



COVID-19 may trigger endophthalmitis, a rare eye infection that causes vision loss

Usual symptoms of endophthalmitis includes pain, redness and discharge from the eye. You must also be alert to swelling of the eyelids and you may experience reduced vision.



Rare Development But It Cannot Be Ruled Out According to a new study at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, this is a rare development, but it can happen.

and because they were all tied to COVID-19 infection it needed to be investigated, say researchers.

from COVID-19, another had to have an eye removed "despite heroic efforts to save the eye," and a third lost all sight, said researchers.

worse and made them more susceptible to other associated health conditions.

ording to one of the researchers, other cases of endophthalmitis linked to COVID-19 patients have also been reported.

But All Keratitis Cases May Not Progress To Endophthalmitis According to researchers, it is unusual for keratitis to progress to endophthalmitis.

Land ecosystems becoming less efficient at absorbing CO2: Study

Researchers have identified an unsettling trend - as levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere increase, 86 per cent of land ecosystems globally are becoming progressively less efficient at absorbing, because CO2 is a main 'ingredient' that plants need to grow.

thor Ben Poulter from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. "In other words, terrestrial ecosystems are becoming less reliable as a temporary climate change mitigator," Poulter added.

Office Of The Chief Medical Officer Anantnag Kashmir

Mr. Farooq Irfan Hakeem S/o Late Mohammad Ramzan Hakeem R/o Qazibagh Tehsil and District Anantnag

No:-Est/III/Gen/ 6908-11

4TH FINAL NOTICE

Dated:- 21/12/2020

Whereas, Block Medical Officer Bijbehara has reported that, you were posted as Junior Pharmacist at Sub Centre Panchpora Block Bijbehara and you restored to un-authorized absence from your legitimate duties w.e.f 05.08.2019.

DIPK-10769/20

Sd/- Chief Medical Officer Anantnag

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Mohammad Amin Shah S/o: Habibullah Shah R/o: Khag Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-0273 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Poshkar Khag.



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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1988 Dated 23/12/2020 Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

Where a application for transfer of ownership has been received from one. Shri : Mohd Ashraf Khanday S/o: Mohd Abdullah Khanday R/o: Chadoora Budgam (Transferor) of Maruti car.



registration number JK04 - 1023. Chasis number 108104 En-gin0e no. 64754 Model 1997 in favour of Shri.. Riyaz Ahmad Bhat S/o. Ali Mohd Bhat R/o Noorani Colony Gopalpora Kralpora (Transferee)

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1822 Dated 11/11/2020 Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education, Branch Office Sopore

The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original marks certificate of 10TH & 12th under Below mentioned particulars Name: MOHAMMAD SALEEM RATHER



AMS

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly spelled in school records as SAMEER AHMAD MIR S/O ABDUL MAJID MIR While the correct spelling is SAMEER AHMAD MIR S/O ABDUL MAJED MIR

A-KO

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT TUBERCULOSIS OFFICER BUDGAM (19111)

NOTICE FOR QUOTATIONS Tender No:- 07 of 2020-21 Dated:-22/12/2020 DTC/BUD/580-84

Sealed quotations affixed with revenue stamp of Rs.10/- are invited for below mentioned civil work at DTC Budgam for the financial year 2020-21 from reputed dealers/approved suppliers/manufacturers/authorized dealers who are dealing in actually the goods for which the tender is issued.

The sealed quotations are to be submitted properly duly super scribed name of firm/Manufacturers/dealer and should reach to this office within seven (7) days after the publication of the said notice in the newspaper up to 4:00pm.

Table with 2 columns: S.NO and CIVIL WORK. Item 01: Wooden Paneling of office room measuring 18x14ft x4 No's. Item 02: Wooden Paneling of meeting Hall on three walls measuring 20x12ftx 03No's.

The whole information regarding the civil work can be obtained within 3days positively from the office of the undersigned after the publication of this notice

- Other Terms & Conditions:- 1.Rates Charged shall be FOR Stores (Distt.TB Centre Budgam) inclusive of all charges: 2.The quotations submitted without a prescribed format shall be rejected without any notice;

No:- DTC/BUD/580-84 Dated:- 22/12/2020

DIPK-10789/20

District TB Officer Budgam

Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Executive Engineer Mechanical Division Srinagar

Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir

Fax No: 0194-2497093 email: xenmds@gmail.com website: www.medkashmir.org

GIST of e-NIT No: MDS/TS /2020-21/ 151 /e-tendering Dated:22-12-2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from OEM/Authorized Dealers/Representatives/Registered & Reputed firms for the below mentioned work:

Table with 6 columns: Name of the Work, Cost of Tender Doc. (In Rupees), Earnest Money, Estimated Cost (In Lacs), Time of completion (In days), Position of Funds.

