



Maximum : 32°C SUNSET Today 07:45 PM Minimum : 17°C SUNRISE Tomorrow 05:28 AM Humidity : 49%

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News Digest

2 Persons Slip Into Well, Die

Kupwara: Two persons have died after they slipped into a well while cleaning it in Chalgund village of Hatmat Pora Hyhama in Kupwara district of north Kashmir on Thursday...

LG Condemns Bandipora Killings

SRINAGAR: Lt Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu has condemned the killings of BJP leader Sheikh Waseem Bari, his father Bashir Ahmed and brother Umar Bashir...

2 Killed, 4 Hurt In Kishtwar Accident

Jammu: Two persons were killed and four others injured in an accident in Kishtwar district of Jammu division on Thursday...

Scuffle Over Land, Youth Killed

Anantnag: A youth was killed during a scuffle over some land dispute in Vailoo area of Kokarnag in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Thursday morning...

Budgam Man Injured In Bear Attack

Budgam: A 55-year-old man was injured in a bear attack in Shoplian Khag area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district on Thursday morning...

Woman Falls From Tree, Dies

Sopore: A 40-year-old woman died after falling from a tree in Chandil Wanigam area of Tangmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday...

J&K Proposes Modifications In Central Waqf Act

Proposal Submitted To Ministries Of Home, Minority Affairs

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir government has proposed modifications in the Central Waqf Act before constituting the Waqf Board in the newly carved out Union Territory...

Official documents reveal that UT administration has decided to vigorously pursue the proposal submitted to Centre for J&K-specific amendments in the Central Waqf Act...

Under the Jammu & Kashmir Re-Organisation Act, Centre is empowered to make adaptations and modification in central laws as well as laws of erstwhile state protected by the Parliament...

The Waqf Board and Waqf Council constituted under these laws ceased to exist with abolition of these laws from October 31, 2019 when J&K Re-Organisation Act came into effect...

Positives Of Pandemic: Clean Air, Clear Sight, Crystal Water In Kashmir

Swati Joshi

SINCE industries are majorly shut and vehicular movement minimal, the pollution level has greatly reduced in Kashmir during the pandemic...

"Kashmir Valley has seen changes in the environment during the pandemic," said the scientist...

was the same but the load on the Effluent Treatment Plants (ETP), especially at Lassipora was less during the lockdown.

Suhail Bashir, an environmentalist from Srinagar, said due to the pandemic the concentration of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide (NOx) and Sulphur oxide (SOx) was reduced in the air.

As most people stayed home, the number of oil barrels used in Kashmir reduced by 1-2 barrel as compared to 100 barrels used before the lockdown, he said.

The pollutants from the air get accumulated on the surface of plants which reduced the process



of photosynthesis, the environmentalist said. "But with a reduction in the amount of pollutants, the plants are thriving without any interruption." Apart from air, the dumping of

solid and liquid waste has also decreased in the valley.

"Liquid and solid waste from factories have stopped which has led to a positive impact on the environment," said Touseef Ahmed, Chairman of Kashmir Concern, an environmental conservation organization.

There're more than a dozen rivers, lakes, and wetlands that are used for dumping Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in Kashmir, he said.

"Most of the wetlands, lakes and deep drains had become choked and resulted in constant waterlogging during rain and snowfall." Civic authorities who are sup-

posed to implement MSW Rules 2016 are themselves involved in dumping municipal waste in wetlands and water bodies, he said.

Ahmed who has been working on waste disposal for a long time, said that over the last six years, his research has led him to file several petitions in National Green Tribunal (NGT) and other quasi-judicial forums. The NGT's intervention has shown some positive results as a committee headed by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir has been constituted to look into the destruction of water bodies especially due to the dumping of MSW, Ahmed told Kashmir Observer. >>>PAGE 02

BJP LEADER'S KILLING

Attack Was Pre-Planned, Lashkar Involved: IGP

10 PSOs Of Slain BJP Leader Dismissed, Arrested

Observer News Service

BANDIPORE: Two Lashkar-e-Taiba militants carried out a "pre-planned" attack on the ex BJP district president in Bandipora and that all the 10 personal security officers (PSOs) deployed for slain leader's protection have been dismissed from service and arrested as well, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir range, Vijay Kumar said Thursday.

IGP Kashmir, who visited Bandipora along with the DIG North Kashmir and district SSP, examined the CCTV footage at the police station which is just opposite to the slain BJP leader's house where he was shot dead along with his brother and father.

Wasim Bari, his father Bashir Ahmed and brother Umar Bari were killed in the attack that took place Wednesday evening at Muslimabad Bandipora.

"We have checked the CCTV footage in presence of army and CRPF officers. Two militants from Lashkar-e-Taiba have carried the attack. One is local who has been identified as Abid and another is a foreigner. Local militant Abid fired at the trio from a close range with a pistol while the other one was guarding him," the IGP said.



BJP STATE PRESIDENT Ravinder Raina speaking at a condolence meeting at the slain party leader's residence in Bandipora

Bari Stood For India Like Tiger In Kashmir: Raina

We Will Definitely Take Revenge: Koul

BJP's J&K unit president Ravinder Raina on Thursday termed the killing of Wasim Bari, BJP local leader as "huge loss" for the party and said that he was a "tiger" who stood for India in Kashmir.

"The trio sustained head injuries and succumbed on way to the hospital. We will track both the militants soon and eliminate them," Kumar declared. He said the attack >>>PAGE 02

NC Leader, 6 More Die Of Covid-19, J&K Toll 155

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday reported six deaths due to Covid-19 including a 38-year-old National Conference leader, taking the fatality count due to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir to 155.

Officials said the 38-year-old NC leader was serious and died this evening.

"He was admitted with severe respiratory tract infection on July. He was on oxygen since admission and put on ventilator yesterday evening," Principal GMC Jammu said. He expired at 07.15 P.M. in isolation ward of GMC Jammu, he said.

"Sadly we lost Rohit (Kirmi) a few minutes ago. He had been put on a ventilator but the medical teams, in spite of their best efforts, couldn't stabilise him. He leaves behind a wife & two young kids," party vice president and former chief minister Omar Abdullah tweeted.

Officials said that a 65-year-old woman from Kulgam died at SKIMS Bena, one of the exclusive facilities meant for the management of the Covid-19 in the Valley.

The elderly was referred from Kulgam and died this afternoon, said Dr Shifa Deva, Medical Superintendent of the hospital. "Having breathlessness, she was admitted at around 7 p.m. on July 8. She was having pneumonia besides other underlying ailments such as hypertension," she said.

Earlier in the day, 80-year-old, 60-year-old and 70-year-old women from Srinagar Baramulla, and Pulwama districts respectively died.



3 SSB Personnel Among 240 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir Thursday recorded 240 fresh Covid-19 positive cases that include four pregnant >>>PAGE 02

According to Dr Nazir Choudhary the octogenarian from Natipora Srinagar died at 4:15 a.m.

Admitted to the hospital on June 1, Dr Choudhary said that she had underlying ailments like hypertension, diabetes and community-acquired bilateral pneumonia (CAP).

Regarding 70-year-old from Pulwama, Dr Choudhary said she was having multiple problems including bilateral pneumonia. She was admitted on July 6 and died today, he added.

Meanwhile, the sexagenarian woman from Pattan died at CD hospital, one among the exclusive facilities for the management of the Covid-19 patients.

"She was admitted in ICU of the hospital on June 6 with hypertension, hypothyroidism and bilateral pneumonia," Dr Salim Tak, Medical Superintendent of the CD hospital said. Officials said that one covid-19 death was reported from Shopian. The elderly woman had died few days ago at her home but her sample was taken at the local hospital where she was treated, officials said.

With these deaths, 140 people in Kashmir and 15 in Jammu division have died so far due to the virus. Srinagar district with 39 deaths has the highest fatalities followed by Baramulla (31). >>>PAGE 02

SHE WAS ADMITTED IN ICU OF THE HOSPITAL ON JUNE 6 WITH hypertension, hypothyroidism and bilateral pneumonia," Dr Salim Tak, Medical Superintendent of the CD hospital said. Officials said that one covid-19 death was reported from Shopian.

Govt Extends Expenditure Bar For Second Quarter

SRINAGAR: The government in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has extended the guidelines regarding the expenditure for the second quarter in view of Covid-19.

In an order government has stated that the guidelines vis-a-vis expenditure restrictions imposed in the month of April this year shall remain in force during the second quarter, Q2 (July-September, 2020) of the current financial year 2020-21 as well.

"The Departments are required to restrict the overall expenditure within 40% of Budget Estimates 2020-21 up to ending September, 2020 certain exceptions," the order stated.

The order stated that the expenditure on all non-salary heads of revenue budget shall be restricted up to 20% of the Budget Estimates, 2020-21 for Q2 (July to September, 2020) with overall expenditure upto 40% of BE 2020-21 by ending September, 2020.

"The expenditure under Capex Budget in respect of 'on-going' works and 'non-construction' activities shall be restricted up to 40% of BE 2020-21 by ending September, 2020 except in case of PW (R&B), Rural Development, Power Development and Jal Shakti Departments. >>>PAGE 02

LG Visits Kulgam; Reviews Situation

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today visited District Kulgam and interacted with about 15 delegations. They included representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies, traders' federation, Awqaf committees, transporters, fruit and vegetable growers association, senior citizens and ST community members to take first hand appraisal of the developmental needs of the area, besides taking stock of the various projects and works under execution.

The Lt Governor also inaugurated projects and laid foundations stones of various works of public importance. During the interaction, the members of the delegations >>>PAGE 02

JK Bank Hqrs Closed After 26 Employees Test Positive

SRINAGAR: Corporate Headquarters of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank will remain partially shut for a day on Thursday in the wake of panic that gripped the entire headquarters after 26 employees were tested positive for the Covid-19 on July 08.

Officials said that the reports of 26 employees who work in banks headquarters at TRC Srinagar, came positive on Wednesday (July 08), after which panic gripped the entire staff. "As a precautionary measure and to sanitise the offices, and floors of the headquarters, the headquar-

ters will remain closed for a day tomorrow (July 10)," bank officers said.

However the offices vice-presidents and management will remain open. On Thursday, the J&K Bank management closed ground floor-general department, ground floor-enquiry department, 1st floor-vigilance department, 1st floor-S&C Department, 1st floor-IS Audit, 2nd floor-Estate and Engineering, 3rd floor-all departments, and ATM help desk section.

Sources in the bank said that all the 26 employees, >>>PAGE 02

Soldier, Woman Injured In Pampore Attack

PULWAMA: A soldier and a woman were injured after militants fired at an army ambulance at Ladhoo area of Pampore in South Kashmir's Pulwama district on Thursday.

"Militants fired upon an Army vehicle at Ladhoo, Pampore in which one Army personnel and lady received minor injury. She has been discharged from hospital after treatment," Kashmir zone police wrote on its official Twitter handle.

"An ambulance with QRT moving from Khrew was fired upon by militants from near a Mosque at Ladhoo Mor, Lethpora, Awantipora at 6 PM. One soldier injured, evacuated to 92 BH, stable. One >>>PAGE 02

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Inaugurates Six Bridges In J&K

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday inaugurated six bridges in border areas of Jammu and Kashmir, and asserted that development of remote areas in the region will continue to be a key priority for the NDA government.

The defence minister dedicated the bridges through video conferencing in presence of Chief of the Army Staff Gen MM Naravane, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar, Director General of Border Roads Organisation Lt Gen Harpal Singh among others.

Four bridges were constructed on the Akhnoor-Pallanwala road in Akhnoor, while two bridges were built on the TarnahNallah in Kathua district, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.



The total cost of construction of the bridges was Rs 43 crore.

The inauguration of the bridges, built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) comes at a time when India and China are engaged in a border row in eastern Ladakh.

Officials said the dedication of the bridges to the people of Jammu and Kashmir carries a bigger message that India will continue to develop key infrastructure in border areas notwithstanding hostilities by any adversary. Our government is >>>PAGE 02



A KASHMIRI nomad collects firewood with a panoramic background of Sindh Valley- KO photo Abid Bhat

From Front page...

Top Medical Body Plans Pan-India Survey To Determine Population Exposure To Covid

New Delhi:

The ICMR on Thursday said a nationwide sero-survey to determine the exposure of the novel coronavirus among the population will be carried out as a follow-up to a similar study conducted in May, the results of which are yet to be released.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will conduct a "sero-survey" which involves testing of blood serum of people to check for the prevalence of antibodies against coronavirus

infection.

The final results of the sero-survey conducted by the ICMR in May, which focused on infections of mid-April is still under process, Rajesh Bhushan, Officer on Special Duty in the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday.

