



LOCKDOWN TAKES A TOLL ON MENTAL HEALTH, ANXIETY LEVELS UP AS JOB LOSS FEARS RISE

A lot many are fearing loss of job, some have already seen pay cuts and appraisals are getting delayed almost for everyone. The COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing lockdown has left employees feeling anxious and worried about their future, prompting many corporates to look for ways to keep the staff motivated. Some are roping in psychologists to conduct "happiness sessions" for staff members over video conferencing, others have decided to keep communicating with them regularly about business updates and a few are also promising necessary steps to safeguard their career progression.

.....LIFE & TIMES
P5

News Digest

Retired Soldier Injured in Militant Attack Dies

Srinagar: A former Territorial Army (TA) soldier, who was shot at by militants in south Kashmir's Kulgam district, succumbed to injuries at an army hospital here on Monday. Official sources said that the former soldier Abdul Hamid Matoo succumbed to his injuries at the army's 92 base hospital in Srinagar in the wee hours today. A resident of Buchroo village of Kulgam, Matoo was shot at and injured by unidentified militants on Sunday evening. Meanwhile, a police officer said that a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigations taken up.

Militants, Forces Trade Fire In Pulwama

Srinagar: Government forces and militants on Monday exchanged gunfire in Malangpora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district. Unknown militants attacked joint party of CRPF and police at Malangpora near Railway Station this evening, reports said. The joint team returned the fire triggering off a brief gun-battle. Following the shootout, additional reinforcement were rushed to the area and searches were launched to nab the attackers.

Three Commit Suicide In Doda

Jammu: Three people, including a woman, allegedly committed suicide in separate incidents in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Monday. Mohammad Rafiq (35), a resident of Sekwan village, jumped into the Chenab river from Ganpat bridge on Monday afternoon and drowned, a police official said. Efforts are on to recover his body, he said, adding that preliminary investigation suggested that he was upset over some family issue. Neelma Devi (40) allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself inside her house at Barana village on Sunday, the official said. He said police have started inquest proceedings to ascertain the motive behind her taking such an extreme step. **▶P-02**

Govt Revokes PSA of 36 Detainees

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday revoked Public Safety Act (PSA) detention orders of 36 persons lodged in different jails, reports said. Home department of J&K Union Territory today revoked detention orders of 36 persons lodged in different jails, news agency KNO reported quoting sources. Details gathered from different jails and police revealed that detainees whose PSA was revoked today are lodged in Central jail Srinagar (16), KotBhalwal central jail Jammu (16), and one each in district jails of Kupwara, Anantnag, Baderwah and sub-jail Hira Nagar. According to sources, the government has also decided to revoke PSA detention orders of 30-40 prisoners lodged in jails outside Jammu and Kashmir.

PM Modi To Address Nation Today

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on Tuesday at 10 am, the Prime Minister's Office said.

The 21-day nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus ends on Tuesday and the prime minister is likely to talk about its possible extension.

"Prime Minister @narendramodi will address the nation at 10 AM on 14th April 2020," the PMO tweeted.

Last month, the prime minister had addressed the nation twice — on March 19 and March 24.

On March 19, he had called for resolve and restraint to fight coronavirus. He had also announced a 'janta curfew' on March 22, a Sunday.

On March 24, he had announced the 21-day nationwide lockdown to check the spread of the deadly virus.

In a video message on April 3, Modi had urged people to switch off the lights at their homes and light up lamps, candles or mobile phone torches for nine minutes at 9 pm on April 5 to display the country's "collective resolve" to defeat the coronavirus.

Iran Evacuated Pilgrims Return After 1 Month Quarantine

SRINAGAR- 44 evacuees from Iran were airlifted to their homes in Kashmir and Ladakh on Sunday after completing a one-month-long quarantine period at the Indian Navy Quarantine Facility at Material Organisation, Ghatkoper, Mumbai.

The evacuees had arrived on March 13 and on March 28 all of them tested negative for Covid-19. But amid the national lockdown their stay at the facility got extended as they had no means of travelling to their homes in Kashmir valley and Ladakh, reported news agency ANI.

A team of medical staff from the Navy monitored the health of the evacuees. They were supported **▶PAGE 02**

House Boat Owner Booked For Hiding British Tourist

SRINAGAR: A British national has been sent to a quarantine facility while his host in Ladakh has been booked here in Kashmir capital Srinagar, reports said Monday.

According to reports a house boat owner not only hosted a British citizen but also provided him accommodation at his house boat.

The tourist was spotted by a police official and during questioning he admitted to have reached the Valley via Srinagar-Jammu Highway and had managed to skip the Foreigner Registration Offices of both Jammu and Kashmir Tourism and police **▶PAGE 02**

12 Tabligh Members Among 28 More Test Covid-19 Positive In Kashmir

Kashmir Tally Crosses 200 Mark, Over 53,000 Under Lens In J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Twelve more non-locals, all members of Tablighi Jamaat and a four-year-old girl were among 28 people, who tested positive for coronavirus in Valley on Monday, taking the total number of infected people in Kashmir to 225, and 273 across the Union Territory, officials said.

"25 new cases of Covid-19 reported in J&K. All from Kashmir. Total now at 270. Further details in daily bulletin being released shortly," Government spokesperson Rohit Kansal Tweeted.

However, hours after his Tweet, a news agency reported three more Covid-19 cases, all from Srinagar, taking the day's tally to 28.

The new cases that were reported today included twelve non-locals, all religious preachers who had arrived in Valley on March 22. All of them hailing from the Indian Capital New Delhi were placed under quarantine at EDI Pampore immediately after their arrival, reports said.

"While we attend every case with same attention, gladly there's no local Covid +ve for 3rd day. Sadly, 12 new reported today, all from same group of outsiders who've been in quarantine since Mar 27. #Srinagar needs to continue with precautions, patience, and no panic," Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Shahid Choudhary wrote on his Twitter page.

Srinagar, the capital city witnessed three fresh cases of Covid-19 after a break of two days. The three new cases are two elderly women from Chattabal, both contacts of previous Covid-19 patient and a 27-year-old woman from Zoonimar area. She had been to New Delhi recently. In north Kashmir's Bandipora, **▶PAGE 02**



VOLUNTEERS REGULATING MOVEMENT Of People In Srinagar's Habba Kadal Locality on Monday. Photo: Abid Bhat

2 Covid-19 Positive Children Recover, Discharged

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Two children who had tested positive for the novel coronavirus last month have recovered and were discharged from the hospital after their repeated samples came negative, official said today.

"First two COVID-19 Positive children discharged today from JLNH Hos-



pital Rainawari Srinagar along with their mother who was COVID-19 Nega-

tive but was staying with her daughters. The repeat samples of **▶PAGE 02**

BESIDES, 13856 PERSONS HAVE COMPLETED THEIR 28-DAY surveillance period. Moreover 10, more patients have recovered today, 04 are from Kashmir and six from Jammu,"

8 flee From Red Zone, Booked; Put Under Quarantine

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Eight people who fled from Red Zone in south Kashmir's Pulwama district were booked on Monday under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for violating the quarantine laws.

Tehsildar Pulwama received information from the field staff that eight people were staying at a house in Amirabad Tral after escaping from a Red Zone village of Parigam and Qazigund, an official spokesperson said. Taking swift action, the district authorities traced all the eight persons and put them

under quarantine at Hamdard Grammar School Tral.

"In this connection, the violators have been booked under section 269 IPC (unlawfully or negligently doing something which is likely to spread infection of any dangerous disease to life), section 270 IPC (malignant act likely to spread infection of dangerous disease to life), section 271 IPC (knowingly disobeying any quarantine rule) and section 188 IPC (for disobeying any government orders)," the official spokesperson said. **▶PAGE 02**

Covid-19 Recovered Patients As Normal As Others: Dr Naveed

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Kashmir's leading pulmonologist and head Chest Disease Hospital Srinagar Dr Naveed Nazir Shah Monday said Srinagar will soon move into the stage of discharging recovered COVID-19 patients and it was important to understand that these persons are now as normal as others.

He said while it is understandable that people are scared of this disease and one must take all precautions as required it is important to understand that those who had it and have now recovered are just as free from it as

others who don't have it.

Dr Naveed said the stigma that has been seen as having been attached to someone affected with this infection is uncalled-for and it is important to end it for all societies to live a normal life.