- 1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q). Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in

No. MDS/ TS- /6176-80 District TB Officer Budgam DIPK-10809/20







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K O V I E W

## DDC poll outcome

The outcome of the District Development Council election has been along predictable lines. The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration has done well in Kashmir Valley and the Muslim majority parts of Jammu while as the BJP has done well in Hindu majority areas of Jammu. Going by the number of seats the PAGD has won, it can take control of around 14 DDCs. The PAGD can now also claim the outcome is a vote for restoration of Article 370. The BJP, on the other hand, claims it has won more votes in its core constituency, so the decision to abrogate Article 370 has public support.

The BJP had deployed its major leaders to the region to campaign - Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Shah Nawaz Khan, Smriti Irani, Anurag Thakur traveled far and wide to address election rallies. The home minister Amit Shah also weighed in by framing the election as a battle between nationalist and anti-national forces, the BJP's favourite electoral trope. He called the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) "a gang", a label that is since being reiterated by the BJP leaders.

The eight-phase polls which began from November 28 were announced all of a sudden. But the Gupkar alliance was quick to declare its participation taking many people by surprise as earlier the utterances of its top leaders like Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti had indicated they won't be taking part in the exercise. This seemed to indicate that the PAGD was reluctant to fight polls as some quarters had expressed apprehensions that this would normalise the revocation of Article 370. But the PAGD decision has belied such expectations.

The PAGD rationalised its decision to participate as a bid to reclaim the political space, cautioning that doing otherwise would enable the BJP and its allied parties to fill in the vacuum and control the levers of power. The grouping also argued that strengthening its political presence at the district level will add force to its position that Article 370 was revoked without consulting people of J&K.

Given the powers the DDCs have been given, they have become the kind of mini-assemblies and it has thus become important for Gupkar alliance to control these to enhance its political clout.

These huge stakes make the role of the DDCs profoundly significant. For one, the campaigning and the polling associated with them has brought back the political activity to J&K after a hiatus of sixteen months. This, in turn, also confronts the BJP with its biggest political challenge in the region. The PAGD dominated DDCs are expected to assert. But primarily the DDCs are for the development of the former state and their performance will be judged by how they deliver on the ground.

O T H E R O P I N O N

## Must Pakistan be so OIC-oriented?

The ummah comprises world Muslims linked through an unshakable bond of belief and emotions peculiar to Muslims; the OIC consists mostly of unelected governments of 50-plus member states which may or may not share common interests because of differences in geography, ethnography and historical experience. Even the 22 members of the Arab League do not have a common perception of geopolitical issues and are sometimes at loggerheads, as can be seen in their policies on the slaughter in Syria, Yemen and Libya.

One point should, however, be grasped at the outset. The Arab world is the pivot on which the ummah turns. Without the Arabs and their language there is no ummah. This is a harsh geopolitical and historical reality, and if one finds Arab governments indifferent to non-Arab issues — even tragedies like Kashmir and Rohingya — then one can only pray.

There is another bitter observation: the average Arab cannot understand how people — eg those millions of Indonesians, South Asians, Kazakhs or Bosnians — can be Muslim if they do not speak the language of the Holy Quran.

Getting down to brass tacks, it was the UAE which gave two blows to Pakistan last year. In March, it hosted at Abu Dhabi the 46th OIC foreign ministers' conference, which the late Indian foreign minister, Sushma Swaraj, attended as an honoured guest. Later that year, it could have come up with a stronger denunciation of the Indian move to abolish India-held Kashmir's special status and amendment to the nationality law. The entire Arab world was indifferent.

Must we be so OIC-oriented? What is this lame-duck organisation good for? It doesn't even have non-political achievements to its credit. No country in the world attaches so much importance to it as Pakistan does for reasons which are visceral and not grounded in geopolitical realities. India, too, watches the OIC carefully and derives sadistic pleasure from Pakistan's discomfiture. (India enjoys observer status at the Arab League.)

...The Arabs are basically a secular people. A native of Damascus or Cairo is first a Syrian or Egyptian, then an Arab and lastly a Muslim. He is impervious to non-Arab overtures on a religious basis. In fact, he is suspicious as to the motive. Islam is in his blood, and unlike us Pakistanis he doesn't flaunt it.

Muhammad Ali Siddiqi in Dawn

# UP Anti-Conversion Law

Constitutional courts should strike down UP's Anti-Conversion law



AMJED ASHRAF

**The ordinance law in the first place owes its existence to a hypothetical and bogus term of 'Love-Jihad'. As the Government of India, as such, nowhere recognizes the notion of Love-Jihad, bringing a law against such a fictional notion, prima facie reflects the oblivious and dogmatic attitude of the State government**

Since the promulgation of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance 2020 by the Governor of the State in exercise of the powers conferred on him by the grundnorm of the land—the moral as well as constitutional validity of it has been a huge subject matter of debate. No sooner had it enacted than it kicked up a storm across the legal realms of the country. Although the anti-conversion laws of such a nature already exist in several other states, the UP law is a draconian law of its own kind. The ordinance law in the first place owes its existence to a hypothetical, bogus, and dog whistle term of 'Love-Jihad'. As the Government of India as such nowhere recognizes the notion of Love-Jihad, bringing a law against such a fictional notion, prima facie reflects the oblivious and dogmatic attitude of the State government. Nevertheless, there are numerous provisions in the ordinance, which per se flout the law of the land. In this article, we will try to scrutinize some provisions of it on a legal footing.

