturers/ authorized dealers/ Experienced Firms for Providing and Fixing of Anti Static (conductive/Non Conductive) flooring and providing and laying of self levelling compound etc, at Trauma Hospital Bijbhera.The tenders shall be published on official website <http://jktenders.gov.in> on or before 20/06/2020, 6.00 PM and shall be available for download from 20/06/2020 at 6.00 P.M. to 08/07/2020 6.00 P.M. The bidders are requested to refer to the website for further details.

(Er. Faisal Azmat Shah)

Deputy General Manager,

Mechanical Unit, J K PCC Ltd,

Srinagar.

DIPK-NB-872/20

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

JKPCC LTD. MECH UNIT

Brick & Tile Factory Premises, Opposite SRTC Yard, Pampore, Kashmir-192121

Fax No: Email:-dgmmmechSrinagar@jkpsc.com

No: Mech/K/ DATED: / /

Gist of E-NIT NO: JKPCC/MU/K/13 of 2020-21

Issued under endorsement no: Mech/K/359-64, dated: 19-06-2020

On behalf of the Managing Director J&KPCC Ltd. E-tenders are invited from Reputed/ Registered Firm/ Contractor/Experienced Firmsfor Providing and Laying of M.S “C” Class Piping for Restoration of Fire Fighting System at L.D Hospital, Srinagar.The tenders shall be published on official website <http://jktenders.gov.in> on or before 20/06/2020, 6.00 PM and shall be available for download from 20/06/2020 at 6.00 P.M. to 29/06/2020 6.00 P.M. The bidders are requested to refer to the website for further details.

(Er. Faisal Azmat Shah)

Deputy General Manager,

Mechanical Unit, J K PCC Ltd,

Srinagar.

DIPK-NB-874/20

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

ELECTRIC DIVISION BARAMULLA

Fax No/Tel:- 01952-234241 Tel:-01952-234480 email:- tsedbla@rediffmail.com

e-NIT No:EDB/05 of 2020-21, Dated:19/06/2020

STANDARD BIDDING DOCUMENT AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

a)INVITATION:-

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Jammu and Kashmir UT, e-Tenders are hereby invited from registered A class Electrical Contractors registered with Inspection Agency of KPDCLOr any other relevant Government agency enlisted with CPWD, MES, Railway, DGBRO of appropriate classfor**Rate Contract for the Supply of Store items for the year 2020-21 in respect of Electric Division Baramulla**asper terms, conditions, technical specifications and schedules forming part of this tender specifications and schedules forming part of this tender document.

A	Date & Time of down loading of Standard Bidding	The Standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://jktenders.gov.in
B	Sale of Bid Document (Start)	
C	Sale of Bid Document (End)	
D	Clarifications start date	
E	Clarifications end date	
F	Bid submission (start) (Submission of e tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	
G	Bid submission (end) date & time (Submission of e tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	
H	Online Commercial and Technical e Bid opening date &	
I	Online financial e Bid opening date &time (Only of the Commercial & technical qualified	Will be communicated to the Technical Qualified Bidders
J	of opening of technical & financial e	ELECTRIC DIVISION
K		
L	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit	
M		
N	Position of Funds	

The interestedbidders are requested to submit their offer along with terms, conditions, technical specifications and annexures forming part of this tender document.

1. The Bidders are advised to study the Bidding Document carefully. Submission of e-Bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after site visit, careful study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications.

2. The tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below.

3. The bidders need to upload the proof/cost of e-Bid document as stated in the above table through Demand Draft (Preferably J&K Bank) pledged to **Executive Engineer Electric Division Baramulla, payable at Baramulla**. The scanned copy of the Demand Draft must be enclosed along with the e-Bids but the original Demand Draft should be submitted by all the participants with 2 days from the last date of submission of e Bid in the office of **Executive Engineer Electric Division Baramulla** upon information. No Interest would be payable on Earnest Money deposited.

a. Hard Copy of original instrument of EMD shall be submitted by the lowest bidder to the office of the **Executive Engineer Electric Division Baramulla**.

b. The Financial-bids shall be opened accordingly online on the same Web Site at office of theExecutive Engineer Electric Division Baramulla.

4. The e-Bids will be electronically opened in the presence of bidder’s representatives, who choose to attend at the venue, date and time mentioned in the above table or any subsequent day to the convenience of the Tender Opening Committee. An authority letter of bidder’s representative will be required to be produced.

5. The **Executive Engineer Electric Division Baramulla** reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids/ the e-Bid process without assigning any reason thereof. The decision of **Executive Engineer Electric Division Baramulla** will be final and binding.

6. In the event of date specified for e-Bids opening being declared a holiday then the due date for opening of e-Bids shall be the following working day at the appointed time and place.

7. All the required documents excluding Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded by the e-Bidder electronically in the PDF format, whereas Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded electronically in the same BOQ sheet provided with the SBD.

8. To participate in e-bidding process, bidders have to get ‘Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)’ class III (b) as per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding.

9. L1 will be decided for each item on the basis of lowest rate.

It may be noted that for evaluation purposes the uploaded offer documents will be treated as authentic and final.

SD/=

Executive Engineer,

Electric Division Baramulla

DIPK-NB-860/20

NO: EDB/TO/1393-1404

Date d:19/06/2020

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir

Office of the Deputy Director (HQ), I/C SHTO

Bemina, Srinagar.

Corrigendum for Extension

Subject: Annual Rate Contract for Supply of Filters & Other Auto Electric Items for Ambulances/Vehicles of Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir.

Reference: NIT No. DD/SHTO/e-Tender/ARC-Filters & Other Auto Electric Items/03; Dated: 18.05.2020

In view of poor response to the above referred e-NIT, the same NIT is hereby extended for wide participation. The new critical dates of the above referred e-NIT are as follows:

Sr. No	Description	Date
1	Last date of Submission of Bids Online	03.07.2020 14.00Hrs
2	Bids received up to due date and time will be opened on	04.07.2020 14.00Hrs

Note: All terms and conditions will remain same.

Deputy Director (HQ)

I/C SHTO, Bemina,

Srinagar.

No: DD/SHTO/e-Tender/08/796-97

Dated: 20 /06/2020

DIPK-2017/20

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

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
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI

CALENDAR

02 Zu al-Qa'dah

1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 35
ZUHR	12: 33
ASR	5:33
Magrib	7:49
ISHA	9:31

This Day In History

- 1795- US & Great Britain sign Jay Treaty, 1st US extradition treaty
- 1812-Napoleon Bonaparte's forces invade Russia crossing the Neman River
- 1866 -Second Battle at Custoza: the Austrian Imperial army, joined by the Venetian Army
- decisively defeated the Italian army, despite the Italians' strong numerical advantage.
- 1898- American troops drive Spanish forces from La Guasimas, Cuba
- 1917 -Russian Black Sea fleet mutinies at Sebastopol
- 1922 -Adolf Hitler begins a month long prison sentence for paramilitary operations; he rails
- against the 'Jewish sell-out' of Germany to the Bolsheviks
- 1930- 1st radar detection of planes, Anacostia DC
- 1931- USSR & Afghanistan sign neutrality treaty
- 1932- Coup ends absolute monarchy in Thailand
- 1940- France signs an armistice with Italy during WW II
- 1942- Africa Korps invades Egypt
- 1943- Allies begin 10-day bombing on Hamburg
- 1961-Iraq demands dominion over Kuwait
- 1966 -Period of relative peace following WW II exceeds that following WW I
- 1975- Moon tremor perceived (hit by Taurid meteors)
- 1982- Soyuz T-6 Launch (USSR)
- 1983- 7th Space Shuttle Mission-Challenger 2 lands at Edwards AFB
- 1985-18th Space Shuttle Mission (51-G)-Discovery 5 returns to Earth
- 1997- USAF reports Roswell 's;space aliens'; were dummies
- 2012 -Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood becomes President of Egypt

From KO Archives

Quit Worrying On Hurriyat: PM To Atal

NEW DELHI - Brushing aside the charge that the Government mishandled Hurriyat leaders' visit to ' Pakistan, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has affirmed its commitment to take the Indo-Pak dialogue process forward while ensuring that India's vital interests are fully safeguarded.

Replying lo a letter from former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on June 15. Singh emphasised that there was no room for ambiguity regarding India's position on Jammu and Kashmir in its discussions with Pakistan or actions. "I have reiterated on every possible occasion that there can be no redrawing of boundaries. We have also ruled out any role for a third party — either through intervention or as guarantor or as mediators—in am form." he said in his letter dated June 20 to Vajpayee.

He said that India had consistently held that the dialogue with Pakistan was predicated on its commitment to end cross border terrorism, as outlined in the joint statement of January six 2004. 'The centrality of this position was recently reflected in the Joint Statement released after my meeting with President Musharraf." With regard to the Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan, he said it was not correct to stale that the authorities on the Indian side had mishandled it.