He said there is no risk of transmission after a patient has recovered and become negative for the viral load — adding however that as a precaution the recovered person must remain under quarantine for the required period after discharge from the hospital.

The doctor said all such persons should keep themselves isolated from **▶PAGE 02**

Authorities Warn Of Strict Action Against Those Violating Curbs

SRINAGAR- Restrictions to contain the spread of coronavirus were intensified in declared red zones across the Kashmir valley, with authorities warning of strict action against those violating prohibitory orders.

State forces have sealed off main roads in most places in the valley and erected barriers at several other places to check the unwanted movement of the people and to enforce the lockdown, officials said.

Only persons with valid passes were allowed to move, they added.

There will be no inward and outward movement of any person from areas declared red zones and the people will stay in their homes to ensure complete lockdown as restrictions have been intensified. Strict action will be taken against those who violate the prohibitory orders, they said.

They said the curbs were intensified after chief secretary, BVR Subrahmanyam, directed all Deputy Commissioners and District Police heads for strict implementation of restrictions in all 77 Red Zones (areas reporting maximum cases) declared in **▶PAGE 02**

12 Lockdown Violators Held: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Monday claimed to have arrested twelve people for prohibitory orders in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir.

12 people were arrested by police station Lar for defying the prohibitory orders issued under section 144 CrPc in view of Covid-19 pandemic, a police spokesperson said today. He said a case FIR number 28/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered and further investigation into the matter started.

"Police have once again requested the general public to follow the restrictions imposed by Government in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and those who are violating the restriction orders will be dealt strictly," the spokesperson said. **▶PAGE 02**

2 Fresh COVID-19 Cases In Ladakh

LEH: Two more people tested positive for coronavirus in Ladakh, while one patient recovered on Monday, taking the total number of active cases in the union territory to five, officials said.

The total number of cases reported in the union territory stands at 17.

Of the fresh cases, one is reported from Sabu in Leh and another from Shakar-Chiktan in Kargil. The patient who has been cured is from Kargil, he said, adding that his reports came on Sunday.

He said reports of 40 samples were received from Delhi on Sunday and all of them were negative. Twenty-eight samples were sent from Leh and 12 from Kargil. **▶PAGE 02**

Mirwaiz In Most Influential Muslims List For Sixth Time

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Incarcerated Hurriyat Conference (M) Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has been listed among the world's most 500 influential Muslims, sixth time in a row.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has been chosen as "Man of the Year" while US Congress woman Rashida Tlaib has been selected as "Woman of the Year", Malaysian Newspaper New Straits Times reported today.

Jordan based Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC), an international Islamic non-governmental organization has released the list of the world's most 500 influential Muslims for the year 2020 in which Mirwaiz figures for the sixth consecutive time. The Hurriyat Chairman inherited the



title of 14th Mirwaiz in 1990 at the age of 17 after the assassination of his father. "At the young age of 20 he became chairman and founder **▶PAGE 02**

'Why on Our Bodies, Homes': A Dispatch From Kupwara

Auqib Javed

KUPWARA: A day after three corpses were retrieved from the smouldering rubbles in bombed Kupwara hamlets, some mournful villagers returned to see their homes, barns, cowsheds and coops reduced to a warzone site.

The air still smelt of bitter smoke, while a dented car stood like a mangled iron adjacent to a corpus of charred wood. The scalded wreckage reminded many of the nightmarish nineties when frequent arsons would inflict scorched scars in parts of Kupwara.

Two women stood inconsolable in front of their blasted home, sobbing: "They should better kill us at once, than this!"

Their cries made a howling sound, as a shrapnel-wounded vil-



Wailing mother with the body of her 8 year old son who died after being hit by a shrapnel during cross LOC shelling in village Tumina in Kupwara on Sunday. Photo credit: Social media

lager nearby rolled up his trouser to show his bandaged limb to scribes.

At a stone's throw, a middle-aged man sat in front of his shell-ripped home. He broke down like a baby over the sudden devastation unleashed on this idyllic hamlet, tucked around 60km from the explosive Line of Control.

When shells suddenly landed on this postcard countryside pocket on Sunday, many villagers felt that a new warfront has emerged from their backyard.

Amid raining shells from across the LoC, a desperate run-for-life, trailed by screams and cries, ensued. "We ran without footwears, leaving behind all our belongings," said a relative of the mother of four children, who was killed in Sunday's shelling along with two other villagers, including a **▶PAGE 02**

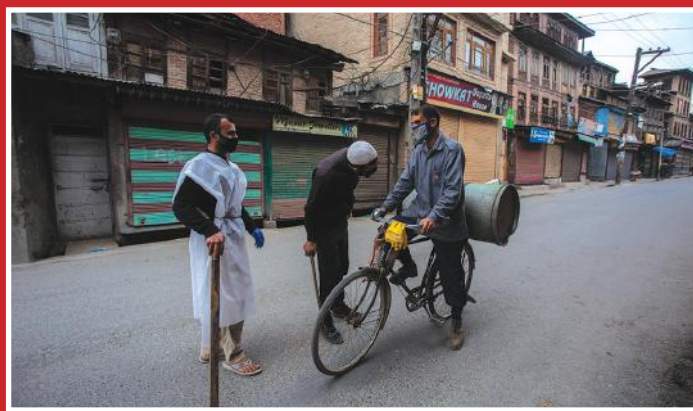
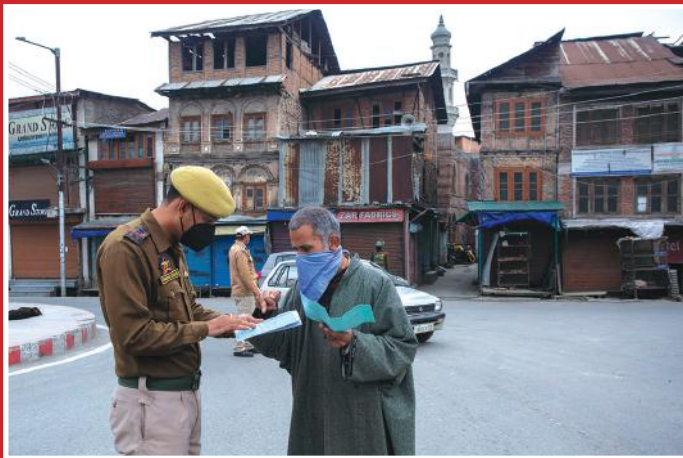
India Issues Demarche To Pak Over Kupwara Killings

NEW DELHI: India on Monday issued a strong demarche to Pakistan over the killing of three civilians, including a minor, by Pakistani troops in a ceasefire violation along the Line of Control in Keran sector of Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said.

The three people were killed when Pakistani forces resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation on Monday. "A strong demarche was made to the Pakistan side on the killing of three innocent Indian civilians," said a source. Demarche is a diplomatic note, generally issued to lodge protest over any action of development.

Last Sunday, Keran sector was the scene of a deadly operation in which five elite army commandos laid down their lives while eliminating a group of **▶PAGE 02**

KASHMIR OBSERVER LENS MAN ABID BHAT Captures Different Shades Of Life During The 13th Day Of Lockdown In Srinagar City On Monday



12 Tabligh Members...

two minor girls were among nine people who tested Covid-19 positive today. Eight among them were reported from Gund Jahingeer village where the 52-year-old man died of the COVID-19 last week. Among them are 4-year-old girl, five women and two men.

The ninth case is a youth from Naidkhai area of the district who had contracted the disease from a previous patient.

The neighbouring Baramulla district reported three new cases today. While two of them are from Sopore, the other one is an elderly man from Tangmarg, all contacts of previous Covid-19 patients.

A wife of a Covid-19 patient also tested positive to the dreaded disease in Kulgam.

Meanwhile, the media bulletin issued by the government said today that 53679 travellers and persons in contact with suspected cases have been put under surveillance, including 8581 persons in home quarantine, 354 in hospital quarantine, 250 in hospital isolation and 30634 under home surveillance.

"Besides, 13856 persons have completed their 28-day surveillance period. Moreover 10, more patients have recovered today, 04 are from Kashmir and six from Jammu," the bulletin said.

It said that 3795 samples have tested as negative till April 13, 2020.