The Article 213 clause (1) of the Indian constitution empowers the governor of a State, to promulgate ordinances during recess of legislature. The provision explicitly mentions that "if the governor is satisfied that circumstances exist, which render it necessary for him to take immediate action he may promulgate such ordinances". The apex court of the country in the case of Krishna Kumar Singh v State of Bihar, 2017 and various other cases has held that the President and Governor's power under Article 123 and Article 213 respectively, is subject to judicial review. It thus implies that the 'satisfaction' and 'immediate action' must have a legal sanctity and the attainment of which ought not to be indeterminate, and vague. However, the procedure involved in the UP Anti-Conversion law stands contrary to such established precedents on the aspect that such cir-

cumstances, which could compel the governor to promulgate the ordinance were palpably and outright absent. Thus, the procedure taken to assent the ordinance is challenging to the core.

The ordinance under Section 3 prohibits conversion from one religion to another on the grounds of fraud, misrepresentation, coercion, allurement etc, or by marriage. It also states that no person shall abet, convince or conspire such conversion. Notwithstanding the said law, the conversion due to force, undue influence, has had to be void undoubtedly, but the use of terms like "allurement" and "convince" in the ordinance, are open to interpretation, hence ambiguous. It therefore allows the state to bring any act within the purview of the definition of such terms. Besides, the phrase 'by marriage' in it deems all marriages involving the religion conversion, as illegal, unless proven otherwise, thereby coming in repugnance with a citizen's fundamental rights. It thereby directly infringes the Right to Life and Personal Liberty, and Freedom of Conscience and Propagation of Religion, guaranteed under Article 21 and 25 of the Indian constitution respectively. The ordinance crystal clearly eclipses the apex court's ruling in the case of Shaheen Jahan v. Asokan K.M 2018, that "the right to change of faith is part of fundamental right of choice." It also overshadows the Allahabad High Court's recent landmark verdict in the case of Salamat Ansari v. State of U.P, that "Right to live with a person of his/her choice irrespective of religion is intrinsic to right to life and personal liberty." Furthermore, the proviso to Section 3 is as intransigent and inconsistent, as anything is. It deems the reconversion to previous religion not a conversion at all. It means that even if the reconversion is done by means of force, fraud, etc, it is valid under this act. The other legal loophole is that the ordinance while criminal-

izing the conversion by marriage, explicitly strikes to reverse the administration of criminal justice in the country by placing the burden of proof on the accused rather than the prosecution. It blatantly violates the legal principle of "innocent until proven guilty", which is also an internationally recognized principle. Besides, the ordinance aims to infringe the Right to privacy of a person—which is a human right recognized internationally under instruments like Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) etc, also guaranteed by the constitution of India under Article 21—by giving the instrumentalities of state a free hand to curtail this right vis-à-vis marriage. In compliance with the KS Puttaswamy Case, the ordinance fails to conform to the three-fold test laid down therein. The law is also in repugnance with the Special Marriage Act of the Country. Apart from the legal apertures, the UP ordinance law is ostensibly patriarchal in nature. It undermines the dignity and conscience of women at large. Since its inception, it has hastily taken a heavy toll on the rights of minorities particularly the Muslims, which simply reflects the malafide intention on the part of the government.

In view of the same, the constitutional courts must step in and jettison the ordinance law before it can become a statute. Such laws sear into the social and secular fabric of the country and undermine the purpose of constitutionalism. It's the duty of the judiciary to discourage such laws so as to safeguard the tenets of the highest norm of the land.

*The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer*

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## Global disturbing disparities

Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, the President of United Nations General Assembly has put forth an ambitious agenda during his maiden speech before the world body on September 14, 2020, "It is not only a health crisis, but a social and economic crisis, which has exacerbated existing challenges the UN is seeking to overcome through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Let us try to analyze some of these SDGs set out by the United Nations. It is a fact that while citizens of some African and Asian countries are starving, the rich countries are beset with obesity. Discrepancies of these types are morally disturbing. The United Nations is ideally suited to ending these shocking inequalities because it hosts all the nations of the world and endows each with identical voting power in the General Assembly. The poorest and the weakest are equal to the richest and the strongest.

The most urgent approach to promoting global partnership for sustainable development is the ending of warfare. War,

whether intramural or international, wreaks havoc on the elements necessary for health, housing, education, employment, the rule of law, the environment, and happiness generally.

The second urgent global sustainable development objective should be universal literacy and education. As Socrates explained, the unexamined life is not worth living. Or as philosopher Sam Johnson amplified, there is the same difference between the learned and unlearned as between the living and the dead. And as the Quran says, "Are those who know equal with those who know not?" These observations are made not to deride or degrade the uneducated, but to underscore the criticality of education to making life morally meaningful and fulfilling between ashes to ashes and dust-to-dust.

