



Maximum : 28°C
Minimum : 11°C
Humidity : 35%

SUNSET
Today 06:12 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 06:27 AM



News Digest

Aga Hasan Leads Prayers After 425 Days

SRINAGAR: Senior separatist leader and President Anjuman-e-Shari Shian Aga Syed Hasan Almosvi Alsafvi on Friday led congregational prayers at central Kashmir's Budgam district, first time after the abrogation of special status.

On Friday, after spending more than 425 days under house detention at Darul Mustafa Shariat Abad, Budgam, Aga Hassan crossed all barricades that prevented his movement to lead the Friday congregation, news agency KNS reported. ● P-02

JK Declares Mourning For Kuwait Emir

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday announced one day state mourning on October 4 as a mark of respect to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, who passed away on Tuesday.

According to an order issued here today, the J&K government would observe one day state mourning on 4th of October over the demise of Kuwait Emir, an official spokesperson said. "During the period of mourning the national flag shall fly" ● P-02

Soldier Shoots Self Dead In Uri

Baramulla- An army soldier shot himself dead with his service rifle in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday night, officials said. A police officer said that the soldier, identified as Rakshit Kumar (22) son of Kuldeep Kumar, resident of Samba district of Jammu region, shot himself by using his service rifle at JACK 1 post, sub sector Gohallan of Uri. He said the soldier died on spot, adding that his autopsy is going on in sub-district hospital (SDH) Uri. He said a case has been registered in this regard and further investigation has been started.

Minor Boy Strangulates Self

SRINAGAR: A minor boy on Friday allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself at his home in Aloosa village of north Kashmir's Bandipora district.

12-year-old boy (name withheld) was found hanging by his family members inside his home in Aloosa village on Friday afternoon, a police official said. He said the boy was taken to a nearby hospital by his family members, where doctors declared him brought dead. Meanwhile, police has taken cognizance of this incident, the official added. (KDC)

Labourer Slips To Death In Kulgam

SRINAGAR: A labourer died after he accidentally slipped off the road and fell down into the drain in Srandoo area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district. 20-year-old youth Manzoor Ahmad Chohan, a labourer from Halankulgam, slipped off the road when he was pulling the handcart loaded with cement and fell into the drain, official sources said. He suffered severe head injury and died on the spot, the official said, adding that a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigation has been taken up—(KNO)

10-Day-Old, 14 Others Die Of Coronavirus, J&K Toll 1214

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: At least fifteen people, including a 10-day-old newborn died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, taking the number of fatalities due to the deadly infection across the Union Territory to 1214.

While ten more people succumbed to Covid-19 in Jammu division on Friday, the virus claimed five more lives in Kashmir valley, officials said.

The infant is the youngest COVID-19 victim in J&K, the officials said. Earlier, an 11-day-old died on July 12 while a 15-day-old baby from Bemina area died here on June 19.

Among the ten deaths from Jammu division, four of the victims hailed from

Jammu district, two each from Udhampur and Kathua besides one each from Doda and Samba.

Five deaths were reported from Kashmir Valley include three from Srinagar and two from Budgam districts. Among the victims were a 65-year-old man from Harwan, who died at SKIMS Soura, thirteen days after he was admitted to the tertiary care hospital.

A 65-year-old man from Pakharpora Budgam died at CD hospital, one of the exclusive facilities for the management of the covid-19 patients in the Valley. The sexagenarian was admitted to the facility on September 29.

Also, an 85-year-old man from Brain Nishat Srinagar died a week after he was admitted to the



19 Soldiers Among 1090 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Friday 1090 new cases of coronavirus, including nineteen soldiers and forty five travelers, taking the total number of people infected by the virus in the Union Territory to 77253. While Jammu division reported 603 fresh cases of Covid-19, the remaining 487 were confirmed by the officials from the Kashmir Valley. ● P-02

Police Seeks Arrest Of Dr Mubeen Shah



SRINAGAR: Eleven months after revoking his detention under the stringent Public Safety Act, Jammu and Kashmir Police has initiated the process of taking NRI businessman Dr Mubeen Shah into custody and attachment of his properties.

The police had registered a case against Shah in June this year under various sections of the Indian Penal Code over his purported Facebook post against non-locals residing in the Kashmir Valley.

"Yes, we are in the process of securing an arrest warrant against him after the police station concerned found his post on social networking site was aimed at creating communal tension," Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh said.

Based out of Malaysia, where he runs his handicrafts business, Shah used to visit Kashmir once a year. Earlier, he was the

Shun Violence, Will Help You With Jobs: Sinha To Militants

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday appealed to local militants to shun the path of violence and promised to help them with jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

He was speaking after launching the third-phase of the pioneering 'Back to Village' programme in Shopian district in south Kashmir.

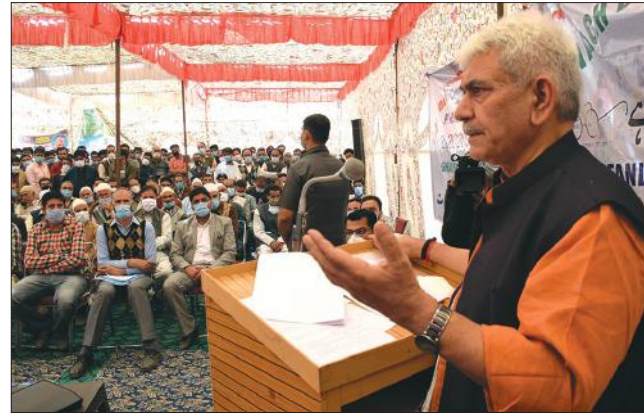
Sinha said the people of J-K, especially the youth, want to tread on the path of progress and development and appealed to the misguided youth to shun violence and return to the mainstream.

The government is ready to help with jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, he added.

The Lt Governor said the administration will work hard to make Jammu and Kashmir one of the most developed union territories in the country.

The administration is committed to make the UT a role model of development and prosperity, he said, adding it will empower youth and strengthen the panchayati raj institutions.

On the occasion, Sinha inaugurated a youth recreation centre and a chil-



'Gandhi Advocated Panchayati Raj, Decentralised Form Of Govt'

Commencing of the third phase of the 'Back to Village' programme across Jammu and Kashmir is a perfect way to honour Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on the occasion on Friday.

An apostle of peace and social service, Gandhi's contributions to the freedom struggle, and promoting the rights and welfare of the oppressed sections of the society have unending

dren's library in Sermal village.

He also laid the foundation stone of a 100-bedded girls' hostel costing Rs 306.34 lakh.

Counting achievements under the ongoing activities, the Lt Governor highlighted that during the past two

Block Diwas, impressive results have been achieved. Around one lakh students have been provided scholarships, more than 25,000 beneficiaries have been provided pensions under Integrated Social Security Scheme, more than

SHOPIAN 'FAKE ENCOUNTER'

Process To Exhume, Hand Over Bodies To Be Completed Soon: DGP

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Dilbag Singh on Friday said the legal process to exhume and hand over the bodies of three persons from Rajouri who were killed in an alleged fake encounter by Army in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir in July would be completed soon.

"The process is on. We have started whatever legal process has to be undertaken and this process will be completed soon," the Director General of Police (DGP) told reporters when asked when the bodies would



be handed over to their families.

On September 30, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said since the DNA samples matched with the families, the three bodies will be exhumed and handed over to families after due process of law.

2 Dead Militants Of Lashkar Among 3 Charged By NIA

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The NIA has filed a charge-sheet against three persons who allegedly underwent training in Pakistan to carry out militant attacks in India on the instructions of Pakistan-based group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), an official said.

The charge-sheet against Muneeb Hameed Bhat, Junaid Ahmad Mattoo and Umer Rashid Wani, all residents of Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district, was filed before a special NIA court in Jammu on Thursday.

It was filed under sections of the Ranbir Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the official said.

Mattoo and Wani were killed in separate encounters in Jammu and

Kashmir in 2017 and 2018, respectively, the NIA official said.

The case relates to subversive activities of the LeT in Kulgam. It was motivating youths such as Bhat to join the militant group and organise their travel to Pakistan for training on the basis of valid travel documents following the recommendation of separatist leaders, the NIA official said.

Investigations by the NIA, which took over the case on September 25, 2018, established that LeT militant Mattoo motivated Bhat to join the LeT and go to Pakistan for arms training, the NIA spokesperson said. He added that Wani, another LeT militant, gave him funds to meet the expenses of his visit to the neighbouring country. ● P-02

HC Dismisses Plea Against e-Auction Of Minor Minerals In J&K

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The J&K high court has dismissed plea against e-auctions of minor minerals in Jammu and Kashmir, observing that it is the most transparent and efficient method of conducting a public auction.

A bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Sanjay Dhar said that decision of the government to cancel the auction of 2017 was "bonafidely based on material on record and arrived at after application of mind and full consideration of the relevant material purely in public interest."

"The decision to change the policy and to auction mineral licences by e-auction was a reason-



able policy decision fairly made without any ulterior purpose for the discernible reasons," the court said, adding, "that e-auctions are the most transparent, maximize competition, geographically inclusive, effective, efficient method of conducting a public auction which enables maximization of the public interest and national priorities."

The court was hearing appeal to

its single bench's judgment, challenging dismissal of 16 petitions in which challenge was thrown to a communication of the Department of Industries and Commerce, scrapping open auction carried under the J&K Minor Minerals Concession, Storage, Transportation of Minerals and Prevention of Illegal Mining Rules 2016 and providing further

Women Burglars Gang Busted In Srinagar: Police

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police said on Friday that they have busted a gang of women burglars in Srinagar by arresting five women thieves who were involved in pickpocketing and other theft related incidents in busy market areas of the city.

Speaking to the media here, Haseeb Mughal, SSP (Srinagar), said that a group of eight thieves has been arrested, of which five are women.

"So far, Rs 90,000 stolen cash has been recovered from the arrested group, besides a huge cache of stolen purses, LCD TVs, furnishing items etc.

"The women would get close to females shopping in busy markets like Gonikhan

Ex- DIG Dies While Finding Shortest Route To China LAC

NEW DELHI: A 70-year-old retired BSF deputy inspector general died in the upper reaches of Himachal Pradesh while leading a team to "explore the shortest route to China border", officials said on Wednesday.

The retired officer, S C Negi, had commanded a Border Security Force (BSF) battalion in Kargil during the 1999 war between India and Pakistan, and had retired in 2010 after putting in 33 years of service.

"He took his last breath in the mountain for the cause of the nation when he was

In FOCUS / Nastaliq To Devanagari: After Language, Kashmir Watching Script Campaign

Swati Joshi

After the Jammu and Kashmir Official Language Act was implemented by New Delhi recently, there has been a concern amongst civil society in Kashmir over the promotion of the Devanagari script over the Nastaliq style for the digitization of data.

Lately, in a letter issued to J&K government, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology mentioned that the Centre wants to digitize materials of Kashmiri language in Devanagari script.