Providing district-wise breakup, the bulletin said that Srinagar has 70 positive cases wherein 66 are active, 03 recovered and 01 has died, Baniptora 51 positive cases with 47 active, 03 recovered and 01 died, Baramulla 40 positive cases with 39 active no case has recovered and 01 died, Budgamhas 11 active positive cases, Pulwama 03 positive cases with 02 active, 01 recovered; Shopian and Kupwara with 14 and 23 positive cases respectively and all are active, and Ganderbal and Kulgam with 05 and 05 positive cases respectively all of whom are active.

Similarly, Jammu has 21 positive cases of whom 18 are active and 03 have recovered, Udhampur 19 positive cases of which 14 are active, 04 recovered and 01 died, while as Rajouri has 03 positive cases of whom 2 are active with 01 recovery; Samba district has 04 positive cases which are all active. Meanwhile, Kishtwar has only 01 positive case which has recovered.

The Bulletin said that the breakup represents districts from which the patients have been traced or are ordinarily residing.

Authorities Warn ...

Jammu and Kashmir.

The chief secretary directed the deputy commissioners to go for complete lockdown in such areas for containment of the disease and ensure that there is zero movement of people, they added.

The total number of positive cases in the union territory has risen to 245 — out of which 197 were in Kashmir and 48 in Jammu.

While four patients have died in Jammu and Kashmir, six have recovered.

More than 51,000 people have been kept under surveillance including those who are

either in government established quarantine facilities or in home isolation.

Till date, 51320 travellers and persons in contact with suspected cases have been put under surveillance which include 9153 persons in home quarantine including facilities operated by government, 433 in hospital quarantine, 235 in hospital isolation and 29718 under home surveillance. Besides, 11777 persons have completed their 28-day surveillance period," the officials said.

They said the union territory has ramped up testing and was now testing at the rate of 289 persons per one million of the population.

Over 400 persons tested on Sunday alone. This may lead to more positive cases or declaration of more areas as red zones, but it is not a cause for alarm, the officials said.

Meanwhile, markets across the valley were shut and public transport was off the roads with only pharmacies and groceries allowed to open, the officials said.

Educational institutions across Kashmir are closed, while all public places including gymnasiums, parks, clubs and restaurants were shut down more than a week before the nationwide lock down announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While the Prime Minister announced the country-wide lockdown on the evening of March 24, the union territory administration here had on March 22 announced a lockdown across Jammu and Kashmir till 31 March as part of its efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The administration said the essential services including healthcare personnel have been exempted from the restrictions.

Restrictions were first imposed in many parts of the valley on March 19 to contain the spread of the virus. The measures were taken after the detection of the first positive case of coronavirus in the valley.

2 Covid-19 Positive ...

both the children and of the mother came NEGATIVE for COVID-19 today," Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) J&K government tweeted.

The two minor siblings had tested positive for the deadly disease on March 26 after coming into contact with their grandfather who had tested positive for the disease on March 24.

Meanwhile, government spokesperson Rohit Kansal congratulated the family after kids were discharged from the hospital.

"Great News...Mubarak to the families and gratitude to the entire medical team," tweeted Kansal.

"I take a humble bow in respect of doctors at JLNH hospital and for resilience of a brave mother as two kids who had earlier tested positive are discharged after repeat samples testing negative. Congratulations!", DC Srinagar Shahid Choudhary tweeted.

2 Fresh COVID-19 Cases

"This is the second time that the report of the

Kargil patient came negative," he said.

He said the reports of 120 more samples, including 50 taken on Monday, are awaited.

Leh District Magistrate Sachin Kumar warned people of action against "irresponsible posts" on social networking sites and circulation of official communiques on the internet.

"It is ordered that each WhatsApp/Facebook group admin shall report to the nearest police station if any post which is sensitive and likely to cause public disorder circulates on the social media groups," Kumar said in an order.

He also directed the group administrators to bear responsibility and ownership of the content posted in the group.

"Any violation of these instructions will lead to strict action under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act and IPC," he warned.

Iran Evacuated...

by a team of conservancy personnel and other staff to take care of the cleanliness of the facility, their comfort and wellbeing.

Arrangements were made to airlift them using IAF aircraft and on Sunday, a C-130 aircraft flew these individuals back to Srinagar.

House Boat Owner ...

in Srinagar, news agency KNT reported.

The house boat owner according to report also admitted that he was hosting since March 15.

The foreigner was immediately taken to the hospital for checkup where his condition was stated to be stable and was directed to remain in quarantine.

The FIR vide number 45/2020 has been registered at Nehru Park police station under sections 269 and 188 of IPC in this regard.

8 flee From Red Zone,

The District Magistrate Pulwama has issued stern warning against those violating the prohibitory orders.

"He reiterated that there would be zero tolerance against the people endangering thousands of lives. Violating government orders shall invoke penal action and prosecution proceedings shall be initiated without second thought," the official spokesperson added.

Covid-19 Recovered...

others until their home quarantine - following hospital release - has completed — adding that relatives and friends should also not go visit them until their said quarantine has completed.

Mirwaiz In Most...

of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a grassroots coalition of pro-freedom parties in Jammu & Kashmir. He has raised the Kashmiri

problem at the UN, the EU parliament and the OIC advocating dialogue with both India and Pakistan so that the aspirations of the Kashmiri people may be realized," RISSC said about the Mirwaiz.

Pertinently, Mirwaiz has under house arrest at his Nigeen residence since August 5, 2019 when government of India abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and split the state into two Union Territories.

The list of 'The Muslim 500' involves scientists, to artists, to kings and is divided into 13 categories of influence.

The categories are 'Scholarly', 'Political', 'Administration of Religious Affairs', 'Preachers and Spiritual Guides', 'Philanthropy/Charity and Development', 'Social Issues', 'Business', 'Science and Technology', 'Arts and Culture', 'Qur'an Reciters', 'Media', 'Celebrities' and 'Sports Stars'

India Issues Demarche

infiltrating militants.

There have been frequent incidents of ceasefire violation by Pakistani side since India announced its decision to withdraw special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcate the state into two union territories in August last year.

Indian troops have also been retaliating to Pakistani actions.

'Why on Our Bodies,

minor of a neighbouring hamlet.

"Cops tried to resist our run amid pandemic, but as shells rained, there was no question of staying back. We had to spend a night in another village."

In times of coronavirus scare, the villager said, not many doors were thrown open for them. "It was like running death and landing in darkness."

But before the shells would drive them out, panic had gripped in North Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday after Indian Army moved artillery weapons in an open field surrounded by over 200 houses in Panzagam and Rawatpora villages.

Next day, fearing imminent firepower response from the other side, the locals staged a strong protest against the move.

The protest was driven by the recent war panic.

Last year, on October, as Kashmir was reeling under political lockdown over the abrogation of J&K's special status, Reddi village in Chowkibal, witnessed ear-shattering shelling, making villagers believe that it was a prelude of new Indo-Pak war amid Islamabad's UN showdown and diplomatic offensive.

Before October, the villagers said, they hadn't witnessed any shelling from other side.

On Sunday, when their courtyards once again threatened to become a combat-zone, the villagers came out of their homes, defying the pandemic precautions, to lodge their strong protest against the move.

Even as the district administration suspended internet in the area, some videos showing

Panzgam locals having heated arguments with the troops went viral on social media.

Inside the artillery field, the villagers can be seen shouting at soldiers: Kill our kids instead of escalating the situation amid novel coronavirus scare.

"We're living in fear for last 20 days," said a local villager. "An ongoing heavy shelling had already robbed us of our mental calm, before they tried to open a new warfront here."

Sunday's shelling is seen as part of recent LoC flare-up triggered by the deadly Karen gunfight, which left 5 militants and 5 paratroopers dead.

Amid the explosive frontier, what surprised many was the shelling in Panzgam, which is around 60km from LoC. How did shells land so far, that too, in human habitations is still an unanswered question.

Sensing the life damage and incensed mood, the army has now vacated the field. But the sense of loss and hurt still runs deep.

There're also allegations of using civilians as human shields. When Kashmir Observer contacted Srinagar-based Indian Army PRO on this and the artillery move, he said, "I'll check and revert." As and when he reverts, this copy will be updated.