By allowing the Hurriyat leaders to travel beyond Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Islamabad violated the understanding reached between the two countries on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. Drawing Vajpayee s 'attention to the fact that the Hurriyat leaders have regularly met dignitaries from Pakistan visiting India as well as its diplomats in the last four or five years, the Prime Minister said that their track to Pakistan-administered Kashmir using Srinagar-Muzaffarabad was cleared on the basis of agreed procedures. "That Pakistan decided to invite them to visit Islamabad and other cities in Pakistan violated an understanding on these procedures that had been reached between India and Pakistan." Singh said.

He said passports were issued to those Hurriyat leaders who did not possess it and made request for the issue of such documents.

Noting that Hurriyat Conference was one of the groups that is outside the electoral process in Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister said that nevertheless, the Government was willing, to enter into dialogue with such groups provided they agree to abjure the path of violence.

(Kashmir Observer, 24 June, 2005

KASHMIR OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the
Kashmir Observer LLP
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2106304
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
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Flawed Covid-19 strategy

India's coronavirus caseload has jumped to over 450,000, and the death toll has gone up to over 14,000. The daily spike in numbers has now risen to around 15,000. This is happening at a time when the country has decided to open up and live with the pandemic, as now appears the most pragmatic solution. In the first three lockdowns, while the Coronavirus cases kept growing, the economy which was already reeling was hit hard. On Monday Moody's Investors Service projected the Indian economy to shrink 3.1 per cent in 2020. Though it had pegged India's annual growth at 0.2 per cent in April, the prediction was revised following the disruption caused by coronavirus pandemic. Incidentally, Moody's has also taken on board the recent clashes with China on the border which underline rising geopolitical risks in the Asian region.

This state of affairs hardly makes lockdown a sustainable strategy. In hindsight, it is clear the lockdown wasn't a good strategy at all. Its benefit was limited to providing the government time to put in place the healthcare infrastructure to deal with the crisis. But far from doing that the government spent its energies in strengthening the lockdown bringing the businesses to a complete halt. This suddenly deprived the migrant labourers in major cities of their jobs, triggering a massive exodus to that clogged the highways, defeating the purpose of lockdown.

Three months on, while India is among the top five countries with most Coronavirus cases, its economic growth has halted. To borrow the words of the industrialist Rajiv Bajaj, the lockdown has flattened the wrong curve as it has decimated the economy. Now that the government has belatedly woken up to the need to reopen the economy, questions have arisen about its flawed strategy to deal with the pandemic. It followed the Chinese strategy of lockdown blindly and at a far bigger scale by shutting down the entire economy, something that was not advisable for as densely populous a country as India. It solved little as far as arresting the spread of Coronavirus but it brought untold suffering in its wake for the millions of people who lost livelihoods as a result.

Now that the government has gone back to reopening the country, it is clear that the Coronavirus can be fought without sacrificing the economy. It is possible to persuade people to take necessary precautions so that they don't contract virus. At the end of the day, the fight against Coronavirus has to be a people-led effort than the one driven exclusively by the government.

OTHER OPINION

More questions than answers

In effect, it mocked the death of India's 20 soldiers who fell on June 15 trying to push the Chinese military out from the Galwan River valley in eastern Ladakh, although this could not have been Mr Modi's intention.

The PM spoke after his colleagues from the Opposition parties had spoken and was gracious enough to acknowledge their sentiment in standing four square behind the country and its armed forces, but he delivered a shock when he said categorically and explicitly that the Chinese had not entered the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control or occupied any Indian posts.

If this was the case, then what's been all the hullabaloo about in India's military and political circles of late? What was the need for the tension-filled hours long talk between the commander of India's Ladakh-based 14 Corps and his Chinese counterpart on June 6?

Why did the Indian readout of the conversation between our external affairs minister and his Chinese counterpart speak of Chinese intrusion without any hedging? Indeed, why the need of the MEA to urge the Chinese to return to "status quo ante" in Ladakh?

It is a no-brainer that Mr Modi's remarks to Opposition leaders are severely at odds with the MEA statement and the external affairs minister's observations. In that case, should heads roll in the MEA?

More dramatically, should heads roll in the country's higher military command since the top brass too has been committed to facts on the ground and the pith of its observations to the media have shown concern about China's military incursion into the Galwan river valley as well as in the Fingers area of Pangong Lake?

If heads should roll in these precincts, what is the offence that should be attributed to them? Being at odds with the understanding of the PM? Did the national security advisor, who now carries a cabinet rank, and the newly-appointed Chief of Defence Staff, shape the PM's appreciation, or did they not?

These are subjects of critical importance for our national life and are best thrashed out in Parliament at the earliest, and not spun around and rung dry for crass propaganda on friendly television channels, in supine sections of the media, and by the vicious battalions of the ruling party's social media warriors.

It was indeed sad to see the PMO clarification of the PM's original statement speak of "mischievous" elements in characterising those in the Opposition who were surprised by the PM's original narrative.

The clarification strained itself to persuade the country that Mr Modi's words had been in the context of the death of our jawans and an officer in the Galwan riverbed alone.

However, they succeeded in leaving the frightening impression that our soldiers had intruded into China's area (since the PM had said the Chinese had not come into our side). Evidently, the running of the PMO leaves much to be desired.

Deccan Chronicle

Galwan, Galwan Valley and the Great Game

On expedition to Pamir, Charles Murrey and his team lost way in bad weather and treacherous trek. Young RasulGalwan bailed the team out. Murrey was delighted and named the valley after Galwan

MAKHDOOMMOHI-UD-DIN

In early twentieth century, Ladakh and land beyond became fair game for empires: Czarist Russia expanded her frontiers sometimes 20,000 square kilometers a year, knocking at the doors of British India at Pamirs



Popping across screens of TV sets, computers and mobiles, Galwan Valley is making headlines. But few outside Kashmir know how did a valley in distant Ladakh get its Kashmiri name. Galwan, according to lexicologist George A. Grierson defines a caretaker of ponies in mountain pastures. It carries some connotations which have gained wider currency: thief, horse thief, obstreperous, truculent.

So who are the Galwans? Walter R. Lawrence puts them in "inferior races and tribes". Mohammad Ud Din Fouq tries to give them a guise of "race respectability" comparable to the concept of "black respectability" of African-Americans. Lawrence takes recourse to orientalist tropes: "Galwans are the horse keepers considered the descendants of the Dums their dark complexion suggests that they are not of the same race as Kashmiri peasants. Others think the Galwans are the descendants of Tsak tribe. Lawrence further hypothesises: "Originally they (Galwans) earned their livelihood by grazing ponies but as the time went by they found it more remunerative to steal them and eventually developed into established criminal tribe". Continuing his imperial harangue Lawrence further writes: "they (Galwans) achieved notoriety in the days of Pathan rule and when Sikhs took over, the Galwans were terror to the country".

RasulGalwan, who has witnessed some sort of a resurrection following China-India stand-off in Galwan Valley, was a descendant of KhairaGalwan. Khaira, hero of many a legend was caught and hanged by Sikh Governor Colonel Mian Singh ostensibly for his band's depredations. Rambir Singh, Dogra ruler banished Galwans to Bunji, a town in Astor district of Gilgit-Baltistan. Banishing to Bunji, "BunjiLadan, Bunji-Barun" is a Kashmiri idiom now.

how did Galwan Valley get

its name? It has been named after RasulGalwan, guide, trekker, explorer, polymath and writer of the book "Servant of the Sahibs". Galwan was from Arghun community, descendants of mongrels, mixed-race off-springs of Uyghur, Tartar, Kashmir, Pathan, Mughul and Dogra males and local females. Janet Rizvi, a Ladakh expert, makes a sense of this miscegenation in her excellent book, 'Ladakh - Cross Roads of High Asia'. "Long tradition of inter marriages dating back to the days of caravan trade when its (Leh) bazaar was home to a colony of foreign merchants and local Buddhist girls are the basis of Arghun community," Rizvi writes.

Competitive expansionism of three contesting empires, British India, Czarist Russia and Chinese put some bulwarks on trade across a vast land mass of Ladakh, Central Asia, Tibet and plains of Indian subcontinent. Unraveling national boundaries pushed up the geostrategic stakes of Ladakh. Rizvi gives the feel of expansive profile of the landscape known for treacherous ruggedness and mountain ranges, some of which cup up Galwan Valley. "Such is the complexity of the system and such the godforsaken barrenness of vast and remote expanses that the imperialist map makers of the nineteenth century had the utmost difficulty in fixing on the line of Ladakh's border with the lands beyond; present alignment seems to have come about more by the accident than by design. Since the mid-1950 the Chinese have been in defacto possession of huge swathe of Aksai Chin, which for them forms the vital line of communication between Sinkiang and Tibet".