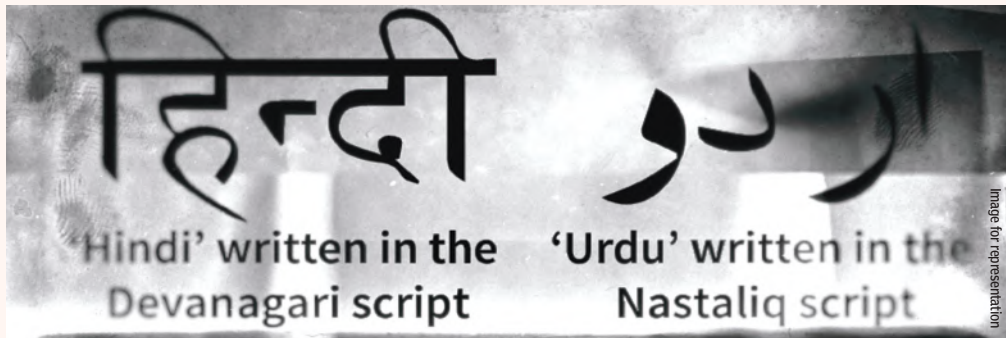
Reacting to this, the Group of Concerned Citizens (GCC) expressed its

concern over the promotion of Devanagari script instead of Nastaliq style for the Kashmiri Language.

GCC is a Kashmiri based-civil society body of former vice-chancellors, bureaucrats and academicians.

In a joint statement, the GCC members stressed that the Common Locale Data Repository (CLDR), a project of the Unicode consortium for preparation of required data, is using the Devanagari script instead of its Persian script.

"The introduction of Devanagari script in the digitized official repository raises genuine apprehensions about the future of the Persian script, which need to be allayed



through an explicit order about retention of Persian script in Nastaliq style," the civil society group said.

Pandit Pash

Recently, a letter issued by All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS), an apex body of Indian and Overseas Kashmiri Pandit organizations, justified

the use of Devanagari as additional/co-script for the Kashmiri language.

"The biggest advantage will accrue to thousands of young Kashmiris

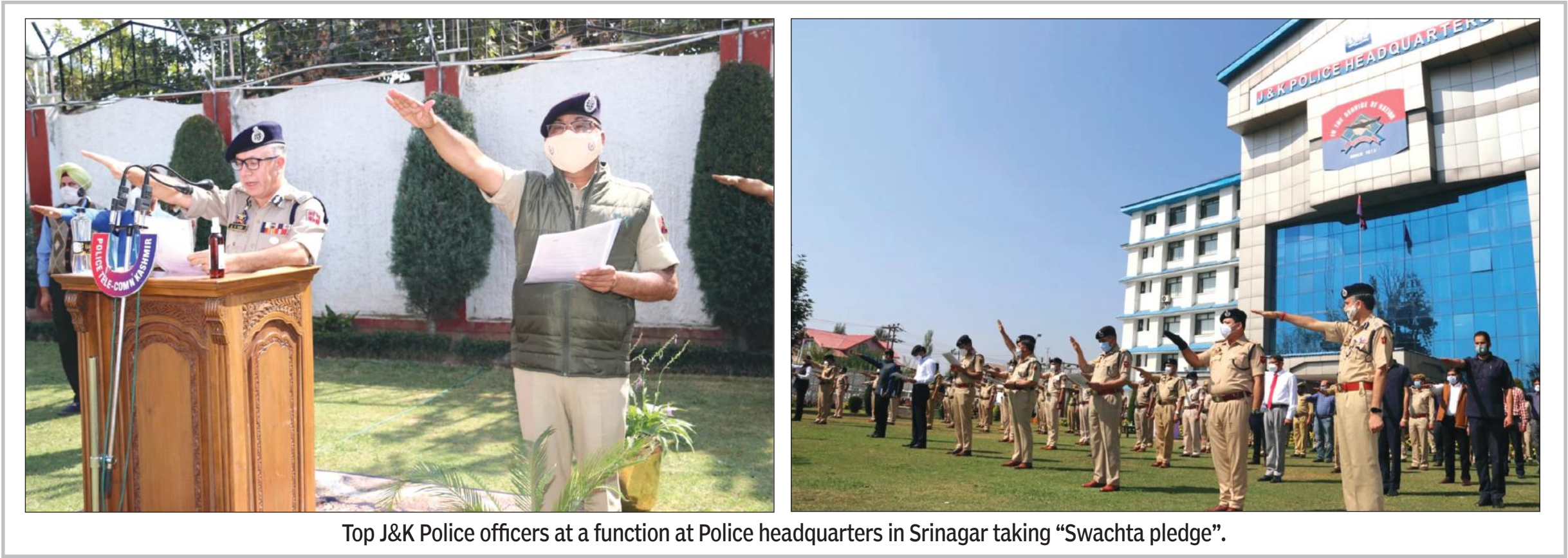
University, the demand of AIKS or "some other Kashmiri Hindu organization" to introduce Devanagari as the script for the Kashmiri language is not new.

In 1938, the Dogra Raj appointed a committee called the Education Reorganization Committee to make the necessary recommendations for the reorganization of the existing system of education in the state at that time, explained Bashir.

He said, among numerous other issues, the committee also examined the scripts and the medium of instructions in the schools.

In this regard, the committee recommended, "If this State...

● P-02



Top J&K Police officers at a function at Police headquarters in Srinagar taking “Swachta pledge”.

Hathras Incident: Kejriwal Joins Protest At Jantarmantar; Demands Strictest Punishment For Accused

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday joined the protest at JantarMantar against the alleged gang-rape and murder of a woman in Hathras, and demanded strictest punishment for the accused while asserting that politics should not be done over the issue.

Kejriwal, who joined a protest for the first time since he became chief minister for the third time, said this is a fight for justice for the victim's family.

"There should be no politics on the matter, it is not ethical to play politics on this. When one says a rape has happened in Uttar Pradesh, another person says a rape has also happened in Rajasthan. This is no argument. Why should such incidents of rape happen in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan? Why should they happen in Madhya Pradesh, Mumbai, and Delhi?"

"They are our daughters, whether, from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata or Bangalore. No incident of rape should happen anywhere in the country. All of us, all the governments, parties, and people of the country, must create a system that keeps our daughters safe. There should be no politics on the matter," he said while addressing the protesters.

Kejriwal said the entire country wants that the accused should get the strictest punishment.

"We are in a deep pit. I am not here to give a speech, we pray to God for our daughter to rest in peace. The whole country would like to appeal to the Uttar Pradesh government that the culprits be given stringent punishment and must be hanged till death.

"They should be given the harshest punishment so that nobody in the world tries to repeat such an act. Some people have been feeling that attempts are being made to save the culprits and the whole incident is being covered up. This is wrong," he said.

The chief minister said "what happened is very painful and a gruesome act has been meted out against the victim who lost her life at the end."

"The FIR for rape was not lodged for many days, proper treatment was not given to her, and her body was cremated at night going against the Hindu customs. Several actions have made people believe that the whole incident and the culprits are being shielded. The culprits must be punished," he said.

The chief minister said the behaviour which the family of the victim is being subjected to is not right.

"The behaviour that the family is being subjected to is not right. At this point, all that the family needs is peace and they should be set free so that they can meet whoever they want to," he said.

10-Day-Old, 14 Others Die...

hospital, officials said.

A 65-year-old woman from Gundipora Beerwah who was admitted with bilateral community acquired pneumonia died eleven days after admitted to the SMHS hospital here, they said.

Among others, the deaths from Jammu division include a 10-day-old baby from Dachan Kishtwar, a 35-year-old woman from Battal Walia Udhampur, a 56-year-old from Rewa (Madhya Pradesh), a 83-year-old from Karan Nagar Jammu, a 55-year-old from Ustaad Mohalla and a 63-year-old from Govindpora Satwari. (With GNS inputs)

19 Soldiers Among 1090...

Giving district-wise breakup, official said Srinagar reported 181 cases, Budgam 54, Baramulla 64, Pulwama 29, Anantnag 32, Bandipora 58, Kupwara 25, Ganderbal 28, Kulgam 6, Shopian 10, Jammu 354, Rajouri 33, Udhampur 30, Kathua 21, Doda 27, Samba 20, Poonch 22, Ramban 25, Reasi 46 and Kishtwar 25.

Meanwhile, 1400 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals— 990 from Jammu division and 410 from Kashmir Valley.

Police Seeks Arrest Of Dr...

president of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Singh said that during course of investigation, police teams made correspondence with Facebook to get details of the person holding the account on the social media platform.

"On the basis of the evidence collected so far, a request has been made to the competent court for getting arrest warrant issued against him.... The process of getting a lookout notice issued on the basis of the arrest warrant is also in progress," he said.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police is trying to secure an Interpol Red Corner Notice against Shah.

The police chief said that correspondence has also been made with the revenue authorities to get his property details to declare him a proclaimed offender and subsequent attachment of his property as per law.

Shah was detained on August 6 last year, a day after the Centre abrogated special status of the erstwhile state and bifurcated it into union territories -- Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah's wife moved the Supreme Court challenging the order and on December 7 last year he was initially released "temporarily" from Agra jail and later all charges against him were dropped after the Jammu and Kashmir administration revoked the PSA order against him.

"In exercise of the powers conferred under section 19 (1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978, the government hereby in supersession of government order..dated December 6, revokes the detention order...dated August 7, 2019..." the order said.

A Supreme Court bench of Justices N V Ramana, R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai declared the petition of Shah's wife as infructuous after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the union territory, said the PSA has been permanently revoked.

Shah figured during the US Congress hearing on human rights in South Asia, focused on India's action in Kashmir last November, when Indian-American Democratic lawmaker from Washington's 7th Congressional district Pramila Jayapal raised the matter of his detention.

"One of the individuals detained without charges is Dr Mubeen Shah, who is the uncle of my constituents in Seattle...this is former CEO of chamber of commerce. His urologist who is affiliated with Registrar General of Hospital has called for his immediate release because of serious medical issues."

Assuring Jayapal, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G Wells had replied that America had taken up the issue of Shah with the Indian government.

"Yes, we explicitly raised the case of Dr Shah and shared your concern about the grounds for detention particularly given the health condition. We have received a response that he is receiving medication," she said.

Shun Violence, Will Help...

17,000 Kisan Credit Cards delivered, around 4600 beneficiaries, which include widows, senior citizens and specially-abled persons, added under National Social Assistance Scheme and 14,000 works started under 14th FC and MNREGA.

In these two days, more than 1.5 lakh people participated, 1.43 lakh provided various certificates, revenue papers issued to more than 15 thousand, around 22,000 Ration Cards seeded with Aadhar, more than 8,000 families provided benefits of Ayushman Bharat and around 4,000 Universal Health Cards were issued. During Awami Muhim, 11,000 grievances, out of 24,000 received, were resolved on spot. Similar results would be achieved in the future due to the government's doorstep delivery of governance.

There is no dearth of funds as Rs 2.5 crore has already been issued to districts in addition to Rs 10 lakh per panchayat. Total 54 schemes of the government are giving direction to progress, and prosperity of

J&K. Special focus is being laid on 100% saturation of all social security and beneficiary oriented schemes.

'Gandhi Advocated Panchayati...

imprints on the world history and would continue to inspire the generations to come, Sinha said.

Everyone must follow the path of non-violence, social justice, equality, upliftment of the underprivileged sections of the society, secular traditions and brotherhood shown by the father of the nation for bringing an era of peace and development in the world, he said.

Mahatma Gandhi advocated panchayati raj, a decentralised form of government, the lieutenant governor said.