However, as per Ahmed Ali Fayyaz, a senior Kashmiri journalist, army is ordering inquiry to ascertain "if yesterday's smartphone footage of an argument between residents & soldiers on TV exposed artillery gun locations in Chowkibal Kupwara and within 2 hours helped Pak army to target same area where 3 civilians got killed".

The artillery was placed in an open-field, used by locals as playground. It previously served as army helipad, they said.

The assault, however, has already created a crisis for these villagers.

Amid pandemic when social distancing is being practiced, they said, they can't even seek refuge in others' home.

"We're the worst sufferers of the frontier confrontation," said a cousin of a teenage boy killed in the shelling. "Why should they fight over our bodies and homes?"

In a neighbouring village of Tumina, where a mother was photographed on porch lapping her dead son, the tears and the fears competed with each other.

Benumbed with tragedy, the mother was still being consoled by her equally devastated family members.

"After all this, we want government to resolve Kashmir Issue through talks and spare us from this torment," said Firdous Ahmad Wani, a local in Panzgam.

"This madness should end. Our people don't deserve to be killed like this!"

Three Commit Suicide

In a similar incident, the official said Khalid Hussain (23) was found hanging from a tree in the forest area near his house at Thathri village on Sunday.

Preliminary probe revealed that he had allegedly committed suicide over some issue with his family, the official said.

2500 tablets for students:

Govt Schools Go Mobile, Teachers Innovative

SRINAGAR: With the start of tele classes and e-learning initiatives, the students of government schools in Jammu and Kashmir will be able to study at home during the lockdown announced to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). To ensure that students continue their education, the School Education Department had already distributed assignments of Unit I and Unit II to students during the early phase of lockdown through DIETs. This information was revealed in a meeting chaired by Principal Secretary School Education, Dr Asgar Hassan Samoon here to review the progress of e-learning initiative of the Department.

The meeting was informed that the Education Department has started tele classes on Door-darshan on a daily basis from 4 pm to 5:30 pm by resource persons of the Department. Notably, Directorate of School Education Kashmir has a repository of tele classes which are also being aired on DD Kashir separately.

Regarding roping in of local cable networks for the initiative, Dr Samoon was informed



FILEPIC

that the tele classes have also been started on local cable networks. "Tele-classes are being aired on local cable networks by lecturers, District Resource Persons, ZRPs and teachers. Also

the recorded videos of these classes with Directorate have been provided to the Districts for airing them on local cable networks in their area," Director School Education Kashmir

Meanwhile, the meeting also decided to provide 2500 low-budget educational tablets to the students of 10th to 12th standards for enhancing their virtual learning experience. The tablets would be loaded with textbooks, problem-solving techniques and other related material.

Dr Samoon reiterated that the School Education Department through its online education initiatives is trying to ensure that students can continue their learning during the lockdown period.

The meeting was also informed that the Department has taken an initiative titled Aawo Padhein- a centralized

"The schools have to form different groups of their students and teachers and accordingly form a timetable for virtual classes. They should also engage them in a play way activity, quizzes, assignments, small projects in a two-way process," he said.

Dr Samoon directed expediting the process of collecting phone numbers for forming a database of their contacts. "We are trying to make on-line classes a parallel alternative where students on the click of a button attend classes virtually like a normal day."

He also asked for the status of distribution of dry ration and collection of account details of students for transferring the Mid-day meal scheme benefits to them.

Earlier Principal Secretary issued orders for placement of four hundred fifty 10 +2 lecturers in Kashmir Division in various disciplines.

repository of voice PPTs and videos for Unit I and Unit II with proper indexing and sequence which is available on http://www.dsek.nic.in website.

Teachers and students have been guided for accessing DIK-SHA portal e-content and content on NCERT's e-Patshala, officials said.

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Dy Mayor visits Achan landfill site, interacts with locals

Assures fulfillment of their genuine demands



SRINAGAR: Deputy Mayor, Parvaiz Ahmed Qadri, today visited Achan dumping site immediately after the locals stopped vehicles, carrying solid waste, from entering the area and dumping waste there.

The Deputy Mayor interacted with the locals, who informed him about the issues faced by the people living in the area. They put forward demands including use of additional chemical spray to

mitigate the odor caused by the waste, being dumped there, on daily basis.

He gave them patient hearing and assured of redressal of all their grievances and fulfillment of genuine demands in a time bound manner.

On the occasion, Qadri entered the landfill site premises and took first hand appraisal of the sanitation works being carried by the corporation.

Govt Deptts invite e-tenders for works amid lockdown, contractors smell 'fishy'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Amid COVID-19 scare and low internet speed, government departments in Jammu and Kashmir have been seeking e-tenders for hundreds of developmental works in the Union Territory.

Entire world is under lockdown and government is asking people to stay inside doors to contain COVID-19.

Surprisingly, government departments have invited hundreds of e-tenders for last around one month even as there is complete lockdown in Kashmir. Contractors have raised questions whether there will be "transparency" in the process when they won't be able to upload tender documents.

As per the details available with agencies, Public Works Department has invited over 70 e-tenders since March 17 including for upgradation of sub health centres and construction of footpaths.

The Power Development Department has also invited over 70 e-tenders since March 15, including works related to stabilization of

high tension lines and renovation of sub-stations. Housing and Urban Development Department has invited around 100 e-tenders since March 15.



Tenders have been sought for construction works like upgradation of lane from graveyard upto Bhat Mohalla near Masjid Hanfia at Solinapayeen, construction of concrete cement drain from main road Masjid Zehar Bemina Chowk, construction of lanes at Koolipora Bemina, Goripora Bemina, construction of cement concrete pro-

tection wall on foot bridge upto Janded Khan at Baghemehatab, upgradation of lane at Baghe Mehtab, annual maintenance contract for two Nos of weed harvesters and two number of weed transport barges.

Similarly, Irrigation and Flood Control Department has also invited e-tenders for 150 works in the last one month for clearance of silt, construction of concrete cement channel and other works. SICOP has invited e-tender for hiring of consultancy for implementation of BRAP and district BRAP. Other departments including Health and Medical Education, Finance Department, universities, Estates Department have also invited several e-tenders since lockdown was announced.

JKCC North Kashmir president Showkat Teli, questioned departments' decision of inviting e-tenders amid lockdown. "Entire Kashmir is under lockdown. How is it possible to submit the documents? There seems something fishy to invite e-tenders when there is lockdown," he told KINS over phone.

SMC sprays 50,000 litres of sanitization chemical mixture daily

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) is spraying 50,000 litres of decontamination chemical mixture on a daily basis to sanitize various public places and institutions to contain the further spread of deadly coronavirus (COVID-19) disease.

Commissioner SMC, Gazarif Ali said that the Corporation has pressed into service its mechanized decontamination vehicles and special teams of workers for sanitization and cleanliness of places of public importance.

"Around 5000 workers equipped with protective gear are carrying out decontamination and sanitation works besides 240 vehicles including tippers, loaders, compactors, dumpers and other vehicles have been put into service," the Commissioner said.

He said that around 50,000 litres of chemical mixture is being sprayed during the sanitization works which includes

use of Quaternary ammonium compound in decontamination tunnels and is also sprayed within 300 meters radius of the house of the COVID positive cases. Besides, Sodium



Hypochlorite mixture is used for the overall sanitization of other areas including lanes and bye lanes.

Furthermore, SMC has installed decontamination tunnels in all the government hospitals in Srinagar to ensure persons visiting hospitals including doctors, hospital work-

ers, patients and other attendants get sanitized instantly while entering or leaving the hospital premises.

The tunnels have been installed at Bones and Joint Hos-

pital, JLN Hospital, CD Hospital, LD Hospital, GB Pant, JVC Kashmir Nursing Home, SMHS Hospital and two tunnels were installed at SKIMS Srinagar.

Besides, sanitization of hospital surroundings by the Corporation is a regular affair to contain the spread of novel coronavirus.

The Commissioner further informed that in continuation of the sanitization drive, SMC has also decontaminated 20 Child Care Homes and Institutions.