In early twentieth century, Ladakh and land beyond became fair game for empires: Czarist Russia expanded her frontiers sometimes 20,000 square kilometers a year, knocking at the doors of British India at Pamirs. This colonial and strategic confrontation called 'The Great Game' was immortalized in Rudyard Kipling's novel Kim. The

spoons of the travelers and traders, monks and missionaries, adventurers and explorers, aggressors and invaders, seated and settled can be smelt and seen in Ladakh and beyond. Imprints and inscriptions, engravings and epitaphs in the languages as diverse as Brahmi, Sanskrit, Kharoshthi, Chinese, Tibeti, Sharda and Arabic at Khapalo, Khaltese, Tangshe, Chilas, Gilgit, Hunza brings out mixing and meeting of cultures, cuisines, costumes and traditions in bold relief.

Much earlier before Dogra rulers were coerced into accepting Officers on Special Duty and Residents, a steady stream of British adventurers and explorers made forays into Ladakh and Tibet. William Moorcraft, a veterinary surgeon with East India Company set off on an arduous trek in 1819 to Ladakh, Kabul and Bokhara. Moorcraft tried his hand in the politics of Ladakh. John Company was annoyed. Spurned Moorcraft died a stoic death. Dr. Henderson was known in north India for his wanderlust and venturing into unknown. He entered Ladakh from Skardu and spent three months in prison. "The great little man of Kashmir" C.E. Tyndall Biscoe went to Ladakh with Dr. Ernest Neve. Captain Chereneux Trench Commissioner of Ladakh enabled their 1896 visit.

RasulGalwan trekked with Francis Younghusband to central Asia in 1890. Charles Murrey, Earl of Dunmore travelled to Pamir with Galwan. Younghusband and Murrey were tasked with the mission to report on the movement of Russian army. Galwan valley shot into headlines in 1962 India-China war. Radio made it popular then. On his expedition to Pamir, Murrey and his team lost way in bad weather and treacherous trek. Young RasulGalwan bailed the team out. Swashbuckler, Murrey was delighted and named valley after Galwan.

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Our widows need helping hand

World Widows' Day is observed to remind ourselves of the need to work for full rights of widows and take steps to end violence, discrimination and poverty suffered by them. The ultimate goal of the day is to develop resources and policies to empower widows and allow them to build a life for themselves and their children, following the death of their husbands. Women often find themselves without support when their husbands die. They also find themselves denied of inheritance and land rights and sometimes are evicted from their homes, ostracised and abused. The children of widows are also affected: they are more susceptible to abuse, especially the girl-child.

Every year on June 23, World Widows' Day is observed with the only aim to raise awareness about the hu-

man rights violation that widows face in many countries across the globe.

In Kashmir, the observance of this day reminds us of the pathetic condition of this depressed class of society: the women who have become widows due to one or the other reason. Here, the causes are many. The war-torn state of the valley has left thousands of widows in its wake. According to some reports, there are over 32,000 widows and 97,000 orphans in violence battered J&K. The unending conflict in the erstwhile state is making things worse for the vulnerable sections of society. The widows and orphans, whose numbers have increased drastically since 1989, have not received adequate help from the government or NGOs. Neither the government nor the NGOs have been able to help them in an organised and systematic manner.

The tragic aspect of the situa-

tion is that the union territory has not adopted any specific social policy and programme in this regard. The problems widows accumulate and intensify day by day. Individuals, society, community and the state must share responsibilities in terms of programmes.

In addition to the large chunk of the women who have become widows during the thirty years of the armed conflict, there are thousands of women who are referred to as 'half widows'. The term 'HalfWidow' is exclusively addressed to the Kashmiri women whose husbands have been missing for decades. Thousands of the men have disappeared during the conflict. The result is that their wives find themselves in mental trauma because they do not know whether their husbands are alive or not. Most of the widows have not married due to the

doubt about their husbands' fate. The failure of the society and government to help these women has compounded their sufferings. Along with the plight of thousands of orphans, the children of half widows who are affected deeply by the conflict, adds more to the crises. Most of the widows are suffering from depression, phobia, traumatic disorders and emotional instability.

This day should be considered as an opportunity for action towards achieving full rights for widows, to provide them a fair share of their inheritance, pension, social protection, education and training opportunities. At mohalla and village level also, the well off persons must come forward and form welfare committees at their respective villages.

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Gordian Knot In Enterprise

What’s Happening To Kashmir-Based Startups?

SWATI JOSHI

“The lockdown implemented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the onslaught of the pandemic on March 25 this year badly dented startup sector. According to a survey by Nasscom, the technology industry body, 40 percent of 250 startups across India have halted their operations, while 92 percent of startups experienced some level of revenue decline.

WHEN panic-buying triggered by doctors’ fervent appeals for healthy diet gripped the valley early this year, Mir Saeid, co-founder of Kashmirnica, suddenly saw his dream venture becoming a sunshine startup. This incredible rise came when the virus was sending body bags to cemeteries and forcing people to boost up their bodily response to resist the viral attack.

It was in this backdrop that immunity-boosting foodstuffs saw surged sales.

“Food material like saffron suddenly witnessed high demand,” says Saeid, whose e-commerce platform deals with Kashmir’s luxury handicrafts, art, and culturally-driven products. “It certainly infused a new life in the sector which otherwise had its own niche customers.”

But then, one shallow doesn’t make a summer.

While merchants of the food sector were making hay while the sun was shining, it was a sombre sunset for many startups — tumbling and heading towards closure.

The lockdown implemented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the onslaught of the pandemic on March 25 this year badly dented startup sector.

According to a survey by Nasscom, the technology industry body, 40 percent of 250 startups across India have halted their operations, while 92 percent of startups experienced some level of revenue decline.

Despite surged sales, Saeid and Co. faced impediments in product delivery process in the locked down valley.

While Kashmirnica fed supplies to the stores in Kerala and Delhi, it couldn’t do so in Kashmir.

Mir Saeid

“Till now,” he says, “product delivery mechanism is not feasible in Kashmir. The only viable option is India Post.”

Though India Post has a huge network, Saeid says, the services provided by them are more inclined to personal items rather than business.

Due to these practical hitches, sales in various startups nosedived during the pandemic lockdown.

But the more blatant crisis was seen in textile-based startups, currently suffering from order cancellation, pending payment to artisans, unavailability of raw materials and low demands.

Unlike many manufacturers, Aaditya Kitroo, co-founder of Jos&fine, had asked his artisans to work from home after reassembling handlooms there.

“We ensured our production continues without any hassle,” Kitroo says. “However, that’s not being of much use.”

Demand has gone down, he says, and half of the looms are not running. But, he asserts, he’s paying the artisans a working amount for subsistence.

Aaditya Kitroo

“But we’re not getting into production as of now,” the self-starter says. “If production begins at this stage, we would’ve inventory on our hand which is quite difficult to handle right now.”

The more important thing for their business, Kitroo says, is to make sure that they’re not in a position where they’ve to fire people.

“But sadly, we’re getting close to that [disengaging workforce],” continues the cofounder.

Before the back-to-back Kashmir lockdowns, he says, last year by June, they had finalized the order and the winter production was already underway.

But currently, only the first stage of production has finished, Kitroo continues. “I don’t think 2020 is going to be a good year for startups.”

According to him, next year, the Indian market will start picking up some lost threads, but it’ll take two-three years for the market to bounce back.

“A person will only indulge in luxury products



Streets might be witnessing desperate footfall during the present ‘unlock’ phase, but uncertain markets and unsure status of the valley-based startups are only making it a deceptive rush bereft of the promised growth.

when he’s in a good mood,” opines Kitroo, who sells expensive shawls and other merchandise. “But sooner or later, we’ll witness personal prospects of growth.”

But while the rest of the world is currently grappling with the first lockdown, it’s a lockdown within a lockdown for Kashmir, says Anam Siraj, owner of Closet Cloud by Anam, a self-made fashion brand.

Anam Siraj

As Kashmiris mostly found themselves under curbs since August 5, 2019, when New Delhi struck down Article 370 which gave semi-autonomous status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, the local industry mostly found itself under a lock and key, Siraj says.

“My store was largely closed after the August lockdown,” she says. “Even online work was not possible as deliveries were stopped.”

The owner is quite skeptical about her store re-opening, as she doesn’t want to sit idle there.

These days, when she’s not taking online orders, Siraj looks after bank installments, rent and employee’s salary.

“These are the costs we’ve to pay in Kashmir for no work,” she grins. “Wish we could come out of these enforced situations to breathe easy and feel some life!”

Like Siraj, Ubair Shah is equally paying through his nose for running a startup in the lockdown-plagued valley.

An orchardist with a twist, Shah is now mulling to rebrand his startup by feeding his fresh farm produce directly to local consumers, rather than exploring new buyers and markets.

