From Front page...

Iran Releases 70,000 Prisoners As It Battles Virus

TEHRAN: The coronavirus out- the news site of the judiciary. breaks in China and South Korea appear to be slowing, as countries elsewhere in the world have now died from COVID-19. adopt drastic measures to try and stamp out the infection.

ly 70,000 prisoners due to the coronavirus outbreak, Iranian ju- 133 deaths reported on Sunday, diciary chief Ebrahim Raisi said bringing the total to 366. More on Monday, according to Mizan, than 7,000 people in the country

There were 49 new fatalities virus. in Iran, where some 194 people

In Italy, where some 16 million people in Lombardy and Iran has released approximate- other parts of the north are now under quarantine, there were

But the latest figures from China and South Korea suggest the virus judicial authorities on Monday. might be slowing in northeast Asia. In Iran Chief Justice Ebrahim Raeisi said it has ordered temporarily release of around 70,000 prisoners in order to prevent a cial apparatus has also prioritized further spread of the disease.

have been confirmed to have the furloughed as long as [this mea- products and other medical re- a total of 237 deaths and 7,161 insure] does not interfere with the society's security," Raeisi told

"The priority lies with those who have underlying health conditions," he added. The chief justice said Iran's judi-

processing the cases of individuals "Prisoners will continue to be charged with hoarding hygiene

quirements amid the country's ef- fection cases. forts to curb the outbreak.

The novel coronavirus, which first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, has killed more than 3,800 people and in- Kianoush Jahanpour said 595 fected over 108,000 others in at least 95 countries.

Iran has been the worst-hit country in the Middle East, with are upbeat about the country's

Presenting the latest figures on

the epidemic on Monday, head of

the Health Ministry's Public Re-

lations and Information Center

new infections had been diag-

Medical authorities, however,

the US, France and Spain will

Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia,

Vietnam, and Nepal are already

till the conveyor belt areas.

nosed since Sunday.

ability to subdue the outbreak, citing the rate at which patients have been recovering from the disease. Jahanpour said at least 2,394 people have been released from hospitals after regaining their health.

Kashmir Observer 10-03-2020

Passengers From Us, France, Spain

NEW DELHI: The Airport Au- France & amp; Spain to the list of thority of India (AAI) on Mon- nations(now 15)from where arrivday said that passengers from ing pax needs segregation as per

also be separated from other in a tweet. This is among the series

passengers at Indian airports of steps taken by the government

Passengers flying in from DGCA and AAI, in the view of the

China, Hong Kong, South Ko- spread of the deadly coronavirus.

rea, Italy, Iran, Malaysia, Japan, Around 45 people have tested posi-

being segregated from other ar- cials from the Health Ministry and avia-

riving passengers at the airports. tion regulator DGCA, reviewed arrange-

(passengers) from US, rein in the spread of coronavirus.

"Airports advised to include ments made at international airports to

To Be Separated At Airports: AAI

Earlier, the World Health Organization (WHO) described Iran's capability and performance in controlling the virus as exemplary.

@MoHFW_INDIA," said the AAI

including the aviation regulator

tive for the infection in India. AAI

Chairman Arvind Singh, along with offi-

Three-Year-Old Child In Kerala Infected By Coronavirus Number of coronavirus cases in India rises to 43

NEW DELHI: The number of where in the country. coronavirus cases in India rose to 43 on Monday with four people, the patient in Jammu, the first including a three-year-old child in Kerala who had returned from a travel history to Iran. The one Italy, testing positive for the dis- in Delhi had travelled to Italy. ease, Health Ministry officials said on Monday.

mu reported one case each, officials said.