These include Observation Home in Harwan, Shiekh-ul-Alam Yateem Trust in Jawahar Nagar, SOS Village in Haiderpora, Agosh in Moominabad Batmaloo, A-Muzammil in Lawaypora HMT, Al-Mausumeen in Gilli Kadal Lalbazar, Cradle Baby Centre in Sonwar, Markazi Falahi Itfal in Shalimar, Markazi Falahi Mastoorat in Shalimar, CTF in Baghat, Baitul Banat in Haft Chinar, Gulshan Mahal Hostel - A in Mukhdoom Sahib, Gulshan Mahal Hostel - B in Soura, J&K Yateem Khana at Bemina Crossing, FETO at Batmaloo, Mohamadiya Yateem Trust in Chanapora, Borderless Foundation in Chanapora, Baitul Altaf in HMT, Gujjar Bakerwal Hostel in Gogjibagh and Gujjar Bakerwal Hostel at Rajbagh.

20 more persons quarantined after 3 fresh positive cases in Ganderbal

GANDERBAL : The District Administration Ganderbal today quarantined 20 more persons who are primary and secondary contacts of 3 new positive cases from Village Guzham, Ganderbal.

Notably, the Village Guzham has already been declared red zone after two positive cases were detected in the village, earlier.

Briefing the media, the District Magistrate (DM), Shafqat Iqbal said that 3 fresh positive cases are sent to isolation at COVID-19 District Hospital, Ganderbal, besides 20 persons are Hospital quarantined whose samples have been taken for testing.

The DM appealed the people to maintain social distancing and obey the advisories issued by the Health department and District Administration. He appreciated the surveillance teams for their tireless efforts in contact tracing.

Pertinently, to prevent the spread of the virus, the District Administration has intensified efforts by implementing strict lockdown, aggressive contact tracing and sampling in red zones, carrying door to door information dissemination campaign and counseling general public for observing social distancing, importance of wearing mask to contain the deadly virus.

Besides, DM is regularly assessing the availability of essentials in the district and home delivery of ration, LPG and other essential commodities is carried out on regular basis, so the people may not face any inconvenience.(KNT)

COVID-19

DC Kupwara reviews preventive measures in Red zone areas

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner (DC), Kupwara, Anshul Garg, today convened a meeting of concerned officers to review the status of preventive measures in place in the Red zone areas of the district.

The meeting was informed that strict restrictions have been imposed on vehicular and people's movement in Drugmulla, Manigah and Trehgam, which have been declared Red zone areas after detection of some Corona virus cases in these areas.

The meeting was informed that



15000 masks have been distributed so far among the people of these areas to contain the deadly virus.

Meanwhile, the D C directed concerned Tehsildars to sealing all entry and exit points of the Red zones. He also directed the Chief Agriculture officer to arrange required machinery for further fumigation of these areas.

The Assistant Director, Food and Civil Supplies informed the meeting that the ration supply for the month of April stands distributed across the

district and demand for additional essential commodities have been taken up for supply.

The D C directed the concerned to home deliver ration supply in Red zone areas twice a week and LPG once a week to avoid public gathering.

In order to ensure complete restrictions on the movement of people, the D C directed the concerned to augment the service of volunteers for home delivery of grocery items in Red zone areas twice a week.

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 193 - Lucius Septimus Severus crowned Emperor of Rome
- 754 - Pact of Quierzy: between Pope Stephen II, [III] & Pippin the Korte
- 966 - Christianisation of Poland
- 972 - Notger becomes bishop of Liege
- 979 - Challenge to throne of King Aethelred II of England
- 1028 - German emperor Conrad II the Sailor crowns his son Henry III, king
- 1191 - 85-year old Giacinto Bobo becomes Pope Coelestinus III
- 1341 - Sack of Saluzzo (Italy) by Italian-Angevine troops under Manfred V of Saluzzo.
- 1434 The foundation stone of Cathedral St. Peter and St. Paul in Nantes, France is laid
- 1471 Wars of the Roses: Battle of Barnet - Yorkists defeat the Lancastrians and kill the Earl of Warwick
- 1699- Khalsa: Birth of Khalsa, the brotherhood of the Sikh religion, in Northern India in accordance with the Nanakshahi calendar.
- 1792 - France declares war on Austria, starting French Revolutionary Wars
- 1919 -Following Gandhi's nonviolent methods, Muslim and Hindu protest British rule; British troops fire on the crowds, killing 400
- 1940 - Allied troops land in Norway
- 1944- Freightier "Fort Stikene" explodes in Bombay India, killing 1,376
- 1945 -WWII: US 7th Army & allies forces capture Nuremberg & Stuttgart in Germany
- 1967 - In the Vietnam War, US planes bombed Haiphong for 1st time
- 1971 - President Nixon ends blockade against People's Republic of China
- 1981 - 1st Space Shuttle, Columbia 1, returns to Earth
- 1988 - USSR, US, Pakistan & Afghanistan sign Afghanistan treaty
- 1994 - US F-15 accidentally shoots 2 US helicopters down over Iraq, 26 die
- 1995 - India beats Sri Lanka to win the Asia Cricket Cup final in Sharjah
- 2000 -Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich files a lawsuit against P2P sharing phenomenon Napster. This law-suit eventually leads the movement against file-sharing programs.
- 2003 -The Human Genome Project is completed with 99% of the human genome sequenced to an accuracy of 99.99%
- 2013 - 20 people are killed in attacks in Mogadishu, Somalia
- 2013 - 33 people are killed after a bus tumbled off a cliff in Trujillo, Peru
- 2013 - 11 people are killed and 50 are injured after a hotel fire in Xiangyang, China
- 2013 - Justin Trudeau, son of long-serving Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, is elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
- 2015 - Archeologists announce they have found at Lomekwi in Kenya 3.3 million-year old stone tools, the oldest ever discovered and which pre-date the earliest humans
- 2017 - Meethotamulla rubbish dump collapses onto houses in Colombo, Sri Lanka killing 26

From KO Archives

Rail Comes To Udhampur

54.85 Kilometers In 22 Years, Now Only 236.15 Kilometers To Go

Observer News Service

UDHAMPUR : Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Wednesday flagged off a train service between Jammu and Udhampur promising that it would go right up to Srinagar and Baramulla by 2007.,

The foundation stone of the rail link from Udhampur housing the Army's Northern Command, was laid by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983.

The train "piercing the heights of the Pir Panjal mountains and taming nature's fury is a challenge that engineers have accepted" he said.

The launch of the 'Uttar Samparak. Kranti Express' brought the prime minister to the state for his second visit in six days. The first was six days ago to flag off Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

The rail track passes through mountainous terrain with 20 per cent of the track going tunnels including an over 2.5-km long one that is considered longest in the country.

The 54.85-km broad gauge railway line, an engineering marvel with 158 bridges and 20 tunnels was built at a cost of Rs 515 crore.

The prime minister said the train link has led to hopes of the train running right up to the valley.

"The train will run from Udhampur to Katra, Qazigund, Srinagar and Baramulla by '2007. We have earmarked Rs 1000 (Rs.10 billion) for this," the prime minister said, with the fervent hope that the service would help build a stronger relationship between the people of the "state and the rest of the country.

(Kashmir Observer, 14 April, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Border On Edge

At a time when India and Pakistan are battling the outbreak of coronavirus on a nationwide scale, the cross-LoC skirmishes have continued unabated. On Sunday, three civilians including an 8-year-old boy died along the LoC in Kupwara. This shows many shells have landed in civilian areas. Fresh ceasefire violations have started in Tangdhar and Karnah sectors and Anil posts. Earlier, Indian army had said that it responded to the Pakistani ceasefire violation and had destroyed terror launch pads, ammunition dumps etc on the Pakistani side of the LoC.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has reported one civilian death and one injury in the LoC firing. Days ago, five soldiers and five militants had lost their lives in a hand to hand combat in Operation Randori Behak in Keran sector. The operation was the biggest in Kashmir since the revocation of Article 370 in Kashmir in August last. Security forces haven't suffered such a huge loss in an encounter in a long time. Also, the encounter took place at a time when militancy in Kashmir had been giving all indications of being in retreat.

These developments are fraught with implications for the immediate future, more so, for the summer ahead. There is a possibility that the skirmishes can escalate into a bigger confrontation. The bitterness between the neighbours now runs deeper than before. The leaders of the two countries have now even given up the pretense of showing interest in the engagement thus abdicating their responsibility towards peace in the region. This has let the violence take the centre stage again.