After Covid-19 lockdown disrupted the overall fruit production supply chain in Kashmir, the likes of Shah started rising above the traditional methods of marketing, wherein they would transport their produce to outside markets.

The orchardist stresses that the pandemic has

hugely impacted local farmers because they cannot find buyers for their produce and have to sell it at marginal prices.

Ubair Shah

“There was a very limited demand for fruits especially apples stored in cold storage this year,” Shah says.

The young Kashmiri is a co-founder of Efruit Mandi — an online platform to connect farmers directly to the buyers.

“In a place like Kashmir,” Shah continues, “one has to resort to available options to safeguard one’s startup based on lot of love and efforts.”

While many of these new-age self-starters of Kashmir are today finding themselves at the crossroads due to the recurrent lockdowns in their homeland, the traditional tourism players are silently witnessing a steep fall of their prospects.

But despite the crisis situation in the sector, Irfan Mir was quite hopeful when he started his trekking and tour company Woodswalk Treks and Tour after completing his graduation.

All his hopes, however, ended in despair.

Irfan Mir

Mir had bookings for March 2020, but they were canceled because of the pandemic. He had to refund the amount, and approximately lost Rs. 2 lakhs in a single month.

“Last year I had bookings till August,” says Mir. “But because of the abrogation of Article 370, everything was canceled and I didn’t earn a single penny.”

Mir’s only source of income is tourism and his savings are going to end soon. Owing to the loss in his business, the young man has to curtail on many things.

“Life is not the same in Kashmir now,” he laments. “A person like me today has to think twice before buying anything.”

Lessons from the Great Global Lockdown

GITA GOPINATH

THE Great Lockdown is expected to play out in three phases, first as countries enter the lockdown, then as they exit, and finally as they escape the lockdown when there is a medical solution to the pandemic. Many countries are now in the second phase, as they reopen, with early signs of recovery, but with risks of second waves of infections and re-imposition of lockdowns. Surveying the economic landscape, the sheer scale and severity of the Global Lockdown are striking. Most tragically, this pandemic has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives worldwide. The resulting economic crisis is unlike anything the world has seen before.

This is a truly global crisis. Past crises, as deep and severe as they were, remained confined to smaller segments of the world, from Latin America during the 1980s to Asia in the 1990s. Even the global financial crisis 10 years ago had more modest effects on global output.

For the first time since the Great Depression, both advanced and emerging market economies will be in recession in 2020. The forthcoming June World Economic Outlook Update is likely to show negative growth rates even worse than previously estimated. This crisis will have devastating consequences for the world’s poor.

Aside from its unprecedented scale, the Global Lockdown is playing out in ways that are very different from past crises. These unusual characteristics are emerging all over the world, irrespective of the size, geographic region, or production structure of economies.

First, this crisis has dealt a uniquely large blow to the services sector. In typical crises, the brunt is borne by manufacturing, reflecting a decline in investment, while the effect on services is generally muted as consumption demand is less affected. This time is different. In the peak months of the lockdown the contraction in services has been even larger than in manufacturing, and it is seen in advanced and emerging market economies alike. There are exceptions - like Sweden and Taiwan Province of China, which adopted a different approach to the health crisis, with limited government containment measures and a consequently proportionately smaller hit to services vis-à-vis manufacturing.

It is possible that with pent-up consumer demand there will be a quicker rebound, unlike after previous crises. However, this is not guaranteed in a health crisis as consumers may change spending behavior to minimize social interaction, and uncertainty can lead households to save more. In the case of China, one of the early exiters from lockdown, the recovery of the services sector lags manufacturing as such services as hospitality and travel struggle to regain demand. Of particular concern is the long-term impact on economies that rely significantly on such services-for example, tourism-dependent economies.

Second, despite the large supply shocks unique to this crisis, except for food inflation, we have thus far seen, if anything, a decline in inflation and inflation expectations pretty much across the board in both advanced and emerging market economies. Despite the considerable conventional and unconventional monetary and fiscal support across the globe, aggregate demand remains subdued and is weighing on in-

flation, alongside lower commodity prices. With high unemployment projected to stay for a while, countries with monetary policy credibility will likely see small risks of spiraling inflation.

Third, we see striking divergence of financial markets from the real economy, with financial indicators pointing to stronger prospects of a recovery than real activity suggests. Despite the recent correction, the S&P 500 has recouped most of its losses since the start of the crisis; the FTSE emerging market index and Africa index are substantially improved; the Bovespa rose significantly despite the recent surge in infection rates in Brazil; and portfolio flows to emerging and developing economies have stabilized.

With few exceptions, the rise in sovereign spreads and the depreciation of emerging market currencies are smaller than what we saw during the global financial crisis. This is notable considering the larger scale of the shock to emerging markets during the Great Lockdown.

This divergence may portend greater volatility in financial markets. Worse health and economic news can lead to sharp corrections. We will have more to say about this divergence in our forthcoming Global Financial Stability Report.

One likely factor behind this divergence is the stronger policy response during this crisis. Monetary policy has become accommodative across the board, with unprecedented support from major central banks, and monetary easing in emerging markets including through first time use of unconventional policies.

Discretionary fiscal policy has been sizable in advanced economies. Emerging markets have deployed smaller fiscal support, constrained to some extent by

limited fiscal space. Furthermore, a unique challenge confronting emerging markets this time around is that the informal sector, typically a shock absorber, has not been able to play that role under containment policies and has instead required support. We are now in the early stages of the second phase as many countries begin to ease containment policies and gradually permit the resumption of economic activity. But there remains profound uncertainty about the path of the recovery.

A key challenge in escaping the Great Lockdown will be to ensure adequate production and distribution of vaccines and treatments when they become available-and this will require a global effort. For individual countries, minimizing the health uncertainty by using the least economically disruptive approaches such as testing, tracing, and isolation, tailored to country-specific circumstances with clear communication about the path of policies, should remain a priority to strengthen confidence in the recovery. As the recovery progresses, policies should support the reallocation of workers from shrinking sectors to sectors with stronger prospects.

The IMF, in coordination with other international organizations, will continue to do all it can to ensure adequate international liquidity, provide emergency financing, support the G20 debt service suspension initiative, and help countries maintain a manageable debt burden. The IMF will also provide advice and support through surveillance and capacity development, to help disseminate best practices, as countries learn from each other during this unprecedented crisis.

Khaleej Times

ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND HUGE Ring Of Ancient Shafts Near Stonehenge

“WHEN THESE PITS WERE FIRST NOTED IT WAS THOUGHT they might be natural features — solution hollows in the chalk,” he said. But geophysical surveys allowed scientists to “join the dots and see there was a pattern on a massive scale.”



Agencies

Archaeologists have said that they have discovered a major prehistoric monument under the earth near Stonehenge that could shed new light on the origins of the mystical stone circle in southwestern England. Experts from a group of British

universities led by the University of Bradford say the site consists of at least 20 huge shafts, more than 10 meters (32 feet) in diameter and 5 meters (16 feet) deep, forming a circle more than 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) in diameter.

The new find is at Durrington Walls, the site of a Neolithic

village about 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from Stonehenge.

Researchers say the shafts appear to have been dug around 4,500 years ago, and could mark the boundary of a sacred area or precinct around a circular monument known as the Durrington Walls henge.

Richard Bates, of the University of St. Andrews School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, said the findings -- made with remote sensing and sampling -- provided “an insight to the past that shows an even more complex society than we could ever imagine.”

University of Bradford archaeologist Vince Gaffney said it was “remarkable” that Stonehenge, one of the most studied archaeological landscapes in the world, could yield such a major new discovery.

“When these pits were first noted it was thought they might be natural features — solution hollows in the chalk,” he said. But geophysical surveys allowed sci-

entists to “join the dots and see there was a pattern on a massive scale.”

Britain is dotted with stone circles build thousands of years ago for reasons that remain mysterious.

The most famous is Stonehenge, a huge monument built between 3000 B.C. and 1600 B.C.

that is one of Britain's most popular tourist attractions.

It's also a spiritual home for thousands of druids and mystics who visit at the summer and winter solstices -- though this weekend's summer solstice celebrations were scuttled by a ban on mass gatherings because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Critically Ill Covid-19 Patients 10 Times More Likely To Develop Heart Rhythm Disorders: Study

Press Trust Of India

COVID-19 patients who are admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU) may be ten times more likely than others hospitalised with the viral infection to suffer cardiac arrest or heart rhythm disorders, according to a new study which may help better protect those most vulnerable to the disease. Researchers, including those from the University of Pennsylvania in the US, said cardiac arrests and heartbeat rhythm disturbances suffered by some patients with COVID-19 are likely triggered by a severe, systemic form of the disease, and are and not the sole consequence of the viral infection. The findings, published in the Heart Rhythm Journal, differ significantly from early reports which showed a high incidence of arrhythmias among all COVID-19 patients, according to the scientists.