They added that no deaths have been reported from anv-

FM Jaishankar Makes

According to the officials, the minister in-

formed the parents that elderly and pilgrims

would be brought back first, followed by stu-

dents. Besides, he made it clear that anyone

airlifted from Iran would be sent to a guaran-

Shabir Hussain, a resident of Budgam town

in central Kashmir, said, "My daughter is in

Iran. I received a call from the Divisional Com-

missioner office to reach here, so I came. The

minister said the government will bring them

back, but we are very concerned....we request-

ed the minister to bring them back immedi-

Another parent, speaking on condition of

anonymity, said, "We told him that our chil-

dren are in Iran and that we are very concerned

about their well-being. He assured us that they

are at a safe place and there was nothing to

I request the government that our children are

at a high risk of infection, so please bring them

government will airlift them. He told us that

screening and scanning is going on there. The

minister said the government will first airlift

the pilgrims as they were more in number and

it will take a day or two for them to be brought

here, after which students will be airlifted. We

told the minister that if any one tests positive

for the virus, he should be sent to quarantine

centre but please bring the others home," an-

India will send a military transport aircraft

to Iran on Monday night to bring back Indians

stranded in the coronavirus-hit nation, official

other parent said.

sources said.

home as soon as possible," one woman said.

"My daughter, Nadia Shabir, studies in Iran.

"We felt good about his visit, but he did not give us any concrete assurance as to when the

worry about. We felt a sense of relief."

tine centre for 14 days of isolation.

the meeting said.

ately.'

Giving details, officials said case in Jammu and Kashmir, had And the third patient, from Uttar Pradesh's Meerut town, had Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Jam- come in contact with the six people from Agra who had tested positive for coronavirus.

An estimated 110,041 people from more than 90 countries

ease that has killed 3,825 people. In the Kerala town of Kochi, officials said the three-year-old child who tested positive for coronavirus and its parents landed at the Cochin International Airport Limited at 6 am on March 7 from Italy. They underwent thermal screening and the child was detected with symptoms of the disease. The family was imme-

diately referred to the isolation

have tested positive for the dis- ward of the Kalamassery Medical College Hospital, they said. Samples of the parents have

also been sent for lab tests, the officials added.

Up north, in Jammu, a 63-yearold woman who declared positive was among the two patients declared "high viral load cases" by the administration on the weekend. They are undergoing treatment

at the isolation ward of the Government Medical College (GMC)

hospital and are in a stable condition, officials in Jammu said. "The test report of the woman

patient is positive, while the report of the other patient is still awaited,' a Health Department official said. The two with a travel history

to Italy. South Korea and Iran had fled the hospital's isolation ward on Wednesday shortly after being admitted there but were brought back within hours of the incident, the official said.

> tion. You can check his profile with the Jammu and Kashmir Police," Sami's sister Sehrish told Kashmir Observer.

pax

She says her brother was carrier oriented and he had no interest in whatever was happening in Kashmir.

Sami is survived by his parents and a sister. His father is a businessman and mother a retired teacher. Sehrish is a Law student.

Sehrish alleged that the Delhi Police detained her brother and his wife and linked them to ISIS because they were Muslims and Kashmiris. She said her brother and sister-inlaw were being made 'scapegoat'.

"Hina didn't want to leave her husband alone when Sami was being whisked away. She argued with cops after which she too was taken to the police station," Says Sehrish.

She added that at the police station Hina was told that she too may be involved with the ISIS and thus detained.

According to the Special Cell, the couple have been allegedly promoting the Islamic State's ideology, and were inciting Muslims to take up the violent struggle against the state. The Special Cell had also claimed that the couple was also involved in instigating protests against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The police had seized four mobile phones, one laptop, one external hard disc and claimed recovery of incriminating material from their house.

No History Of Militancy, Says Police

told Kashmir Observer that the detained man doesn't have any history of militancy or crime in the Police station.

When contacted, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Dr Haseeb Mughal told Kashmir Observer that the police was verifying the credentials of the arrested man.

The Delhi police haven't asked as any

Opposition Demands Surprise Visit To Kashmir Detained J&K Leaders'

Modi government's false and self-serving claim that they pose a threat to 'public safety' in J&K or that they have endangered national interests with their activities," they added.

"Ironically, the BJP itself has allied with all three of them, and their parties, in the past, both at the Centre (with NC) and in the state (with PDP). The very validity of the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978 can be challenged following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution as the state has now been stripped off its Special Status", they said.

