

Chinese Facing Backlash Abroad Due To Coronavirus Scare



Punjabis staying abroad say Chinese nationals have been at the receiving end of a backlash following an outbreak of the coronavirus in their country.

There is a large population of Chinese nationals in the US, Canada, Australia, and many other countries. Punjabis settled abroad say the Chinese are facing a tough time because people often assume they have just returned from their home country and hence interactions with them could be a risk. As a result, many members of the community are themselves avoiding going out in public.

"People start running away from them, some even shout at them, asking them to stay home," said Reena, a Punjab native settled in Toronto, Canada, while admitting she too is scared of sending her children

to school where a large number of Chinese students are enrolled.

Karan Singh, a Punjabi living in Australia said he had Chinese friends who had visited their home country a month back. "People of all communities are feeling scared and even the fellow Chinese are avoiding meeting those who had returned from China recently," he added.

"We know that one should not assume every Chinese national is infected, but because of the scare, people are helpless. Taking precautions is better because one infected person can infect any number of persons who can further infect several others," said Pooja, a resident of California.

Parkash Kaur, a resident of London, said that she visits her

home in Punjab every year during this time but canceled her plans to travel. "At the airport, one can come in contact with passengers coming from any nation including China. So I decided to wait for some time," she said over the phone.

"We fully support the Chinese community but we are worried about ourselves and our dear ones," said Kusum, residing in Canada.

The North American Punjabi Community's executive director Satnam Singh Chahal said that while Chinese nationals are not at fault for the outbreak, everyone including the Chinese should take precautions against the spread of the virus.

H S Singh, an employee of the Dashmesh Temple Sikh Darbar in the US, said everyone is quite anxious in their community.

"Even we had fellow Chinese workers in our company but they have not visited China recently. However, they too are avoiding meeting with their own brethren who had recently made trips to China," he added.

"It is unfortunate that people are behaving in an insensitive manner," said Chahal.

In Punjab, students cancel travel plans. A couple of Chinese students of a private university in Jalandhar said they have canceled plans to visit their hometowns but are in regular touch with their parents to inquire about their well-being.

"Our parents have asked us to not to visit our home country till it's safe to do so," said a Chinese student studying in Phagwara's Lovely Professional University.

Coronavirus Outbreak: Embassy Alerts Indians About Tentative Evacuation Plan Today

The Indian embassy in Beijing on Thursday alerted Indian nationals in Wuhan that it was tentatively preparing for evacuation on Friday evening. "This flight will carry those Indian nationals who are in and around Wuhan and have conveyed consent for their evacuation. There will be another flight subsequently which will carry those who are from other parts of Hubei Province," the Indian embassy said in a message to the Indian community.

However, the Indian embassy said that the details "are tentative and are being shared with you so that you are adequately prepared". The embassy officials said in the message that it was their intention to ensure that all those who had expressed consent to avail of this facility are safely returned to India.

The embassy has drawn up a list of 374 students — till 11pm on Thursday — who will board flight no.1 and will be tentatively evacuated on Friday. However, official communication to students indicated that this will be subject

to clearing the medical check-up conducted by Chinese officials. The students have been told to pack no more than one carry-on bag (7 kg) and one check-in luggage (15 kg) for their journey. They have also been asked to make sufficient arrangements for masks, gloves, tissues, hand sanitizers, adequate food and drinking water and essential medicines. Students have been told to prepare for departure at "very short notice" on Friday afternoon.

In New Delhi, the government said that it was waiting for the necessary approval from the Chinese side for the two Air India flights to bring back about 600 Indians, who have been contacted by the Indian embassy.

Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "We have made a formal request to the government of China for bringing back Indian nationals from the Hubei province in two flights. We are awaiting the necessary approval from the Chinese side. We hope this will be granted soon."

The government has reached out to over 600 Indians living in China's Hubei province, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, to ascertain their willingness to be brought back to India.

"We have established contact with over 600 Indians across the province and are individually ascertaining their willingness to be repatriated. Our Mission in Beijing is working round-the-clock on the ground to work out the necessary logistics," the MEA spokesperson said.

According to Chinese authorities, the nationwide death toll from novel coronavirus has jumped to 170. Kumar said arrangements are being put in place for people to travel to the airport in Wuhan.

"We remain committed to the safety and well-being of our nationals abroad. We appreciate the support extended by the government of China and other ministries in government of India in putting this process together," Kumar said.

In New Delhi, the Chinese embassy's spokesperson Ji Rong said

that the Chinese Embassy in India has maintained close communication with the Indian government, and timely briefed on the development of the epidemic and China's efforts in epidemic prevention and control. "The Chinese side pays close attention to the report of the emergence of one confirmed case of pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus in India and will cooperate with the Indian side to jointly strengthen the epidemic prevention and control."