They said the results provide more clarity about the role of the novel coronavirus, SARS-COV-2, and the disease it causes, COVID-19, in the development of arrhythmias, including irregular heart rate, slow heart rhythms, or rapid heart rate that stops by itself within 30 seconds.

“In order to best protect and treat patients who develop COVID-19, it's critical for us to improve our understanding of how the disease affects various organs and pathways within our body -- including our heart rhythm abnormalities,” said study senior author Rajat Deo from the University of Pennsylvania. “Our findings suggest that non-cardiac causes such as systemic infection, inflammation, and illness are likely to contribute more to the occurrence of cardiac arrest and arrhythmias than damaged or infected heart cells due to the viral infection,” Deo said.

Earlier studies had suggested that COVID-19 is associated with a high incidence of cardiac arrhythmias, particularly among critically ill patients



with early reports indicating that 44 per cent of patients admitted to the ICU suffered heartbeat rhythm disturbances. According to the researchers, heart rhythm problems occur when electrical impulses that coordinate heartbeats don't work properly, causing the heart to beat too fast, too slow, or irregularly. If left untreated, they said cardiac arrhythmias can lead to serious medical conditions, including stroke and cardiac arrest -- the abrupt loss of heart function.

In the study, the scientists evaluated the risk and incidence of cardiac arrest and arrhythmias among 700 hospitalised patients with COVID-19. They assessed the clinical records for patient demographics, and medical comorbidities such as heart disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease, and recorded patient vitals, test results, and treatment. According to the study, the patients had a mean age of 50 years. The researchers identified a total of 53 arrhythmic events

-- nine patients who suffered cardiac arrest, 25 patients with atrial fibrillation who required treatment, nine patients with clinically significant slow heart rhythms, and 10 people who had rapid heart rate that stopped by itself within 30 seconds. Of the 700 patients hospitalised, they said about 11 per cent were admitted to the ICU. None of the other hospitalised patients suffered a cardiac arrest, the study noted. On controlling for underlying demographic and clinical factors, the scientists found that cardiac arrest and arrhythmias were more likely to occur among patients in an ICU compared to the other hospitalised patients.

Citing the limitations of the study, they said the analysis was conducted from a single centre serving a large urban population.

“More research is needed to assess whether the presence of cardiac arrhythmias have long-term health effects on patients who were hospitalised for COVID-19,” Deo said.

Remdesiver, Favipiravir 'No Game Changers' In Covid Fight, Say Medical Experts

Press Trust Of India

With pharmaceutical companies launching generic versions of Remdesivir and Favipiravir for COVID-19 treatment, medical experts on Monday said it was a “positive development” in the fight against the pandemic, but cautioned against regarding the antiviral drugs as “game-changers”.

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has launched the antiviral drug Favipiravir, under the brand name FabiFlu, for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 cases, while Cipla and Hetero have received approvals from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to launch Remdesivir under the brand names Cipremi and Covifor respectively.

Cipla Ltd on Sunday announced the launch of Cipremi.

Dr Sanjay Rai, Professor at the Centre for Community Medicine, AIIMS Delhi, said till date no effective treatment or vaccine to combat coronavirus has been found.

“Till date, we don't have evidence that a particular drug is effective, so we cannot call any drug game-changer till then. With their launch, it will only be clear in the future how effective they will be. Whether they can play a supportive role in CO-

VID-19 treatment is also not yet known,” he told PTL.

Dr Vikas Maurya, Director, Department of Pulmonology and Sleep Disorders, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, said drugs like Remdesivir and Favipiravir were “no game-changers” as they were used for other diseases and have now been found useful in some way in treating COVID-19 patients.

“It is not as if all those taking these drugs will recover,” he told PTL.

It has been found that they help reduce viral load but are not game-changers, Maurya said.

“But yes, it is a positive development as it is better to have something in hand than nothing. There is also a psychological impact that something is being given which could have some benefit,” he said.

Dr Rommel Tickoo, Associate Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, also echoed Maurya's views.

Whatever studies that have been done on these drugs are very limited so they cannot be called “game changers”, but their launch is a positive development as it is better to have something than nothing, he said.

“On both the drugs we have limited data, whatever evidence we have is mostly anecdotal. There is no specific treatment



improve or not,” he said.

“It is definitely a positive development that we will be using antivirals, but it is not a game-changer as that term can be used for something which you give and the patient recovers,” Kumar told PTL.

Drug firm Hetero had on Sunday said it has received approval from regulator DCGI to launch investigational antiviral drug Remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19.

The drug will be available in 100 mg vials (injectable) which have to be administered intravenously in a hospital setting under the supervision of a healthcare practitioner, it said.

Asked about the price of the drug, Hetero Group of Companies MD Vamsi Krishna Bandi told PTL it will be in the range of Rs 5,000-6,000 per dose.

The drug has been granted approval by DCGI for the treatment of suspected or laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in adults and children, hospitalised with severe symptoms of the disease, the company said.

Cipla has also said that it has been granted regulatory approval by the DCGI for restricted emergency use in the country as part of the accelerated approval process considering the urgent and unmet medical need.

Urine Test Reveals Quality Of Your Diet And Whether It's The Best Fit For Your Body: Study

Agencies

LONDON - In a recent study, scientists have completed large-scale tests on a new type of five-minute urine test that measures the health of a person's diet, and produces an individual's unique urine ‘fingerprint’.

Scientists at Imperial College London in collaboration with colleagues at Northwestern University, University of Illinois, and Murdoch University, analysed levels of 46 different so-called metabolites in the urine of 1,848 people in the U.S.

Metabolites are considered to be an objective indicator of diet quality - and are produced as different foods are digested by the body, say the research team, who published their findings in the journal Nature Food.

The work was funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and Health Data Research UK. Dr Joram Posma, author of the research from Imperial's Department of Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction said “Diet is a key contributor to human health and disease, though it is notoriously difficult

to measure accurately because it relies on an individual's ability to recall what and how much they ate. For instance, asking people to track their diets through apps or diaries can often lead to inaccurate reports about what they really eat. This research reveals this technology can help provide in-depth information on the quality of a person's diet, and whether it is the right type of diet for their individual biological make-up.”

The findings revealed an association between 46 metabolites in urine, and types of foods

or nutrients in the diet. For instance, certain metabolites correlated with alcohol intake, while others were linked to intake of citrus fruit, fructose (fruit sugar), glucose and vitamin C. The team also found metabolites in urine associated with dietary intake of red meats, other meats such as chicken, and nutrients such as calcium. Certain metabolites were also linked with health conditions - for instance compounds found in urine such as formate and sodium (an indicator of salt intake) are linked with obesity and high blood pressure.

Initial COVID-19 infection rate in US may be 80 times

Agencies

Washington: The number of early COVID-19 cases in the US may have been more than 80 times greater, and likely doubled nearly twice as fast as originally believed, according to a study which says the undercounting may have been due to testing issues, and the prevalence of asymptomatic individuals.

In the study, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, the scien-

verman, study co-author from the Pennsylvania State (Penn State) University in the US.

“When you subtract these out, you’re left with what we’re calling excess ILI—cases that can’t be explained by either influenza, or the typical seasonal variation of respiratory pathogens,” Silverman explained.

The study noted that the excess ILI showed a nearly perfect correlation with the spread of COVID-19 around the country.

“This suggests that ILI



tists estimated the detection rate of symptomatic COVID-19 cases using the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) influenza-like illnesses (ILI) surveillance data over a three week period in March 2020.

“We analyzed each state’s ILI cases to estimate the number that could not be attributed to influenza, and were in excess of seasonal baseline levels,” explained Justin Sil-

data is capturing COVID cases, and there appears to be a much greater undiagnosed population than originally thought,” Silverman said.

According to the scientists, the size of the observed surge of excess ILI corresponds to more than 8.7 million new cases during the last three weeks of March, compared to the roughly 1,00,000 cases that were officially reported during the same time period.

Saudi’s Game Of Thrones: Pressure grows to release jailed prince

Agencies

London: A \$2 million US lobbying effort and petitions from European lawmakers are piling pressure on Saudi Arabia to release a philanthropist prince jailed for two years without charge amid an intensifying royal crackdown.

The detention of Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz and his father since January 2018 is part of a clampdown under de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that has ensnared not just potential rivals but also figures posing no visible challenge to his hold on power.

The dangerous power plays have also swept up family members of Saad Aljabri, a former aide to another detained prince and top intelligence official, who fled to Canada and holds key state secrets.

The most unlikely target is Prince Salman, a multilingual 37-year-old educated at Paris’s Sorbonne University, who apparently espoused no political ambitions and earned a reputation of being a “walking blank check” for funding development projects in poor countries.

“This is not just an unlawful arrest,” an associate of the prince told AFP. “This is daylight kidnapping. This is a forced disappearance.”