"The indefinite detention of the three former CMs of J&K, along with many other political activists, is a blatant violation of their fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. This must be seen in the larger context of the prolonged lockdown of the state since 5 August 2019, which also is an attack on the Constitutionally assured rights and dignity of millions of our sisters and brothers in Kashmir".

Leaders said such measures only expose what they described as "the oft-repeated lie" that the situation in J&K is "completely normal". "Whereas the government has recently organized well-choreographed visits of the foreign diplomats to Srinagar in a bid to show the world that the situation in J&K is "normal", it has placed all kinds of hurdles in the attempts of representatives of India's own political and media establishment to move freely in the state and assess the situation on the ground".

"We also demand complete and verifiable restoration of the rights and freedoms of our Kashmiri brethren, who, against all odds, have repeatedly shown their allegiance to the Indian Union, by being an integral part of our democratic process", the joint statement said.

Those who have signed the statement in

Ahmad Malik @Abu Maviya of Yaripora and Amir Ahmad Dar of Wadina Melhoura. Police also claimed to have recovered one AK-47 rifle with a magazine, one UBGL, a Chinese pistol with magazine and 9 rounds from the encounter site.

Police said Malik was a Pakistan trained militant active since 2017. His associate Dar joined militancy ranks last year. He said that both the militants were involved in various militancy related cases in Shopian and Kulgam districts of south Kashmir.

Meanwhile, police have filed a case FIR No. 11/2020 under sections 16, 18, 19 ULA (P) Act, 7/27, I Arms ACT, 307 1PC, over today's encounter.

"People are requested to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials if any." The police spokesperson added.

Blast Inside Army's Ammunition Depot Kills

The deceased have been identified as Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, resident of Pahloo and Gulzar Ahmad Khan, resident of Uttersoo Maidphall areas of the district, he said.

The two injured labourers identified as Fida Hussain and Shabir Ahmad have been rushed to a hospital, the official added.

Khundru is one of the biggest ammunition depots in the Kashmir valley. There have been few such incidents in the past as well. In 2007, several people were killed in a fire which continued for days after an accidental blast at the depot

Pak Intruder Arrested In Poonch

this side inadvertently. Things will get clear once his interrogation gets over, a police official said

significant help as it will help detect cases quickly and help in overall assessment of the health situation," the spokesperson said. Last week the administration in the district

also reached out to mosques and shrines in the district.

Meanwhile inspection drives are underway across the district to check availability and pricing of personal protective equipment. Chemists and other such stores were inspected and fined across all seven tehsils of the district under strict instructions of the DC.

41 Budgam Residents Return From Iran, China

ensure all quarantine facilities are available and ready for suspected persons.

The meeting among others was attended by CMO Budgam Dr Nazir Ahmad, SDMs, DIO, Tajamul Yousuf, all BMOs, senior medicos and other concerned officers and officials.

Banihal Alignment Road To Be Thrown Open

In case of any emergency or restriction of traffic via Jawahar Tunnel, this road can be used as an alternate route for unrestricted traffic movement on the 270-km highway, the only road linking Kashmir with rest of the country, he said.

Singh said his men are maintaining both tubes of Jawahar Tunnel and undertaking necessary repairs on daily basis besides keeping dozens of CCTV cameras functional.

The BRO's project BEACON was the only agency to look after the maintenance and repair of the highway over the past six decades but now the area of its operation is confined to a small stretch of 31 kms of the arterial road between Banihal and Qazigund and 41 kms of Banihal Old Alignment road via Pirpanjal top.

Apart from traditional machines, the BRC

The C-17 Globemaster military aircraft is expected to depart from the Hindon airbase around 8 pm, they said.

The external affairs minister also met representatives of the Kashmir hoteliers" association, the tour and travel operators" association and the house boat association.

In a tweet, the minister said, "Heard a clear message from them that they were ready for the forthcoming tourist season. Promised them that Govt would strongly support tourism promotion efforts, domestically and internationally."

The representatives claimed they were asked to assemble at the venue to meet a finance team coming from Delhi to assess the current situation.

There was complete misinformation from the government and many of the associations had not come prepared, one of the hoteliers said, adding, "We came with out balance sheet which reflects losses and nothing else."