"The sero-survey that ICMR conducted across the country focused on infections of mid-April and preliminary findings were shared. As you know all such sero-surveillance studies or any other scientific study is subject to peer-review and

those inputs are also incorporated. So that process is going on," he told reporters.

"We will be in a position to share it once that gets over," he said.

The ICMR had earlier said on the basis of the data compiled from 65 districts out of 83 districts across the country in the first part of the sero-surveillance study, 0.73 per cent of the population surveyed showed evidence of past exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

Bhushan further said the findings of the sero-survey, which

has been done in Delhi by National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) as a part of which 22,000 samples were collected from June 27 to July 5 from 11 districts, is being processed.

"In the near future, ICMR is planning a follow up sero-survey pan-India to the earlier sero-survey that they had done for mid-April infections," Bhushan explained.

The sero-survey conducted in May had two parts -- estimating the fraction of the general population that has been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and estimat-

ing the number of people who have been infected with coronavirus in containment zones of hotspot cities, ICMR officials had earlier said.

The IgG antibodies against an infection takes around 15 days to develop in the body.

India saw a record single-day surge of 24,879 coronavirus infections, which pushed the nationwide COVID-19 tally to 7,67,296 on Thursday, while the death count climbed to 21,129 with 487 new fatalities, the Health Ministry data updated at 8 am showed.

Nepal Bans Broadcast Of Indian News Channels, Cites 'Baseless Propaganda' Against Govt And PM Oli

Agencies

KATHMANDU- Cable television producers in Nepal have switched off signals for all Indian news channels, except Doordarshan, news agency ANI reported on Thursday.

However, no official order has been passed in connection with the ban.

"We have turned off the signals of the Indian channels from this evening," ANI quoted an operator, Dhruva Sharma of Mega Max TV, as saying.

The move came hours after former Deputy Prime Minister and spokesperson of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP)

Narayan Kaji Shrestha said that "baseless propaganda by Indian media against the Nepal government and our PM" should stop.

"It has crossed all limits. This is getting too much. Stop with the nonsense," Nepalese media quoted him as saying.

Bishnu Ramal, chief advisor to PM KP Sharma Oli, said "news stories and comments coming from the Indian media against the government and Prime Minister of Nepal are highly objectionable".

Tensions between India and Nepal arose after Kathmandu issued a new political map incorporating Indian territories.

60 New Farmer Producer Organizations To Be Setup Across J&K In Current Fiscal

SRINAGAR: A minimum of 60 new Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) will be setup across Jammu and Kashmir in the current financial year, informed Principal Secretary, Agriculture Department, Navin K. Choudhary, while chairing first Steering Committee meeting of FPOs held here today.

Principal Secretary directed that a minimum of three FPOs per district in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will be the target for the current financial year in addition to 16 FPOs which are already in existence and functional. He informed that 42 additional propos-

als for setting up of FPOs submitted by Director NRLM will also be examined on merits for approval.

Explaining the concept and scheme of FPOs, DGM NABARD informed the participants that these can be set up for one produce in a cluster based approach. Further, FPOs can also be combined to form an apex FPO at district level or even at a bigger geographical unit. Ideally, FPOs can be of minimum 50 members to make it an effective organization. He also explained in detail about the support NABARD will provide in the initial years for their commencement of functions.

GM NABARD explained that in addition to one time support from NABARD, the FPOs can obtain credit up to Rs. 2.00 crore from banks and other financial institutions. Sunil Gupta, Conveyer UTLCB affirmed that this will be explained to all banks and proposals approved will be submitted to NABARD for accessing Credit Guarantee Fund.

Principal Secretary said that the goal should be to have at least one FPO in each block of the UT in next two years. He asked that FPOs should be set up not only for fruits, vegeta-

bles, value based products like honey, mushroom but also for different sectors like dairy, fisheries etc. He directed that heads of departments of these allied sectors shall be the permanent invitees in the Steering Committee. It was also decided that this Steering Committee will meet every month to take stock of the progress made so far.

Principal Secretary asked GM NABARD to share their Annual Credit Plan for each district with all HoDs of the primary sector besides providing one page brief on all NABARD schemes to them to create awareness about the same.

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Advisor Bhatnagar Announces Award For Covid-19 Frontline Warrior

SRINAGAR- Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar has announced cash reward with citation to Ambulance Driver Jameel Ahmad working with CMO Srinagar, for rendering exemplary services during the pandemic COVID-19.

While announcing the award, Advisor Bhatnagar said that we need to boost the morale of our frontline Health workers who are working dedicatedly while fighting COVID-19. He added that despite facing several challenges they have ensured the safety and health of the people of J&K.

He directed the heads of Health care institutions of



Jammu and Kashmir to recommend names of staff persons who have played commendable roles during this time so that they can be suitably rewarded.

Interestingly the driver has been working round the clock since the outbreak of pandemic COVID-19 without taking any leave. Interestingly he has vol-

unteered for such duty most of the times.

Meanwhile Advisor Bhatnagar has appealed the general public to refrain from unnecessary travel and venturing out and to strictly follow the guidelines and SOPs circulated by the Health Authorities for their safety. "Health and Medical Education Department is committed to fight the spread of virus at all levels and ensures safety of all," Advisor said.

The Advisor has also extended his wishes to all the Frontline Health workers who are rendering their duties in these difficult times.

Positives Of Pandemic...

Revival of Nature

As people mostly remained indoors, many species of animals and birds were spotted in Kashmir after a long time. In a first, the Wildlife Department was able to capture 10 majestic Hanguls in camera in Shikargah wildlife sanctuary of the Tral area of South Kashmir. Also known as the Kashmir stag, the critically endangered species is the only Asiatic survivor of the European red deer. The flight operations were postponed during the lockdown which helped the bird's species to thrive.

According to a research by Norbert Kempf and Ommo Hüppop, disturbances can influence the time and energy budget of birds and hence, for example, the ability to lay down fat reserves for migration and breeding.

"The most positive impact of the lockdown is that people have started appreciating the environment and they are finding ways to protect it," Ahmed said.

"With the availability of clean air, new species of birds and a clean environment, people are encouraged to take steps to curtail activities which deteriorate the environment."

Attack Was Pre-Planned...

was pre-planned as BJP leader had visited his ward and had returned to his home along with all his PSOs. "After entering his house, his PSOs had gone to their room and Bari went to his shop where his father and brother were also present," the IGP said. "Had there been only two of his PSOs present, they would have killed the attackers." He said all the 10 PSOs of the slain BJP leader have been dismissed from their services and taken into custody. "They are being questioned," IGP said. Asked whether there was need to increase the security of protected persons, he said wherever there is a threat to a political worker, security will be enhanced. "We have already asked the political leaders and workers to come forward if they have threats or are vulnerable to militant attacks," the IGP said.

Bari Stood For India...

He said that this was not being tolerated by Pakistan that is why the militants killed Bari and his family members in what he described as a "cowardly attack."

Talking to reporters at Bandipora, Raina expressed sympathy with the grief-stricken family members of the BJP leader and said that the nation will never forget the sacrifices of these "tigers" who have been helping the poor for the last many years.

"Pakistani militants did not like these deeds of Wasim and that is why they killed his family."

He claimed that they will wipe out these Pakistani militants very soon and those who killed the family of Bari will meet the same fate. Raina later gave shoulder to Wasim's coffin up to the graveyard where the deceased along with his father and younger brother were laid to rest.

Bari, state executive member and former district president BJP along with his father, and younger brother was killed by militants outside their residence in Muslim Abad area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district late last evening.

Jammu Kashmir BJP General Secretary Ashok Koul also condemned the killing of Bari and his family members. He said that Wasim was working honestly for the party and was one of our best members. "We will definitely take revenge."

Meanwhile, BJP spokesman, Altaf Thakur while talking to reporters said that BJP has lost a precious member and a brave voice of the people.

He said that several BJP members during the last couple of years have been killed by militants in the valley to suppress the voice of the pure nationalists.

He further added that it was negligence from the police side that how militants opened fire on such a person having 10 security personnel as guards.

NC Leader, 6 More Die...

Kulgam (18), Shopian (15), Anantnag (12), Budgam (11), Jammu (9), Kupwara (7), Pulwama (5), Bandipora (3), Doda (2) while one death

each has been reported from Ganderbal, Poonch, Udhampur, Rajouri and Kathua, (GNS)

3 SSB Personnel Among 240

women and three Sahasra Seema Bal (SSB) personnel, taking the total number of cases in the UT to 9501.

Official figures reveals that among new cases that were detected in Jammu and Kashmir, 60 were tested positive at SKIMS, 14 at JVC Bemina and rest at other hospitals.

Among 240 new cases, 185 belong to Kashmir division while as 55 are from Jammu division, officials said, adding that the total number of positive cases in Kashmir division has reached to 7504 including 4276 recoveries and 140 deaths while as total number of positive cases in Jammu division has reached to 1997 including 1419 recoveries and 14 deaths.

The officials said that total number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 3652 including 3088 from Kashmir division and 564 from Jammu division.

With 128 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached to 5695 which is 59.94 percent of the total cases which was over 63 percent few days before.

"Cases tested positive in J&K include 58 from Srinagar, 02 from Kulgam, 37 from Baramulla, 07 from Shopian, 08 from Anantnag, 32 from Kupwara, 04 from Pulwama, 18 from Budgam, 05 from Bandipora and 14 from Ganderbal in Kashmir division while as 55 from Jammu division include 12 from Jammu, 04 from Kathua, 09 from Samba, 05 from Poonch, 18 from Rajouri, 03 from Doda and 04 from Kishtwar," officials disclosed.

An official at SKIMS said that 60 samples were tested positive at SKIMS on Thursday. He said 60 new cases include 17 from Budgam, 16 from Srinagar, six from Baramulla, five each from Bandipora and Anantnag, three from Ganderbal, two from Shopian and one each from Kulgam and kargil.

Dr Reyaz Untoo, Principal at JVC Bemina said that out of 443 samples tested at SKIMS Bemina (JVC) 13 from Shopian were tested positive. He added that 06 more patients were discharged from hospital after their complete recovery, taking tally of discharged patients to 588 while as 102 are undergoing treatment at the hospital. He further added that 21 normal deliveries were managed and 31 major surgeries were conducted at hospital till date.

Officials from CD hospital said that new positive cases include 4 pregnant ladies, 3 SSB men from 63 BN Ganderbal, 2 from DPL Handwara, 4 sopore court employees and 03 from RR camp Sopore.

As per officials figures, 1451 positive cases including 37 deaths and 494 recoveries are from Srinagar, 1214 including 31 deaths and 506 recoveries are from Baramulla, 930 including 646 recoveries and 18 deaths are from Kulgam, 873 including 15 deaths and 652 recoveries are from Shopian, 764 including 12 deaths and 590 recoveries are from Anantnag, 676 including 458 recoveries and 07 deaths are from Kupwara, 593 including 278 recoveries and 05 deaths are from Pulwama, 522 including 292 recoveries and 11 deaths are from Budgam, 382 including 282 recoveries and 03 deaths are from Bandipora, 153 including 78 recoveries and 01 death are from are from Ganderbal.

In Jammu division, 429 including 314 recoveries and 08 deaths are from Jammu district, 298 including 241 recoveries and 01 death are from Udhampur, 265 including 201 recoveries and 01 death are from Kathua, 243 including 206 recoveries are from Ramban, 217 including 132 recoveries from Samba, 137 including 115 recoveries and 01 death are from Poonch, 189 including 01 death and 86 recoveries are from Rajouri, 123 including 64 recoveries and 02 deaths are from Doda, 52 including 35 recoveries are from Reasi and 44 including 25 recoveries are from Kishtwar.

As per the daily information bulletin, 306,434 persons in Jammu and Kashmir are under observation while 38939 persons have been kept under home quarantine besides that 3652 persons are in hospital isolation while 44 persons are under hospital quarantine.

According to the bulletin, 217,932 persons have completed surveillance period and 45,713 persons are under home surveillance besides that so far results of 429,787 samples are available.

Out of 429,787 the number of samples tested negative stands at 420,286 while as 9501 have been tested positive, among them 3652 are active and 5695 persons have recovered and 154 persons have died

Govt Extends Expenditure...

These four Departments can incur expenditure upto 50% of BE 2020-21 by ending September, 2020 and are also permitted to initiate works within full budget approved for the financial year 2020-21." As per the order there shall be no restriction in respect of items of expenditure within the overall authorisation of funds conveyed to the departments which include wages/honorarium/stipend/scholarship/compensation and beneficiary oriented schemes of social welfare and other departments if any.