Following the Gandhian ideas of 'gram swaraj' and panchayati raj system, the administration is making "untiring efforts to reach out to the people and including all the stakeholders in the process of decision-making and public policy formulation to bring a positive social and political change in J&K," he added.

Back to Village is a unique and ambitious exercise by the administration to reach the doorsteps of the people with responsive, accountable and equitable governance is in its own way promoting values, ideology and philosophy of Gandhi, according to Sinha.

The programme, which started on Friday, is also seen as a unique effort to strengthen the newly-constituted panchayats, the Lt governor said. "This practice is the first such attempt at a concentrated and determined developmental push."

Sinha said the endeavour was as challenging as ambitious -- it involved the visit of over 4,000 gazetted officers of the Union territory to each and every panchayat so that they can be well-versed with the local issues and developmental needs.

It also aims at ensuring that beneficiary-oriented schemes actually reach the last person in the queue, he added.

"It is my advice to every single officer on the ground to work as a changemaker to ensure benefits of governance reach the last man in the queue, so that the desired results, which we are aiming at i.e. development of villages and strengthening of panchayats must be achieved," Sinha said.

'Back to village' is a novel initiative launched in Jammu and Kashmir to take the governance to grassroots level.

The senior officials are deputed to village level for a few days where they get first-hand account of development needs of these areas so that projects and plans can be formulated for easing the hardships of the people. PTI

Process To Exhume, Hand...

Mohammad Ibrar, a resident of Tarkassi village of Rajouri, left their homes to work as labourers in Kashmir's Shopian and went out of contact with their families after July 17 late evening.

A day later, the Army claimed three militants were killed in Amshipura village in the higher reaches of south Kashmir's Shopian. It initiated an inquiry after social media reports indicated that the three men were from Rajouri and had gone missing in Amshipura.

The Army completed a probe on September 18 and said it has found "prima facie" evidence that its troops "exceeded" powers under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act during the encounter and has initiated disciplinary proceedings.

The police also launched its investigations and collected the DNA samples of the families to match with those killed.

Last week, the police said the samples have matched with the families from Rajouri and further investigation in the case was going on

Kashmir Media Bodies Slam...

representing the institution of media," the statement said.

It said that the media in Kashmir has been struggling to survive as an institution of public service for most of its recorded existence.

"While retaining its status, it has paid a heavy price to stay neutral to the politics and objective to the facts, a rare trait that hardly is being exhibited by media while covering their own conflict," the statement said.

"For countless reasons, the media in Kashmir is on the edge and the stakeholders are doing their utmost to bring in some stability to this key public service institution," it added.

The media bodies further said that Kashmir journalists across the groupings and the status they hold in their respective organisations have, once again, felt pained over the unwarranted propaganda, aimed at bringing a bad name to individuals and institutions for no apparent reasons or justification.

"This propaganda is being deliberately peddled to gossip-hungry social media so that reputations of the professionals are sacrificed for the political ends of the virtual rumour mongers. This propaganda, however, adds to the vulnerability of the media," the statement said.

The media in Kashmir, it said has always grown stronger by the assaults from here and there. The vilification may massage the ego of the people behind these shameful acts but it eventually hurts Kashmir.

"Media groups take this opportunity to reiterate the larger reality that

media has been covering Kashmir with utmost responsibility and objectivity, something that Kashmir media is proud of. It will continue doing so. An objective media is in everybody's interest," the joint statement said, adding "Kashmir media stands united to defeat the ill designs of such elements."

2 Dead Militants Of Lashkar...

In July-August 2017, Bhat visited Pakistan on valid travel documents and was imparted training on using weapons and secret social media chat platforms, the official of the premier investigation agency said.

After returning from Pakistan, he was in constant touch with LeT handlers in Pakistan and with active militants of Kulgam on secret messaging platforms to carry out subversive and militant activities in the Valley, the NIA spokesperson said.

Bhat was working as a sleeper cell of the LeT and intended to join the banned militant organisation, the official said.

From 2016-2018, many Kashmiri youths were sent by separatist leaders to Pakistan, he added.

They were trained in the camps for five to 15 days. After returning, they were initially used as sleeper cells by militant organisations and subsequently recruited for active militancy, the official said.

HC Dismisses Plea Against...

that fresh auctions would be carried out only through e-auction mode.

The appeal was filed by Rakesh Kumar Choudhary, Chaman Lal, M/s Usman Construction and others, M/s Mohammad Ashore and others, Mohammad Farooq Lone & Others, Vikar Ahmad Dar, Nagar Singh, Shahinawaz Ahmad Bhat & anr.

The division bench directed the Chief Secretary to take immediate steps for appointing professional and qualified person(s)/ agency(ies) for technically and scientifically evaluating, in strict time frames, the issues of fixation of the reserved prices of minerals in the J&K; the terms and conditions on which auctions and tenders for grant of all mineral concessions are conducted and recommendations of the experts so appointed be implemented in public interest.

"The Chief Secretary shall, if not already done, appoint a Committee of Experts on the lines of directions given by the Supreme Court in National Green Tribunal Bar Association v. Virendra Singh (State of Gujarat), as well in Mushatkeen v. MOEFF & CC, to assess the components and scales of compensation and recommend measures of reparation for acts and omissions of the appellants which have resulted in environmental degradation."

The court also directed the Chief Secretary to appoint a nodal officer and committee of officers to compute the scale of compensation as recommended by the Committee with a time bound mandate to issue notices to show cause to the appellants with regard to payment of compensation, if any, consideration of the responses, making appropriate determination of liability and effecting recoveries thereof.

The court set aside the conclusion of the Single Judge in its judgment that the appellants had a remedy in common law to seek compensation.

It also set aside the liberty granted by the Single Judge to the appellants to claim refund of their bid amount(s), if any, lying with the Department of Industries and Commerce or to sue the latter in appropriate proceedings for any loss or damage, if any, suffered by them.

Women Burglars Gang Busted...

and other places and snatch their purses and later buy goods for their own houses using the stolen cash. Some of these women would wear 'pherans' (a traditional outfit in Kashmir) and would operate in Gonikhan, Maharajabazar, L.D. Hospital and Hari Singh High Street areas in Srinagar.

"This group would target rural women who came to Srinagar from various districts for marriage related shopping. The arrest of one woman of the group who was operating as a pickpocket led to the busting of this gang," Mughal said.

Ex- DIG Dies While Finding...

willingly leading a reconnaissance and survey team of a security force to explore a shortest route to China border in Himachal Pradesh, the BSF said in a statement.

"He was advised by his family against the trip as he being 70-years-old, but he said it will be his last trip," the BSF said in a statement.

True to his words, it became his last trip and even after retirement, he died in the line of duty for the nation, the force said.

The BSF statement did not identify the security force team that the slain officer was leading.

However, sources in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) said the retired officer was rescued by a patrol party of the force on Tuesday from the remote Nishanggaon area of Kinnaur district along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

The officer was seen lying injured by the ITBP patrol and he had suffered multiple fractures. He died while he was being carried by ITBP troops, they said.

They said his body is being kept at Ganthambralam border post, at a height of about 18,600 feet in Himachal Pradesh, of the ITBP for over 24 hours as a helicopter sortie is awaited to pick the mortal remains.

A 1977-batch officer of the BSF cadre, Negi is known as the oldest Indian police officer to scale the world's tallest peak Mount Everest at the age of 56 years in 2006, the BSF said.

He had also been the leader of the central mountaineering team of BSF for a long time, it added.

Nastaliq To Devanagari..

had actually two scripts in use, we would have accepted the existing situation and recommended the compulsory teaching of both scripts in the state. The introduction of the controversy of the second script will be a distinct disservice to the cause of national solidarity."

Knowing that Persian had been the official language in the state for centuries and both Muslims and Hindus were well versed with it, N. Gopalaswamy Ayangar, the then Prime Minister of J&K, ordered at the behest of the Maharaja, the introduction of two scripts-Devanagari and vogue Persian script.

It gave rise to a long controversy that also led to a crisis in National Conference where the opinion was split along religious lines, Bashir told Kashmir Observer.

The communal forces had failed to get their way and introduce Devanagari which is a way to make Hindi the main language of J&K and impose it on the 70 per cent Muslim majority so that their culture, tradition, literature is destroyed, the scholar added.

"To preserve our culture, our language, our way of life, our own stories and respond to this cultural onslaught effectively, we will have to document all such assaults in the past so that we can resist the current onslaught on us," he said.

A Larger Plan

Changing Kashmiri script is a part of larger plan to boost the radical Hindu chauvinistic political narrative, said Mir Tariq Rasool, former Secretary J&K Adbhe Markaz Kamraz (AMK) and Patron Kashmir Literary and philosophical foundation.

According to him, the changing script would not only add to the destruction of India's secular fabric but also outdated and make all the literary treasure irrelevant for the future generations.

"Besides it will damage the etymological fabric of Kashmiri language because a huge chunk of words cannot be fitted in the Devanagari script," Rasool told Kashmir Observer.

The move of changing script of Kashmiri language is nothing but an effort to kill the basic living Kashmiri literary and linguistic thought, he said.

Against Kashmiri Sentiments

People in Delhi should read between the lines, said Dr. Rafiq Masoodi, former additional director general Doordarshan, adding that people guiding the Centre do not know the ground reality of Kashmir.

"The AIKS is asking for Devanagari as an additional script but it is already there," Dr Masoodi told Kashmir Observer.

"They want Devanagari to be constitutionally added and it would somewhere or the other touch the sensitivity of Kashmiri people."

There is an apprehension amongst people that the demand for the additional script would ultimately replace Nastaliq with Devanagari, he said.

All religious books are in Nastaliq and the conversion of these books would hurt the sentiments of Kashmiris, he added.

"When the Kashmiri language was born it was read in Sharda script and even the AIKS know Sharda script but they demand Devanagari, not Sharda," he said.

Masoodi has been the secretary of culture for four years and during his tenure, he released many books in Devanagari script but the books didn't find any reader, "so ultimately, they had to shift to Nastaliq," he said.

'Saffronisation' of the Script

The use of Devanagari is tantamount to a kind of "saffronisation of the script", said Rao Farman Ali, a Kashmiri based author.

"This demand would create a rift between the Hindus and Muslims in the Kashmir region," Ali said. "It is a surprise that AIKS is asking for Devanagari script and not Sharda script."

Aga Hasan Leads Prayers...

The report quoting a statement further said that the house detention of Aga Hassan, after the abrogation of the Article 370 was challenged in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

"The petition was heard and the government of Jammu and Kashmir was asked to come forward and clear the position on the Aga Hassan's detention, to which the administration answered that Aga Hassan was free and was advised to stay safe in the given turbulent environment," the report added.

JK Declares Mourning For...

at half mast on all buildings and places throughout the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir where it is flown regularly and there will be no official entertainment on the day," he added.

CAG’s scathing remarks on functioning of JKMSCL

Srinagar: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has made scathing remarks on the functioning of the Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation, saying the purpose of setting up it has been defeated.

“There were delays in finalisation of rate contracts and consequent delay/ non-procurement of medicines/drugs, instruments, machinery, equipment; thereby defeating the purpose of creation of the Company,” reads the CAG report on functioning of Public Sector Undertakings in Jammu and Kashmir.

In May 2013, J&K cabinet cleared a proposal for setting up Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (Company) for procurement of medicines and equipment for government hospitals in the State.