Tour operators" association member Nasir Shah, who attended the meeting, said they raised the issue of losses suffered by the industry after the lockdown of August 5 last year, the day the Centre withdrew the special status of the erstwhile state and bifurcated it into Union territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials said the Union minister assured the tourism industry representatives of "strong support" from the government to make 2020 a successful season.

Shah said the representatives of the industry asked for pro-active measures from Jaishankar"s ministry in withdrawal of travel advisories issued by various foreign countries in the aftermath of the developments of August 2019.

"He (Jaishankar) has assured help to us and ensure that our plight reaches the right corridors of the government. Other than this, we can only hope," he said.

The minister also met top Army officials, including Lt Gen B S Raju, and then went to Baramulla in north Kashmir where he met with locals.

In a tweet, he said, "Interacted with the local community in #Baramulla. E-inaugurated a number of projects. Heard from a broad cross-section about their strong expectations of change and developmental progress. Confident that their faith in a better future will be realised.'

Jaishankar also visited the Regional Passport Office in Srinagar and took stock of its functioning

clude Sharad Pawar, President, Nationalist Congress Party, Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal and President, Trinamool Congress, H.D. Deve Gowda, former Prime Minister - Janata Dal (Secular), Sitaram Yechury, General Secretary, Communist Party of India (Marxist), D. Raja, General Secretary, Communist Party of India, Prof Manoj Kumar Jha, Rajya Sabha MP from Rashtriya Janata Dal, Yashwant Sinha, former Foreign Minister and Arun Shourie, former Minister in Vajpayee led BJP government.

LG Promises Land, **Job Protection For Locals**

to facilitate industrial development.

Appealing to Gujarati entrepreneurs to invest in Jammu and Kashmir, Murmu said the kind of apprehension about the region that existed earlier is no longer here.

"Apprehensions like militancy and other things are limited to certain pockets. That too has become negligible. What was happening in earlier years is gone. There is complete peaceful atmosphere there," he said.

Murmu said while there were no restrictions now on outsiders purchasing land in J-K, the government is investing in urban infrastructure and connectivity, and has earmarked a huge land bank to set up industries.

He said while the region has ample hydro power supply, skilled manpower, and connectivity, his government has come out "with a very competitive policy," drafting sectoral policy to facilitate investment.

"We are restructuring departments, streamlining each and every thing to provide ease of doing business. We are facilitating everything," he said.

The I-K administration held its sixth and last roadshow in Ahmedabad for the upcoming investors summit to be held in May.

It seeks to attract investments, especially in the areas of textiles, food processing and manufacturing from Gujarat.

Five roadshows were earlier held in Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Chennai, with MoUs promising investments of Rs 10,000 crore signed, an official said.

2 Militants Killed In Shopian Gunfight

the holed up militants were killed," the police spokesperson said.

He identified the slain militants as Shabir

Rs 223 Crore Scam Unearthed In J&K

revealed that the Mir had moved an application to Secretary Cooperatives, Administrative Department of Co-operative Societies, seeking directions to J&K Cooperative Bank Ltd for grant of financial assistance to the tune of Rs 300.00 Crores for taking over possession of 300 kanals of land in city outskirts for construction of Satellite Township.

"The application was endorsed to Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K for taking up the matter with Jammu and Kashmir State Cooperative Bank. Accordingly J&K Cooperative Bank Srinagar sanctioned loan to the tune of Rs. 223 Crores without adhering any codal formalities," the ACB spokesperson said.

He said the details of the society, including balance sheet, profit and loss account business, activities being done by the society, PAN number, income tax return, details of construction of the board and board resolutions was not furnished to the bank when the loan was availed.

"During enquiry it also surfaced that River Jhelum Cooperative Housing Building Society has not been even registered with Registrar Co-operative Societies, J&K," the bureau spokesperson said.

"Hilal Ahmad Mir and the Bank Chairman and others have prepared fake and fictitious registration certificates and managed the sanction of loan amount to the tune of Rs. 223 Crores," he added.