After being detained for around a year in the high-security Al-Ha’ir prison near Riyadh and later in a private villa with his father Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, the prince was moved to a secret detention site in March, multiple sources told AFP.

He was mysteriously returned to the villa last week to be reunited with his father, three of those sources said.

It remains unclear why he was moved to the secret site. His telephone calls to his family are monitored by Saudi intelligence, the sources said.

But his return may be a tentative sign that international pressure for his release is working. Saudi authorities did not respond to a request for comment on the case.



A picture made available on May 30, 2020, by a friend of Saudi Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz shows him (left) with Portugal’s Prime Minister Antonio Costa in the capital Lisbon in 2017.



Saudi To Allow Around 1,000 Pilgrims To Perform Haj, Says Minister

Agencies

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia will allow around 1,000 pilgrims residing in the kingdom to perform Haj this year, a minister said on Tuesday, after it announced the ritual would be scaled back due to coronavirus.

“The number of pilgrims will be around 1,000, maybe less, maybe a little more,” Haj Minister Mohammad Benteen told reporters.

“The number won’t be in tens or hundreds of thousands” this year, he added.

The pilgrimage, scheduled for the end of July, will be limited to those below 65 years of age and with no chronic illnesses, Health Minister Tawfiq al-Rabiah said.

The pilgrims will be tested for coronavirus before arriving in the holy city of Makkah and will be required to quar-

“The number of pilgrims will be around 1,000, maybe less, maybe a little more

antine at home after the ritual, Rabiah added.

Saudi Arabia announced on Monday it would hold a “very limited” Haj this year, as it moves to curb the biggest coronavirus outbreak in the Gulf.

It said the ritual will be open to people of various nationalities already in the kingdom.

The decision marks the first time in Saudi Arabia’s modern history that Muslims outside the kingdom have been barred from performing Haj, which last year drew 2.5 million pilgrims.

Benteen did not specify how the pilgrims will be selected. But he said the government will work with various diplomatic missions in the kingdom to select foreign pilgrims residing in Saudi Arabia who fit the health criteria.

The annual Haj typically packs millions of pilgrims into congested religious sites and could be a major source of contagion.

The decision comes as Saudi Arabia grapples with a major spike in infections, which have now risen to more than 161,000 cases — the highest in the Gulf — with more than 1,300 deaths.

But the move to scale back the five-day event is fraught with political and economic peril and comes after several Muslim countries pulled out of the ritual that forms one of the main pillars of Islam.

US designates ‘Global Times’, 3 other Chinese outlets as foreign missions

Agencies

Washington: Ramping up its measures against China’s state-owned media outlets, the Donald Trump administration on Monday designated four major Chinese outlets as “foreign missions”. The designation means the outlets will be treated as being akin to diplomatic missions and not media agencies.

The four outlets are China Central Television, China News Service, the People’s Daily and the Global Times. The Global Times, considered as being Beijing’s mouthpiece for a global audience, had come into focus in India over the past month for its shrill rhetoric on the Ladakh standoff. The Global Times had published multiple articles in recent weeks highlighting new Chinese weaponry, detailing military exercises and even warning India of humiliation in a conflict.

The action against the Global Times and the three outlets means that they will be required “to submit a list of everyone who works for them in the US and any real estate holdings”, Associated Press reported. While no journalist of

these outlets has been asked to leave the US, a similar action against five Chinese outlets in February saw a cap being placed on the number of staff that the outlets could have in the US.

The US reduced the number of journalists allowed for the five outlets to 100 from around 160. Those five outlets

nary foreign media.”

In its notification of the move on Monday, the US State Department said, “These nine entities all meet the definition of a foreign mission under the Foreign Missions Act, which is to say that they are ‘substantially owned or effectively controlled’ by a foreign government. In this case, they

“Four organisations are essentially mouthpieces for the Chinese Communist Party and the government and should not be treated like ordinary foreign media

were Xinhua News Agency, China Global Television Network, China Radio International, China Daily Distribution Corporation and Hai Tian Development USA. Following the US move in February, China responded by expelling reporters of The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and Washington Post.

“State Department officials said the four organisations are essentially mouthpieces for the Chinese Communist Party and the government and should not be treated like ordi-

are effectively controlled by the government of the People’s Republic of China.”

“The decision to designate these entities is not based on any content produced by these entities, nor does it place any restrictions on what the designated entities may publish in the United States. It simply recognises them for what they are. Entities designated as foreign missions must adhere to certain administrative requirements that also apply to foreign embassies and consulates in the United States.”

Iran to establish permanent military base in Indian Ocean: report

Agencies

BEIRUT, LEBANON: The Iranian Revolutionary Guard announced its intention to establish a permanent military base in the Indian Ocean by next March, with the aim of providing security in the waters of the Gulf of Oman and the ocean, and protecting fishermen and merchant ships from piracy.

The commander of the Naval Forces, Ali Reza Tungsiri, said that the Guards have di-

and Revolutionary Guards have previously sent fleets to the high seas, stressing that other future fleets will be sent.

The military official pointed out that Iranian fishermen and merchant ships were exposed to harassment by pirates in the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean, stressing that the permanent presence of the guards in those areas would prevent any future attacks.

It is noteworthy to mention that Iran possesses the strategic port of Chabahar on the



rectives from Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, to be present on the high seas permanently.

In a press statement, Tungsiri said that the Iranian Army

waters of the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman, but its development suffers from difficulties due to the U.S. sanctions on Tehran.

Israel will help Gulf nations confront Iran: Israeli intel chief



Agencies

BEIRUT, LEBANON: The Israeli Intelligence Minister Eli Cohen said his country’s intelligence ability and cooperation with the Gulf states in confronting Iran, and pledged Israel’s support to neighboring countries in confronting Iranian ambitions.

In an interview with the Elaph newspaper, Cohen said that Israel is ready to provide every piece of information that would stop the Iranian attacks on the Gulf states, and that cooperation is taking place in this regard, without revealing more than that.

The Israeli minister stressed the importance of Israel standing in the front-lines with the United States to confront Iran, and claimed that this matter is what prevents Iran from attacking the Gulf countries.

He said Israel is harnessing all its capabilities, even military, to prevent a nuclear Iran.

He continued: “I believe that the power of Israel and the United States is to ensure stability in the region, and I know

that Iran would have taken hostile steps towards some of its neighbors had it not been for the existence of Israel and its activity in the face of Iran.”

Cohen said Iran is attempting to position its forces across the Middle East, citing Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, and Yemen as examples.

He pointed out that those who pay a high price for this intervention are the citizens of those innocent countries, where instability can be seen in those countries where Iran is expanding, as seen in the economic collapse in Lebanon.

He cited the Lebanese people, for example, saying that “they do not want to confront the State of Israel, as they, like the rest of the people, love life, economic prosperity, and the development of tourism and trade.”

He pointed out that “Iranian threats to its neighbors make it clear to the Gulf states and other Arab countries who the real enemy is and who is the true partner, and without doubt there are common interests that bring together the Gulf states with Israel to deepen security and economic cooperation.”

NEWS MAKERS

China launches final satellite to complete rival to GPS

Beijing: China on Tuesday launched the final satellite in its home-grown geolocation system designed to rival the US GPS network, marking a major step in its race for market share in the lucrative sector.

Footage from state broadcaster CCTV of the launch in southwestern Sichuan province showed the rocket blast off against a backdrop of lush mountains as a small group of onlookers filmed on their phones.

The launch of the BeiDou-3GEO3 satellite from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center was originally scheduled for last Tuesday but was delayed over unspecified “technical issues,” China’s space agency said.

Completing the satellite network makes China a key player in the billion-dollar geolocation services market, observers said.



BeiDou — named after the Chinese term for the plough or “Big Dipper” constellation — is intended to rival the US’s Global Positioning System (GPS), Russia’s GLONASS and the European Union’s Galileo.

“I think the BeiDou-3 system being operational is a big event,” Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer at the Harvard-Smithsonian

Center for Astrophysics, told AFP.

“This is a big investment from China and makes China independent of US and European systems.”

China started building its global navigation system in the early 1990s to help cars, fishing boats and military tankers navigate using mapping data from the country’s own satellites.

Now the service can be used on millions of mobile phones to find nearby restaurants, petrol stations or cinemas, to guide taxis and missiles and fly unmanned drones.

The coverage provided by BeiDou, which has been in commercial use since 2012, was first limited to the Asia-Pacific region, but worldwide service has been available since 2018.

The system works on a network of about 30 satellites.

Protesters Try To Topple Former US President’s Statue Outside White House

Washington: A crowd of protesters tried to topple the statue of a former US president near the White House Monday evening as police responded with pepper spray to break up new demonstrations that erupted in Washington.