"Leave encashment claims of current financial year 2020-21 up to ending June 2020. Medical Reimbursement claims of the current financial year 2020-21," the order further stated--

LG Visits Kulgam; Reviews...

put forth a number of demands pertaining to drinking water, power supply, package for transporters, augmentation of receiving stations, flood protection bunds for residential areas, installation of solar lights for remote ST areas, development of play fields, beautification of Veshoo nallah, approval for Polytechnic College at Yaripora and early completion of PHC Yaripora, Transformer and restoration of power supply to the Badijalan and completion of works already taken under B2V2, besides release of work done claims of the years 2016 to 2018 taken and executed under MGNREGA.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the government is putting dedicated efforts in reaching out to the people of J&K to address their issues and grievances and meet their developmental aspirations.

He assured the delegations about quick redressal of the problems and fulfillment of their genuine demands. He also said that an amount of Rs 1200 crore has been already sanctioned for upgradation of Power infrastructure, and directed Superintending Engineer PDD to restore power supply to the remote areas within 15 days. He further directed the concerned Engineers for completion of languishing projects for which funds have already been released. He said that the Government is providing free Health Insurance to about 25 lakh families of J&K under Ayushman Bharat scheme. Further, Power, Roads, Healthcare and Education are the priority sectors for the government, for which the administration is working tirelessly, he added.

He directed DDC Kulgam to identify land for the rehabilitation of victims of 2014 floods belonging to Adigatnoo village.

The Lieutenant Governor also sanctioned Rs 2 crores for completion of bypass road from Laroo to fruit mandi, including construction of embankment at three vulnerable spots at Khudwani on Nallah Veshoo.

During his visit, the Lt Governor laid the foundation stone of 50-bedded integrated AYUSH hospital at an estimated cost of Rs. 750 Cr, steel truss bridge over Zadrin nallah at Kanchloo Kund with an estimated cost of Rs. 45 lakhs under the 13th Finance Commission.

He also e-inaugurated a ramp and lift facility in District Hospital Kulgam, Rural Haat at Devsar at an estimated cost of Rs 84 lakhs, double circuit 11 KV line from Nillow to Mohammad Pora Kulgam under PMDP and a 2x10 MVA receiving station at Yaripora.

Those present included Member Parliament, Nazir Ahmad Laway, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole, DDC Kulgam, Dr. Showkat Aijaz Bhat, Directors of Education, Health, Rural Development, Chief Engineers of R&B, Jal Shakti, I&FC and District officers

JK Bank Hqrs Closed After ...

who tested positive have been quarantined and their contacts are being traced. "Officers of each branch and department have appealed the employees who have come in contact with those who have tested positive to come forward and voluntarily go for Covid sampling so that lives of others are protected," they said.

Soldier, Woman Injured...

civil lady sustained injuries in the crossfire, stable. Area being searched," said Defence Spokesman in Srinagar, Colonel Rajesh Kalia. A police official said that the woman had minor splinter injuries in her head and was immediately referred to Sub-District Hospital Pampore, where she was treated and later discharged. He said that the injured soldier was shifted to Army's 92 base hospital in Srinagar where his condition was stated as stable.

Meanwhile, joint teams of security forces cordoned off the area and launched a massive search operation to nab the attackers--

Defence Minister Rajnath...

committed to promoting infrastructure on our borders and necessary resources will be provided for this. Our government has a keen interest in the development of Jammu and Kashmir," Singh said in his brief address.

"Keeping in mind the needs of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Armed Forces, many other development works are also in the pipeline, which will be announced in due time. About 1,000 kilometre long roads are currently under construction in Jammu region, he said. The defence minister said the government has ensured that sufficient resources are provided to the BRO for the construction of strategic roads.

Despite the COVID-19 epidemic, the government will not let the resources of the BRO fall short, he added.

According to the ministry, the annual budget of the BRO ranged from Rs 3,300 crores to Rs 4,600 crores during 2008 to 2016. However, the allocation was hiked to Rs 8,050 crore in 2019-2020.

The budget for the BRO for 2020-2021 is likely to be Rs 11,800 crore, the ministry said, adding the higher allocation will expedite the construction of strategic roads, bridges and tunnels along our northern borders.

In his remarks, Singh congratulated the BRO for construction of the bridges in "record time".

2 Persons Slip Into Well, Die

police rushed to the spot and started a massive rescue operation to retrieve them. A 25-year-old youth Shariq Ahmad Khan, a local youth fell unconscious while being part of the rescue efforts and was immediately referred to nearby by hospital, they said.

The overall rescue operation continued for more than two hours, they added. BMO Kupwara Dr Zaffar confirmed the death of the two persons in the incident.

LG Condemns Bandipora...

be brought to justice. He expressed his deepest sympathies with the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls.

2 Killed, 4 Hurt In Kishtwar...

injured have been identified as Daleep (26), Chander (29), Bachan Singh (25) and Indra Devi (22), all residents of Nageni Balgram. The injured persons were shifted to GMC Doda, the official added. Station Kistwar Aijaz Wani confirmed the death of the two persons and injuries to four persons.

Scuffle Over Land...

Ishaq Ahmad, son of Ghulam Nabi Sheikh of Gohan Vailoo. "He died on the spot." The official said that a police party from a nearby police post was rushed to the spot and they have taken the body into their possession for further formalities.

He said that further investigation into the matter has been initiated.

Budgam Man Injured In Bear

attacked by a bear and later being rescued by passers-by. The official identified the man as Ghulam Qadir Sheikh, son of Sattar Ahmed Sheikh of Shopian Khag.

He said that man was rushed to a nearby hospital in a critical condition wherefrom he was shifted to the Srinagar Hospital for advanced treatment.

Woman Falls From Tree, Dies

wife of Abdul Khaliq Malla of Chandil Wanigam. Meanwhile, a police official said that a case has been registered in this regard.

We Need to Set Up Plasma Bank: Dr Wani

Recovered Patients Can Save Lives, Says SKIMS Doc Who Had Tested Positive

Srinagar: A prominent medico from Kashmir, Dr. Saleem Wani on Thursday said that COVID-19 is an ongoing battle and Jammu and Kashmir will witness a "challenging situation" in the next few months in case the people don't follow precautions.

The noted urologist also said that people need to understand that only lockdown has ended while the virus is still there. "I am pained to see the people especially those above 60 years-old not even wearing masks on the roads. This attitude has to come to an end and people need to understand that only lockdown has ended while the virus still exists in Jammu and Kashmir," Dr. Wani said in an interview.

"We cannot tell people to follow the guidelines with batons. But, we need to make them fully aware about the ramifications of not following the advisories," he said.

Wani, who was recently tested posi-

tive for COVID-19 and later recovered, also shared his experience as a doctor and the patient. He said as a doctor he knew that this too will pass. "But, as a patient, it is a disaster. The main thing a patient faces is social stigma. During the period, your own people, members who we have spent time with, try to run away from you. They too can't be blamed as nobody wants to die. The situation faced by a patient is very painful," he said.

He said when a patient is tested positive, he or she is being isolated. "But, I believe that God puts his loved ones in isolation to introspect," he said, adding that negativity like social stigma has to come to an end.

The famous Urologist and a kidney transplant surgeon also said that "we should salute the people who are warriors. The real warriors for me are Ambulance drivers, nursing staff and sanitary workers in the hospital, who are doing tremendous job amid the pandemic."

Asked about the contrary reports pouring in regarding COVID-19, he said some organizations say the virus is airborne while some claim it is not. "However, all these organizations have been warning people to get ready for the worst situa-

tion. Therefore, we need to get ready for it and should follow the guidelines and advisories in letter and spirit," the famous Urologist further stated.

"When you don't have treatment, when you don't have vaccine available, we have no other option than taking all the preventive measures. First, people should wear masks. Second social distancing should be maintained. Third the respiratory etiquettes should also be followed," he said.

Dr. Wani was the third COVID recovered patient and donated blood plasma in Kashmir for the critically ill virus infected patient here. When asked about his decision of donating the plasma, he said two patients before him have already donated blood plasma. "I was the third recovered patient to donate my blood plasma. But, when my name came forward, it must have become an inspiration for many," he said.

"Although there is no treatment for the virus, there are scientific papers which support plasma therapy while many of the States have already started giving convalescent blood plasma therapy to the COVID patients.

I was approached by the concerned department and they told me to donate blood plasma therapy following which I decided to donate my blood plasma. It is not about me only. But, people who recovered from the virus have also come up to donate their blood plasma. After my news

became viral, people have now been enrolling themselves for the blood plasma donation," he said.

"We should prepare a plasma donor information list. We should come up with the plasma bank facility that will help the people at this juncture. There are over 5000 people who have recovered so far in Jammu and Kashmir and they can give life to many others. We need to make them aware of how many people can be saved. It is the people who have to come forward. We need to put our heads together. Contribute in whatever little way to combat the deadly virus," he said.

When asked about the idea of Cadaver organ donation, he floated in Kashmir years ago; Dr. Wani said, "You need to motivate a person for donation. The best time to motivate the family of a person for organ donation is when he is dead. We need to talk to his family and relatives that his organs can give life to many people. Although the person is dead, his parts can still give life to many others. That's how we can overcome the shortage of organs."

Asked about the growing COVID cases, he said that the peak of the pandemic is yet to come and our efforts should be to save lives and prevent the second peak as has happened in Spanish flu in 1918. "We need to understand the situation witnessed years ago in Spain. Even if we have better facilities, we still need to take precautions," he added. KNO

Illegal encroachment of migrant Pandit's land

HC directs DC Kupwara to file status report

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed deputy commissioner Kupwara to file status report on the complaint of petitioner regarding illegal encroachment on migrant land in Gund Gushi village of north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

In a notice the High Court has directed the deputy commissioner Kupwara to file a status report and ordered that the nature of the property shall not be changed in any manner.

The petitioner namely Reeta Pandita, a Kashmiri migrant through her attorney had approached the court with the plea that she has ancestral land at Gund Gushi but the same is being illegally encroached upon by some persons (private respondents).

"Despite filing complaint before DC Kupwara who is statutory authority under the Jammu and Kashmir migrant immovable property (preservation, protection & restraint on distress sales) Act, 1997, but he has not taken any step for the redressal of the grievance."

The Bench comprising Justice Rajnesh Oswal after hearing counsel of the petitioner advocate Sajad Geelani and advocate Mansoor Ahmad Mir, issued notice to the respondents through email and to private respondents through SHO police Station Kupwara.

Public Notice

The Name of My daughter has been wrongly entertained in DOB Certificate issued by Police Station Utrsoo as Tabish While her correct name Tabinda Jan which needs immediate correction . If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office Police Station Utrsoo within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Jawaid Ahmad Malik
F/o Tabinda Jan R/o Tangimulla

M ANG

Public Notice

I have lost the DOB certificate Of my Daughter issued by Municipal Committee Anantnag . Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Executive Officer Municipal Committee Anantnag within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Wazir Mohammad Gundoo
F/o Fatimul Nisa R/o Khanabal Nandpora Anantnag

M ANG

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Sahil Dhar S/o: Soom Nath Dhar R/o: Sheikhpora Migrant Colony Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-4864 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Bohri

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.403
Dated 09/07/2020

M CB

Public Notice

I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides license for my business unit under . if any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office Plant Protection Officer Lalmandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Yaseena Mudisar
D/o Abdul Rashid Shah
R/o Nowgam Shangus Anantnag

M ANG

Public Notice

I have applied for the issuance of Fertilizer license for my business unit under . if any body having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office Chief Agriculture Officer Anantnag within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Yaseena Mudisar
D/o Abdul Rashid Shah
R/o Nowgam Shangus Anantnag

M ANG

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION GANDERBAL

Secretariat Ganderbal T

FRESH NIT No.44 /2020-21 DATED:08.07.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT of J&K, e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible contractors/SHG's registered with UT of J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following works:-

S No	Name of work	Estt. Cost (Rs in lacs)	Cost of T/D	Earnest money	Time of completion	Class of contractor	Major Head of Account
1	Improvement/Upgradation of Kangan Panzin Link, Kangan Hospital link, Kangan Akhal road, Magray Mohalla Thune and Jamia Masjid upto Graveyard Kangan b.w.o P/L, 75mm thick compacted wet mix macadam, 50 mm thick compacted bituminous Macadam in P/S. 25mm thick semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in stretches/patches(Machine Mix laid with paver).	Rs. 45.06 Lacs	1100/=	90120/=	20 cal days	AAY Class with HMPH	C&T
2	Improvement/Upgradation of Lar Manigam road incl. internal roads from Fire Service Station Lar to Paktoon Basti Lar b.w.o P/L of 75mm thick compacted wet mix Macadam, 50mm thick compacted bituminous Macadam in P/S, 25mm thick Semidense with 6mm thick seal coat.(Machine Mix laid with paver).Part-B	Rs. 24.00 Lacs	800/=	48000/=	20 Cal Days	AAY Class with HMPH	C&T

- Position of AAA/TS : Accorded.
- Position of Funds: Committed.