The ACB spokesperson further said that a case FIR No. 04/2020 P/S ACB has been registered against the accused for causing a loss of Rs 223 crore to the bank.

He added that the investigations in this case were going on.

Family Of Detained Kashmiri Couple Rubbish

company. He got married to Hina in October last and moved to Delhi for work as the Valley was reeling under communication clampdown.

At their home in Shivpora, a stone's throw away from the largest army cantonment in Valley, the family of couple is in a state of shock. Relatives and neighbours come in flocks to console the family shattered by the news of the arrest.

"My brother has no links with any organisa-

regarding the person but we are verifying at our level," Haseeb added.

Police Crack Jammu Lawyer's Murder

his house at Greater Kailash here on February 24, a police spokesperson said.

"The duo were arrested with active help from Chhattisgarh, Delhi and Punjab police. At their disclosure, a stolen car and gold and silver articles worth Rs 10 lakh have been recovered," the spokesperson said

Buchh, the husband of Power Development Department's retired chief engineer Shenaz Goni, was alone at his residence when the incident took place as his wife was abroad while his son was away in Mumbai.

The spokesperson said Chouhan, who was staying at Bakshi Nagar area of Jammu, was working as domestic help at the house of Buchh. He committed the crime in collusion with Kohli, who was also living in Channi Himmat area of the city.

Quoting findings of preliminary investigation, he said the lawyer was sleeping in his room when he was killed by the duo, who wanted to commit theft in the house. They fled the in the car of the deceased after loading it with various looted articles.

Woman Tests Positive To Coronavirus,

of surveillance teams, 30 guarantine and 4 isolation facilities, testing facility at SKIMS among a range of measures put in place," an official spokesperson said.

"The suspected cases will be shifted to guarantine facilities which have been set up across the district. These facilities have been set up at different private hospitals and nursing homes in addition to healthcare centres located in different health zones of the district," the official spokesperson added.

The official spokesperson said that twelve hotels located at two different areas have also been earmarked as quarantine facilities to be used if required.

He said that the administration has also set up isolation facilities where the affected or positive cases will be admitted for treatment. These have been set up at SKIMS Soura. SMHS. CD Hospital and SKIMS Bemina.

"The government has also made a testing facility available at SKIMS Soura. The facility which was made operational today will be a has inducted four Italy-made snow cutters equipped with the latest technology, he said.

Sources in Beacon said the BRO has proposed renovation and upgradation of both tubes of the tunnel during summer.

They said the repair and renovation process of the tunnel would be done in a phased manner to ensure minimum inconvenience to commuters while diverting the one-way traffic through Banihal old alignment road.

If the proposal gets a nod, the eastern tube of the tunnel will be first taken up for upgradation and renovation as per latest technologies in May-June followed by the another tube, the sources said, adding the BRO wants to upgrade the tunnel, built in 1956, in line with the Chenani-Nashri tunnel and other tunnels which are under construction as part of the four-laning of the highway.

The work is in progress on 8.5 km Banihal-Qazigund tunnel, which is going to bypass Jawahar Tunnel on its completion next year and reduce the distance by 16 kms.

Stranded Vehicles Allowed On Kashmir

for stranded vehicles this morning and traffic was presently moving smoothly towards Kashmir," an official of the traffic department said.

He said the road was cleared of the debris by Sunday afternoon but fresh sliding of stones at several places forced suspension of the traffic in the evening.

With no overnight rains, the clearance operation was intensified and the road was made traffic worthy again, leading to resumption of traffic, the official said, adding minor incidents of shooting stones from hillocks overlooking the highway caused some disruptions but overall the traffic is moving smoothly.

He said no fresh traffic was allowed either from Jammu or Srinagar for the second consecutive day on Monday.

The traffic on the highway is restricted to one-way since December last year as part of the winter arrangement to avoid traffic snarls in view of the ongoing work on the four-laning highway project.

'A decision to allow normal traffic on the highway from Tuesday will be taken after fresh review of the road condition later in the day," the official said.

Two persons were killed and several others injured when their vehicles came under rolling boulders in Ramban district over the past two days.