It was incorporated on 5th March 2014

under the Companies Act, 1956 and functions under the administrative control of the Health and Medical Education (HME) Department.

The CAG report reveals that 59 per cent procurement of drugs, machinery, equipment and were done by heads of department in Health and Medical Education and only 41 purchases were made by the Corporation.

“Out of total expenditure of Rs 573.63 crore incurred by the 113 Heads of Department in HME Department for procurement of drugs/medicines, machinery/equipment, furniture etc. during 2014-15 to 2017-18, only Rs 236.07 crore (41 per cent) were transferred to the Company and procurements worth Rs 337.56 crore (59 per cent) were made by these HoDs themselves, which indicated that the objective of relieving the service providers

of the extra burden of purchase/ distribution was not served,” reads the report.

The PSU was set to relieve the service providers (head of the departments/Doctors) of the additional burden of procurement and distribution process.

The audit also observed that there had been delay in finalisation of Annual Rate Contract (ARC) leading to delay in procurement of drugs/ medicines/machinery/ equipments.

“In first phase, the Company invited tender for the procurement of drugs/ medicines/ fluids comprising 870 items (increased to 9404) in June 2015, January 2016 and July 2016, out of which the Company finalised ARCs for only 592 items (63 per cent) in three instances during November 2015 and June 2017 by taking time ranging between 87 days and 320 days after issue of NIT (Notice Inviting

Tender). Similarly, out of 723 items advertised (February 2017) in second phase, the ARCs for only 362 items were finalised during November 2017 and March 2018 by taking time ranging between 273 days and 403 days. Delay and non-finalisation of ARCs in respect of 348 drugs and medicines in first phase and 361 drugs and medicines in second phase implied that these items could not be procured by the Company for the indenting Department, thereby defeating the purpose of creation of the Company,” reads the report.

The audit reveals that JKMSCL had not prescribed anytime-line for finalisation of technical/ financial evaluation, meeting of the State Level Purchase Committee (SLPC) and issuance of ARC in its Standard Procurement Procedures (SPP)—(KNO)

Principal CC of Forests inaugurates Wildlife Week 2020

Pictorial Guide Book released, video clips on wildlife rescue operations screened

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 2: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and HoFF, Dr. Mohit Gera, today inaugurated Wildlife Week celebration at Wildlife Complex, Manda Jammu.

Dr. Gera emphasized the importance of conserving the diversity of forest types which host wild fauna. He called for sustained and coordinated efforts between various government departments and stakeholders for raising awareness about the need and importance of protection and conservation of wildlife. He also highlighted the significance of people's participation in this noble cause. He advocated use of low cost modern technologies in afforestation and enforcement besides following a landscape approach to conservation.

He also administered a pledge to the participants regarding maintenance of cleanliness on the eve of Gandhi



Jyanti.

Chief Wildlife Warden, J&K, Suresh Kumar Gupta, highlighted the richness of biodiversity of Jammu and Kashmir in view of its unique geo climatic position. He emphasized the need for support and cooperation from all sections of the society towards protection and conservation of wildlife.

Dr. Gera also released a Pictorial Guide Book on herpetofauna of Jammu region be-

sides two video clips on wildlife rescue operations were also screened.

Dr. Gera awarded appreciation certificates to the wildlife staff who have done exemplary work in the field.

Dr. Neeraj Sharma from University of Jammu, Guldev Raj from an NGO named Himalayan Avian and Rahul Raina, Ornithologist also shared their views and experiences on the subject.

Samoon inaugurates Rozgar Mela at Budgam

22 companies participated while over 150 candidates appeared in the placement drive

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 02: Principal Secretary School Education & Skill Development Department, Dr Asgar Hassan Samoon today inaugurated Rozgar Mela at Budgam.

Mission Director, J&K Skill Development Mission, senior officers of Skill Development Mission, functionaries of PMKK(Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra) Budgam and representatives of various local and national companies were also present on the occasion.

22 companies participated in the placement fair and more than 150 candidates appeared in the placement drive.

While appreciating the companies for providing jobs to the candidates in different parts of the country, Dr Samoon stressed on creation of jobs at local level for those skilled candidates who are reluctant to move outside for jobs.

“The Government is trying its level best to provide best skilling and employment opportunities to



the youth and presence of various companies in the job fair indicates that we are putting efforts in the right direction,” said Dr. Samoon.

Samoon also interacted with candidates undergoing training in various skills sets such as food & beverages, front office associate, sewing machine operator and general duty assistance and gained first-hand account about the quality of training being received by them.

Last week, Skill Development Mission resumed training activities in J&K with strict adherence to Covid-19 prevention SOPs and protocols.

LG Opens Recreational Centre in Shopian

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 02: On the launching day of Back to village-3 programme from Shirmal, Shopian, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha dedicated a Youth recreation Centre to the budding sportspersons and athletes of the Panchayat.

The youth recreation centre houses a gym and facilities for Sqay Martial Arts which will act as a boon for the budding sportspersons of the area. It will also motivate a large number of

children towards sports and martial arts.

Players of Sqay Martial art displayed their talent in the newly constructed recreational centre in a friendly match.

International/National Sqay Martial Arts players Suzain Zahoor, Faizan Ayoub, Laiba Imtiyaz and Urkan Lateef, while sharing their views on the event, said that the facilities and support of the Administration will give wings to their dreams.

FC Finance's office establishes control room for B2V3 suggestions

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 2: The Finance department today sets up a control room for Kashmir province to look into public suggestions or requests demanding attention of Financial Commissioner, Finance regarding B2V3.

This control room so constituted shall function from 9:00 am in the morning till 9:00 pm in the evening from 2nd-12th of this month. The control room is assigned to collect the suggestions,

opinions and feedback from the general public about making this program further fruitful or people-centric.

In this connection the department has designated 4 officials to receive the necessary feedback in context of Back to Village-III requiring attention of Financial Commissioner, Finance Department, who is also the designated Nodal Officer, Kashmir Division from the LG administration.

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN IMI (IQBAL MEMORIAL INSTITUTE) GADOLE VAILOO		
STAFF SALARY STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2019-2020		
S.NO	NAME OF THE OFFICIAL	MONTHLY SALARY
01	Mr. Aejaz Ah Dar	2350
02	Mr.Manzoor Ah Rather	2350
03	Miss. Gousia Jan	2050
04	Mr.Basit Ah Rather	1750
05	Miss.Kawsar Jan	1750
No.IMI/G/ACC/040		Date:-01/10/2020
MJA		Sd/- Chairman

VC IUST administers Swachhta Pledge at IUST

Awantipora : To commemorate the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Vice Chancellor IUST, Prof. Mushtaq A. Siddiqi administered the Swachhta Pledge to the Officers/ Officials and Staff members of Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) here on Friday. Deans of Schools, Librarian, Finance Officer, senior officers/officials, and staff members participated in the Swachhta Pledge.

The pledge is a determination of the J&K Government to relish and revive the ideals propounded by the Father of the Nation, one of which was his love and emphasis on cleanliness (Swachhta).

All the participants took a pledge to initiate the quest for cleanliness with themselves, their family, their locality and workplace, besides spreading the message of Swachh Bharat Mission.

All the participants took the pledge to propagate the message of Swachh Bharat Mission in villages and towns in order to encourage other persons to devote their time in cleanliness, so as to make the whole country clean. It is a unique way of sensitizing the people across the country to remain committed towards cleanliness and devote their time in keeping the country neat and clean.

LG condoles demise Journalist
Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has expressed grief over the untimely demise of a young journalist, Javid Ahmad.
In a condolence message, the Lt Governor has prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family at this hour of grief.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Mechanical Hospital & Central Heating Division Srinagar
(Phone No: 0194-2496089, E-mail id: xenmhchdk@yahoo.in) Website: www.medkmr.or

(Short Term)
NIT No: MHCHD/TS/2020-21/131
Dated: 29-09-2020
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Date of sale of tender documents.	From 29-09-2020 to 06-10-2020 (2.00 P.M)
Last date of receipt of Tenders.	07-10-2020 upto 2.00 PM.

For & on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, sealed tenders affixed with Rs.5/- revenue stamps are invited from the registered firms/Govt. Contractors for the below mentioned work:

S. No	Description of work.	Estimated cost in Rupees	Amount of E/M in Rs.	Cost of Tender document in Rs.	Time of completion	Position of Funds
1	Providing and applying of acrylic washable distemper and allied works at newly installed 600 LPM Oxygen Concentrator Plant at Govt. SMHS Hospital Srinagar.	55,040/-	1100/-	200/-	05 Days	Available as communicated by intending Department

The tender must be accompanied with the requisite earnest money deposit in the shape of CDR/FDR drawn from any scheduled/ national bank and pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, MH&CH Division, Srinagar. The tenders found without earnest money shall be rejected out rightly at the time of opening of tender.
The tender document can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours against cost mentioned above, in the form of IPO/Demand Draft or Cash Payment. Tender documents shall be issued subject to production of certificates to the following effect:
1. Latest Sales tax clearance certificate/or as applicable as per new GST rules.
2. J&K State Sales Tax Registration Certificate/ GST registration certificate.
3. Documentary proof of having successfully executed similar nature of job in Government or Semi-Government Department.
The tenders should reach the office of undersigned on 07-10-2020 upto 2.00 P.M and shall be opened on the same day or any subsequent date convenient to the undersigned in presence of the tenderers who may be present on the spot.
The envelope containing tender should properly be superscripted with Tender Notice no, Name of work and Name of tenderer.


DIPK-6662/20

Executive Engineer
Mechanical Hospital & Central Heating Division,
Srinagar.

NO:- MHCHD/TS/


Dated:

DIAL-EMMA




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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS




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

HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI
CALENDAR

15 Safar
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 06
ZUHR	12: 21
ASR	4:34
Magrib	6:20
ISHA	7:40

- This Day In History
- 1835 - Battle of Gonzales fought between Texans and Mexican forces. First engagement of the Texas revolution
 - 1851 - The pasilalinic-sympathetic compass(a contraption built to test the pseudo-scientific hypothesis that snails create a permanent telepathic link when they mate) is demonstrated but proves to be a fake.
 - 1864 - Battle of Saltville, VA
 - 1912 - Gopal Krishna Gokhale, at invitation of Gandhi, arrives in South Africa on a 26-day tour; he also visits Tolstoy Farm
 - 1920 - The Chinese sign an agreement with the Russo-Asiatic Bank, largely French and Russian controlled, which will oversee the Chinese Eastern Railway, but give local supervision to China
 - 1923 - British occupying army leaves Constantinople
 - 1924 - League of Nations approves protocols of Geneva
 - 1935 - Mussolini's Italian army attacks Abyssinia (Ethiopia)
 - 1940 - 17 German aircraft shot down over England
 - 1941 - Germans launch attack on Moscow
 - 1944 - Nazis crush Warsaw Uprising killing 250,000 people
 - 1944 - US B-17's drops pamphlets on Walcheren
 - 1949 - USSR recognizes People's Republic of China
 - 1956 - 1st atomic power clock exhibited-NYC
 - 1958 - Guinea (French Guinea) gains independence from France (National Day).
 - 1963 - West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer condemns western grain shipments to USSR
 - 1968 - Mexico City police fire on protesting students, 300-500 killed
 - 1968 - Republic Guinea forms (day of republic)
 - 1972 - Aeroflot Il-18 crashes near Black Sea resort of Sochi, kills 105
 - 1977 - Pakistani general Zia ul-Haq bans all opposition
 - 1978 - Syrian & Palestinians shoot in East Beirut, 1,300 killed
 - 1981 - Ali Chamenei elected president of Iran
 - 1982 - Bomb attack in Tehran, kills 60, injures 700
 - 1990 - WW2 Allied nations cede any remaining rights as occupiers of Germany
 - 1990 - Chinese plane explodes, about 100 die
 - 1991 - Steffi Graf becomes the youngest woman to win 500 professional tennis matches
 - 1994 - Pakistan defeat Australia by one wicket in Karachi Test
 - 2001 - NATO backs US military strikes, following 9/11
 - 2009 - The economic crisis in Ireland is considered to be the driving force behind the largest migration of Irish people to London in 20 years, it is reported today
 - 2012 - 20 students are gunned down in Mubi, Nigeria
 - 2014 - 15 people are killed after a gun powder plant explodes in Gorni Lom, Bulgaria