Ji said, "The Chinese government attaches great importance to safeguarding the safety and health of every foreign national in China, including the Indian people. We are willing to continue to maintain close communication with the Indian side, provide necessary assistance and convenience to ensure the health and safety of Indian citizens in China, and address their legitimate concerns timely. We also hope Indian side could continue to render understanding and support to China's efforts in epidemic prevention and control."

Anti-CAA stir: SC notice to UP govt on plea for quashing notice sent to protesters seeking damages

The Supreme Court Friday issued a notice to the Uttar Pradesh government and sought response on a plea for quashing notices sent to alleged protesters by district administration for recovery of losses during anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests.

The Uttar Pradesh government had slapped notices on 372 people (out of 478 identified) to recover damages caused to public properties during agitation in the state. Citing a set of Supreme Court recommendations from 2007 and a 2011 Allahabad High Court order, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath justified the move after he declared "badla" (revenge) on rioters.

A bench comprising Justices D Y Chandrachud and K M Joseph issued the notice to the state government and directed it to file its response within four weeks.

The apex court was hearing a plea where it is alleged that the notices were sent in an "arbitrary manner" against a person, who died six years ago at the age of 94. People aged above



90 were also issued notice, the plea states.

Advocate Parwaiz Arif Titu, a petitioner in the case, sought stay on these notices claiming that they were sent in a hap-

azard manner to persons who have not been booked under any penal provisions, and with no details of FIR or criminal offence having been made against them.

From Front page...

Abrogation Of Art-370

of Military Affairs will improve coordination among the three services, besides speeding up their modernisation.

Referring to foreign policy issues, Kovind said India is stimulating economic growth and prosperity by increasing connectivity with its neighbouring countries and the "Neighbourhood First" policy has been a priority.

"My government is of the view that foreign policy is a vital ingredient of the country's economic and strategic security," he said.

On India's rising military prowess, Kovind talked about the successful test of anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) and major milestones in the development of the naval version of Tejas light combat aircraft.

"In these evolving times, to meet the new and complex challenges related to the defence of the country, my government is working to make the defence forces stronger, more effective and modern," he said.

On tackling militancy, he said alertness on the part of the citizens is extremely helpful in dealing with the challenge in view of the changing nature of terrorism.

"My government is working with full strength and determination to free the country from the scourge of militancy," he said.

"The decrease in militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir demonstrates that public cooperation can be effective in the fight against militancy. My government has given the security forces a free hand in taking the strongest measures against those indulging in militancy," the president said.

Teachers Blame 'Goli Maro'

from the students.

"We also appeal to our fellow citizens at Shaheen Bagh to allow the passage of traffic on one side of the road. It would be an act of civic responsibility and sensitivity, and also a gesture of facilitation to all whose destinations would be easier to access," the JTA said.

Injured Kashmiri Student Discharged

head and shouting "Yeh lo Azadi" amid heavy police presence in the area.

Farooq, who received bullet wound on his left hand, was admitted to AIIMS. No injury to blood vessels or nerves were sustained, a

doctor said.

Juvenile Board Sends Shooter

firearm above his head and shouting "Yeh lo Azadi" amid heavy police presence. The Crime Branch is probing the case.

3 Jaish Men Killed, Cop Injured

Dilbag Singh said. He said a policeman was injured in the incident.

He said the militants belonged to Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

The truck driver and conductor were arrested, the DGP said.

The Jammu-Srinagar highway was closed and the entire forest belt was cordoned off. After a gunbattle, two more militants were killed.

Choppers, drones and sniffer dogs have been inducted into joint operations to track down the fourth militant as a massive search operation rages up, they said.

Six weapons, including a sniper rifle and large quantity of ammunition and explosives have been recovered, the DGP said.

"The truck was stopped by our personnel for checking. As they were about to enter the truck, the militants opened fire and our jawans also retaliated. One of our jawans was injured in his arm due to a bullet, while a militant was killed on the spot," the DGP said.

IGP Jammu Zone, Mukesh Singh told reporters that the truck was intercepted at the toll post at 5 am by a joint team of police and CRPF.

The truck was carrying polyvinyl and a cavity was created inside it to hide the militants, officials said, adding that the militants were armed with bullet-proof jackets. The officials suspect that the militants might have planned to carry out an attack at vital installations as well as security camps along the nearly 300-km highway.

Bhom Raj, the policeman injured in firing by the militants, has been hospitalised, they said. Raj was unarmed and could not retaliate.

Senior police officials were at the spot to oversee the combing operations. All schools and colleges were closed in Udhampur district as a precautionary measure.

In 2018 and 2019, militants had created similar hideouts in trucks to ferry militants to Kashmir to engineer major attacks.

In September last year, a truck loaded with cardboard material was intercepted

during checking on the Jammu-Pathankot highway in Kathua district.

Three militants, who were on the truck, were arrested and arms and ammunition, including four AK-56 rifles, two AK-47 rifles, six magazines and 180 rounds of ammunition, besides Rs 11,000 in cash, was seized.