A wave of nationwide rallies calling for racial justice has swept the United States since the May 25 death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

On Monday, hundreds of protesters were pushed back by at least 100 security force personnel after they had thrown ropes around the statue of Andrew Jackson, the divisive seventh US president, in Lafayette Park.

The word “killer” had been spray-painted on the stone plinth, according to an AFP reporter at the scene. Jackson, in office from 1829 to 1837, owned more than 500 slaves over the course of his life and was a key figure in the forced relocation of at least 60,000 Native Americans, otherwise known as the Trail of Tears.

As New York reopens, a \$1000-per-cut hair salon has waitlist of 1,200



New York: Masks, gloves and temperature checks became standard protocol before a \$1,000 haircut at the posh Julien Farel salon on Monday, as New York advanced to a new stage in its COVID-19 reopening.

Top-dollar stylists at the chic establishment on Manhattan’s Upper East Side began snipping through the 1,200-person waitlist of clients determined to be transformed from shaggy to spectacular after three months of coronavirus lockdown.

“It’s worth every penny, because it’s so easy to take care of,” said Susan Warren, wearing a robe as she sat in a styling chair and removing her mask to speak with a Reuters reporter.

“You feel like a million bucks. Now, I would eat peanut butter and jelly and get fabulous hair and color if that need be,” said Warren, who lives in New York.

The million-bucks feel now starts with hand sanitizer and a mask in an effort to maintain New York’s new bragging rights as the U.S. state with the lowest rate of coronavirus infection. Just months ago, New York was the epicenter of the pandemic.

“From the moment a client arrives, we’re temperature-taking at the door,” said Suelyn Farel, the salon’s chief executive officer and wife of Julien Farel, the main stylist.

Telangana High Court To Twitter And Centre: Why Islamophobic Posts Not Yet Removed?

HYDERABAD: The Telangana High Court has issued notices to social networking site Twitter, the Centre and the state government seeking explanation as to why some of the posts allegedly linking COVID-19 to the Muslim community and a religious event held in Nizamuddin in the national capital in March, have not been removed.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B Vijay- sen was hearing a PIL petition filed by advocate Khaja Aijazuddin seeking direction against the social networking site to stop the alleged "illegal" trending of some posts which were linked to religion and the pandemic.

The petitioner requested the court to direct the state government to register

strain all online social media networks operating in India from carry any "Islamophobic" posts or messages hurting or insulting the feelings of the community.

The petitioner alleged that posts under #Islamiccoronavirusjihad,

The petitioner requested the court to direct the state government to register criminal cases against Twitter and the users who were allegedly spreading hatred messages under Chapter XV-Offences Relating to Religion of Indian Penal Code and other relevant laws prevailing.

The petitioner also urged the court to direct the Cabinet Secretary and the Telangana Home Secretary to restrain all online social media networks operating in India from carry any "Islamophobic" posts or messages hurt-



criminal cases against Twitter and the users who were allegedly spreading hatred messages under Chapter XV-Offences Relating to Religion of Indian Penal Code and other relevant laws prevailing.

The petitioner also urged the court to direct the Cabinet Secretary and the Telangana Home Secretary to re-

ing or insulting the feelings of the community.

The petitioner alleged that posts under #Islamiccoronavirusjihad, #Coronajihad, #Tablighijamat, #Nizamuddinidiots,

#TablighijamatVirus, were allegedly trending in the social media. The court posted the matter on July 20 for hearing.

AIIMS To Resume OPD Services For Follow-Up Patients From June 25

NEW DELHI: Almost three months after it closed down its OPD services, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, has decided to resume the operation from June 25 for its follow-up patients, not more than 15 a day, for each department initially, officials said on Tuesday.

The outpatient department (OPD) services would be available for follow-up patients as of now but requisite appointments for a limited number of new patients would also be given for those departments who wished to start physical OPD consultation, they said.

For the first time in its history, the AIIMS had shut down its OPD services, including speciality services, as well as new and follow-up registrations from March 24 as part of its effort towards redirecting its resources to control the COVID-19 outbreak.

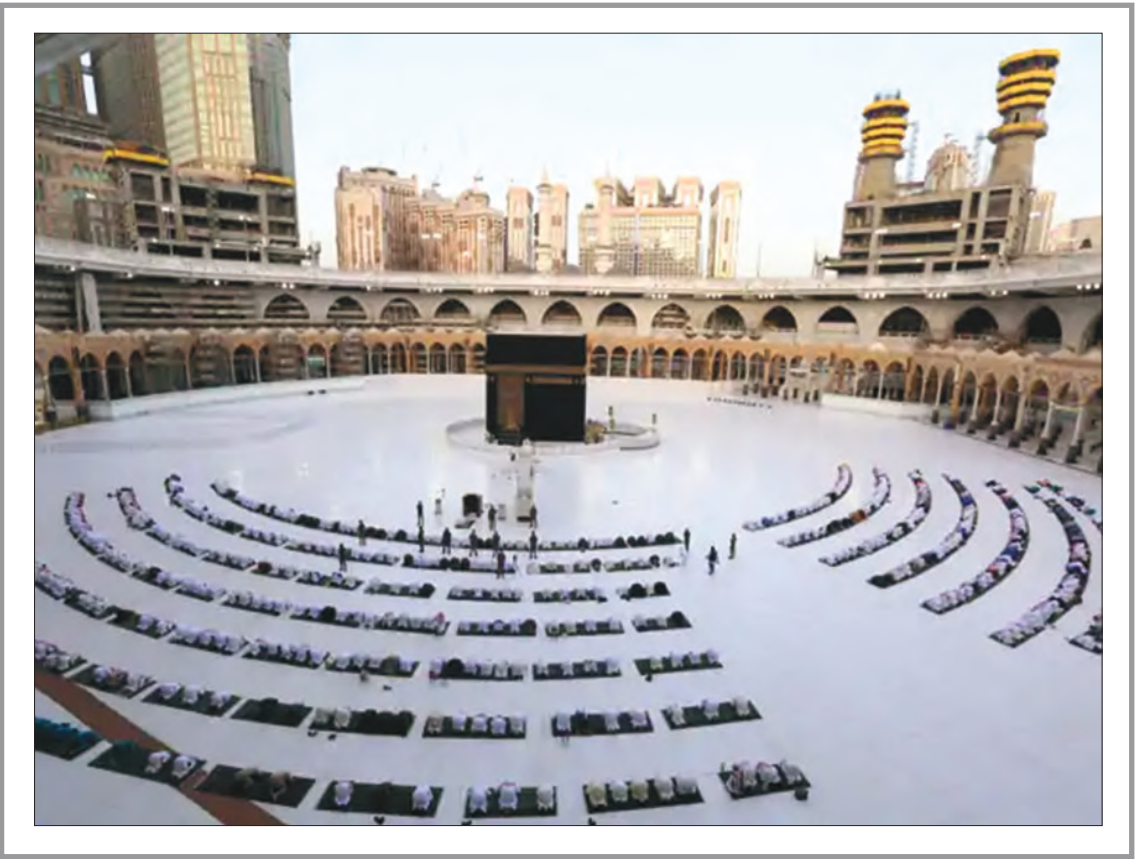
"AIIMS to restart physical OPD services from June 25. It is informed that the AIIMS Director has approved the resumption of physical appointments for old/follow-up patients, not to exceed 15 per day for any department initially which will be enhanced in a few days," an official circular issued to all departments on Tuesday said.

In addition, requisite appointments for a limited number of new patients will also be given for those departments who wish to start physical OPD consultation, the circular stated. However, no appointments will be given for evening speciality clinics in the first phase of OPD reopening.

"It will be the prerogative of the departments to call patients directly or screen them through teleconsultation before giving a physical appointment," the circular said.

Patients can be given an appointment for OPD consultation directly by the department or through the computer facility as decided by the department concerned. However, if an appointment is given from the department, the departmental appointment list will have to be intimated to the computer facility and faculty in-charge of the OPD 48 hours in advance, it said.

All heads of clinical departments in AIIMS have been requested to provide information on the date of resumption of physical OPD for patients of the department concerned and daily list of patients along with their telephone numbers who have been given an appointment for physical consultation, the circular added.



No Haj For Indians This Year After Saudi Arabia's Request Amidst Covid-19

NEW DELHI: The government has decided that Muslims from India will not travel to Saudi Arabia for Haj 2020 after the kingdom conveyed that pilgrims should not be sent this year in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Tuesday.

The decision was taken after Saudi Arabia's Haj and Umrah Minister Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen telephoned last night and suggested not to send pilgrims from India for Haj this year, he told reporters.

Saudi Arabia on Monday said it has barred international visitors from making the Islamic pilgrimage, in a bid to control the coronavirus pandemic.

Mr Naqvi said 2,13,000 applications had been received for Haj 2020 and the process to refund the full amount of money deposited by the applicants without any deduction has been started immediately.