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

S No	Date of issue of Tender Notice	08-07-2020
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	08-07-2020 at 3.00 P.M
3.	Bid Submission Start date	08-07-2020 From 3.30 P.M.
4.	Bid Submission End date	16-07-2020 upto 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (online)	17-07-2020 at 10.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal.

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender documents in shape of Treasury Challan/demand draft in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Ganderbal (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money/ Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Ganderbal (tender receiving authority).

3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on website www.iktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same website in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal.

4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

19. All other terms, conditions are as per PWD Form-25 (Double agreement Form).

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
(R&B) Division Ganderbal

No:- 3748-55
Date:- 08-07-2020

DIPK-2735/20

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Construction Division, Srinagar.

Gist of Notice Inviting e-Tender

e-NIT No. MICD/45 of 2020-21 dated: 08-07-2020

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of UT of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited in two cover from the reputed, registered and experienced Mechanical/Electrical SSI unit holders/contractors/fabricators/firms for the following items of work The bidding process shall be completed online in two covers viz. Cover '1st' -Tender fee and Earnest Money details, Deposit, fulfillment of prequalification criteria, technical specifications and acceptance to terms and conditions of the tender. Cover '2nd' - Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

e NIT No.	Name/ Particulars of the work	Name of Division	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Cost of document/ tender fee (In Rs.)	Earnest money (In Rs.)	Validity of Rates
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MICD/45 of 2020-21 Dated: 06 /07/20	Repairing of 40 KVA Voltage stabilizers and other allied work at LIS Shippora and Sanoor-Kalipora Beerwah Budgam.	Mechanical Irrigation Construction Division, Srinagar	Rs 120290/-	Rs 200/=	Rs 2400/=	90 days

Position of funds: Demanded.
Key/critical Dates

Date of Hosting In Website/ Publish date	08/07/2020 (1600Hrs)
Document download/sale start date	08/07/2020 (1600 Hrs).
Bid submission start date	08/07/2020. (1600Hrs)
Bid submission end date	13/07/2020 (1500 Hrs)
Bid opening date	13/07/2020 (1600 Hrs)

Each tender should be accompanied with an Earnest Money/Cost of tender document in the form of CDR, FDR/DD as detailed above, pledged to the Executive Engineer MICD Srinagar In absence of Earnest Money, the Tenders shall be rejected outright.

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website <http://iktenders.gov.in>.

Any information regarding the tenders can be had from this office on all working days.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mech. Irri. Const. Division,
Srinagar.

DIPK-2729/20

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 1800180701
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

HIJRI
CALENDAR
18 Zu al-Qa'dah
1441

FAJR	3: 44
ZUHR	12: 36
ASR	5:35
Magrib	7:48
ISHA	9:27

This Day In History

- 48 BC - Battle of Dyrrhachium: Julius Caesar barely avoids a catastrophic defeat to Pompey near the city of Dyrrachium (in what is now Albania)
- 1568 - Battle on Eerns: Dutch Water garrison beats Spanish
- 1652 - England declares war on The Netherlands - beginning of the 1st Anglo-Dutch war
- 1778 - American Revolution: Louis XVI of France declares war on the Kingdom of Great Britain
- 1780 - The Comte de Rochambeau and his French force of 7,000 land at Newport, Rhode Island, to join the American Revolutionary War
- 1796 - Carl Friedrich Gauss discovers that every positive integer is representable as a sum of at most three triangular numbers
- 1861 - Lincoln writes to Kentucky's militia and says Union troops will not enter that state
- 1863 - Battle of Charleston, South Carolina (Morris Island)
- 1863 - Battle of Jackson, Mississippi - captured by federals
- 1913 - Romania declares war on Bulgaria
- 1923 - All non-fascist parties dissolved in Italy
- 1924 - Denmark takes Greenland as Norway ends claim
- 1925 - USSR's official news agency TASS forms
- 1940 - Battle of Britain begins as Nazi forces attack shipping convoys in the English Channel
- 1942 - Netherland's government in exile (London) recognizes Soviet Union
- 1943 - US, British and Canadian forces invade Sicily in WW II (Operation Husky)
- 1944 - German submarine U-821 sunk by RAF
- 1944 - "Father of Medicare" Tommy Douglas becomes the 7th Premier of Saskatchewan
- 1946 - Belgian government of Acker resigns
- 1947 - 200 die when train derailed and falls into a river in Canton, China
- 1947 - Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is recommended as the first Governor General of Pakistan by then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Clement Attlee
- 1951 - Armistice talks to end Korean conflict began at Kaesong
- 1962 - Martin Luther King Jr. arrested during demonstration in Georgia
- 1967 - Uruguay becomes a member of the Berne Convention copyright treaty
- 1971 - Failed assassination attempt on King Hassan II of Morocco, 101 killed
- 1972 - Herd of stampeding elephants kills 24, Chandka Forest India
- 1973 - Bahamas declares independence from UK & adopts constitution
- 1974 - OPEC ends oil boycott against Netherlands
- 1974 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalinsk USSR
- 1981 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1982 - Zimbabwe beats Bermuda by 5 wickets to win ICC Trophy
- 1985 - Coca-Cola Co announces it will resume selling old formula Coke
- 1991 - Boris Yeltsin sworn in as 1st elected President of the Russian Federation
- 1992 - Spaceship Giotto (Halley 1986) approaches comet Grigg-Skjellerup
- 1994 - Nepal premier Girija Prasad Koirala resigns
- 2006 - Pakistan International Flight PK-688 crashes in Multan, Pakistan shortly after takeoff, killing all 45 people on board
- 2011 - British tabloid News of the World publishes its last edition after 168 years in the wake of a phone hacking scandal.
- 2013 - 40 people are buried in landslides in Sichuan Province, China

From KO Archives

Pandits to join Hurriyat Conference

Observer News Service

JAMMU- Kashmiri Pandits who were forced to leave the Kashmir Valley due to the violence there will join a conclave organised by the Hurriyat Conference in Srinagar this month.

At a meeting here between leaders of the Pandits and an emissary of the moderate faction of the APHC, it was decided that Pandits would participate in the meeting to be held at the Hurriyat headquarters July 19.

Salim Gilani, the Hurriyat representative who interacted with several intellectuals and leaders of die Pandit community here over the past few days, told a news conference Wednesday that the Hindu leaders would take part in the conference.

Pandit leaders including Rattan Lai Bhan, who represents several migrant camps in the Jammu region and was at the news conference, said they had agreed to a Hurriyat's proposal to attend the meet

Bhan said Pandits had more faith in the Hurriyat than the government. "The government cannot offer us any guarantee of our safety, whereas the All Parties Hurriyat Conference can," he said.

He noted the people in the Kashmir valley responded to the calls of the Hurriyat on various issues and not to those of the government. "Therefore, we feel the Hurriyat's efforts for our return (to the Kashmir Valley) are more sincere and genuine," Bhan remarked.

Currently, a 34-member group of various Pandit organisations is touring the Kashmir Valley to study conditions ahead of the possible return of migrants. The state government organised their trip, now in its second week.

(Kashmir Observer, 10 July, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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After Ladakh stand-off

India and China's dis-engagement process is in full swing along LAC friction points in Ladakh. Armies of both the countries are expected to carry out joint verification to assess the implementation of the disengagement process once the dismantling of temporary infrastructure and withdrawal of troops by China are completed, reports have said. This is a welcome development. A fortnight ago it seemed unimaginable that the two sides would be able to sort out their differences amicably. The stakes, however, were too big for the two countries to escalate matters. Both the countries are the biggest in the world in terms of their population. In fact they are jointly home to one-third of the world population. Between them they also constitute a large market which makes them an attractive destination for the leading manufacturers of goods and services across the world. There's an important difference though. Over the past three decades, China has become a far bigger power than India, both economically and militarily. So much so that it is now seen as a credible rival to the US which has otherwise been the sole superpower since the break-up of the USSR in 1989.

This power differential between India and China drives the new geo-politics in the region. Another factor that is complicating the matters in the region is the estranged relationship between India and Pakistan. Their relationship has become irreconcilable following the revocation of Article 370 in August last. So, if there has to be a stable South Asia, it will involve a broad reconciliation among the three major powers of the region: China, India and Pakistan. And this would need resolving the existing differences and reconciling the contending interests of the three countries which essentially keep the region destabilized.

Needs is for a broader regional approach to work for an integrated solution to the conflicts and the competing interests that in turn trigger the recurrent conflicts. Neglecting this objective assessment of the situation is certain to aggravate the rivalries, especially the one between India and Pakistan. Dividing the two countries since their founding is the festering issue of Kashmir.

So far there has hardly been a regional effort that works to resolve issues in a cooperative framework. Each neighbouring country is looking to secure their respective interests rather than work together for a solution. The only way that the current destabilizing situation can be effectively tackled is for the regional powers including India and Pakistan to cooperate and find a comprehensive solution to the issues dividing them. And for such a solution to materialize it has to first address the core concerns of the neighbouring countries and take care of their respective interests.

OTHER OPINION

Kanye West's entry

Rapper and hip hop star Kanye West has announced that he will join the U.S. presidential race in November, a move that would in theory position him as a challenger to incumbent Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic rival and former Vice-President Joe Biden. Mr. West has earlier alluded to having presidential ambitions, including when he explicitly indicated, at the 2015 MTV Video Music Awards, his interest in standing for elections in 2020, and in November 2019, when he spoke about a bid in 2024. Nevertheless his latest declaration — as a vague Twitter post to "realise the promise of America by trusting God, unifying our vision and building our future" — is a bolt out of the blue considering that Mr. West is a self-confessed admirer of Mr. Trump, has no known formal party affiliation or comprehensive policy agenda, and would have to scramble to file the paperwork necessary to get on to the ballot in the less than four months left to Election Day. Little surprise then that his announcement has elicited more confusion than enthusiasm, barring the case of Tesla Inc. CEO Elon Musk who promised Mr. West his "full support". Even in the country that has seen a movie star, Ronald Reagan, rise to the highest office in the land, the idea of a rap artist with zero political experience entering the Oval Office must appear far-fetched to many Americans.

There are two interpretations of this odd turn in the presidential campaign. The first relates to a question of tactics. Given the visible West-Trump bonhomie, is it far-fetched to reason that within the campaign Mr. West may serve as an undeclared surrogate for Mr. Trump, perhaps attracting to his campaign significant numbers of undecided or independent voters, even some of minority groups? This might not be so hard to achieve if Mr. West stood for election and, just before November 3, stood down in favour of Mr. Trump, effectively muddying the waters for Mr. Biden. The second is that the age of anti-intellectualism appears to be nearing its zenith in American politics. It is a well-worn adage in the U.S. that people vote based on a candidate's personality and not their politics. It marks a new phase for this trend if, at this dark hour of racial hatred, physical and economic insecurity on account of the devastating toll of COVID-19, and an accelerating slide in the U.S.'s position as a global leader, the voting American populace is seriously considering placing its faith once again in a property mogul who shot to fame as the star of a reality TV show. The 43-year-old musician with no more than occasional incoherent ramblings to his credit in the field of politics is not the only alternative, however. It is just as well that there is another candidate in the fray.

The Hindu

Will Universities Learn From Lockdowns?

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to bring about further rapid and far-reaching shifts in the economic ground beneath us. But we need not view these changes with dread if the pandemic also propels a transition to better and more universal higher education

KENNETH ROGOFF

Virtually everyone agrees that broadening access to higher education is one of the best ways to mitigate inequality, and that it can help to make society fairer and more productive

CAMBRIDGE — Will COVID-19 finally trigger a long-overdue technological disruption of higher education? Throughout the world, sudden mid-semester lockdowns aimed at combating the pandemic forced universities to switch to distance learning almost overnight. But while this rapid transition has been tough for faculty and students alike, some good might yet come of it.

Like many businesses, universities are struggling with how to reopen and are adopting a range of strategies. For example, the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom has announced that its lectures will be online-only until at least the summer of 2021. Others, including Stanford University, are offering a mix of in-person and online classes, as well as spreading out their academic year so that fewer students will be on campus at any time.

Make no mistake: COVID-19 represents a massive economic hit to higher education. Dorm rooms are unoccupied, sports stadiums remain empty, and students push back against paying full tuition fees. For many colleges and universities, the drop in revenue from foreign students, especially Chinese, is likely to be painful; numerous smaller and less-endowed schools may close.