From KO Archives

Police registers case against army

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Even as army promised an Inquiry into the raid on Beeru police station and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) battalion headquarters a fortnight ago a case has been registered against the commanding officer, of 34 Rashtriya Rifles Col TJ Shashidharan in this connection, official sources said today. Station House Officer (SHO) of Beerwah police station registered the case on September 25 for unauthorised entry by the army personnel into the police station after higher authorities gave a green signal to do so, they said. Following strong protests by the police over unbecoming behaviour of the Rashtriya Rifles troops, the army promised an inquiry into the conduct of its officers involved in the raids on the intervening night of September 18/19/ . Personnel of Rashtriya Rifles conducted raids on the Beerwah police station and the battalion headquarters of the CRPF in connection with September 12 attack by a two-member Fidayeen of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen on a Rashtriya Rifles camp in Beeru in which 15 army men including a major were killed.

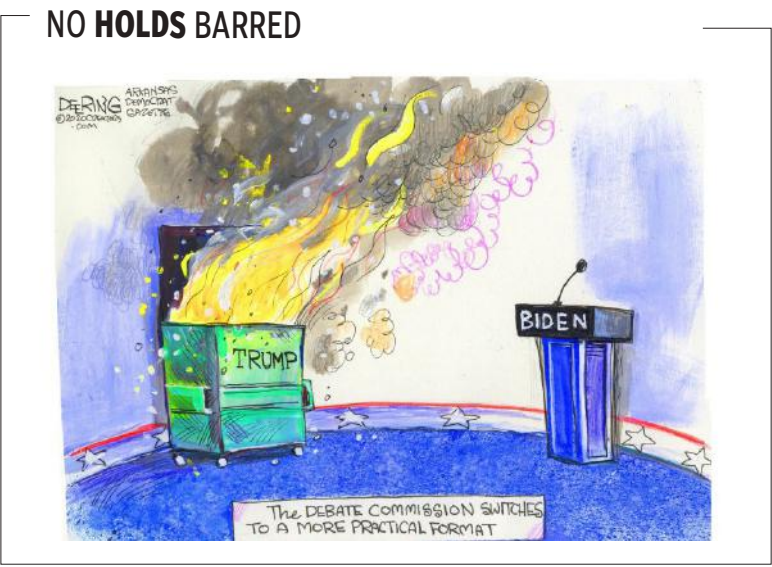
The army suspected involvement of policemen in harbouring militants. It also conducted an identification parade of policemen and raided the residential quarter inside the police station premises. The police, sources said, believe that raids were an attempt by the RR to cover up its failures in preventing the attack as it had specific intel-ligence suggesting an attack by militants. But, the army personnel took the report lightly, the sources added.

They found nothing, because the whole search operation was a ploy to cover up their own failure and shift blame on others, they claimed.

(Kashmir Observer, October 03,2000)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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By focusing on the immediate and visual, the photograph erases the constraints and contexts of time and space, and therefore allows for a glossing over of reality to suit narratives.

Literary Ecriture

Oddity of Administration’s Coffee Table Books

Recently coffee table books were released by the Lt Governor at a well-covered function. Even as the process of compiling them has been stopped, what were the motivations behind this oddity?

HUZAIFA PANDIT

The coffee table books released exploit the tendency and introduce a grammar of progress and development conveniently erasing the contexts of censorship and repression within which such progress is articulated.

For a place that rarely drinks coffee, rather prefers its noon chai sitting on the ground; a coffee table book is somewhat of an oddity. Be that how it is, recently someone in the administration floated an idea that each department of the valley must conceive and compile a coffee table book highlighting their achievements, especially since the abrogation of article 370. These were released by the Lt Governor recently at a well-covered function, even as the process of compiling them has been stopped in early September by official order. What the motives and rationale of the books were, I leave to your imagination and the administration to decide.

However, to my ill-informed mind, it appears to be largely a self-congratulatory move. But vanity is the bane of almost every human being. Government bashing may be the order of the day, but surely blaming them for a bit of vanity is carrying your bias a little too far, or is it? Either way, I have no bone to pick with the vanity, or the self-congratulatory air of the gesture, what I have a bone to pick with is the politics of such a book.

The compilation of the book is not just another attempt by the government to legitimize itself to convince a cynical population. Such gestures are passé, and merit no special attention. However, the coffee table book is different because its politics are well thought out and tie up with the larger project of commemorating and translating routines for consumption of an audience, which is as yet unconverted to either the popular ideology or the narrative of the government. However, this needs to be discussed in detail, or else one runs the risk of being accused of making mountains out of molehills.

First, why a coffee book? Why not a proper report or a white paper detailing the achievements? Or why not a proper book in the first place. The answer lies in the form of a coffee table book, which allows information to be consumed at a single glance without paying attention to detail, where the devil lies. A coffee book relies majorly on images and photos, which exploit the human tendency to privilege sight over other senses. After all what is seen is what is believed, and vice versa! The photograph particularly is crucial in this context as by its permanence it freezes the reality, and erases the contexts in which the reality it captures was constructed or realized. By focusing on the immediate and visual, the photograph erases the constraints and contexts of time and space, and therefore allows for a glossing over of reality to suit narratives. Susan Sontag writes therefore “In teaching us a new visual code, photographs

alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe. They are a grammar and, even more importantly, an ethics of seeing. Finally, the most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads — as an anthology of images.”

The coffee table books released exploit this very tendency and introduce a grammar of progress and development conveniently erasing the contexts of censorship and repression within which such progress is articulated. Rather, the immense materiality and facility of the development in terms of tangible figures, statistics and images is foregrounded in both image and prose to obliterate the more abstract narratives of happiness, justice and liberty that ought to underpin real development.

Moreover, the prose in which the photographs are translated, builds on this edifice of evasion and erosion. One, the prose is deprived of any claim or trace of authorship since it is written in the most generic manner as possible, and merely highlights the facility of the photographs. If it diverges from the facility to explore the emotive, it usually does so by praising the material and tangible benefits that will be accrued from the ‘development’. By doing so, it commemorates the benevolence of the state, and establishes its legitimacy as being engaged in the welfare of people, when the reality on ground testifies otherwise. In other words, it creates a fiction of progress and benevolence that invites the reader to recognize the beneficence of subjugation.

The question that arises then is how must such fiction be contested? Apart from poetry and slogans, what other media are present that can translate local routes and roots of dissent and translate them into a form that can be disseminated to convert and motivate a people to the narrative of the oppressed?

Fiction offers a useful medium for such activism, for diamond cuts diamond. To the fiction of state, we offer our own fiction. The question, however, is not to define the role of fiction in enacting resistance. As I have previously written, writing offers the subjugated to conceive of and produce alternative papers to the paper trail of subjugation. The question is: what form should fiction take or what idiom may it adopt to achieve maximum effect?

Normally, one would steer clear of such prescriptive questions, and suggest that a writer is free to adopt any style which suits her. However, as in everything, the question of art in a situation of turmoil is a particularly vexed one; for the writer is tasked with the responsibility of voicing the aesthetic of the

collective, and find space for collective memory in writing. Besides, the writer is implicated in the same collective memory, and therefore is bound to draw from it in writing.

It is no surprise then that like poetry, fiction too has greatly revolved around the turmoil and trauma of Kashmir, besides being realistic in tenor. This has attracted the charge of a ‘pornography of reality’ against contemporary fiction, which has been accused of peddling “slave narratives” apologetically as ‘resistance literature’. The Palestinian critic Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi offered a succinct summary of this pejorative attitude with respect to Palestinian fiction, and an observation, which holds true to Kashmir too: “There is a tendency to suggest that the literature is ‘Palestinian’ and unfortunately this national definition has become the rationalization for the lack of any objective study or criticism of the literature which is in itself a source of national pride, a symbol as well as means of resistance.” Is the fact that a work is produced by a Kashmiri or is about Kashmir enough to insulate it from criticism? A corollary to this question is: Must a work be necessarily dismissed on account of not being ‘fictional’ or ‘lyrical’ enough. This is a debate that offers no easy answers but rather must be deliberated in detail.

The purveyors of realistic fiction will point to the nature of resistance literature as produced within harsh realities, and immediate contexts of subjugation, oppression and trauma. Such literature defies the expectations of being instruments of entertainment, rather focuses on intervening in the cultural appropriation by the state and allied structures.

Literature offers a site of contestation over power to shape and articulate narratives that determine the collective memory and possibilities of expressing that memory. Fiction that is representative of the diverse contemporary realities may not permit a fictionality, which can be best described only in negation of realism. The immediacy and plainness of the literature could be read as rebelling against cultural imperialism, which permits neither the luxury nor resources (servile academia, dreary and outdated curriculum and complete absence of any spaces and liberty for peer interactions owing to prohibitions on movement and internet, to quote an example) to produce enough ‘quality’ literature.

Huzaifa Pandit is the author of the recently published ‘Green is the Colour of Memory’, which won the first edition of Rhythm Divine Poets Chapbook Contest 2017. He holds a PhD on poetry of resistance from the University of Kashmir.

Human Rights Halted?

Amnesty International shut its work in India citing government attacks. The event is emblematic of the state of human rights in India at the moment

RANA AYYUB

On Tuesday, Amnesty International, one of the most respected human rights nonprofits in the world, announced that it was halting its operations in India after the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi froze the organization’s bank accounts. The closing is another shameful blow to civil society, human rights and free speech in India.

“The continuing crackdown on Amnesty International India over the last two years and the complete freezing of bank accounts is not accidental,” said Avinash Kumar, the executive director of Amnesty International India. “The constant harassment by government agencies, including the Enforcement Directorate, is a result of our unequivocal calls for transparency in the government, more recently for accountability of the Delhi police and the government of India regarding the grave human rights violations in Delhi riots and Jammu and Kashmir.”

The fact-finding work of Amnesty International has long been an eyesore for the Modi administration. The organization has produced detailed reports holding the government culpable for serious human rights abuses. In October of last year, Amnesty International testified before the U.S. Congress on

the “ongoing arbitrary detentions, use of excessive force/torture and silencing of dissenting voices” in Kashmir and the attacks and threats the organization had received.