This is deeply troubling and doesn't bode well for the future. The escalating trend of the violent border exchanges over the recent years have already unravelled the 2003 ceasefire agreement which had held strong for close to a decade. The calm borders had become an important factor in the normalization of the relations between the neighbours, enabling them to start one of the most promising dialogue processes through 2003-2007 which by accounts of the top leaders of the two countries who were at the helm of it was close to a breakthrough on Kashmir. But with return of the border eruptions with a vengeance alongside the continuing break in engagement, there is little hope that the situation will improve. And if left unaddressed, things can only go from bad to worse and possibly lead to dangerous consequences. More so, in the wake of the post 5/8 when New Delhi revoked the Article 370 that granted J&K its semi-autonomous status within Indian Union.

Hence the need for the two countries to reach out to each other and pull the situation back from the brink. With dialogue already suspended and tensions rising high, India and Pakistan can ill-afford to let the border skirmishes go on unchecked and escalate into a major conflict.

OTHER OPINION

Fear and prejudice

Physical distancing and isolation continue to be the most effective weapons in the fight against the novel coronavirus. But given the hardships and disruptions that such measures have caused to the people — particularly the socio-economically vulnerable among them — they also need to be accompanied by social solidarity and respect for the law. What is increasingly coming to the fore, however, is the opposite of that — there are unfortunate and troubling acts of exclusion, violence and mob justice, along new and pre-existing cleavages.

On Wednesday, the Delhi Police confirmed that a 22-year-old man who had returned to the city from Bhopal after attending a Tablighi Jamaat conference, and was brutally assaulted by his neighbours, died of his injuries. He had been tested for the disease earlier and released by the police. On Thursday, a man and his sister, both doctors, were beaten up in South Delhi while buying groceries, accused by their assailant of spreading the virus. In Haryana, in a village in Palwal, a family was assaulted by a mob for turning on their lights last Sunday during the prime minister's "diya jalao" call, even though they switched them on after 9 pm. In Manesar, migrant workers were beaten up by a group of men appointed by the local panchayat to distribute rations to the locals. These attacks target the more vulnerable. Medical workers are most at risk of serious infection; migrants, largely daily wagers, have borne the brunt of the economic disruption. The violence against minorities, prompted in this case by a seemingly irrational fear and anger, can only exacerbate anxieties and insecurities that have built up over the last few years.

The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented challenge to both the state and society. For all the claim that it is flattening differences — posing a danger to all, across social and economic divides — it could also be deepening inequalities along class and communal and other faultlines. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for applause for essential service providers during the "janata curfew" and for the lighting of lamps on another day — both were attempts to bring people together, reinforce solidarity. These must now be supplemented with a clear message that even in a crisis, the rule of law — not of fear or brute force — will prevail. Healthcare professionals, already at risk from the virus, need to feel secure as they do their job. Migrant workers deserve empathy and aid. Every Indian must be assured that the government and society stand with the public, not the mob.

The Indian Express



IQRA SHAFI

The health risks associated with the pandemic, including the heightened fear and panic accompanying this outbreak is clearly suggestive of the resultant risks and impacts on the economic front. First and foremost, there are costs associated with the health care system inclusive of costs of treatment of those affected with the disease and outbreak control. A stout outbreak like COVID-19 has the potential of overwhelming the health care system, shrinking its capacity of dealing with routine and general health issues, thereby aggravating the problem enormously.



COVID-19: An ICU Nurse's Coronavirus Diary

I've started to refer to the time before this as peace time. Because this feels like war

SIMONE HANNAH-CLARK,

I'm awake before my alarm goes off. I make coffee, wash my face and put deodorant on twice. The deodorant is never enough to stop the sweat and smell, but I try. My husband and kids are still asleep. I try to eat. My stomach turns as I imagine what today will bring, though of course I know. It's always variations on the same theme: Critically ill patients who all have been given the same diagnosis, COVID-19.

I've started to refer to the time before this as peace time. Because this feels like a war. I grudgingly respect our enemy's tenacity. Unseen, ruthless, random.

I am one of the many thousands of nurses who work in intensive care units in New York. We are not handmaidens or angels. We are professionals in our own right. We turn treatment plans into action. We question when things don't make sense or aren't going to work. We find solutions that work for our patients. Nurses assess and observe, question and console. We stand between the patient and the enemy. We are the front line.

Subway or Lyft? I ponder this before every shift. I don't feel safe taking the subway. It's too eerily quiet now. So Lyft it is. I pick up my work buddy on the way. We discuss our enemy, our talk inflected with dark humour and good-natured digs at colleagues. "If I end up here," I say as we arrive at the ICU, "promise me you won't let Chad see me naked?"

Looking after these patients is a team effort. We are all scared and heartbroken. But we have our triumphs: A patient improves and can be moved out of the ICU; we come up with an idea that saves time and preserves our precious PPE.

- Simone Hannah-Clark, nurse in New York City

We arrive at work and are both assigned to the COVID ICU. We are

Global health emergencies and pandemics, although, considerably abated through developments in science and technology and rarely encountered, continue to remain one of the most significant menaces threatening the human race. Humans continue to struggle and fight against both age-old pathogenic diseases like plague that have distressed masses for millennia and new pathogens like the recently discovered Novel Coronavirus that has brought the world to its knees.

COVID-19 being highly virulent and intensely pervasive has wreaked havoc across the globe.

The health risks associated with the pandemic, including the heightened fear and panic accompanying this outbreak is clearly suggestive of the resultant risks and impacts on the economic front. First and foremost, there are costs associated with the health care system inclusive of costs of treatment of those affected with the disease and outbreak control. A stout outbreak like COVID-19 has the potential of overwhelming the health care system, shrinking its capacity of dealing with routine and general health issues, thereby aggravating the problem enormously.

In addition to these shocks and disruptions to the health care sector, this pandemic forces people, both directly affected (patients) and indirectly affected (caretakers) to sit back home, miss out work completely or leads to performance issues such as decreased effectiveness at jobs due to stress and pressures back home, driving productivity figures down. In case of worsening scenarios, where specific advisories restricting movement or orders of complete lockdowns have been put in place by governments to contain the pandemic, exercising social distancing becomes mandatory. This leads to closure of educational institutions, shutting down of commercial enterprises, transportation services, public offices — all of which perturbs the order and brings economic activity to a halt, thereby, pushing productivity abysmally to a nil.

On an international level, concerns over the deadly COVID-19 would mean a steep, dramatic fall in trade and commerce even to the extent of posing an existential threat to several industries like tourism industry (specifically the aviation sector). The long-running nature of the



COVID-19 pandemic has the probability of deterring foreign direct investments as well. The economic risks of this pandemic are significant, inclusive of not only the total lost incomes but also the intrinsic costs associated with elated mortality.

It has been witnessed (from previous experiences) that even when the health effects of a pandemic are relatively confined, its economic impacts magnify rapidly.

However, the consequences of such a pandemic are not distributed evenly throughout the entire economy. There are some specific sectors that may even be at an advantage financially, while other sectors and industries may be at a disproportional disadvantage. For instance, pharmaceutical and medical corporations that deal with various antibiotics, personal protective equipment, sanitisers or companies/countries that produce vaccines can be potential economic beneficiaries. On the other hand, livestock producers, health care organisations and life insurance corporations are most likely to bear the financial brunt of this pandemic, in the short run, anyway.

The upside, amidst it all is that we can proactively work towards managing the risk of this novel pandemic and take on initiatives to mitigate its impact. What is required is a concerted and collaborative strategy at the regional, national and international level which can possibly go a long way in protecting our physical and economic wellbeing in the times to come.

Vulnerable sections of the population, specially the poor, are likely to undergo hardships dispro-

portionately because of limited or no access to health care and no or minimum shield in the form of savings to protect against catastrophes on the financial front.

As long as humans exist, such outbreaks and pandemics will certainly occur and impose a significant burden on the health care systems, yet there are ways to limit the risk of a severe catastrophe on the economic front. As is and has been done in the case of natural disasters, insurance can be a vital facilitative mechanism via which the financial burden across various economic sectors and regions can be distributed. Also, in an attempt to protect and safeguard critical economic resources, prioritising health care workers, military members and employees working for public safety on different forefronts is a must.

We cannot exactly predict how dire the consequences of this pandemic are going to be but we are certain that it will impose substantial costs on the social, physical, emotional and economic fronts.