Third on the global sustainable development agenda should be the elimination of poverty and the securing for every man, woman, and child a right to flourishing health, a clean environment, comfortable housing, and nutritious food. The goal is not a choice but a moral obligation. Thus,

rich countries should transfer much of their riches to poor countries.

Next on the list of global sustainable development priorities should be the ending of all racial, ethnic, or class hatreds or enmities. The attainment of equality for women is another pressing yardstick of global sustainable development. Similarly repugnant is trafficking in children for slave labor.

Global sustainable development also requires universal access to the Internet, a technological marvel that brings the excitement of knowledge and the joys of instant communication to every user. The United Nations should play a key role in the universal access quest.

A clean environment is also essential to global sustainable development.

Let me with great humility offer a few closing observations about the entire global sustainable development enterprise. It is characteristic that national or international organizations employ quantitative benchmarks to measure success in meeting enumerated objectives. For instance, a long-standing objective has been for each nation to contribute a specified per-

centage of its gross domestic product for humanitarian or foreign aid. Companion quantitative benchmarks have been set for literacy, vaccinations, annual income, longevity, smoking, etc.

There is nothing inherently mischievous about these development yardsticks. But they should never distract from our recognition that the highest in sustainable development consists of non-quantifiable characteristics. These would include acts of charity, humility, courage, benevolence, magnanimity, self-restraint, and non-vindictiveness. It would seem to me to turn logic and morality on their heads to award higher sustainable development acclaim to a nation whose citizens were universally economically prosperous, literate, healthy, long-lived, non-polluting, but also mean-spirited, selfish, and egotistical than to a nation whose citizens were impoverished, plagued by disease, but were generous in time, effusive in hospitality, austere in habits, and selfless for the community.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai  
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# Coronavirus Mutations and Current Crop of Vaccines

REBECCA ROCKETT  
ALICIA ARNOTT  
FABIENNE BRILOT-TURVILLE

**‘If there are lots of mutations in non-essential regions of a virus’ genetic material, it can likely still function. But mutations in critical regions can disable a virus, so these don’t occur very often**

“Coronavirus” has already established itself as the scary new word of 2020. Add the word “mutant”, and you’ve got an even stronger candidate for the scary new phrase of 2021.

One fear is that critical parts of the coronavirus genome will mutate, making any vaccine obsolete before it’s widely rolled out next year.

But how much of an issue is this really? As we’ll see, SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, mutates, as do all viruses. But unlike other RNA viruses, it’s actually quite stable.

That’s largely good news for the first crop of vaccines that are set to be rolled out around the world in 2021.

#### What’s a mutation anyway?

In genetic terms, a mutation is just a scary word for a mistake. As cells make new copies of a virus, mistakes happen. These mistakes sometimes result in a stronger virus, sometimes a weaker virus.

But in most cases mutations in the coronavirus are irrelevant anomalies that cause changes to the genetic material (RNA) but not the resulting proteins that make up its composition and structure.

In fact, SARS-CoV-2 seems to have a slower rate of mutation than other RNA viruses. That’s because it belongs to a family of viruses with genetic proofreading mechanisms that can identify and remove most mistakes in its RNA when the virus replicates.

This means SARS-CoV-2 has about half the mutation rate of influenza and a quarter the mutation rate of HIV.

#### What about mutations and spike proteins?

If there are lots of mutations in non-essential regions of a virus’ genetic material, it can likely still function. But mutations in critical regions can disable a virus, so these don’t occur very often.

This is why vaccines are typically designed against these critical regions — to safeguard against mutations that would make them ineffective.

And it’s mutations in one of these critical regions, the COVID-19 spike



protein, that has gained significant attention recently.

This is the protein many COVID-19 vaccines use to generate a protective immune response. In fact, the four vaccines Australia has signed agreements for, should they pass clinical trials, all either contain the virus’ spike protein or carry the instructions your body needs to make it.

#### What’s all this to do with mink?

One mutation that has attracted controversy is the D614G mutation, partly because it leads to a spike protein with a slightly altered shape.

And some scientists were concerned this mutation, plus three others in the spike protein, would help the virus bypass the type of immunity generated following vaccination.

These mutations emerged when the coronavirus jumped from hu-

mans to minks and back again.

To avoid the potentially disastrous implications of this new combination of variants rapidly spreading in humans, millions of minks were culled in Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands.

However, not all scientists are convinced of the potential impact of this combination of mutations. So studies are currently under way to better understand their impact.

#### Syringes at ten paces

Considering what we know about how the virus mutates and the rate of these mutations, the first generation of COVID-19 vaccines look likely to provide some protection against currently circulating SARS-CoV-2 strains.

However, researchers are monitoring the possible emergence of any new mutations in the spike protein

from isolates around the world to ensure ongoing vaccine effectiveness.

