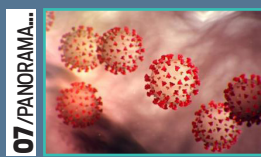




**.....LIFE & TIMES / 08**

**HOW PEOPLE REACT TO FAKE NEWS ON TWITTER, FACEBOOK DECODED**

When it comes to fake news on Facebook and Twitter, some users outright ignore it, many take it at face value, some investigate whether it is true while others get suspicious, a study has found.....



**07/PANORAMA...**

**HOW DO YOU BECOME INFECTED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS?**

The new coronavirus has traveled unseen paths from Wuhan, China, to virtually all corners of the globe. Evidence of its movements abound, from the proliferation of people wearing face masks to the....

**04/NEWS.....**

**CHINA LIFTS TRAVEL CURBS TO HUBEI PROVINCE, INCLUDING WUHAN**

China announced Tuesday that a lockdown would be lifted on more than 50 million people in central Hubei province where the coronavirus first emerged late last year. But fears rose over a second wave of infections fuelled by people arriving....



## News Digest

### Omar Abdullah Set Free After 8-Months



Srinagar- Soon after his release from nearly eight months of detention, National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah on Tuesday called for the release of all detained people within and outside Jammu and Kashmir and appealed for the restoration of high-speed mobile internet services.

"The politics and situation of this state, what happened on August 5 (last year), I will talk about it in detail, but first, let us get rid of coronavirus, save ourselves and our families and friends.

**FULL STORY ON P-5**

### Civilian Injured In Cross-Border Shelling

Srinagar: A civilian was injured after India and Pakistan troops exchanged heavy gunfire along the International Border (IB) in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Tuesday. 45-year-old Bodh Raj sustained splinter injuries when a mortar shell exploded near his house in Manyari area of Hiranagar Sector in the early hours today, officials said. The injured man was removed to sub-district hospital Hiranagar and discharged after treatment. The shelling and firing from across the border in Manyari and adjoining villages started at 9.35 pm on Monday and continued through the night, prompting strong and effective retaliation by Border Security Force (BSF).

### Militants Try To Abduct PDP Worker

Srinagar: Suspected militants made an attempt to abduct a worker of Mehbooba Mufti led Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, officials said Tuesday. On Monday night, three masked militants barged into the house of PDP worker Irshad Ahmad Wagay in Abhama village of Rajpora and tried to abduct him, officials told news agency KNT. However, the family members of Wagay, they said raised an alarm forcing the militants to retreat. Amidst hue and cry, the PDP leader fell unconscious and was removed to the hospital by his family. After the incident, government forces cordoned off the area and launched search operation. However, no one was arrested when the operation ended.

### LG Launches Free Ambulance Service

Jammu: At a time when Jammu and Kashmir is under lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus, Lt Governor G C Murmu on Tuesday dedicated a free ambulance service to the people of the Union Territory. "The operationalisation of 102/108 ambulance service will ensure the delivery of public healthcare services to the patients at their doorsteps," an official spokesman said after the ceremony at Raj Bhavan here. He said it would provide round-the-clock transportation to the patients requiring immediate medical care, especially those critical, accident victims, pregnant women and sick children.

### Man Found Dead In Noorbagh

Srinagar: A middle-aged man on Tuesday was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Noorbagh locality of this capital city, reports said. Bashir Ahmad Pakhtoon, an auto driver by profession was found dead by locals in Noorbagh locality this morning, news agency KNO reported. The body of auto driver was taken by police for post-mortem after some people alleged murder.

### Srinagar's First COVID-19 Patient Successfully Treated: Officials

Srinagar- A 67-year-old woman, the first coronavirus patient reported in the Kashmir valley, has been successfully treated, officials said on Tuesday.

The resident of Khanyar area of the city had returned from Saudi Arabia on March 16 after performing 'Umrah' (pilgrimage) and tested positive for coronavirus two days later.

"Srinagar's first COVID-19 Positive case successfully treated: Director SKIMS. Let's #BreakTheChain," Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Shahidulqbal-Chaudhary tweeted.

### 2 Recover From Covid-19 In Leh

Srinagar: Two people in newly carved Union Territory of Ladakh have recovered from coronavirus after being treated upon by the doctors at the SNM hospital, officials said Tuesday.

The two hailing from worst hit Chuchot village have recovered from the infection and shifted to quarantine, Commissioner Secretary (Health) Rigzin Samphel, who is also

### 11 Held For Defying Prohibitory Orders

Srinagar: Police in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Tuesday arrested eleven people for violating orders issued under section 144 CrPc, officials said.

"Acting on specific information, police arrested 10 drivers and a shopkeeper after finding them violating the government orders. Police have also seized 10 tipsters from the arrested drivers," a police spokesperson said. He said that cases

## 21-Day India Wide Lockdown Begins

Any Negligence In These 21 Days Will 'Push The Country And Your Families By 21 Years': PM Modi

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a complete lockdown across the country for 21 days from Tuesday midnight, asserting that social distancing is the only way out for the country in its decisive battle against the coronavirus.

In his second address to the nation on the pandemic raging across much of the world with the number of infections rising in India, Modi made a fervent appeal to the countrymen not to cross the 'lakshmanrekha' of their homes in the next three weeks.

Any negligence in these 21 days



**6 The lockdown will be like curfew and more stringent than the janata curfew"**

will "push the country and your

families by 21 years", he said underlining the massive danger the coronavirus poses.

The experience of countries, which have been able to contain the virus to some extent and experts' views have made it clear that social distancing caused by a lockdown is the only way to break the cycle of the infection, he said.

This is the only ray of light, he asserted.