The upside, amidst it all is that we can proactively work towards managing the risk of this novel pandemic and take on initiatives to mitigate its impact. What is required is a concerted and collaborative strategy at the regional, national and international level which can possibly go a long way in protecting our physical and economic wellbeing in the times to come.

Iqra Shafi is a JRF in Management and is pursuing her Doctorate in Women Technopreneurship at the Department of Management Studies, University of Kashmir. She can be reached at:

catheter and two intravenous lines.

We wash the patient and check his skin for wounds. We pad his heels and lower back with foam adhesives to prevent painful pressure areas forming while he is bed-bound. We place an oral gastric tube so he can receive nutrition while he is intubated and on a ventilator.

I walk into my apartment backward, leaving my shoes at the door, spraying Lysol behind me, headed for the shower. The kids are asleep. My husband gives me a smile...we keep our distance, sleeping in separate rooms.

- Simone Hannah-Clark, nurse in New York City

Nursing colleagues outside the room set up our IV pumps with long extension tubing, so that we can manage our drips without donning our PPE. It is amazing what kinds of hacks we've devised to stay safe.

Finally, it is time to doff our PPE. We carefully clean our face shields and place them in a paper bag for reuse. An hour has passed. We are both sweating, our faces striped with marks from our N95s. The same worry haunts me every day now: Was I careful enough when I removed my PPE? It's the only mask and shield I have for the rest of the day. Did I wash my hands well enough, for long enough?

Next, I check in with the doctors to discuss the treatment plan, changes and additions. I call the pharmacy to check on a medication. I need a piece of equipment I can't find; our nursing assistant reads my mind and finds it without my having to ask.

I start some documentation while one of our nurse practitioners dons her PPE and goes in to place an arterial line — a special catheter that helps us monitor blood pressure and arterial blood gases, so we can know how well a patient is breathing. I discuss the results with our attending ICU doctor. I need to go back in the room to change the ventilator settings.

Nursing is a 24-hour profession

I'm still there an hour and a half after our shift change. I want to go home but it's hard to leave. There is so much still to do. We always have to remind one another that nursing is a 24-hour profession. We hand off to our night nurses.

I remove my shoe covers and bleach my shoes. I change and bag up dirty scrubs to wash at home. My work buddy and I share a car home. We don't talk much. I stare outside at the Brooklyn Bridge, at our beautiful city, and wonder how the patient in Bed 8 is doing, and if we will ever get back to peace time.

I walk into my apartment backward, leaving my shoes at the door, spraying Lysol behind me, headed for the shower. The kids are asleep. My husband gives me a smile but knows we won't greet each other till I'm scrubbed, head to toe. Even then we keep our distance, sleeping in separate rooms.

Sometimes the day doesn't go this smoothly because the patients are crashing, or we are short-staffed. But we do some version of this with every patient, over and over, day after day. They keep coming. And they are sick. Some of them die. Some are old, some are young.

Looking after these patients is a team effort. We are all scared and heartbroken. But we have our triumphs: A patient improves and can be moved out of the ICU; we come up with an idea that saves time and preserves our precious PPE.

The teamwork right now is inspiring. ICU nurses are tough; we fight for our patients; we have one another's backs. Doctors may be the architects of what happens in the hospital. But we are the builders. And so we build, even amid chaos and disintegration. We build, even as a silent enemy attempts to undo everything we've done. We build and we build, shift after shift, as fast — and as best — as we can.

....

New York Times

France: Coffin Makers Work Overtime As Covid-19 Death Toll Rises

Agencies

Jussey, France: It's a grim truth that times are good for the coffin business when they're bad for people, and the coronavirus pandemic is no exception.

At a factory belonging to Europe's largest coffin maker, OGF, in eastern France, workers are doing overtime to meet demand from families parting with their loved ones.

"Due to the epidemic, we decided to manufacture just four models of coffins that are top sellers with families" compared to the 15 types usually on offer, said factory director Emmanuel Garret.

The change "allowed us to optimise production", he added. Output has risen to 410 coffins per day, compared to 370 normally.

Workers are putting in nearly an extra hour per day.

"People have been forewarned and are ready to come in and work on Saturdays," said Didier Pidancet, who heads up the team that selects the wood for the coffins.

France has been one of the countries worst hit by the coronavirus. "We're proud to be participating in this national effort, we're doing our best to

ensure that victims can have their final overcoat, as we say," added Pidancet.

No shortages

Founded in 1910, the factory in the town of Jussey originally produced wood charcoal and flooring. At the outset of World War II it began to specialise in making coffins.

It is now part of the OGF Group, which has two factories including the one at Jussey, and makes one in four coffins used in France.

The 10 hectare (25 acre) site is responsible for the entire process of producing coffins. It strips the logs, cuts then dries the wood, which is eventually crafted and assembled into coffins.

The wood, mostly oak, comes from local forests.

While temporarily cutting back on the number of models, the factory has made another adjustment: it has been making more larger coffins.

"Orders for larger sizes are up a bit," said Garret, although he declined to draw a link to reports that COVID-19 mortality rates are higher for overweight people. While many manufacturers have encountered problems as lockdown restrictions complicate deliveries, the Jussey factory is well stocked.



'I Cried Multiple Times': Now Doctors Are The Ones Saying Goodbye

Agencies

New York: The elderly coronavirus patient arrived at the Manhattan hospital extremely sick and rapidly deteriorating. Dr. Marissa Nadeau, an emergency medicine physician on the night shift, had little time to ascertain his wishes.

The patient, gasping for breath but alert, made it clear he did not want to be intubated and put on a ventilator, which might have been his only hope for survival.

Nadeau placed her hand on his shoulder, then used her phone to FaceTime with his family, telling them of his choice and holding up her phone so they could say what might be a final goodbye.

It was the third time that night at Columbia University Irving Medical Center that Nadeau had helped critically ill patients communicate with their families over FaceTime; the two other patients had also rejected intubation - a decision with potentially life-ending ramifications.

One of the cruelties of COVID-19, the illness caused by the coronavirus, is that many patients may have just minutes to settle their affairs. With family members for the most part barred from visiting their loved ones, doctors often are left to facilitate such moments, full of emotion and tears. They are wrenching for physicians, too.

"I cried multiple times on my shift last night," Nadeau later

texted in a WhatsApp group chat where her colleagues trade advice and experiences and try to comfort each other.

"You guys are going to see me with red puffy eyes for the next few weeks," she wrote. "I just feel like I went into this specialty to save lives, and it kills me that we can't save everybody."

In a pandemic, the normal rituals around death are suspended. In New York City, where on some days the illness has been killing someone every four minutes, some funeral homes have stopped holding wakes, cemeteries are limiting graveside gatherings and authorities have warned people not to gather for religious services.

The actions are meant to keep the living from congregating around the dead and dying. And nowhere is that principle more strictly enforced than in hospitals.

Intensive care units in the city once saw a steady stream of visitors. Nurses and doctors learned about their patients through them: which patient had the spouse who spent every waking hour at the bedside, which patient had the large family.

Now bedside vigils, and visitors generally, are a thing of the past.

In recent weeks, an exception has sometimes been made when a patient is on the verge of death. But even then, the visitor is usually not allowed in the actual room.

In one Manhattan emergency room, a woman recently stood by the secretary's desk. A doctor

handed her a phone. "I love you," she said. "Things will be OK."

The words were played through the call bell in her husband's isolation room, 20 feet away. He was in a medically induced coma, dying. They had been married 40 years, according to a hospital employee who described the scene.

Patients who are going to be intubated and connected to a ventilator are generally first placed in an induced coma.

When told what awaits them, some respond with disbelief and denial. Most patients, though, are just afraid.

"I try to explain that his breathing is getting worse and he's getting tired because of it," said Dr. Meredith Jones, an emergency room physician at Brookdale Hospital Medical Center in Brooklyn. "That puts a strain on the body, and sometimes it's best to take that strain off and let the ventilator do the breathing for you."

They ask, "How long will this last?" Or, "Will I die?"

We hope you will wake up in a week or two, say the doctors who believe in giving hope. Others just say, "We don't know."

But the doctors generally offer the same advice before proceeding. "Now is the time to call your loved ones and tell them all the things you want to say," one doctor at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell hospital said he tells his coronavirus patients before they are intubated. "I'll come back in 15 minutes."