We can identify any mutations using a technique called genome sequencing, which allows scientists to read the complete genetic sequence, or genome, of the virus.

Since January, scientists around the world have generated and made publicly available more than 246,000 COVID-19 genomes. Scientists can then compare these with the early COVID-19 genomes sequenced in Wuhan. These early sequences are the templates for the vaccines we are waiting impatiently for.

This surveillance will provide an early warning system for potentially critical mutations. And if researchers find mutations, they need to work out what these mutations actually do, using so-called “functional tests”.

Such tests can tell us whether a new mutation influences our immune response to the spike protein, compared to those induced by the original Wuhan strain. We can also investigate if antibodies following vaccination can continue to bind to the spike protein of emerging strains and prevent the virus from infecting human cells.

#### So should we be worried?

Researchers have only been able to study this coronavirus for a very short time. So only time will tell if it mutates at a frequency and at limited positions in the essential regions, as we have come to expect. That’s why surveillance is so important.

The current crop of vaccines have been developed using decades of accumulated scientific knowledge and are based on what we know about mutations in this and other coronaviruses. So we shouldn’t be too worried when we read scary headlines about a “mutant coronavirus”.

This past year has demonstrated the capacity to rapidly produce vaccines, which hopefully can be modified to reflect new mutations and merging strains should they occur.

By arrangements with  
The Conversation

## Ventilation to Reduce COVID risk

MARY-LOUISE MCLAWS

As many of us return to the office, and congregate indoors over dinner and drinks during the summer holidays, we need to think about ventilation to minimise the indoor spread of COVID-19.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID, is spread mostly by larger particles called droplets, but also by smaller particles called aerosols, and by touch from contaminated surfaces.

Aerosol particles are lighter than droplet-sized particles, and can be suspended in the air for longer. The suspension and therefore transmission of aerosols is facilitated by poor ventilation.

Increasing ventilation indoors, with fresh outdoor air, is a key method of dispersing viral particles. Ventilation can reduce the risk that just one COVID-positive person (who might not yet know they’re infectious) will infect others.

There are some simple measures you can take, both at home and at work, to improve ventilation over the holiday period and beyond.

#### 1. Open windows and doors

The best strategy at home and at work is simply to open windows and doors.

If you’re having friends and family over for a meal, or your office Christmas party, consider moving tables and chairs closer to open windows and open up a door to create a through breeze.

Or, if weather permits, eat outside.

#### 2. Set your air conditioner to pull fresh air from outside

Air conditioners can help, but they must be on the right setting.

At work or home you don’t want to recirculate indoor air, as this just fans the same air around the room (but now colder or warmer).

Instead, always make sure your air conditioner is set to bring in 100% fresh air from outside. There are settings in offices that allow the system to increase air change per hour, meaning it can reduce the time it takes for all the air inside the



room to be completely replaced with outside fresh air.

But the direction of the airflow is also important. For example, airflow from an air conditioner (that was recirculating air rather than pulling it from outside) was implicated in spreading the virus to a number of diners at tables downstream in a restaurant in China.

Offices welcoming back staff should prepare their air conditioners by having their engineers service the system to pull in fresh air faster than the pre-COVID setting (which may have been around 40 litres per second per person) at no less

than 60 litres per second, per person.

In hospitals, aged-care facilities and hotel quarantine, qualified engineers should be brought in to assess the adequacy of the air conditioner’s airflow. This is particularly crucial for any “hot zones” accommodating people who are COVID-positive.

The World Health Organisation recommends hot zones have 12 airflow changes per hour (that’s 80 litres per second per person), meaning the air is totally replaced 12 times every 60 minutes. This is the gold standard for ventilation, and can be very hard to achieve in many

buildings.

#### 3. Use fans

Guidelines released last week by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend placing fans near open windows to enhance airflow. The recommendation is to keep fans on at all times when a room is occupied, for example at restaurants.

As with aircons, fans can be dangerous if they push the air directly from one person to another, and one is infectious. You should place the fan so it increases the flow of fresh air into the room, and shouldn’t be placed so the air moves from the room towards the open window or open door.

#### 4. Don’t bother with HEPA filters at home

High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters have been marketed as a way to reduce the concentration of SARS-CoV-2 particles in the air.

Their effectiveness is dependent on

**‘Increasing ventilation indoors, with fresh outdoor air, is a key method of dispersing viral particles. Ventilation can reduce the risk that just one COVID-positive person (who might not yet know they’re infectious) will infect others.**

the airflow capacity of the unit, the configuration of the room, the number of people in the room, and the position of the filter in the room.

But there’s no evidence to suggest a portable HEPA filter unit will help in your home. So don’t rush out and buy one for Christmas.

They may be effective in some areas of health care, such as a COVID ward in a hospital or in aged care homes, particularly when used in negative-pressure rooms. The combination of the HEPA filter and negative air pressure reduces the risk of aerosol particles escaping into the corridor.