Six months after the anti-Muslim violence that rocked New Delhi in February, Amnesty released a

This has led to debilitating unemployment and shortages of oxygen and other medical needs. The Modi government is now looking to distract the attention of the country by creating a convenient enemy: the dissenters, the minorities, the lower castes. What started with blaming Indian Muslims for the pan-

On Tuesday, Amnesty International announced that it was halting its operations in India. The closing is another shameful blow to civil society, human rights and free speech in India

scathing report alleging that Delhi police officials indulged in violence and aided and abetted rioters. The violence claimed the lives of at least 53 people and injured more than 500. The report also accused the Delhi police of dismantling protest sites used by peaceful protesters and arresting innocent bystanders.

The backdrop of this action against Amnesty International is of course the government’s inept handling of the covid-19 crisis. With more than 6 million cases and almost 100,000 deaths, India is battling the second-largest coronavirus outbreak in the world.

demic escalated into incarcerating some of India’s finest minds for their potential to transform public opinion.

A scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University who was hailed for his speeches against India’s discriminatory citizenship law is now facing charges under a sedition law and has been jailed. The evidence against Sharjeel Imam includes books by the acclaimed political scientist Paul Brass, which allegedly radicalized him.

Safoora Zargar, a 27-year-old Kashmiri student

activist who is pregnant, is also in jail for speaking against the Citizenship Amendment Bill. Hundreds more like Safoora and Sharjeel, who led peaceful protests, have been jailed while the perpetrators and instigators of the February anti-Muslim violence, including ministers from the Modi regime, remain free.

Many of us who have been sounding the alarm about the erosion of India’s democracy saw the attack against Amnesty International coming. It seems like it’s part of a strategy by government to set high-profile examples.

The same day as Amnesty shut its India operation, a 19-year-old lower-caste woman who was gang-raped by upper-caste men in the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled state of Uttar Pradesh succumbed to her injuries. The remains of the woman, Manisha Valmiki, were cremated by the police against the wishes of her family, who wanted the world to see the horrific brutality India had unleashed against her.

This attack and the harassment against Amnesty International should not be seen in isolation. The Indian government will continue to ignore or mock organizations and institutions that warn about our decline into a majoritarian abyss.

The Washington Post

Why Fear Feminism?

Taking lessons from all the historical and topical lapses at the hands of men, the best we (men) can do is to acknowledge how our gender has exploited and oppressed women and to stand by them in their quest of reclaiming their rightful rights of a dignified life with freedom, liberty and no constraints.

Sheikh Imran

While spending much time on social media with our community, we observe hundreds of posts appropriating women, demanding from them to abide by a male structured societal system, write what men there approve and say what they find appropriate.

Ironically, by this sense of entitlement, men are proving a classic argument of men being oppressors of women. This exhibition of dominance and entitlement is nothing but a deplorable display of male chauvinism, reactionary patriarchy, and male social conditioning. By practicing it, we are contradicting our own claims of fairness towards women and proving that nothing has changed with time and we still continue to oppress women in overt and covert ways.

One word which we very often see thrown around is feminism and those who support it or write about it are trolled and are often questioned on flimsy grounds. Without even having any concrete knowledge of feminism, it's vilified through reactionary arguments which end up in negative labelling of women and consequent shaming of them. No regard is paid to the history of feminist movements and this ignorance ends up in a total disregard of the struggles of great women philosophers and feminist activists like Kate Millet, Simone de Beauvoir or Virginia Woolf.

Yet another word used callously is, "radical feminism" which is actually an adjective meaning going to the fundamentals or foundations. Radical feminists locate the root cause of women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations, as opposed to legal systems or liberal feminism or class conflict or Marxist feminism. In all its shades, even if we take radical feminism into account, it nowhere has any overt overtones of an ideological fanaticism in it. This school of thought asserts that women are viewed as "the others" to the male norm and as such have been marginalized and oppressed systematically.

In the Western world, freedom is generally perceived in terms of the ability to satisfy personal desires and impulses for self-expression, in absence of any impediments or obstructions or retraining factors of authoritarianism. Emphasis is laid on external factors of freedom as they relate to the outer aspects of life — freedom of expression, autonomy, self-determination, self-dependence, self-regulation, democracy etcetera.

The concept of freedom is usually considered in terms of 'free will'. It is taken as freedom of 'choice' that is 'political freedom' or 'social freedom' or 'social liberty' in accordance with biological theory and the evolutionary process. Human growth and development results in the person's autonomy and independence of the environment which defines full individuality and true freedom of maturity or self-actualisation. This is a self-initiated development of personal integrity and mature growth.

On the other end, in the eastern world, freedom is perceived in terms of ability to act according to those convictions which are a proponent of internal harmony or freedom of conscience. Emphasis is laid on the



Ema Anis/ Amnesty International

inner fundamentals of freedom as they lay foundations of the inner aspects of life or "inner peace".

These two conceptions of freedom point out a very important thing regarding the relationship of an oppressed seeking freedom and that of the oppressor seeking control — externally or internally, by conditioning or by controlling an individual's thought process and thinking.

Now, human values develop and flourish with the environment provided to humans. In this schema, the oppressed will learn resistance while the oppressor will continue to maintain their control through various tactics including the use of institutions which are revered and unquestionable, and through a clever and efficient use of moral high ground which has a razor sharp impact on a reactionary society.

In case of gender, this relationship of an oppressor and that of an oppressed is quite clear. For instance, The French Revolution, a revolution which is often referred to as the movement which gave the modern world the ideals of liberty, justice, fraternity and equality, did not grant women any political rights and they were again rendered as passive citizens; a citizenry which had no say in the functioning or election of the government.

The desperation and frustration which men reflect is understandable and it only takes us back to the conservative times when women rights movements had

started gaining impetus and men came out and opposed them from reclaiming their rights.

Today in this modern age, we can see the same pattern. The patriarchal policing present not only in our homes but even outside its four walls compels women to submit to a male designed social structure. Simone de Beauvoir in her book, "The Second Sex" had said, "One is not born a woman but rather becomes one", indicating how the social stereotyping and a system dominated by men, compels a woman to accept the norms set by and in favor of men.

Taking lessons from all the historical and topical lapses at the hands of men, the best we (men) can do is to acknowledge how our gender has exploited and oppressed women and to stand by them in their quest of reclaiming their rightful rights of a dignified life with freedom, liberty and no constraints.

Men owe women reparations for what they have suffered at our hands and this can be done by realizing the reality with honesty and keeping all our biases at bay. Those who cherish freedom and liberty in reality will find no problems in choosing a side here as well, it is just the reactionaries and the ones with a feudal mindset who promote, encourage this cellular form of social colonial imperialism.

The author is a student and a Freelance columnist

God, Plagues And Pestilence – What History Can Teach Us About Living Through A Pandemic

Robyn J. Whitaker

Most of us are living through a year that is unprecedented in our lifetimes. Too young to remember the Spanish flu, we've grown up in a world where we take Western wonder drugs and life-saving vaccines for granted. We have no memory of a time when disease brought the world to a standstill or shut down entire economies. We could not have predicted life in Melbourne in 2020 would include a 5-kilometre travel limit or a curfew.

A longer view of history reminds us we are not the first community to experience and reflect on life during a time of plague or pandemic. So what might we learn from history as we continue to navigate life during a pandemic?

We want to blame someone

Given the ubiquity of religion in most human communities throughout history, it is not surprising reflections on pandemics often begin with God. Plagues and diseases on such a scale feel "biblical" in the sense they are beyond the norm and therefore supernatural in some way. While modern science gives us insight into COVID-19, we still look for someone, anyone, to blame for its presence.

In antiquity, that someone was often God. One of the earliest records of plagues comes from the Hebrew Bible. Anyone who has celebrated Passover, read the biblical book of Exodus, or seen the animated Dreamworks movie Prince of Egypt will be familiar with the plagues that Moses (or God) unleashed on Egypt when Pharaoh would not free the enslaved Hebrews.

Not all of the plagues were disease, but they all brought destruction and potential death. In that ancient narrative, a plague served two functions: it is divine punishment for injustice, and an assertion of religious power in the battle between Egypt's gods and the god of the Hebrews. In the Hebrew Bible texts, Pharaoh's refusal to release the slaves is to blame. It is his fault.

Throughout history, humans have sought explanations for things that are beyond our normal control or understanding. While God is often credited as the sender of plagues or pestilence – usually to teach some moral lesson – we tend to focus our wrath on human scapegoats.



Throughout history, humans have sought explanations for things that are beyond our normal control or understanding. While God is often credited as the sender of plagues or pestilence – usually to teach some moral lesson – we tend to focus our wrath on human scapegoats.

ally to teach some moral lesson – we tend to focus our wrath on human scapegoats. In the 1980s, the HIV-AIDS viral pandemic was blamed on the gay community or Haitians, revealing the racism and homophobia behind such views.

US President Donald Trump's constant reference to COVID-19 as the "China virus" reflects a similar desire for a scapegoat. In its worst form, the blame game leads to widespread retribution against anyone identified with that group.

Role of government is key to protecting the community

Another link with the past is the role of government in containing disease. Governments have for centuries used quarantine as a way to preserve public health, often with great success.

Yet resistance to forced quarantine has an equally long history, with reports of those in isolation being "unruly" and needing to be contained during the Great Plague in 17th-century England. During this period, quarantine procedures made a marked difference to the mortality rate when comparing cities.

Balancing individual freedom with the health of whole communities is a tricky business. Karen Jillings's work on the social history of the plague in 17th-century Scotland shows that, while physicians, magistrates and preachers all regarded the plague as supernatural (either directly from God or by God working through nature), the responses of those of faith differed.

Jillings describes the arrest of a Scottish preacher in 1603 for refusing to comply with the government's health measures because he thought they were of no

use as it was all up to God. The preacher was imprisoned because he was viewed as dangerous: his individual freedoms and beliefs were deemed less important than the safety of the community as a whole.

Being religious does not mean being anti-science

Being a person of faith, however, does not necessarily make one anti-science. COVID sceptics take a wide variety of forms in contemporary culture, including anti-religious conspiracy theorists. Yet anti-science views are often associated with people of faith thanks, in part, to some now tragic examples from North America.

One example of a cleric who did not pit faith against reason was Martin Luther, the 16th-century theologian and reformer. Luther wrote about living through the plague in a pamphlet titled Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague.

Oxford University professor Lyndal Roper writes that while many fled Wittenberg in 1527 when the plague struck, Luther stayed out of a sense of duty to help nurse and care for the dying. This is what he thought all leaders should do.

His staying was not the decision of a martyr, nor was it born of a naïve idea that God would necessarily save or protect him. Luther, writes Roper, "advocates social distancing", the use of hospitals, and necessary precautions according to the science of his time. While he believed that God was ultimately in control, he also affirmed human responsibility. Luther harshly condemned those who went about knowing they were sick and spreading the disease.

A historical perspective does not make living through a pandemic easy. But perhaps there is a small comfort in realising we are not the first community to live through such times, and neither will we be the last.

The things we find hard to balance – individual freedoms versus the group, accountability versus blame, science versus personal beliefs – are centuries old and deeply human.

And, like others in centuries past, we too are capable of incredible acts of care and sacrifice for the sake of the sick and vulnerable.