Even top universities face challenges. The University of Michigan anticipates a pandemic-induced loss of up to \$1 billion by the end of 2020, while Harvard University is projecting a \$750 million revenue shortfall for next year.

But will the COVID-19 shock ultimately help to bring about better education for more people at lower cost? The answer will depend partly on whether universities push technology aside as the pandemic fades, or instead look for the best ways to harness it. This is not an easy challenge, given the importance of interactions among professors, graduate students, and undergraduates, both inside and outside of class.

When I was a graduate student 40 years ago, I was convinced that video learning (the technology of the day) would reshape university teaching. After all, I thought, why shouldn't students around the world have access to the best lecturers and materials, particularly given that on-campus lectures to 200 students or more offer extremely limited scope for personal interaction anyway?

To be sure, in-class teaching would still have an important role to play. Professors would still curate materials and answer questions. And I did not envisage recorded lectures substituting for smaller classes (although taped materials can of course work in that setting, too). But while it is thrilling to watch a great class in person, surely a good taped lecture is better than a mediocre in-person one.

Fast forward four decades, however, and progress has been



Staff members distribute papers to students at an isolation examination room set for learners at risk of infection by the Covid-19 during a simulation of the annual national college entrance exam in Handan in China's central Hebei province last week.

limited. One likely reason is university governance: faculty run these institutions, and few are inclined to go down a path that would reduce demand for their services. Professors are no doubt also worried that taped classes would make it harder for their graduate students to find jobs. And graduate students, with their energy and fresh ideas, are key drivers of research.

Demographic shifts have long been putting downward pressure on college enrollments. Even if faculty in some fields (such as computer science) still see robust demand, for many others, declining student numbers surely amplifies resistance to labor-saving new technologies.

But perhaps the biggest obstacle is the high cost of producing high-quality taped lectures that satisfy students as much as in-person classes. Producing even a single lecture for mass consumption is a risky and time-consuming proposition. And because recorded lectures are so easily cloned, it may be difficult to charge a high enough price to cover the costs. A plethora of education startups (including many in and around the Boston area, where I live) are trying to solve these problems, but so far have not had a major impact on the system.

It therefore seems reasonable to ask whether the United States government should take on the costs of creating basic pre-taped or online college lecture materials in certain fields. (The same could be done for adult education courses.) In particular, introductory online course materials in apolitical subjects such as mathematics, computer science, physics, and accounting should be prime candidates for federal funding.

Many other academic disciplines, certainly including my own field of economics, also have great online potential. Democratic US presidential candidate Joe Biden

now supports making college free, which thrills some professors. But, rather than expanding the existing US university system, wouldn't federal funding for online learning be a fairer and more efficient way forward, especially given that it can help adults of all ages?

Higher education endows students with an array of important life skills and understanding, helps them to lead richer and fuller lives, and, one hopes, makes them better citizens. But it is far from obvious that all of higher education's different aspects, including skills acquisition and social and intellectual development, need to be bundled together in the way they are now. Students need to gather, but not necessarily all the time.

Virtually everyone agrees that broadening access to higher education is one of the best ways to mitigate inequality, and that it can help to make society fairer and more productive. It is also essential in a world where technology and globalization (or nowadays perhaps deglobalization) require greater adaptability and possibly retraining to meet shifting labor-market demand.

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to bring about further rapid and far-reaching shifts in the economic ground beneath us. But we need not view these changes with dread if the pandemic also propels a transition to better and more universal higher education.

By arrangement with
Project Syndicate)

(Kenneth Rogoff, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Harvard University and recipient of the 2011 Deutsche Bank Prize in Financial Economics, was the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund from 2001 to 2003. He is co-author of *This Time is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* and author of *The Curse of Cash*.)



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Post 5/8, Indo-Pak ties are at a new low

A sort of 'not war not peace' describes the India-Pakistan relations. With much of their rivalry emanating over territory of Kashmir, New Delhi and Islamabad have time and again failed to bring permanent peace to the region. The diplomatic relations between the two states have witnessed 'one step forward and two steps backward' and over the last few years, it has witnessed lowest diplomatic engagement. Will there be any forward movement between India and Pakistan in near future?

While much of the media and scholarly attention has been given to factors that lead to the disruption of peace between New Delhi and Islamabad like periodic terrorist attacks, cease fire violations and others, hardly any attention has been given on how derogatory political communication at times personal attack is wors-

ening the already deteriorating relation. From the perspectives of those, who think New Delhi and Islamabad can pick threads afresh, these persistent derogatory and hateful remarks that come from the twitter handles of political premiers obstruct the train of peace to take its course. It appears that both India and Pakistan and their respective leaders have failed to develop 'normal' working relationships with each other. Along the Indo-Pakistan border, specifically at the Line of Control between Indian held Kashmir and Pakistan-held Kashmir constant border skirmishes have become 'normalised' and the sad part is that it does not bother the leadership of Islamabad and New Delhi at all and innocent Kashmiris become prime victims to their nationalistic rhetorics.

Kashmir has remained central to the foreign policy of Pakistan. Islamabad has fought wars and also sup-

ported insurgency in the territory of Kashmir. Ever since the Modi government revoked the special status of Kashmir, it has become incumbent for Imran Khan to raise Kashmir issue on all platforms. The revocation of article-370 has brought Kashmir into greater control of New Delhi and it is also going to affect the dynamics of the conflict. As fighting another war on territory of Kashmir seems highly impractical for Islamabad, therefore keeping into consideration the importance of Kashmir issue in Pakistani politics, Imran Khan will continue performing this duty on twitter. Following the suit, the current nationalistic government in New Delhi is bound to counter this narrative as it seeks to do in every other fora, thus further deepening the divide.

As the relations between the countries have been passing through really hard times, descriptions of this kind

by the leader of the neighbouring state are bound to further deteriorate the relationship between the two countries. At one level, this kind of an attitude can be traced to the highly populist nature of the two leaders. Khan's Kashmir tweets apart, concrete attempts have been made by leaders of both the states to cater to the populist demands. In an age when the virtual world is increasingly assuming importance, Twitter is simply being used as another tool of state machinery. The constructive potential of the new-age tools like Twitter notwithstanding, state interests and priorities seem to be coming to the fore yet again, forestalling any chances of a constructive use of such avenues.

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AI Is Silently Revolutionising The World For Students

Amplifying human intelligence with AI has the potential of helping civilisation flourish

SREEJIT CHAKRABARTY
Gulf News

Everything we love about civilisation is a product of intelligence, so amplifying our human intelligence with artificial intelligence has the potential of helping civilisation flourish like never before — as long as we manage to keep the technology beneficial.

2020, the beginning of a technologically revolutionary era. Indeed, we have come a long way from defining our first computers with binary punches to voice-recognition now.

No one would have imagined the exponential lead emerging technologies have taken over time and that in a Pandemic situation like now, we would need it the most.

The COVID Pandemic that has caused us to stay home and practice distancing has been the deadliest of viruses humanity witnessed since long. The initial outbreak of Poliovirus had a similar impact.

Everything we love about civilisation is a product of intelligence, so amplifying our human intelligence with artificial intelligence has the potential of helping civilisation flourish like never before — as long as we manage to keep the technology beneficial.

Even after the creation of the vaccine, millions of people were left paralysed in countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Africa. Reason being? A whole lot of villages in Africa were missed out which acted as potential hotspots despite which we can say polio has been completely eradicated today.

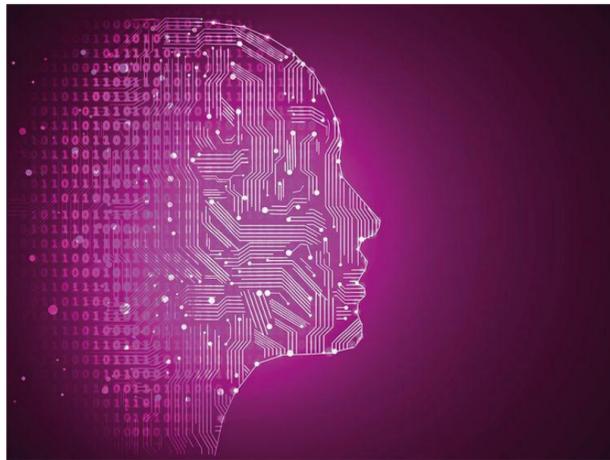
But how did this happen?

Monitoring the situation, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), partnered by Bill and Melinda Gates' foundation, discovered location tracking technology satellites, GPS, map tracking, and Machine Learning Algorithms which were put in use to extract data.

Once the data was extracted, it was structured, read, and detailed analysis showed the number of villages left out. Teams worked through them and the results are in front of us.

Though we have discovered no such approved vaccination for COVID yet (as of June 2020), even identifying potential hotspots to maintain a distance is an incredible step.

Data-scientists and bio-medical teams globally are working hand-in-hand to find COVID-19 hotspots and are analysing data to prepare location-wise resources and equipment needed.



Emerging technologies

Such situations make us realise how important learning AI and other Emerging Technologies are important and needed. Our thoughts dignified Alexa or Siri as the best AI products helping us out. But this is when actual technology is tested.

While the aforementioned uses are high-end, do we realise that this situation has given us blinks of revamping our whole educational system as well? Because the COVID situation has given us space to rely entirely on digital platforms.

Amazingly, according to FOSWAY, 59% of the educators found it difficult to adapt to the new digital learning curve. And only 21% understood the vitality of adaptation and went forward to levy new digital platforms and ways to teach students.

So, classroom knowledge has gone to all bends and cracks to reach out to students. But this is also an amazing time & opportunity to educate the kids more than classroom coaching which means moving from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) to STREAAAM (Science, Technology, Robotics, Engineering, Arts, AI, and Maths).

Source of curiosity

Children have always been a source of curiosity. Their fascination with technology is subjectified when they ask 'How does Siri understand what we say', 'How do the lights turn on when we enter' and many more. There is an inherent need to keep the children in pace with whatever is happening at an early stage.

To our amazement, children have taken the front-seat on learning and enforcing technology into action. Kids like Tanmay Bakshi, who started coding at the age of 11 has developed a keen interest in AI which is still an alien topic for many adults. And Samaira Mehta, founded Coderzbunny, to make an easy hand for kids to learn coding and data structuring.

But why would you think children need professional hands in building their skill set around AI?

Curiosity. When kids are shown a live-project through Virtual Reality sitting in their homes, they learn more practically. Even the traditional ways of learning have seen their decline while the top three skills that are being grasped the most are:

- Virtual Content
- Curated Content
- Mobile Learning

When kids are exposed to drone

tech and monitor the signals waving to and fro, their analytical mind runs faster.

Implementing solutions

Children grasp the canonical factors easily and by the time they graduate, they are already embraced with ammunitions of reading and structuring the data, learning the curves, and implementing solutions just like Bill Gates and his foundation did.

If we had been prone to such a technological advancement early in our academic schedule, the situation could have been different.

It is not always about finding vaccines which indeed is a biomedical team task but curbing or restraining its effect boils down to management.

Just as polio was eradicated but took a long time, COVID might have been restrained if only we had all the right ML techniques in place.

And on the other hand, children are gaining potential knowledge in the form of artificially intelligent tools which is helping them to intricately reform their skill sets. Then why not start early and produce geniuses with the demand that is in perfect place?

We at GEMS Education, strongly believe that being future fluent is more valuable than being future proficient. Thus, at GEMS Dubai American Academy, we have addressed this very challenge by setting up our Center of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence.

The whole idea of the GEMS Centers of Excellence is to bridge the gap between K-12, Higher Education and Workforce to bring in the expert knowledge that exists in the industries right down to a school going student.

We have collaborations with local and global universities and industries in building new learning and developmental pathways allowing students to get exposed to the future skill sets and potential future jobs.

Everything we love about civilisation is a product of intelligence, so amplifying our human intelligence with artificial intelligence has the potential of helping civilisation flourish like never before — as long as we manage to keep the technology beneficial.

Facebook Cannot Be Reformed. This Is Why

We Need To Reimagine The Social Network Or Find A Way To Survive Its Dominance

CHARLIE WARZEL

"We know we have more work to do." That was the line from numerous Facebook representatives in reaction to the #StopHateForProfit advertising boycott campaign. Intended to pressure the company to curb hate speech and misinformation, the boycott has been joined by several high-profile brands, including Unilever and Verizon, and could make a rare dent in Facebook's ad revenue.

The campaign seems to be having an effect. Facebook announced that it would add labels to content about voting and expand its hate speech policies.