#### 5. In public transport, taxis and Ubers

COVID outbreaks have been traced back to exposure on public transport. For example, a young man in Hunan Province, China, travelled on two buses and infected multiple people who were sitting in different areas of the buses. A study of this cluster was carried out by Chinese researchers, who put forward one theory regarding air flow:

The closed windows with running ventilation on the buses could have created an ideal environment for aerosol transmission [...] the ventilation inlets were aligned above the windows on both sides, and the exhaust fan was in the front, possibly creating an airflow carrying aerosols containing the viral particles from the rear to the middle and front of the vehicle.

The study’s authors recommend all windows be open on public transport to help disperse viral particles. If you’re on a tram or a bus, you should open them if you can.

However, on some forms of public transport it might be impossible, like trains. In these instances, you should wear a mask.

Likewise, it’s ideal to have the windows down in Ubers and taxis. But if you can’t or don’t want to, turn on the air conditioner and have it pull fresh air from outside. And still wear a mask!

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# US Congressman Asks India To Provide Security To Agitating Farmers

Democratic American lawmaker on Tuesday urged the Indian government to provide safety to the protesting farmers as he hailed the recent offers of dialogue and a proposal from India's Supreme Court to set up mediation.

"I further welcome the government's engagement with the protestors, including recent offers of dialogue and a proposal from India's Supreme Court to set up mediation," he said in a statement.

"Our relationship with India not only helps anchor US policy in the Indo-Pacific, but it serves to set an example for cooperation that extends far beyond our two countries. As President-elect (Joe Biden) takes office in January, I look forward to working with the new Administration to strengthen this partnership based on the democratic values President-elect Biden has espoused throughout his career," he said.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and several other states have been protesting on various borders of Delhi since November 26, seeking repeal of three farm laws enacted in September. Dubbing these laws as "anti-farmer", these farmers claim that the newly enacted legislations would pave the way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporations.

However, the government has maintained that the new laws will bring farmers better opportunities and usher in new technologies in agriculture. There have been multiple rounds of talks between representatives of the protestors and the Indian government but the logjam continues.

"The partnership between the United States and India has grown exponentially over the course of the past several years based on shared interest in a variety of areas: from security and trade to climate change and human rights," he said.

"I call on India's government to demonstrate its commitment to democratic norms by guaranteeing protesters' safety and by treating them with respect. Democracy demands this much," Congressman David Trone said.

Trone, who represents the sixth Congressional District of Maryland, also expressed concern over reports of violence used against the protesters. He was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2018.

"We are reminded of this as thousands of Indians have taken to the streets in recent weeks to peacefully protest implementation of new laws. Their demonstration is an exercise of the democratic process, one that grants civic rights and freedom of expression," he said.

# Key Verdicts By Supreme Court In The Year 2020

Wide-ranging directions passed in the "world war" against Covid-19 to alleviate the plight of citizens and keeping the wheels of judiciary turning by delivering several key verdicts, including the one which led to the hanging of four convicts in the sensational Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case, were the key imprints left by the Supreme Court in 2020.

All the odds notwithstanding, the apex court kept delivering verdicts having far-reaching impact, including the orders passed in matters related to anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protest at Shaheen Bagh, to the latest order on farmers' agitation against new farm laws at Delhi's borders.

Besides, it took a giant leap towards gender justice by granting permanent commission for women officers in the armed forces. The year also saw the top court face strong criticism on various counts even as it upheld free speech and expression for the citizens.

In 2020, the top court faced a barrage of criticism over allegations of not acting swiftly towards the plight of lakhs of migrant workers, activist-lawyer Prashant Bhusan for criminal contempt for his two tweets against the judiciary.

The apex court, which imposed a "nominal fine" of Re 1 on Bhusan saying he had attempted to "denigrate the reputation of the institution of administration of justice", later in the year issued show-cause notices to stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and cartoonist Rachita Taneja for their alleged scandalous tweets against the top court.

One of the high-profile matters in the apex court was the alleged suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. It led to a political storm from Maharashtra to Bihar, and the court accorded its approval for a CBI probe into the FIR against actress Rhea Chakraborty in connection with the "unnatural death".

The high-drama over encounter killings of gangster Vikas Dubey and five of his alleged associates, days after eight cops of Uttar Pradesh Police were gunned down by the dreaded criminal, also reached the top court which approved the state's draft notification for appointing former apex court judge Justice (ret'd) B S Chaudhary as chairman of the 3-member inquiry commission.

Similarly, the furore over Hathras gang rape case and late-night cremation of the victim also reached the apex court which said CBI probe into the matter will be monitored by Allahabad High Court and CRPF would provide security to victim's kin and witnesses.

The high-stake corporate battle involving Tata Sons and Cyrus Investments continued through the year in the top court. In January it stayed the NCLAT order restoring Cyrus Mistry as executive chairman of Tata Sons and this month, reserved the verdict on cross-appeals filed by them.