The money will be refunded through online Direct Benefit Transfer mode into bank accounts of applicants, the Minority Affairs Minister said, adding this will be

the first time since Independence that pilgrims from India will not be going for Haj due to the unprecedented situation posed by the pandemic.

More than 2,300 women had applied to perform Haj without mehram (male companion) this year and now they will be allowed to go for Haj in 2021 on the basis of their application this year. Besides them, more women, who apply to go for Haj without Mehram next year, will also be facilitated, he said.

A total of 3,040 women have performed Haj after the Narendra Modi government ensured that Muslim women can perform Haj without mehram in 2018, Mr Naqvi said, adding that a total of 2 lakh Indian Muslims had performed Haj in 2019, about 50 per cent of them being women.

In a statement, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Haj and Umrah said that due to coronavirus pandemic and the risks of it spreading in crowded spaces and large gatherings, it has been decided that Haj for this year will be held whereby a "very limited number" of pilgrims from vari-

ous nationalities who already reside in Saudi Arabia, would be able to perform it.

"This decision is taken to ensure Haj is performed in a safe manner from a public health perspective while observing all preventative measures and the necessary social distancing protocols," the statement said.

Mr Naqvi said honouring the decision of the Saudi government because of serious challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and keeping in mind the health and well-being of the people, it was decided that Muslims from India will not go to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj this year.

The entire world is facing challenges from the coronavirus pandemic and Saudi Arabia has also been affected by it, he noted.

Haj 2020 is proposed in the period between late July and early August.

The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam which every Muslim is required to complete at least once in their lifetime if they are healthy enough and have the means to do so.

India Reports Highest Virus Deaths In One Day

NEW DELHI: With 14,933 people testing positive for coronavirus in a single day, India's COVID-19 tally climbed to 4,40,215 on Tuesday while the death toll rose to 14,011 with 312 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The number of recoveries also surged with 2,48,189 patients cured so far, while there were 1,78,014 active cases, according to the updated official figures at 8 am. One patient has migrated.

During the last 24 hours, a total of 10,994 COVID-19 patients have recovered, taking the recovery rate to around 56.38 per cent amongst coronavirus infected patients, an official said.

Of the 312 fresh fatalities reported till Tuesday morning, 113 were from Maharashtra, 58 from Delhi, 37 from Tamil Nadu, 21 from Guja-



rat, 19 from Uttar Pradesh, 14 from West Bengal, 9 from Haryana, seven each from Rajasthan and Telangana, six from Madhya Pradesh, five each from Andhra Pradesh and

Karnataka, three from Jammu and Kashmir, two each from Bihar and Punjab and one each from Chhattisgarh, Goa, Odisha and Uttara-

China's Actions Show 'Total Failure' Of India's Foreign Policy Under Modi: Rahul Gandhi

Stepping up his attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the border standoff with China, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused him of "destroying" India's position and "betraying our Army" by accepting Beijing's stand that it did not occupy any Indian land.

Addressing a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, he said there has been a "complete and total

tested relationship with our traditional allies has been interrupted," he said.

Gandhi suggested that India should build a good relationship with the United States and other countries and must also maintain its ties with its old friends.

"China has brazenly occupied our territory. The PM has destroyed our position and betrayed our army by accepting their position that they occupied no In-



failure" of foreign policy under the Modi government.

"The established institutional structure of diplomacy has been demolished by the PM. Our relations with our once friendly neighbours lie in tatters. Our time

dian land.

"The Chinese can't be permitted to get away with this unacceptable usurpation of our land," he said, adding that everything needs to be done to ensure that sacrifice of our martyrs is not in vain.

Govt Agency Fails To Provide Video Links With Accused, Upsets Babri Trial Court



LUCKNOW: A special court hearing the Babri mosque demolition case on Tuesday expressed concern over National Informatics Centre's failure to arrange video links to record the statements of the accused, including former deputy prime minister LK Advani.

The CBI court here also sent a letter to Uttar Pradesh's principal secretary (law) on this.

The court had asked the NIC, a Central government body, to make arrangements at the homes of 10 of the 32 accused who had opted to record their statements through video conferencing.

The court was set to record statement of Ram temple trust head Mahant Nriya Gopal Das through video conferencing from Ayodhya on Tuesday. But there was no video link in place.

Others in the list include former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh and former Union minister MM Joshi.

"This court had directed the NIC to make arrangements for video links at the

residence of 10 accused, but no response has come so far," Special Judge SK Yadav said in his order.

"The court will wait till June 24 and even then if no response comes, the NIC will be sent a reminder," he added.

The statements are being recorded under section 313 of the CrPC, a stage in the trial after the examination of prosecution witnesses.

The Supreme Court on May 8 had permitted the CBI court to use video conferencing.

The special court offered the video link option to the accused, keeping in view the COVID-19 pandemic and government guidelines on social distancing.

On Tuesday, the judge recorded the statement of the 15th accused, Dharmadas, who denied his involvement in the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the alleged conspiracy.

The Babri Masjid was demolished in December 1992 by "kar sevaks" claiming that a Ram temple had stood at the same spot in Ayodhya before the mosque. PTI

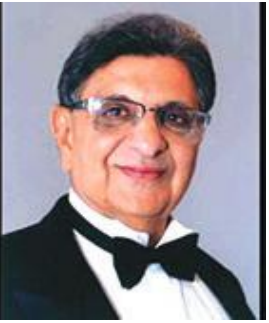
NEWS MAKERS

Wealth Of Serum's Poonawalla Grows Fastest In India During Pandemic: Hurun Research Report

'Vaccine king' Cyrus Poonawalla's wealth grew the fastest among Indian billionaires and fifth fastest in the world during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the strong business potential of his company, Serum Institute of India, according to a report by Hurun Research.

Poonawalla has climbed 57 places to be the 86th richest person in the world as of May 31 on the back of a 25 per cent rise in his networth during the four months of the pandemic, the report said.

The Pune-based entrepreneur's unlisted company is already the largest vaccine manufacturer in the world and the network has been helped by vaccine distribution and



manufacturing potential of his business, it added.

Recently, Serum struck an agreement with AstraZeneca to manufacture 1 billion doses of coronavirus vaccine being developed by Oxford University.

Richest Indian Mukesh

Ambani continues to hold the numero uno ranking as the wealthiest Indian. After sharp losses in the first two months on market rout, the next two months saw a \$18 billion surge in his fortune on the back of over Rs 1.69 lakh crore worth of deals struck by Reliance Industries in selling stakes in its telecom arm, it said.

However, despite the late surge, his wealth was down 1 per cent as compared to the pre-COVID levels, it said.

Ambani saw a "V-shaped recovery" in his wealth, wherein the network plummeted during the first two months and made up nearly all the losses in the next two months, it said.

Bihar Congress Receives Over 3,000 Nominations For Single MLC Seat

NEW DELHI: In a unique turn of events, the Bihar unit of Congress is facing a dilemma as it has received over three thousand applications for just one MLC seat in the state.

Grassroot party workers, big leaders from the state and even former ministers have sent their claims to the party leadership seeking to get nominated to the Legislative Council.

However, Congress chief in Bihar, Madan Mohan Jha, downplayed this by saying that it was symbolic of democracy existing within the party unit.

"Democracy is present within our party, and the party will decide who it wants to honour and who will be allotted the



seat," Mr Jha told ANI.

Congress' MLA from Katihar, Shakil Ahmad Khan also spoke along the same lines and added, "There is nothing wrong in this. Everybody, even big leaders have applied, this shows there is democracy. Our party is not run by any one individual."

Polling to fill nine vacant MLC seats in the state will be held on July 6 and the counting process will begin soon after the polling ends, according to the Election Commission.

June 25 has been set as the last date for filing nominations.

Neem Tree's 'Birthday' Celebrated In Bhopal Market

BHOPAL: Shop owners of a market in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal continued a 26-year-old environment conservation ritual by celebrating the "birthday" of a neem tree, though the affair this year was muted due to the novel coronavirus outbreak and the need for social distancing.

The birthday celebration of the neem tree at Piplani's Adarsh Market in BHEL area is normally attended every year by local officials and hundreds of schoolchildren.

"I have been taking part in this event continuously for the past 16 years as I strongly believe in conserving our environment for future generations," MP Industry Principal Secretary Sanjay Shukla, who cut a cake along with other shopkeepers on Sunday, told PTI. Among those present, apart from Shukla, were Bhopal Range Inspector General of Police Upendra Jain and Bhopal civic chief VS Choudhary Kolsani. The man behind the initiative, Adarsh Market's Rambabu Sharma, said the idea was to give back to nature, and he chose a tree as a symbol as people used wood through all stages of their lives. "Normally, a person uses wood all his life, from birth to building a house to deploying it for late rites. However, he does not give anything in return. With this thought in mind, I floated the idea of planting a neem tree 26 years ago on June 21. And since then we have been celebrating its birthday," he said.