The company also added a "newsworthy" tag for hateful content from political figures that violates rules but is allowed because of its news value. Facebook stressed that all these moves were part of a continuing cleanup. "We know we have more work to do," the statement read.

sold us a utopian vision of a more connected world and left us with our current dystopia. Why can't those of us who are left to clean up its mess have our own shot at utopia? Either way, we know we have more work to do

We Know We Have More Work to Do (let's call it W.K.W.H.M.W.T.D. for short) is the definitive utterance of the social media era, trotted out by executives whenever their companies come in for a public shaming.

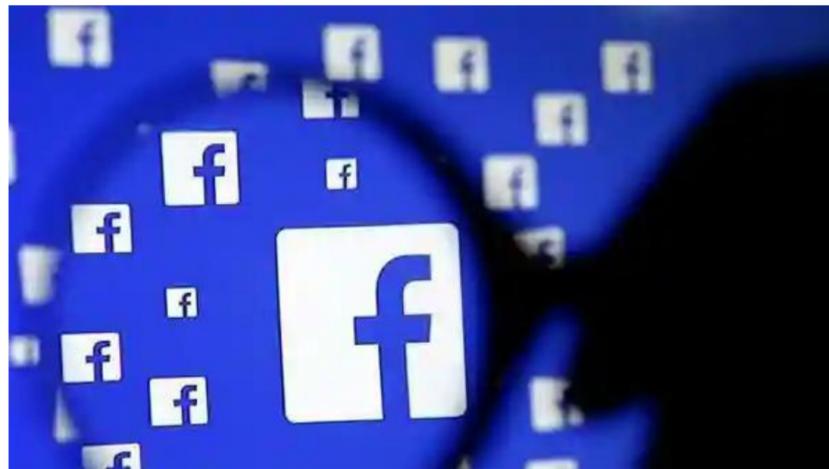
In just eight words, it encapsulates the defensive posture that Facebook has been crouched in ever since the 2016 election, when it became clear that its tolerance of hate-filled communities on its platforms turned them into witting vectors for disinformation and propaganda.

In Facebook's case, what is most dangerous about W.K.W.H.M.W.T.D. is that it glosses over the fundamental structural flaws in the platform.

Architecture of the social network

The architecture of the social network — its algorithmic mandate of engagement over all else, the advantage it gives to divisive and emotionally manipulative content — will always produce more objectionable content at a dizzying scale.

Facebook frequently uses its unfathomable amount of content as an excuse for inaction. "We've made huge strides," a Facebook spokesman, Nick Clegg, said on CNN. "But, you know, on an average



day, there are 115 billion, 115 billion messages sent on our services around the world, and the vast, vast, vast majority of that is positive."

But Clegg's defence is also an admission: Facebook is too big to govern responsibly. There will always be more work to do because Facebook's design will always produce more hate than anyone could monitor. How do you reform that? You can't.

Lately, my thoughts on Facebook have been influenced by two separate movements: prison abolition and the push to defund police. There are complex policy issues involved, but the central premise of these movements is elegant in its simplicity. The bloated and corrupt institutions that they critique are beyond reform.

To be clear, there is no one-to-one comparison between Facebook and the police or the carceral state. Modern policing has its origins in slave patrols. Facebook's origins are obviously much different.

Still, the movements provide a helpful lens through which to view Facebook. Despite the exhausting debates around content moderation policies and constant incremental tweaks to its rules and policies, glaring problems persist. All signs point to a system beyond reform.

Is it really social?

"You see lots of people putting forth a hopeful idea of a new, humane social media platform to rescue us — one that respects privacy or is less algorithmically coercive," Siva Vaidhyanathan, a professor of media studies at the University of Virginia, told me recently. "But if we're being honest, what they're really proposing at that point is not really social media anymore."

In other words, the architecture is the problem. Few who know Facebook really believe that Mark Zuckerberg will dismantle his company or relax his grip on the board, placing conversations like this one more in the realm of thought experiment than in reality.

But for those of us who are at the whims of the company's power, the status quo also seems untenable. Small reforms are crucial, but they also suggest that the current iteration can be saved — that there's more work to do. Facebook cannot be reformed.

The #StopHateForProfit campaign is one such change, but there are others. Vaidhyanathan told me that he is thinking less about policing Facebook's

platforms; he is trying to imagine ways to help us live in a world dominated by Facebook.

"We probably have to start thinking more radically about what kind of information ecosystem we need to survive as a democratic republic," he said. His ideas include what he described as "boring" but essential things like investing in libraries and state schools.

There are other ideas, like declaring "platform bankruptcy." This would involve platforms resetting all of their user and group follower counts to zero and rebuilding communities from the ground up, with the platforms' current rules in place.

There's no shortage of ideas on this subject, as my Opinion colleague Annalee Newitz wrote last year: "We need to stop handing off responsibility for maintaining public space to corporations and algorithms — and give it back to human beings."

I put the question to my Twitter followers, asking for their best ideas to fix tech platforms and received over 1,000 responses in a few hours.

Some were simple: "Design distribution around a different principle than virality." Others were wonkish: "Cross-company/platform data and research collaborations between trust and safety teams."

Many were about fundamental transformation: "Ban algorithmic amplification; require proof of safety, efficacy, freedom from bias before product intro; classify personal data as a human right, not an asset."

There were calls to get rid of metrics and for strict verification of real identities, for the companies to slow down the speed of information. There were privacy solutions, ideas for more tailored community networks.

Many were more blunt: Just shut it all down and start over.

Some of these ideas feel almost too utopian to type, too simple, improbable. But there's elegance in simplicity; these are visions of an internet we actually want to live on.

Facebook sold us a utopian vision of a more connected world and left us with our current dystopia. Why can't those of us who are left to clean up its mess have our own shot at utopia? Either way, we know we have more work to do.

— Charlie Warzel is an opinion writer who specialises in technology

New York Times



“THE CHALLENGE WITH MUCH OF THE technology-family literature is that has mainly stemmed from an assumption of risk and problems. As a result, small and uneven findings can become the focus of media, policymakers, and parents,”

Here's How Smartphone Use Affects Your Parenting Skills

Agencies

Parents may worry that spending time on their smartphones has a negative impact on their relationships with their children. However, a new comprehensive analysis, published in the Journal of Child Psychology

and Psychiatry, found that this is unlikely to be the case.

In the analysis of data from 3,659 parent-based surveys, the authors tested 84 different possibilities to assess whether smartphone use was associated with parenting, and they found little evidence. Accordingly, they explored whether the

effect of phone use on parenting depended on whether it displaced time with family and was associated with family conflict.

At low levels of displacing time with family, more smartphone use was associated with better (not worse) parenting. The authors noted that espe-

cially considering diverse family environments, smartphones play multiple roles in family life, and when not heavily impacting on family time, may have a positive role in parenting.

“The challenge with much of the technology-family literature is that has mainly stemmed

from an assumption of risk and problems. As a result, small and uneven findings can become the focus of media, policymakers, and parents,” said lead author Kathryn L. Modecki, PhD, of Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University, in Australia. “This is an issue be-

cause it can cloud our insight as we focus on ways to meaningfully assist parents and families to enhance positive outcomes.”

Thus, Dr. Modecki and her colleagues used a transparent approach that mapped a myriad of ways that smartphones could link to family wellbeing. “We

found very little evidence of problems and hope these data help move us towards more constructive and nuanced conversations around families’ diverse experiences with technology, actual risks associated with parenting, and where we can best support,” she said.

Compounds That Halt Reproduction Of Covid-19 Virus Identified

Press Trust Of India

Scientists have identified several existing compounds that block the replication of the COVID-19-causing SARS-CoV-2 virus within human cells grown in the laboratory, by targeting a key viral enzyme.

The inhibitors all demonstrated potent chemical and structural interactions with viral proteins critical to the virus’s ability to proliferate, according to the study published in the journal Cell Research. The most promising drug candidates -- including the USFDA-approved hepatitis C medication boceprevir and an investigational veterinary antiviral drug known as GC-376 -- target the SARS-CoV-2 main protease (Mpro) enzyme, the researchers from the University of South



Florida (USF) in the US said.

The enzyme cuts out proteins from a long strand that the virus produces when it invades a human cell, they said. The researchers noted that without Mpro, the virus cannot replicate and infect new cells. This enzyme had already been validated as an antiviral drug target for the SARS and MERS, both genetically similar to SARS-CoV-2, they said.

“With a rapidly emerging infectious disease like COVID-19, we don’t have time to devel-

op new antiviral drugs from scratch,” said Yu Chen, an associate professor at USF.

“A lot of good drug candidates are already out there as a starting point. But, with new information from studies like ours and current technology, we can help design even better drugs much faster,” said Chen. Mpro represents an attractive target for drug development against COVID-19 because of the enzyme’s essential role in the life cycle of the coronavirus

and the absence of a similar protease in humans, Chen noted.

Since people do not have the enzyme, drugs targeting this protein are less likely to cause side effects, he explained.

The team, including researchers from the University of Arizona in the US, identified four leading drug candidates as the most potent and specific for fighting COVID-19.

These are Boceprevir, a drug to treat Hepatitis C, GC-376 -- an investigational veterinary drug for a deadly strain of coronavirus in cats -- and Calpain inhibitors II and XII, investigated in the past for cancer, neurodegenerative diseases and other conditions, they said. All four compounds were superior to other Mpro inhibitors previously identified as suitable to clinically evaluate for treating SARS-CoV-2, Chen added.

A Step Closer Towards A More Effective Treatment For Osteoarthritis

Press Trust Of India

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru have developed a microparticle formulation that they said allows sustained release of drugs to treat osteoarthritis, a chronic joint condition.

They have designed a polymer matrix made of poly (lactico-glycolic acid) or PLGA, an FDA-approved biomaterial, to encapsulate rapamycin, an immunosuppressant drug, an IISc release said.

Preliminary studies on cells cultured in the laboratory as well as in mice models have shown promising results indicating reduced inflammation and cartilage repair due to sustained drug release, it said.

“In cell studies, rapamycin-



protects bone joints, caused due to stress or aging.

The current treatment plan revolves more around managing pain and inflammation than treating the disease.

Although several classes of drugs seemed promising in pre-clinical trials, low drug retention and rapid clearance from the target site have made clinical translation difficult, according to the release.

“The formulation developed by the IISc team, however, has a residence time of up to 30 days at the target site, with no evident signs that it may cause discomfort to patients. Such a sustained release system can improve patient compliance and reduce hospital visits,” the researchers said.

PLGA is widely used for drug delivery applications and several drug formulations are currently used in clinics.

Young Children With High Blood Pressure More Vulnerable To Eye Issues

Agencies

According to a new study, young children with narrow retinal artery diameters were more likely to develop higher blood pressure, which made them more vulnerable to develop retinal microvascular impairment during early childhood.

The first study to show this connection in children was published today in Hypertension, an American Heart Association journal.

High blood pressure, the main risk factor for the development of cardiovascular

disease (CVD), can manifest as early as childhood, and the prevalence of high blood pressure among children continues to rise. In previous studies, analysis of blood vessels in the retina has shown promise as a predictor of CVD risk among adults. In the study titled, “Retinal Vessel Diameters and Blood Pressure Progression in Children,” researchers sought to predict the development of high blood pressure in children over four years based on retinal blood vessel measurements.

“Hypertension continues as the main risk factor for the development of cardiovascular

diseases and mortality,” says Henner Hanssen, M.D., the study’s lead author and a professor in the department of sport, exercise and health at the University of Basel in Switzerland. “Primary prevention strategies are needed to focus on screening retinal microvascular health and blood pressure in young children in order to identify those at increased risk of developing hypertension. The earlier we can provide treatment and implement lifestyle changes to reduce hypertension, the greater the benefit for these children.”

Researchers screened 262 children ages six to eight from

26 schools in Basel, Switzerland, in 2014, for baseline blood pressure and retinal arterial measurements. Both measures were taken again in 2018. Blood pressure measurements at both baseline and follow-up were performed in a sitting position after a minimum of five minutes of rest and were categorized based on the American Academy of Pediatrics’ blood pressure guidelines. These guidelines utilize the same measurements as the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology 2017 Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and

Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults.

Results from the analysis indicate - Children with narrower retinal vessel diameters at baseline developed higher systolic blood pressure at follow-up;

- Retinal vessel diameters could explain 29 -31 per cent of the changes in systolic blood pressure progression between 2014 and 2018;

- Children with higher blood pressure levels at baseline developed significantly narrower arteriolar diameters at follow-up, depending on weight and cardiorespiratory fitness; and - Initial blood pressure measures

explained 66-69 per cent of the change in retinal arteriolar diameter from baseline to follow-up.