"To save India, to save every Indian, there will be a complete ban on people from stepping outside their houses from 12 midnight today," he said.

"Lockdown is being imposed on every state, union territory, dis-

trict, village, mohalla and street," he added.

The lockdown will be like "curfew" and more stringent than the 'janata curfew', which the country had observed on Sunday, he said, adding it will have an economic cost but saving people's lives is of the paramount interest to his government.

A lockdown in most of the country was already in place till March 31, and Modi's announcement extended it everywhere and for two more weeks after this month.

Modi folded his hands a few times to emphasise his request to citizens to adhere to his call, saying it is applicable to everyone from the prime minister

## 3 More Test Positive In Kashmir, Total Cases Rise To 4

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: In a worrying development, three more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Kashmir on Tuesday. One among them is a preacher, who has attended many religious events and travelled widely after his return from Delhi recently.

"2 more cases reported positive in Srinagar. One has confirmed travel history outside India. Full details regarding the second being ascertained," Govt spokesperson Rohit Kansal tweeted.

A youth also tested positive to coronavirus in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. A native of Bandipora, the youth had arrived in Valley three days ago.

"The sample of the youth admitted to Government Medical College Baramulla came positive to the infection. His swabs were sent to SKIMS for laboratory tests," a senior doctor was quoted as saying.



**SMC MEN SANITIZE NATIPORA LOCALITY IN SRINAGAR** after a resident there tested positive for Coronavirus on Tuesday. Photo: Abid Bhat

## Can No Virus Infect Muslims?

Some Kashmiri Clerics Refute Experts' Advice

RayanNaqash

Srinagar: As scientists race against time to study Coronavirus and its possible cure, governments across the world have prohibited large gatherings including at places of worship as physical distancing is the most effective prevention to the spread of the disease. Mosques remain shut across the Gulf countries including Islam's holiest sites but many clerics in Kashmir believe Muslims have little to worry about.

"No virus can beat us, no virus can beat the Hanafis," cleric Haji Tanveer roared in English from the pulpit of a mosque in Kashmir during a congregation last Friday. "No virus can beat AhleSunnatWaljama'at," he now squealed, his throat stressed from the shouting. Worshipers in the mosque respond in agreement: "no doubt".

However, Tanveer was not the only cleric to refute expert medical advice. In another Friday sermon by MohammadNomanNowshahri, also affiliated with the AhleSunnatWaljama'at, those calling for closure of mosques were ironically described as non-practicing Muslims who did not heed scholarly advice. He accused those advocating precautions of "creating divisions in Ummah".

Nowshahri cited a unanimous decision by south Asian Muslim clerics of various schools of thought against the closure of mosques. "We are safe right now and Inshallah we will be safe in future as well," he said as he circled back to Kashmir in his sermon.

The cleric stressed that since the pandemic hasn't spread in Kashmir, precautions need not be taken. Taking a dig at a rival school of thought, he said "You have stopped praying on Fridays but we will camp at our mosques for days together".

Videos of both sermons were uploaded on Facebook inviting harsh criticism from commentators across the Valley.

The Government of India has invoked the colonial era Epidemic Act whose provisions allow authorities to fine or imprison individuals violating rules and regulations to contain the outbreak of disease. Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir too have imposed restrictions and disallowed gatherings. However, many continue to gather at mosques indifferent to the outbreak of the pandemic.

On the intervening night of March 22 and 23, Aga Syed Baqir Al a-Musawi held a religious gathering in central Kashmir's Budgam district in which dozens of devotees crowded in a hall at his residence. A day after several mosques across Kashmir hosted devotees on Shab-e-Meraj.

**Half measures**

Waqf Board has ordered closure of the 133 shrines and mosques across Jammu and Kashmir that fall under its purview. Jamiat-e-Ahle-Hadees issued a statement directing its followers to put off Friday prayers as several Muslim nations had done, making it one of the few religious bodies to adopt the health advisory by experts.

However, a splinter faction of the group attacked it over the decision. In a sermon last Friday, Mohammad MaqboolAkhani, president of the 'Defence of Jamiat-e-Ahli-Hadees', termed closure of mosques as un-Islamic. Referring to the closure of the grand mosques at Makkah and MadinaAkhani said that "we have not pledged allegiance to the rulers of [Saudi Arabia]".

A video of the sermon uploaded on social media shows Akhriani in front of a starry background, framed between two crossed out screenshots of the press release issued by the Jamiat-e-Ahle-Hadees advocating putting off Friday prayers. The cleric is adamant that there is nothing to worry about and dismisses the importance of sterilisation of public spaces by Srinagar municipality.

However, to their credit, many other clerics have followed the medical advice. MutahidaMajlis-e-Ulama, a conglomerate of clerics headed by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, has issued an advisory calling for avoiding large gatherings in mosques.

The advisory directed scholars, orators, and mosque managements to curtail Friday sermons, offer non-obligatory prayers at home and requested the elderly and sick as well to pray at home, to avoid handshakes and to "follow the advice of health experts in letter and spirit".

The advisory, however, did not advocate the closure of mosques.

**Slow government action**

The Jammu and Kashmir administration was also slow to wake up to the crisis. Only months ago, in November 2019, it



## CANCER SOCIETY OF KASHMIR

کینسر سوسائٹی آف کشمیر

### Information for General Public

In the interest of patient care it is hereby informed that **Cancer Society of Kashmir** is conducting Mammography Screening at lowest possible rates of **Rs, 800/-** Eight Hundred only.

All the interested persons can avail the opportunity. For prior appointments please contact following numbers:-

**0194-2441899-2430899.**

**Issued in Public Interest by:-**

**Cancer Society of Kashmir.**

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