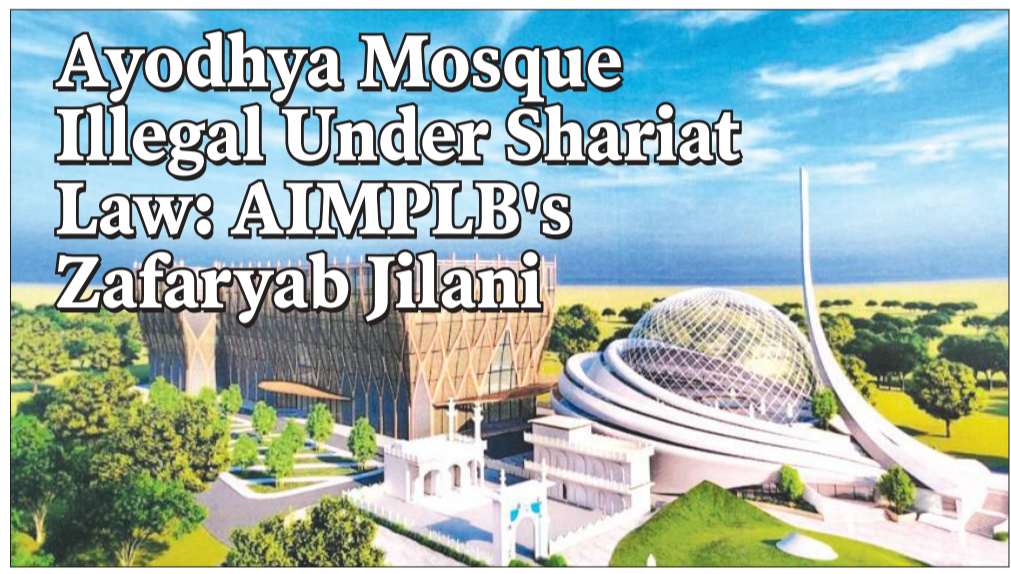


The year also witnessed unprecedented controversy when Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy made allegations against Justice N V Ramana, who is in line to become the next Chief Justice of India, in a letter to incumbent CJ S A Bobde.

Later, while speaking at a condolence meet for former top court judge AR Lakshmanan, Justice Ramana said greatest strength of judiciary is the faith of people in it and judges must be "steadfast in holding on to their principles" and "fearless in their decisions" to withstand all pressures and odds.

In 2020, the top court faced a barrage of criticism over allegations of not acting swiftly towards the plight of lakhs of migrant workers, who started returning to their native places from big cities with their families trudging hundreds of miles due to the sudden nationwide lockdown.

It took cognisance of several COVID-19 related issues, including on migrant workers in which it passed a slew of directions to ensure that they reach home safely and are provided with food and shelter, and also on providing treatment as well as dignified handling of dead bodies in hospitals.



## Ayodhya Mosque Illegal Under Shariat Law: AIMPLB's Zafaryab Jilani

Athar Hussain, the secretary of a trust formed to build the mosque in Ayodhya, however, said everyone interprets the Shariat in their own way.

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) member Zafaryab Jilani said on Wednesday the mosque which is planned to come up in Ayodhya following last year's Supreme Court verdict is against the Waqf Act and "illegal" under the Shariat laws.

The power for interpretation of Shariya does not lie in the hands of some limited people. The mosque is the place for offering namaz. So what is wrong if we are building a mosque?" posed Hussain.

Another executive member of AIMPLB SQR Ilyas said, "We have rejected the proposal to accept land for the mosque at any other place. We lost the title suit and so we don't need a land for a mosque."

He alleged that the Sunni Central Waqf Board was working under the pressure of the government. "The Muslims have, however, rejected this land at Dhannipur given in compensation. The mosque being built by the trust constituted by the Sunni Central Waqf Board is just a symbolic one."

The issue was raised by MP MP Asaduddin Owaisi at a meeting of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board's executive committee held on October 13. All the members were of the view that the exchange of land for the mosque was not permissible under the Waqf Act and in turn "illegal" under the Shariat law.

The Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid disputed structure was demolished in December 1992 by "kar sevaks" who claimed that the mosque in Ayodhya was built by demolishing an ancient Ram temple.

After a protracted legal tussle, the Supreme Court, on November 9 last year, ruled in favour of the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya and directed the Centre to allot an alternative five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque at a "prominent" place in the holy town in Uttar Pradesh.

Ofcom's Executive, the report said, "found that this program contained uncontextualized hate speech and that this content was potentially highly offensive."

# Indian TV channel fined for hate speech vs Pakistanis

LONDON: Britain's communications regulator Ofcom imposed a £20,000 (US\$26,720) fine Tuesday on an Indian TV station for a program that contained "uncontextualized hate speech" against Pakistanis.

The Ofcom report said: "We considered these statements to be expressions of hatred based on intolerance of Pakistani people based on their nationality alone, and that the broadcast of these statements spread, incited, promoted and justified such intolerance towards Pakistani people among viewers."