“Early childhood assessments of retinal microvascular health and blood pressure monitoring can improve cardiovascular risk classification. Timely primary prevention strategies for children at risk of developing hypertension could potentially counteract its growing burden among both children and adults,” said Hanssen. Researchers noted limitations of their study include that they could not confirm blood pressure measurements over a single 24-hour period, so they

would not account for “white coat” hypertension, a condition where patients have high blood pressure readings when measured in a medical setting.

Developmental stage including puberty status of each child was not accounted for in the study, as well as genetic factors or birth weight - variables that could impact blood pressure development and microvascular health.

In addition, reference values for appropriate retinal vessel diameters in children do not currently exist, so future studies are needed to determine age-related normal values during childhood.

Harvard, MIT Sue Trump Govt Over Order Revoking Visas For Foreign Students

Agencies

NEW YORK: Harvard and MIT asked a court on Wednesday to block an order by President Donald Trump's administration threatening the visas of foreign students whose entire courses have moved online because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The universities' lawsuit was in response to an announcement on Monday by the US Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) that the affected students must leave the country or transfer to a school offering in-person tuition.

"We will pursue this case vigorously so that our international students, and international students at institutions across the country, can continue their studies without the threat of deportation," Harvard President Lawrence Bacow said in a statement.

Trump is pushing universities and schools to fully open when the new academic year starts in September despite the US registering record Covid-19 cases.

ICE said in its announcement the State Department would not issue visas to students enrolled in programs that are fully online for the fall semester and such students would not be allowed to enter the country.

Universities with a hybrid system of in-person and online

classes will have to show that foreign students are taking as many in-person classes as possible, to maintain their status.

The measure was seen as a move by the White House to put pressure on educational institutions that are adopting a cautious approach to reopening amid the global Covid-19 pandemic.

"The order came down without notice — its cruelty surpassed only by its recklessness," Bacow said.

He added it was made "without regard to concerns for the health and safety of students, instructors and others." The universities say in their lawsuit that the order would harm students "immensely," both personally and financially.

It describes the order as "arbitrary and capricious" and says it threw US higher education "into chaos." There were more than one million international students in the US for the 2018-19 academic year, according to the Institute of International Education (IIE).

The plaintiffs ask that the court issue a temporary restraining order and "permanent injunctive relief" preventing the policy being enforced.

They also ask that the order be declared unlawful, that their legal costs are covered, and that they receive any other relief that the court deems appropriate.



Cornered At UNSC, US Faces Historic Rebuke From World Powers Over Iran

Agencies

WASHINGTON: At the UN Security Council (UNSC), the US has faced a sharp reprimand from world powers, including its own allies, over its hostile pressure campaign to secure an extension of the anti-Iran arms embargo, which is slated to expire in October under a UNSC-endorsed nuclear deal that Washington ditched two years ago.

Speaking at a videoconference meeting of the Security Council on Tuesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged the 15-nation UN body to block the planned lifting of the UN arms embargo on Iran in October.

Washington had earlier circulated a much-criticized draft resolution to achieve that goal.

Attempting to justify the illegal push, Pompeo claimed that if the UN failed to renew the ban, it would pave the way for Iran to procure advanced military hardware from Russia and China, which

would potentially threaten capitals in Europe and even South Asia.

Tehran would also be "free to become a rogue weapons dealer, supplying arms to fuel conflicts from Venezuela, to Syria, to the far reaches of Afghanistan," he further claimed.

"Don't just take it from the United States; listen to countries in the region. From Israel to the Persian Gulf, countries in the Middle East—who are most exposed to Iran's predations—are speaking with one voice: Extend the arms embargo."

The top US diplomat also alleged that Iran is "already violating the arms embargo before its expiration date," adding, "Imagine Iranian activity if restrictions are lifted."

Pompeo's appeal, however, fell flat, with other Security Council members hitting back at him and reminding the US that it was no longer a party to the Iran nuclear deal and cannot thus resort to Resolution 2231, which endorsed the accord, to seek an

extension of the UN ban.

The US pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018 in violation of Resolution 2231 and reinstated the anti-Iran sanctions it had lifted under the nuclear deal. Washington has also been pressing the other signatories to withdraw.

Russia: US putting knee to Iran's neck

At the opening of Tuesday's UNSC session, Rosemary DiCarlo, a former US State Department official who serves as UN undersecretary-general for political affairs, praised the JCPOA as a "significant achievement of multilateral diplomacy and dialogue" and voiced "regret" over the US withdrawal.

Also addressing Tuesday's meeting, Russia's Ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzya compared imposing sanctions on Iran to the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a handcuffed unarmed African-American man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck despite cries that he could not breathe.

Afghan govt refuses to release 600 'too dangerous' militants

Agencies

KABUL: Afghan authorities said on Wednesday they will not release hundreds of Taliban captives deemed "too dangerous" despite planned peace talks that hinge on the prisoner exchange.

Violence, meanwhile, continued to rack the war-torn country as a suicide bomber killed three security personnel near the governor's residence and police headquarters in the province of Kandahar.

Under the terms of a US-Taliban deal, Kabul pledged to free some 5,000 Taliban prisoners in a swap that would see the insurgents release around 1,000 Afghan security force captives.

But National Security Council (NSC) spokesman Javid Faisal said that 600 prisoners the Taliban asked to be freed still had "serious

with murder, highway robbery and even sodomy, as well as hundreds of foreign fighters, another government official said on condition of anonymity.

"They are too dangerous to be released," the official said.

The Taliban on Wednesday accused the government of fabricating criminal cases against the prisoners. "If they continue to create more problems in this regard, then it shows they do not want issues to be solved through reasonable ways," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

But NSC spokesman Faisal insisted the government was committed to the talks. "We are ready for peace and will release the remaining prisoners... as per the agreement — just not these hundreds of prisoners who have serious criminal cases in the courts,"



criminal cases" against them.

Taliban claim responsibility for a deadly attack near a provincial governor's residence and police headquarters

They include people charged

he said.

Both sides have pledged to hold direct talks aimed at ending the decades-old conflict in Afghanistan after completing the exchange.

New Visa Regulations Likely To Cause Difficulties For Indian Students: Official

Agencies

Washington: The new visa regulations requiring international students in the US with an F-1 visa to take at least one in-person course or face the prospect of deportation is likely to "cause uncertainties and difficulties" for some students, the Indian Embassy here has said.

"These new modifications at a time when many of the US universities and colleges are yet to announce their plans for the new academic year are likely to cause uncertainties and difficulties for some Indian students wishing to pursue their studies in the US," said a spokesperson of the Indian Embassy.

Responding to media queries, the spokesperson said the Indian



government has taken up the matter with concerned US officials.

At the India-US Foreign Office Consultations held on July 7, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla conveyed India's concerns on the matter to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale.

According to a recent report of Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), there were 1,94,556 Indian students enrolled in various academic institutions of the US in January this year. Of these 1,26,132 were males and 68,405 were females.

Noting that partnership in higher education is a key component of the strong people-to-people ties between India and the US, the spokesperson said in the last two decades Indian students in American universities and colleges have been the harbingers of a strong partnership between technology and innovation sectors between the two countries.

Corpses kidnapped in Indonesia as traditions clash with virus protocol

Agencies

Jakarta: The mob of over 150 people who forcefully took Muhammad Yunus' cadaver from a hospital in eastern Indonesia thought it was impossible that the 49-year-old Islamic preacher could have died from the coronavirus. He had always washed his hands, worn a mask and followed health protocols issued by the government, according to local residents.

So when he died the day after going to the hospital on Sulawesi island with chest pains and having trouble breathing, his followers were determined to retrieve his body for what they considered a proper Muslim burial. Over 100 people broke into the hospital, threatened nurses and eventually carried Yunus' corpse away less than 30 minutes after his death.

"What we have done is noble in God's eyes, but despicable in the eyes of the law," said a community member identified by the police only as Ramli.

As Indonesia's virus death toll rises, the world's most populous Muslim country finds itself at odds with protocols put in place by the government to handle the bodies of victims of the pandemic. This has led to increasing incidents of bodies being taken from hospitals, rejection of COVID-19 health and safety procedures, and what some experts say is a lack of communication from the government.

With over 87% of the country identifying as Muslim, Islamic rituals are commonplace in Indonesia when someone dies. Religion dictates that those practis-

ing must usually bury their dead within 24 hours, the bodies interred without a casket so bodies can lie on their right side facing the holy city of Mecca.

Before the burial, the body is washed by family with soap and scented water, then wrapped in a seamless cloth that is tied at the head and feet. Cremation and embalming are forbidden. A wake is usually not held because prayers for the forgiveness of the dead are said at the gravesite.

But with corpses of coronavirus victims thought to possibly be contagious, government protocols for handling bodies have meant that rituals typically performed by families have fallen on the shoulders of those handling the country's dead.

NEWS MAKERS

Trump Niece Describes "Malignantly Dysfunctional Family" In New Book

Washington: In a new book, a niece of President Donald Trump applies her training in psychology to conclude that the president likely suffers from narcissism and other clinical disorders - and was boosted to success by a father who fueled those traits.

In "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man," Mary Trump writes of a "malignantly dysfunctional family" dominated by a patriarch, Fred Trump, who showed little interest in his five children other than grooming an heir for his real-



estate business.

Ultimately, he settled on Donald, she wrote, deciding that his second son's "arrogance and bullying" would come in handy at the office, and encouraged it.

"He short-circuited Donald's

ability to develop and experience the entire spectrum of human emotion," Trump writes. "Donald requires division. It is the only way he knows how to survive - my grandfather ensured that decades ago when he turned his children against each other."

The book, due out next Tuesday, is the first Trump biography written by a family member. Reuters obtained a copy of the book. The president's brother Robert has tried unsuccessfully, so far, to block its publication. The court battle continues but is not expected to halt publication.

Pakistani Man Files \$20 Billion Damages Suit against US for 'Covid-19 Outbreak'

A Pakistani court has issued notices to the US embassy in Islamabad, the US counsel general Lahore and the foreign ministry on a USD 20 billion damages suit filed by a coronavirus infected person.

Raza Ali, a resident of Lahore, on Wednesday filed the petition in the Civil Court (Lahore) through Advocate Syed Zille Hussain alleging that

the US was responsible for the losses suffered by him and Pakistan due to coronavirus as it was behind unchecked spread of the pandemic.

Civil Judge Kamran Karamat issued notices to the US embassy Islamabad, US consul general in Lahore, US secretary of defence through consul general (Lahore) and the ministry of foreign affairs for August 7.

He said his family members are

also suffering and their health is so compromised that they may not be able to live a healthy life ever.

"Unchecked spread of COVID-19 in the US caused its spread over the world including Pakistan. The defendants are responsible for the colossal death toll, misery, and economic disasters they inflicted on the world, including but not limited to the entire Pakistan," he said.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Mechanical Division, Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir, Srinagar
| email: xenmds@gmail.com | website: www.medkashmir.org |

For and on behalf of the Union Territory of tenders are invited on OEM/Authorized Dealers/Representatives/ istered & Reputed for the below mentioned	
Name of the Work	
Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Horizontal Multistage pumping units along with allied works for harnessing of Bore well No. 01, 12, 111, 113, 114, National Mission on Saffron.	
<p>The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in 07.07.2020</p> <p>he bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above website from 07.07.2020 to 28.07.2020 in two covers.</p> <p>The bid uploaded on the Web Site up to due date and time will be opened on 29 .07.2020 in the Office of Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division, Srinagar</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat) Executive Engineer,</p>	
DIPK-2770/20	

India Exploring Legal Options In Kulbhushan Jadhav Case: MEA

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday said it was exploring legal options in the case relating to Indian death-row convict Kulbhushan Jadhav, a day after Pakistan claimed that he refused to file a review petition against his sentence by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage.

"At this stage, we are assessing our legal options. We will do our utmost to protect the life of the Indian national," Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs Anurag Srivastava said at an online media briefing.

Jadhav, a retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017.

Weeks later, India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence. The ICJ, then, restrained Pakistan from executing him.

In July last year, the Hague-based court ruled that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review

and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay.

On Wednesday, Pakistan said Jadhav refused to file an appeal in the Islamabad High Court against his conviction despite being offered the option.

Hours later, India called Pakistan's claim a "farce" and said Jadhav was "coerced" to forego his rights.