In September 2018, three militants of JeM were killed and 12 security personnel, including three officers, injured in Reasi district after they fired on a police party at Jajar Kotli in Jammu.

Encounter Disrupts Highway Traffic

was stopped after encounter ensued at Nagrota when a group of militants, travelling in a truck, fired upon a police party at 0500 hrs this morning. A police constable was injured in the initial firing. The driver of the truck was arrested and a massive search operation was launched against the militants.

"We stopped traffic on the highway as a precautionary measure in view of the counter," official sources said.

However, they said a large number of Kashmir bound vehicles were allowed through alternative route to Udhampur.

Light Motor Vehicles (LMVs) were allowed this morning upto 1100 hrs to cross the Nagrota and Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMs) in the afternoon. HMs are carrying essentials, including vegetables besides oil and LPG tankers for Kashmir valley.

Trucker Cousin Of Pulwama Bomber

toll plaza on Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

Three alleged over ground workers of militants including the driver and conductor were also arrested.

The driver was identified as Sameer Ahmed Dar, a resident of Pulwama district of south Kashmir. He is the cousin of Adil Dar, ADG Dilbagh Singh said.

"The militants were headed to Kashmir, probably as a replacement for top leadership of Jaish including its chief Qari Yasir killed by security forces last month," he said. "It was a group of militants that had recently infiltrated from the international border in Jammu."

Sameer has reportedly done a Masters in Geology from Kashmir University.

All the three arrested men are currently being interrogated.

After the encounter was over a large

quantity of arms and ammunition including wireless sets and US-made M4 carbines were recovered from the slain militants.

Obscene Content Found On Suspended DySP's

by the J&K police the case was handed to the NIA.

Police sources had said that the two militants and the lawyer had planned a travel to Pakistan after reaching Jammu.

Singh was earlier shifted from Srinagar to Jammu on a transit remand where an NIA team questioned him. After his arrest by the J&K police, multiple raids were conducted at his residence in Srinagar.

Singh was posted with the anti-hijacking wing of Jammu & Kashmir Police in Srinagar, and was part of the security staff that had received a group of foreign diplomats who visited Kashmir last month.

Cold Wave Conditions Intensify Across Valley

continued. The night temperature in the city settled at minus 3.9 degree, which is about a degree below normal.

The 40-day-long 'Chalal-Kalan', the severest period of winter, which commenced from December 21 last year, received the heaviest snowfall, breaking about 30 years old record in Srinagar. Meanwhile, 'Chilal Khurd' which began from Thursday, will be followed by 10-day-long 'Chilal Bacha' in the valley, where people are facing frequent power failure, coupled with bad roads.

The world famous ski resort of Gulmarg, about 55 km from here in north Kashmir, was the coldest place in the valley as the mercury dipped about a degree from Thursday and settled at minus 12 degree. "Bright sunshine greeted tourists, including foreigners, who are out on ski slopes enjoying different activities," a hotelier said.

The mercury at world famous health resort of Pahalgam, about 100 km from here in south Kashmir, dipped about a degree from Thursday and settled at minus 11.8 degree, which is below normal.

The night temperature at Qazigund, Kupwara in north Kashmir and tourist resort of Kokernag dipped and settled at minus 5.5 degree, minus 4.2 degree and minus 4 degree, respectively.

Internet Service Restored

of VPNs available which can be used to

bypass the security setting and access the blocked sites.

Only handful news websites have been placed in the category of white listed sites in the valley. Ironically, even the websites of major national newspapers and news agencies have not found their way into the white listed sites.

Restoration of 2G mobile internet service hardly makes any difference as the users are unable to even check their mails as the speed is very low.

Fixed line internet service also remained suspended even after authorities announced resumption of the service on January 25. However, the government had announced that only white listed sites in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir could be accessed from January 25. All social media sites remained suspended, the order read.

The government order had listed 300 white websites, including email service, banking website, education related websites, job platforms, entertainment, tour and travel and weather website. White listing of websites shall be continuous process.

Due to suspension of internet service, journalists working for different media organizations, including News Agencies, were badly hit. However, later administration set up a media facilitation centre at Sonawar in the city.

The centre was later shifted to Directorate Information Office in Srinagar, where journalists are filing their stories to their respective media organizations.

However, despite restoration of 2G internet service, the journalists have to wait for hours, particularly in the evening time, to get their turn since only a limited number of systems are working the centre.

Jamia Imam Seeks Mirwaiz's Release

he said.

"Mirwaiz is the religious head of Muslims of Kashmir and preventing him from performing his religious duties as Mirwaiz and barring him from offering congregational Friday prayers is a violation of fundamental human rights," he added.

He urged the authorities to release the Mirwaiz forthwith and allow him to lead the congregation in Jamia Masjid. Imam Hai also urged the authorities to release all prisoners including youth languishing in various jails across India.