By arrangements with the Conversation



‘VENTILATION SYSTEMS MAY INCREASE COVID EXPOSURE RISK IN WINTER’

“THESE TWO CONCERNS ARE RELATED, BUT DIFFERENT, and there is tension between them, which has been highlighted during the pandemic,” said Rajesh Bhagat, another co-author of the study from the University of Cambridge. “Maximising ventilation, while at the same time keeping temperatures at a comfortable level without excessive energy consumption is a difficult balance to strike,” Bhagat said. In order to model how the coronavirus or similar viruses spread indoors, the scientists believe it is important to know where people’s breath goes when they exhale, and how that changes depending on ventilation.

Press Trust Of India

Ventilation systems in many buildings, which are designed to keep temperatures comfortable, may increase the risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus which causes Covid-19, particularly during the winter season when people prefer to stay indoors, says a new study. Scientists, including those from the University of Cambridge in the UK, found that widely-used ‘mixing ventilation’ systems, which are designed to keep conditions uniform in all parts of the room, disperse airborne contaminants evenly throughout the space. According to the study, published in the Journal of Fluid Mechanics, these contami-

nants may include droplets and aerosols, potentially containing viruses such as the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. With evidence increasingly indicating that the coronavirus is spread primarily via droplets and aerosols expelled as people cough, sneeze, talk, or breathe, the findings underscore the need for good ventilation and mask-wearing to mitigate SARS-CoV-2 transmission risk. Based on studies conducted so far, the researchers said indoor transmission is far more common than outdoor transmission -- likely due to increased exposure times and decreased dispersion rates for droplets and aerosols. “As winter approaches in the northern hemisphere and people start spending more time inside, un-

derstanding the role of ventilation is critical to estimating the risk of contracting the virus and helping slow its spread,” said study co-author Paul Linden from the University of Cambridge. Small respiratory aerosols containing the virus are transported along with the carbon dioxide produced by breathing, and are carried around a room by ventilation flows, Linden said. “Insufficient ventilation can lead to high carbon dioxide concentration, which in turn could increase the risk of exposure to the virus,” he explained. According to the scientists, air flow within the building works in one of two main modes -- mixing ventilation or displacement ventilation. They said the former mode is the most common, where vents are placed to

keep the air in a space well mixed so that temperature and contaminant concentrations are kept uniform throughout the space. The second mode, displacement ventilation has vents placed at the bottom and the top of a room, creating a cooler lower zone, and a warmer upper zone, and warm air is extracted through the top part of the room, the researchers said. Since exhaled breath is also warm, most of it accumulates in the upper zone, they explained. If the interface between the zones is high enough, the study said contaminated air can be extracted by the ventilation system rather than breathed in by someone else. The scientists suggest that when designed properly, displacement ventilation could reduce the risk

of mixing and cross-contamination of breath, thereby mitigating the risk of exposure. “These two concerns are related, but different, and there is tension between them, which has been highlighted during the pandemic,” said Rajesh Bhagat, another co-author of the study from the University of Cambridge. “Maximising ventilation, while at the same time keeping temperatures at a comfortable level without excessive energy consumption is a difficult balance to strike,” Bhagat said. In order to model how the coronavirus or similar viruses spread indoors, the scientists believe it is important to know where people’s breath goes when they exhale, and how that changes depending on ventilation. “Using these data, we can

estimate the risk of catching the virus while indoors,” Linden said. In the study, the scientists explored a range of different modes of exhalation -- nasal breathing, speaking and laughing, each both with and without a mask -- by imaging the heat associated with the exhaled breath. “When sitting still, humans give off heat, and since hot air rises, when you exhale, the breath rises and accumulates near the ceiling,” said Bhagat. The researchers said laughing, in particular, creates a large disturbance, suggesting that if an infected person without a mask was laughing indoors, it would greatly increase the risk of transmission. “One thing we could clearly see is that one of the ways that masks work is by stopping the breath’s momen-

tum,” said Linden. “While pretty much all masks will have a certain amount of leakage through the top and sides, it doesn’t matter that much, because slowing the momentum of any exhaled contaminants reduces the chance of any direct exchange of aerosols and droplets as the breath remains in the body’s thermal plume and is carried upwards towards the ceiling,” he said. According to the scientists, a three-layered mask decreases the amount of those contaminants that are recirculated through the room by ventilation. “Keep windows open and wear a mask appears to be the best advice. Clearly that’s less of a problem in the summer months, but it’s a cause for concern in the winter months,” Linden said.

Study Finds ‘Liking’ An Article Online May Mean Less Time Spent Reading It

Agencies

When people have the option to click ‘like’ on a media article they encounter online, they spend less time actually reading the text, a new study suggests. In a lab experiment, researchers found that people spent about 7 per cent less time reading articles on controversial topics when they had the opportunity to upvote or downvote them than if there was no interactive element.

The finding was strongest when an article agreed with the reader’s point of view. The results suggest that the ability to interact with online content may change how we consume it, said Daniel Sude, who led the work while earning a doctoral degree in communication at The Ohio State University. “When people are voting whether they like or dislike an article, they’re expressing themselves. They are focused on their own thoughts and less on the content in the article,” Sude said. “It is like the old phrase, ‘If you’re talking, you’re not listening.’ People were talking back to the articles without listening to what they had to say.” In another finding, people’s existing views on controversial topics like gun control or abortion became stronger after voting on articles that agreed with their views, even when they spent less time reading them. “Just having the ability to like an article you agreed with was enough to amplify your atti-



tude,” said study co-author Silvia Knobloch-Westernwick, professor of communication at Ohio State. “You didn’t need to read the article carefully, you didn’t have to learn anything new, but you are more committed to what you already believed.” The study, also co-authored by former Ohio State doctoral student George Pearson, was published online recently in the journal Computers in Human Behavior and will appear in the January 2021 print edition. The study involved 235 college students. Before the study, the researchers measured their views on four controversial topics used in the experiment: abortion, welfare benefits, gun control and affirmative action. Participants were then showed four versions of an online news website created for the study, each on one of the controversial topics. Each webpage showed headlines and first paragraphs for four articles, two with a conservative slant and two with a liberal slant. Parti-

cipants could click on the headlines to read the full stories. Two versions of the websites had a banner that said, “Voting currently enabled for this topic,” and each article had an up arrow or down arrow that participants could click on to express their opinion. The other two websites had a banner that said, “Voting currently disabled for this topic.” Participants were given three minutes to browse each website as they wished, although they were not told about the time limit. The researchers measured the time participants spent on each story and whether they voted if they had the opportunity. As expected, for each website, participants spent more time reading articles that agreed with their views (about 1.5 minutes) than opposing views (less than a minute). But they spent about 12 seconds less time reading the articles they agreed with if they could vote. In addition, people voted on about 12 per cent of articles

that they didn’t select to read, the study showed. “Rather than increasing engagement with website content, having the ability to interact may actually distract from it,” Sude said. The researchers measured the participants’ views on the four topics again after they read the websites to see if their attitudes had changed at all. Results showed that when participants were not able to vote, time spent reading articles that agreed with their original views strengthened these views. The more time they spent reading, the stronger their views became. When participants were able to vote, their voting behavior was as influential as their reading time. Even if they stopped reading and upvoted an article, their attitudes still became stronger. “It is important that people’s views still became stronger by just having the opportunity to vote,” Knobloch-Westernwick said. “When they had the opportunity to vote on the articles, their attitudes were getting more extreme with limited or no input from the articles themselves. They were in an echo chamber of one.” Sude said there is a better way to interact with online news. “Don’t just click the like button. Read the article and leave thoughtful comments that are more than just a positive or negative rating,” he said. “Say why you liked or disliked the article. The way we express ourselves is important and can influence the way we think about an issue.”

Canadian Study Reveals Girls Benefit From Doing Sports

Agencies

Girls, but not boys, who participate actively in school sports activities in middle childhood show improved behaviour and attentiveness in early adolescence, suggests a new Canadian study. The results of the study were published in the journal Preventive Medicine. “Girls who do regular extracurricular sports between ages 6 and 10 show fewer symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at age 12, compared to girls who seldom do,” said Linda Pagani, a professor at Université de Montréal’s School of Psychoeducation. “Surprisingly, however, boys do not appear to gain any behavioural benefit from sustained involvement in sports during mid-



dle childhood,” said Pagani, who led the study co-authored by her students Marie-Josée Harbec and Genevieve Fortin and McGill University associate medical professor Tracie Barnett. As the team prepared their research, “it was unclear to what extent organized physical activity is beneficial for children with ADHD symptoms,” recalled Pagani. “Past studies have varied widely in quality, thus blurring the true association between

sport and behavioural development.” She added: “On top of that, ‘past research has not acknowledged that boys and girls are different in how they present ADHD symptoms.’ A chance to get organised ADHD harms children’s ability to process information and learn at school, Pagani explained. Sport helps young people develop life skills and supportive relationships with their peers and adults. It offers a chance to get organised under some form of adult influence or supervision. “Thus, from a public-health perspective, the extracurricular sport has the potential to be a positive, non-stigmatizing and engaging approach to promote psychological well-being and could thus be viewed as behaviour therapy for youth with ADHD,” Pagani said.

‘Vitamin D Deficiency Can Lead To Obesity’

Agencies

We have now one more reason to maintain vitamin D in our body as researchers have found that vitamin D deficiency during early development can disrupt the metabolic balance between growth and fat accumulation. Using a zebrafish model, the study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, suggests a linkage between vitamin D and metabolic homeostasis, or equilibrium. “The vitamin D deficient zebrafish exhibited both hypertrophy and hyperplasia - an increase in both the size and number of fat cells,” said study author Seth Kullman from the

North Carolina State University in the US. “They also had higher triglycerides and cholesterol, which are hallmarks of metabolic imbalance that can lead to cardio-metabolic disease,” Kullman added. This, combined with stunted growth, indicates that vitamin D plays an important role in the ability to channel energy into growth versus into fat storage. For the study, the research team looked at groups of post-juvenile zebrafish on one of three diets no vitamin D (or vitamin D null), vitamin D enriched and control. The zebrafish spent four months

on their particular diet, then the researchers looked at their growth, bone density, triglyceride, lipid, cholesterol and vitamin D levels. They also examined key metabolic pathways associated with fat production, storage and mobilization and growth promotion. The zebrafish in the vitamin D deficient group were, on average, 50 per cent smaller than those in the other two groups, and they had significantly more fat reserves. After the initial testing, the vitamin D deficient zebrafish were given a vitamin D enriched diet for an additional six months, to see if the results could be reversed.

Armenia withdraws ambassador to Israel over Azerbaijan arms sales

Agencies

Baku: Armenia has recalled its ambassador to Israel over the country's arms sales to Azerbaijan, as the two Caucasus countries continue to clash over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Protesting against the Israeli weapons exports on Thursday, Anna Naghdalyan, Armenia's foreign ministry spokeswoman, said: "Israel's workstyle is unacceptable. The ministry has to call back its ambassador in Israel."

Israel's foreign ministry said Armenia's decision to withdraw its ambassador was regrettable.

"Israel attaches importance to our relations with Armenia and sees the Armenian Embassy in Israel as an important tool for promoting those relations for the benefit of both peoples," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Dozens of people are reported to have been killed and hundreds wounded since fighting renewed in the disputed Caucasus region on Sunday.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, but is majority ethnic Armenian.

In 1991, the region broke away to form the Artsakh Republic, which led to violent

clashes that have left tens of thousands of people dead since then.