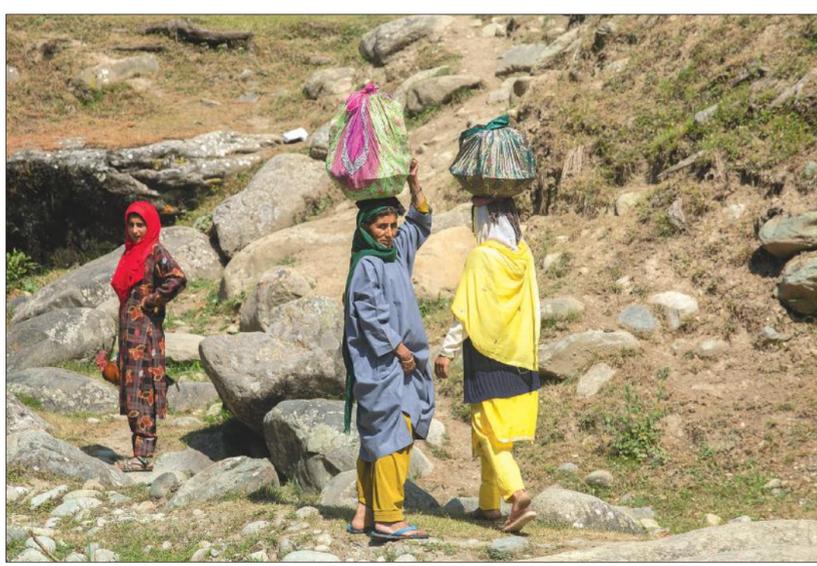
Srivastava on Wednesday said Pakistan's claim reflected its attempt to "mask" its continuing "reticence to implement" the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case in "letter and spirit".

He said Pakistan is only seeking to create an "illusion of remedy" in the case, and asserted that India will do its "utmost" to protect Jadhav and ensure his safe return to India.

"Pakistan's claim that Jadhav, who is incarcerated in Pakistan's custody, has refused to initiate review petition is a continuation of the farce that has been in play for the last four years," Srivastava said. PTI



WOMEN IN COUNTRYSIDE carry lunch boxes for their menfolk working in the fields in central Kashmir - KO Photo Abid Bhat



WOMEN IN COUNTRYSIDE carry lunch boxes for their menfolk working in the fields in central Kashmir - KO Photo Abid Bhat

Nearly 25,000 Cases In A Day Take India's Covid Tally To Over 7.67 Lakh

India recorded the highest single-day spike of over 24,879 new coronavirus cases and 487 deaths in the last 24 hours, pushing the total tally to 7,67,296 with 21,129 deaths, Health Ministry's data revealed on Thursday.

According to the data, out of total 7,67,296 cases, 4,76,377 have recovered while 2,69,789 remain active in the country. With more COVID-19 patients recovering, the gap between the number of recovered cases and active cases has increased by two lakh.

The rate of recovery among the COVID-19 patients continues to increase and has touched 61.53 per cent. India, however, remains to be the third worst-affected country after the US and Brazil.

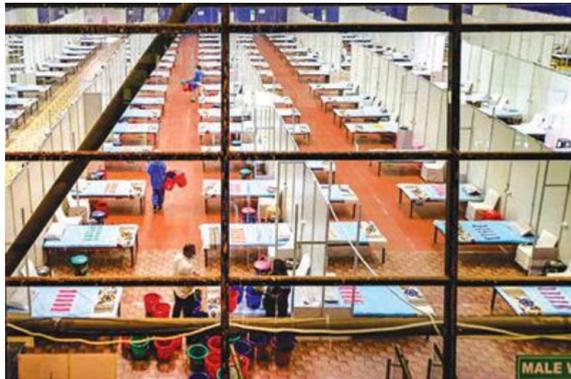
During the last 24 hours, 2,67,061 samples were tested, as the testing lab network continues to expand. As on date, more than 1,119 labs have enabled people to undergo coronavirus tests.

Maharashtra tops the chart and remains the worst hit state, with cases reaching up to 2,23,724 and 9,250 casualties so far, of which 198 occurred in the last 24 hours. Tamil Nadu remained the second worst hit with a total of 1,22,350 cases, including 1,700 deaths.

With 2,033 new coronavirus cases and 48 deaths in the last 24 hours, the national capital recorded a total tally of 1,04,864 and 3,213 deaths.

States with more than 10,000 cases include Gujarat with 38,333 cases and 1,993 deaths, Uttar Pradesh (31,156), Rajasthan (22,063), Madhya Pradesh (16,036), West Bengal (24,823), Haryana (18,690), Karnataka (28,877), Andhra Pradesh (22,259), Telangana (29,536) and Bihar (13,189) cases.

On the global front, the overall number of global COVID-19 cases has surpassed the 12 million mark, while the deaths have increased to more than 548,000, according to Johns Hopkins University.



Tomato Prices Rise To Rs 60-70 Per Kg In Most Cities; Paswan Says Due To Lean Period



As retail prices of tomato surged to Rs 60-70 per kg in almost all big cities, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Thursday said the price volatility was due to lean production season and high perishability of the commodity.

According to the ministry's latest data, retail tomato prices have increased to Rs 60 per kg in metro cities except Chennai on Thursday from around Rs 20 per kg a month ago. In some places, the kitchen staple was being sold at Rs 70-80 per kg.

Tomato was available at Rs 70 per kg in Gurgaon, Gangtok, Siliguri and Raipur, while at Rs 80 per kg in Gorakhpur, Kota and Dimapur.

In producing states too, prices were ruling firm at Rs 37 per kg in Hyderabad, Rs 40 per kg in Chennai and Rs 46 per kg in Bengaluru, the data showed.

Asked about rising prices, Paswan said: "Normally, prices of tomato remain high during July to September due to the lean period. The price volatility is more due to perishability of the commodity."

The prices will come to a normal level once the supply improves, he added.

Experts also said prices of tomato normally shoot up during the lean period and the last five year's data show the same trend.

Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh are states with deficit tomato production in the country. They depend on surplus producing states for supplies.

The country produces about 19.73 million tonnes of tomato annually, while the consumption is about 11.51 million tonnes, as per the official data.

'Mein Hun Vikas Dubey, Kanpur Wala': How Wanted Gangster Scripted His Bollywood-Style Arrest

Uttar Pradesh's dreaded gangster Vikas Dubey, who has had a thing for Bollywood, on Thursday 'surrendered' over a thousand kilometres away from what could be his swan song of a criminal life in the Mahakaal temple premises of Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain as he announced in Sanjay Dutt's "Khalnayak" style: "Mein hun Vikas Dubey, Kanpur wala".

Dubey has been on the run for almost a week, ever since the ambush and killing of eight police personnel in Kanpur. As police searched for him in Haryana, Delhi, and kept a close watch on Indo-Nepal border, the Kanpur boy who had launched himself into crime in the 1990s in the image of Sunny Deol's "Arjun Pandit" and loved the sound of being addressed to as "Pandit" in political



In a photograph that has gone viral, shows Dubey sitting comfortably on a sofa inside the temple complex. Uttar Pradesh Police officially confirmed the arrest of Vikas Dubey, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra spoke to the media minutes after Dubey was whisked away to an unidentified location for medical examination and questioning. Mishra said: "Hamari police kisi ko nahin chhodti. Hamare jaanbaaz police jawanon ne usey dhar dabocha (Our police never lets any criminal go scott free. They have nabbed him)."

Mishra said the details of his arrest and related process would be made public by the police later. Mishra said Dubey has been known to be "cruel and crafty" from childhood. The police had to be extra cautious.

Asia Cup Postponed Until June 2021 Due To Coronavirus Pandemic

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) on Thursday postponed the Asia Cup tournament, scheduled for September this year, until June 2021 owing to an upsurge in COVID-19 cases in the region.

The development further clears the way for the Indian Premier League, which the franchise-based event's organisers are trying to hold from September to November with the T20 World Cup also set to be deferred.

This comes a day after BCCI president Sourav Ganguly announced cancellation of this edition of the continental tournament, the hosting rights of which was with Pakistan.

With the Asia Cup pushed

back by a year, the ICC too is now expected to announce the postponement of the T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in October-November.

"After careful consideration and evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Board of the ACC has decided to postpone the Asia Cup tournament that was scheduled for September 2020," the Asian Cricket Council tweeted.

"The Executive Board of the ACC has met on multiple occasions to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Asia Cup tournament..." the ACC said in a statement.

The ACC Board, of which both Ganguly and BCCI secretary Jay Shah are part of, could not afford to ignore the health risks involved in hosting the tournament.

"From the onset the Board was keen on organising the tournament as per the original schedule. However,



travel restrictions, country-specific quarantine requirements, fundamental health risks and social distancing mandates have posed as substantial challenges to the holding of the Asia Cup.

Trump Threatens US Schools To Reopen, No Funds To Those Who Disobey

Determined to reopen America's schools despite coronavirus worries, President Donald Trump threatened Wednesday to hold back federal money if school districts don't bring their students back in the fall. He complained that his own public health officials' safety guidelines are impractical and too expensive.

Shortly afterward, Vice President Mike Pence announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would be issuing new guidance next week "that will give all the new tools to our schools." The recommendations will keep students safe, he said, but "the president said today we just don't want the guidance to be too tough."

Despite Trump's increased pressure on state and local officials, New York City announced that most of its students would return to classrooms only two or three days a week and would learn online in between. "Most schools will not be able to have all their kids in school at the same time," said Mayor Bill de Blasio.

For a nation that prides itself on its public school system, it's an extraordinary situation in this pandemic year.

With millions of the nation's parents anxious about

their children's safety in the fall — and their own work interruptions if they must stay home — Trump continued to inject politics into public health. He accused Democrats yet again of wanting to keep schools closed for election-year reasons rather than health concerns. And he issued a veiled threat to CDC officials over their reopening guidelines, tweeting, "I will be meeting with them!!!"

Elsewhere in the nation,



many states continued to confront a resurgence of the virus, which has claimed more than 130,000 lives in the U.S. But safety obstacles in schools can be surmounted, Trump insisted, and reopening "is important for the children & families. May cut off funding if not open!"

He did not say what funding he would pull, but Pence suggested at a coronavirus task force briefing that future COVID-19 relief bills could be tied to reopening schools as one way "to give states a strong incentive and encouragement to get kids back in school."

NEWS MAKERS

Veteran Actor-Comedian Jagdeep Dead

MUMBAI: Veteran Actor-comedian Jagdeep, best known for his role as Soorma Bhopali in "Sholay", died on Wednesday at his residence. He was 81.

The actor, real name Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Jafri, was not keeping well.

"He passed away at 8.30 pm at his residence in Bandra. He was not keeping well due to age related issues," producer Mehmood Ali, a close family friend, told PTI.

Jagdeep appeared in around 400 films but it is his role as Soorma Bhopali in 1975 film "Sholay" that is etched in audiences' minds even today.

He also played memorable roles in "Purana Mandir" and in "Andaz Apna



Apna as Salman Khan's father. Better known by his stage name Jagdeep, the actor also directed the movie "Soorma Bhopali" with his character as the protagonist. He is survived by two sons - Javed and Naved. PTI

Govt University Professor Booked For Posting Pakistan Flag, Map Pictures On Facebook

BAREILLY: An FIR has been lodged against a government university professor here for allegedly posting pictures of Pakistani flag and map on a social networking site, police said on Thursday.

The case was registered at the Baradar police station on Wednesday on a complaint of VHP leader Neeru Bhardwaj, they said.

Bhardwaj has alleged that Salim Khan, a Physics professor at the Rohilkhand University here, tried to hurt the feelings of people by posting pictures of Pakistani flag and map in his Facebook account on Tuesday.

Inspector Baradar Shintanshu Sharma said an inquiry is on in the matter.

According to police, the professor has given an apology to University Vice Chancellor Anil Kumar Shukla, who said that the matter will be put before the university executive council. —PTI



Girl Hangs Self After Tiff With Brother Over Mobile Phone

JAIPUR: The ugly face of mobile phone addiction once again came to fore when a 16-year-old girl committed suicide in Jhunjhunu town of Rajasthan after scuffle with brother over phone.

The mother, who intervened in the brother-sister fight, warned that she will not recharge the phone which irked the girl so much that she hanged herself, said police officials on Thursday. The case has been lodged at City Kotwali station by deceased's uncle Shauqat Ali who reported that his niece Kherunissa hanged herself with her dupatta tied to a fan on Wednesday.

Meanwhile Shruvan Kumar, the investigating police officer, said, "It was a trivial matter where the brother and sister had a small fight. Kherunissa wanted to have the mobile phone for playing games, however, his brother was also playing a game on it. As the brother-sister fought, their mother scolded both of them and annoyingly, she said that she will not get the mobile recharged further." The girl felt bad, went to her room and hanged herself to death, said the officer, adding that her brother is studying in class VIII while the deceased was a school dropout. Her father had expired and the deceased was staying with her mother, sister-in-law and younger brother while the elder brother is working abroad. Her body was handed over to her family after post-mortem. IANS