Indian General K.K. Sinha was a third guest on the program, and said: "Oh you useless people. Beggars. Oh beggars, oh beggars. We will douse you with 1.25kg, .75kg-, with two inches. PoK [Pakistan-occupied Kashmir], PoK, we are coming to the PoK. We are coming to the Gilgit, Baltistan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa... We are going to come, be ready. People in your country are shivering with fear that the Indian army may come. We will barge inside your home in Baluchistan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in Karachi, in your area, in Multan, in Rawalpindi and kill you. From Lahore, from Karachi to Gilgit-Balistan when we will have control."

In addition to the fine, Ofcom also ruled that the program not be repeated and that they broadcast a statement of Ofcom's findings on a date and in a form to be determined by Ofcom.

The program was originally meant to discuss India's attempt to land a spacecraft on the moon but also included a wider discussion on India-Pakistan relations.

Ofcom said the counter-argument they received to these statements was that they were not meant to have been taken literally, and that "Asian viewers would have understood clearly."

These statements included "their scientists, doctors, their leaders, politicians all are terrorists. Even their sports people" and "every child is a terrorist over there. Every child is a terrorist. You are dealing with a terrorist entity." The

decision found that the program's presenter and some of his guests conveyed the view that all Pakistanis were terrorists.

Ofcom said in their decision, however: "We considered however that these statements, made by a retired Major General from the Indian Army, which clearly threatened that the Indian military would attack Pakistani civilians in their homes,

£20,000 fine issued by Britain's communications regulator over episode of 'Poochta Hai Bharat'

# No Interference If An Adult Marries, Converts As Per Her Choice: Calcutta HC



On an FIR filed by the father, the police had produced the woman before a judicial magistrate, before whom she made a statement that she had married of her own will.

On the father's complaint, the high court had directed that the woman would meet the senior-most additional district judge in Tehatta and that sufficient care was to be taken so that she was not under any coercion or undue influence.

Hearing a petition by a father claiming that his daughter has been unduly influenced to marry a man of a different religion, the Calcutta High Court has observed that there can be no interference if an adult marries as per her choice and decides to convert.

The bench noted that despite a clear and clean report being furnished by the additional district judge, the father harbours some suspicion. Susmita Saha Dutta, the lawyer representing the father, claimed before the division bench that the husband was present within the court premises at Tehatta in Nadia district when the woman appeared before the judge.

to her paternal house, there can be no interference in the matter," a division bench comprising justices Sanjib Banerjee and Arijit Banerjee observed on Monday.

Upon the father's complaint, the high court had directed that the woman would meet the senior-most additional district judge in Tehatta and that sufficient care was to be taken so that she was not under any coercion or undue influence.

The bench noted that despite a clear and clean report being furnished by the additional district judge, the father harbours some suspicion. Susmita Saha Dutta, the lawyer representing the father, claimed before the division bench that the husband was present within the court premises at Tehatta in Nadia district when the woman appeared before the judge.

The bench directed that to allay the father's suspicion, the woman will meet additional public prosecutor Saibal Babuli in his chamber in Kolkata on December 23.

The bench further directed that at the time the woman meets Babuli, who is representing the state in the matter, there should be no one else in the room, including her husband.

It directed Babuli to file a short report when the matter appears for hearing again on December 24.

# \$30 bottles of British air sold to homesick expats

The business will also take on special orders for certain other UK locations, apart from the four UK countries.

A British company named My Baggage is currently selling bottles of "authentic" air from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to provide Britons overseas with the scent of home. The 500-millilitre bottle is sold at £25 (around \$33). The bottle comes with a cork stopper, for easy use as the recipient can keep opening it up and can take in the aroma, reports CNN.

The business will also take on special orders for certain other UK locations, apart from the four UK countries. As they said they have recently fulfilled an order from a Welshman who ordered a sample of air from the Snowdonia mountain range of northwestern Wales. Besides that, exclusive limited-edition bottles are also available with air drawn from the London underground or a Norfolk fish and chip store.

In the UK, a quickly evolving new variant of coronavirus has resulted in bans and prohibitions on travel to the country. Which has prompted Britain's several European neighbours including Canada and Iran to close their doors to travellers from the country. Meaning a significant number of people still overseas will not be able to return any time soon.

SMELL OF HOME

My Baggage team, who deals with international removals for relocating British people, says they were encouraged to introduce the bottled air collection after conducting research that linked the human sense of smell to emotional memories.



We wanted to help them [UK residents living abroad] reconnect with home and we know from published research that our sense of smell is very evocative when it comes to emotions," a spokesman for the company said.



By allowing recipients to take a deep breath of the air from their home country we're hoping to ease homesickness and help them settle into their new life, wherever that may be"

The vast number of orders, according to My Baggage, come from people that purchase bottles as presents for friends or relatives living overseas.

Four years ago, a company named Aethar started selling 580ml bottles of British fresh air to buyers from polluted Chinese cities.

By allowing recipients to take a deep breath of the air from their home country we're hoping to ease homesickness and help them settle into their new life, wherever that may be"