Israel and Azerbaijan have long been close allies in the region, while Armenia has enjoyed close relations with Israel's main rival Iran.

Israeli-made drones

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) - a leading conflict and armaments think-tank - has reported that Israel provided Azerbaijan with around \$825m in weapons between 2006 and 2019.

On Wednesday, Azeri presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev also told Israel media that Azerbaijan was using "some" Israeli-made drones in fighting around Nagorno-Karabakh.

"[We] have one of the strongest [drone] fleets in the region. And among them we have Israeli ones, we have other drones as well, but Israeli drones especially, including reconnaissance and attack drones, [which] have proved itself very effective," Hajiyev told the Walla news website in a video interview.

Armenia had only inaugurated its embassy in Tel Aviv on 17 September following delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic.



Trump Tests Positive for COVID-19 - What Happens Next?

Press Trust Of India

Washington: US President Donald Trump and first lady Melania have tested positive for the coronavirus, the president tweeted on Friday, a development that is likely to bring to standstill his hectic election campaign.

"Tonight, @FLOTUS and I tested positive for COVID-19. We will begin our quarantine and recovery process immediately. We will get through this TOGETHER! 74-year-old Trump tweeted.

In a statement, Trump's physician Dr. Sean Conley said he received confirmation of the positive tests on Thursday evening.

"The President and First Lady are both well at this time, and they plan to remain at home within the White House during their convalescence," Conley said.

"The White House medical team and I will maintain a vigilant watch, and I appreciate

the support provided by some of our country's greatest medical professionals and institutions," Conley said.

Rest assured I expect the President to continue carrying out his duties without disruption while recovering, and I will keep you updated on any future developments, the physician added.

Trump's positive report comes just hours after his senior aide Hope Hicks was tested COVID-19 positive.

"Hope Hicks, who has been working so hard without even taking a small break, has just tested positive for COVID-19. Terrible! The first lady and I are waiting for our test results. In the meantime, we will begin our quarantine process!," Trump earlier said in tweet.

Hicks, 31, is the closest aide of the president to have tested positive with coronavirus. She had travelled with the president on Air Force One early this week.

Trump, in an interview to Fox News, on Thursday night said he and the first lady spend a lot of time with her.

In the middle of the election campaign, Trump has been travelling a lot in particular in the battleground States. The development is likely to bring to standstill his hectic campaign for the November 3 presidential election.

In a statement, Judd Deere, the Deputy White House Press Secretary said that the President takes the health and safety of himself and everyone who works in support of him and the American people very seriously.

"White House Operations collaborates with the Physician to the President and the White House Military Office to ensure all plans and procedures incorporate current CDC guidance and best practices for limiting COVID-19 exposure to the greatest extent possible both on complex and when the President is travelling," Deere said earlier.

"It's Going To Disappear": What Trump Had Said On Covid

Agencies

Washington: After months of playing down its significance, refusing to wear a mask and holding large campaign rallies as the coronavirus spreads across the United States, US President Donald Trump has tested positive for Covid-19.

Here are some of Trump's most notable and colorful statements on the illness.

Under control

"We have it totally under control. It's one person coming in from China. It's going to be just fine."

Trump in January at the start of the pandemic.

Miracle

"It's going to disappear. One day, it's like a miracle -- it will disappear."

Trump still publicly upbeat in February.

Top marks

"I'd rate it a 10." Trump gives himself top

marks for his response to the virus in March.

No face masks

"I just don't want to be doing -- somehow sitting in the Oval Office behind that beautiful Resolute Desk, the great Resolute Desk, I think wearing a face mask as I greet presidents, prime ministers, dictators, kings, queens, I don't know, somehow I don't see it for myself. I just don't. Maybe I'll change my mind."

Trump tells the world in April he doesn't like wearing face masks.

Prescribing disinfectant

"Then I see the disinfectant which knocks it out in a minute. One minute. And is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside for almost a cleaning? Because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs, so it'd be interesting

to check that."

"So, supposing we hit the body with a tremendous, whether it's ultraviolet or just very powerful light, and I think you said, that hasn't been checked but you're gonna test it. And then I said, supposing it brought the light inside the body, which you can either do either through the skin or some other way."

Trump floats unscientific cures in April.

Going on the offensive

"I think that the World Health Organization should be ashamed of themselves, because they're like the public relations agency for China."

Attacking the WHO and China in April.

Tested positive

"Tonight, @FLOTUS and I tested positive for COVID-19. We will begin our quarantine and recovery process immediately. We will get through this TOGETHER!"

Mossad chief holds talks with Bahrain as ties with Israel deepen

Agencies

Jerusalem: Israel's top spy chief Yossi Cohen has held talks with Bahrain's intelligence services following the two countries recent normalisation of relations, Bahraini state media reported on Thursday.

The Bahrain News Agency (BNA) said that Cohen, director of Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, had visited Bahrain on Wednesday to discuss "topics of mutual interest" and "cooperation between the two countries".

"They stressed the importance... of the role the [normalisation deal] will play in significantly contributing to promoting stability and peace in the region," BNA said.

Bahrain's normalisation deal was signed in Washington last month at the same time as an Israel-UAE normalisation agreement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travelled to the US capital for the ceremony, along with the foreign affairs chiefs of the two Gulf states.

Bahrain and the UAE became the third and fourth Arab countries to normalise ties with Israel, following Jordan in 1994 and Egypt in 1979.

'Great divergence'

Bahrainis however reacted with anger at the government's move and quickly turned the hashtag "Bahrainis against normalisation" into the most popular topic on social media.

Both religious and political figures in the kingdom also released statements rejecting the deal.

"There is a great divergence between the rulers and the ruled in thought, mind, aims and interests. Governments are experiencing a psychological defeat and want to impose it on the people, and the people have to resist this defeat," said Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassim, who lives in Iran.

Qassim is the spiritual leader of Al-Wefaq, Bahrain's biggest opposition society.

As the leading cleric for the country's Shia majority, he has previously criticised their treatment by the minority Sunni royal family.

The Palestinians have condemned the US-brokered Gulf deals with Israel as "a stab in the back" for their aspirations to establish an independent state of their own.

They argue it violates a longstanding pan-Arab position that Israel could normalise relations only in return for land.

Reactions From US, Rest Of The World, As Trumps Test Covid Positive

U.S. President Donald Trump said in a tweet on Friday that he and his wife Melania had contracted coronavirus and were entering quarantine, just a month before the Nov. 3 presidential election.

Trump's tweet revealing that America's First Couple had tested positive reverberated through world media and financial markets. Here are some of the reactions:

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE TWEETED

"Karen and I send our love and prayers to our dear friends President @realDonaldTrump and @FLOTUS Melania Trump. We join millions across America praying for their full and swift recovery. God bless you President Trump & our wonderful First Lady Melania."

Karen and I send our love and prayers to our dear friends President @realDonaldTrump and @FLOTUS Melania Trump. We join millions across America praying for their full and swift recovery. God bless you President Trump & our wonderful First Lady Melania.

FRANCE'S GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN GABRIEL ATTAL "This demonstrates that the virus spares no one, including those who have shown skepticism. I wish him a swift recovery."

HU XIJIN, EDITOR IN CHIEF OF CHINA'S GLOBAL TIMES, TWEETED

"President Trump and the first lady have paid the price for his gamble to play down the COVID-19. The news shows the severity of the US' pandemic situation. It will impose a negative impact on the image of Trump and the US, and may also negatively affect his reelection."

President Trump and the first lady have paid the price for his gamble to play down the COVID-19. The news shows the severity of the US' pandemic situation. It will impose a negative impact on the image of Trump and the US, and may also negatively affect his reelection.

CHINA DAILY, THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER

"The positive test is yet another reminder that the coronavirus continues to spread, even as Trump has tried desperately to suggest it no longer poses a danger. Since it emerged earlier this year, Trump, the White House and his campaign have played down the threat and refused to abide by basic public health guidelines - including those issued by his own administration - such as wearing masks in public and practicing social distancing. Instead, Trump has continued to hold campaign rallies that draw thousands of supporters. The virus has killed more than 200,000 Americans and infected more than 7 million nationwide."

Macron says Islam 'in crisis', prompting backlash from Muslims

President Emmanuel Macron has unveiled a plan to defend France's secular values against what he termed as "Islamist radicalism", saying the religion was "in crisis" all over the world, prompting a backlash from Muslim activists.

In a long-awaited address on Friday, Macron insisted "no concessions" would be made in a new drive to push religion out of education and the public sector in France.

"Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world today, we are not just seeing this in our country," he said.

He announced that the government would present a bill in December to strengthen a 1905 law that officially separated church and state in France.

The measures, Macron said, were aimed at addressing a problem of growing "radicalisation" in France and improving "our ability to live together".

"Secularism is the cement of a united France," he insisted, but added that there was no sense in



stigmatising all Muslim believers.

The law permits people to belong to any faith of their choosing, Macron said, but outward displays of religious affiliation would be banned in schools and the public service.

Wearing the hijab is already banned in French schools and for public servants at their workplace.

Macron's speech led to a debate on social media.

Yasser Louati, a French Muslim activist, tweeted: "The repression of Muslims has been a threat, now it is a promise. In a one hour speech #Macron buried #laicite, anti-Muslim leftists and threatened the lives of Muslim students by calling

for drastic limits on home schooling despite a global pandemic."

Rim-Sarah Alaoune, a French academic, tweeted: "President Macron described Islam as 'a religion that is in crisis all over the world today'. I don't even know what to say. This remark is so dumb (sorry it is) that it does not need any further analysis ... I won't hide that I am concerned. No mention of white supremacy even though we are the country that exported the racist and white supremacist theory of the 'great replacement', used by the terrorist who committed the horrific massacre in #Christchurch."

Iyad el-Baghdadi, Norway-based writer and activist, simply wrote on Twitter: "F*** you, @EmmanuelMacron."

In his speech, Macron also claimed he is seeking to "liberate" Islam in France from foreign influences by improving oversight of mosque financing.

There would also be closer scrutiny of schools and associations exclusively serving religious communities.

Putin Tells Trump His "Vitality, Good Spirits" Will Help Fight Off Covid

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin wished Donald Trump a speedy recovery in a telegram on Friday, saying he was sure the US leader's qualities would help him fight off the coronavirus.

"I am convinced that your vitality, good spirits and optimism will help you cope with this dangerous virus," the Kremlin quoted Putin as saying in the message.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov had earlier wished Trump "a speedy and easy recovery" on behalf of the Kremlin.

Peskov said Putin was considering whether to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, after Russia announced in August that it had developed



a vaccine named "Sputnik V" after the historic Soviet-era satellite.

"When he does it, we will announce it," Peskov said.

Russia has prided itself on registering the world's first coronavirus vaccine, although it is still undergo-

ing large-scale clinical trials after promising results in early trials.

Numerous high-profile figures including Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin have already had the vaccine.

In a speech to the United Nations last month, Putin offered to inoculate those working at the international organisation for free.

He earlier said that one of his daughters had been vaccinated.

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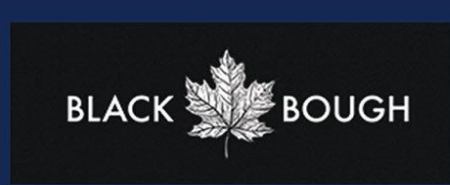
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