'God Is With Us': Many In Pakistan Flout The Coronavirus Ban In Mosques

Agencies

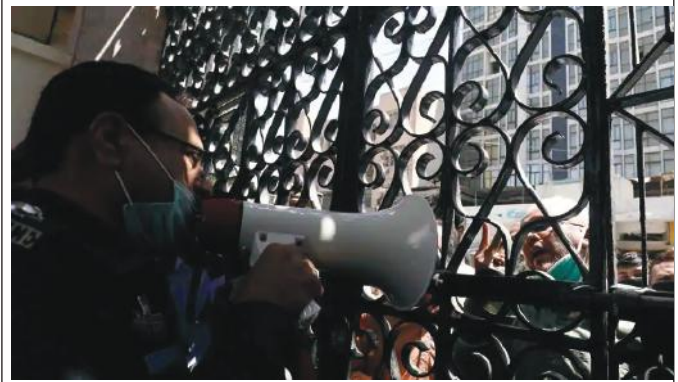
Islamabad: Sabir Durrani says he offers prayers almost every day at a mosque in the central Pakistani city of Multan. He says that often a dozen or more men are in attendance - none of them wearing protective face masks.

Durrani, 52, is among thousands of devout Muslims flouting Pakistan government orders issued late last month banning religious congregations of five or more people to stem the spread of the coronavirus. The disease has so far infected more than 5,300 people and killed 93 in the world's second-most populous Muslim country.

"Our prayer leader told us that the virus can't infect us the way it does Western people," Durrani told Reuters. "He said we wash our hands and we wash our face five times a day before we say our prayers, and the infidels don't, so we need not worry. God is with us."

The Islamic lobby holds immense clout in Pakistan, a country of over 200 million people. Religious parties have not been successful in electoral politics but they are able to whip up large, often violent, crowds on matters pertaining to religion, such as in support of the country's harsh blasphemy law.

"Religion and prayers are an emotional issue for many people in Pakistan, and the government has to be sensitive to that," Mirza Shahzad Akbar, a special assistant to Prime Minister Imran



Khan, told Reuters.

More than 60% of the coronavirus cases in Pakistan have so far been linked to Muslims returning from pilgrimages in the Middle East and followers of the Tablighi Jamaat, an orthodox proselytizing group.

But the worry is of a big spike coming from the congregational prayers held in mosques, especially on Fridays, the Islamic sabbath. The numbers in attendance at prayers are likely to increase with the onset of the holy month of Ramadan within two weeks, and authorities are struggling to cope.

While the Council of Islamic Ideology, a body that advises the government on religious issues, has called on clerics and the public to cooperate with government measures, several priests and local leaders have opposed the ban.

Sheikh Mujib's Killer Executed After 25 Years On The Run

Agencies

DHAKA: Bangladesh has executed a military captain less than a week after he was arrested after nearly 25 years on the run over the assassination of the country's founding leader, a minister said on Sunday.

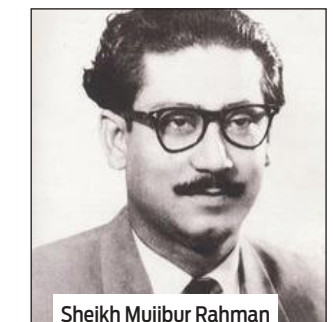
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, father of current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was killed along with most of his family in a military coup on August 15, 1975, nearly four years after he led Bangladesh to independence.

In 1998 Abdul Majed was sentenced in absentia to death along with a dozen other army officers over the murders.

Bangladesh's Supreme Court upheld the verdict in 2009 and five of the killers were executed several months later.

On Tuesday, counterterrorism police officers arrested Majed as he rode a rickshaw in the capital early in the morning.

Bangladesh prison authorities carried out Majed's execution by hanging days later, after the country's president rejected a mercy plea from the convicted killer.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

"He was hanged to death at 12.01am on Sunday," Law Minister Anisul Huq said, adding the execution took place at the country's largest prison, just outside the capital Dhaka.

Majed is believed to have fled to India in 1996. He returned to Bangladesh last month.

Majed's wife met him at the prison one last time on Saturday evening when the prison authorities had scheduled his execution.

Why Africa's Coronavirus Outbreak Appears Slower Than Anticipated



Agencies

Capetown: When Africa's first case of coronavirus was detected in Egypt in February, the rest of the continent prepared for the brunt of a pandemic that has engulfed Europe and spread to the United States, infecting more than 1.6 million worldwide.

Health experts warned of the devastation the deadly virus could cause in Africa, where most hospitals are desperately short of equipment and trained staff.

Coronavirus has since spread to 52 African countries, but despite a steady rise in the number of confirmed cases, the continent continues to lag behind the global curve for infections and deaths.

Still, the World Health Organization last month warned Africa faced a dramatic evolution of the pandemic even as governments imposed restrictions to help curb the spread. The continent appears poorly equipped to manage a major health crisis and is struggling to test enough to monitor virus cases.

To date the novel respiratory disease has infected more than 12,800 people on the continent and killed at least 692, according to a tally compiled by AFP.

Only the Comoros archipelago and the tiny kingdom of Lesotho have not yet detected any cases.

South Africa is the worst-affected country, with over 2,000 confirmed cases and 24 recorded deaths so far - well behind the more than 871,000 cases and 71,000 deaths counted in Europe to date.

Experts, however, warn that the tide is rising. "During the last four days we can see that the numbers have already doubled," said Michel Yao, the World Health Organization (WHO) Africa's emergency response programme manager. "If the trend continues... some countries may face a huge peak very soon," Yao told AFP.

WHO says 70 coronavirus vaccines in the works, with 3 leading candidates

Agencies

Geneva: There are 70 coronavirus vaccines in development globally, with three candidates already being tested in human trials, according to the World Health Organization, as drugmakers race to find a cure for the deadly pathogen.

The furthest along in the clinical process is an experimental vaccine developed by Hong Kong-listed CanSino Biologics Inc. and the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology, which is in phase 2. The other two being tested in humans are treatments developed separately by U.S. drugmakers Moderna Inc. and Inovio Pharmaceuticals Inc., according to a WHO document.

Progress is occurring at unprecedented speed in developing vaccines as the infectious pathogen looks unlikely to be stamped out through containment measures alone.

The drug industry is hoping to compress the time it takes to get a vaccine to market - usually about 10 to 15 years - to within the next year.

Drugmakers big and small have jumped in to try to develop a vaccine, which would be the most effective way to

contain the virus. Pharmaceutical giants like Pfizer Inc. and Sanofi have vaccine candidates in the preclinical stages, according to the WHO document.

CanSino said last month it received Chinese regulatory approval to start human trials of its vaccine. Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Moderna - which has never put out a product - received regulatory approval to move quickly to human trials in March, skipping the years of animal trials that are the norm in developing vaccines. Inovio began its human trials last week.

Julian Assange fathered two kids with lawyer while at Ecuador Embassy: Report

LONDON: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange fathered two children while holed up in Ecuador's embassy in London for much of the past decade, according to a report Sunday confirmed by the mother.

The 48-year-old Australian is the dad of two boys, aged two and one, with lawyer Stella Morris, to whom he is engaged, she confirmed following a Mail on Sunday report.

Assange is currently being held in London's high security Belmarsh prison as he fights an extradition request by the United States to stand trial there on espionage charges.

Morris detailed the revelations shortly after the report emerged, in a video posted on social media by Wikileaks chronicling her five-year relationship



with Assange and the arrival of their two children.

"We fell in love," she said in the nearly 12-minute film, outlining how the romance began in 2015 - three years into his seven-year stay at the Ecuadorian embassy in central London.

"This is the person... I know the most in this world - he's extraordinary," the South African-

born lawyer said.

Morris said she wanted to speak out now fearing Assange's life "might be coming to an end" due to his continued detention and the spread of coronavirus.

Jennifer Robinson, one of Assange's lawyers in Britain who introduced the pair to each other in 2011, according to Morris, also confirmed to AFP they were a family.

She said a statement by Morris outlining the situation had been cited as evidence in a failed court bid last month to get Assange bailed to avoid catching COVID-19.

"Despite her statement about their family and the medical evidence about the severe risk to Assange's health, the judge refused bail and refused to grant her and the children anonymity," Robinson said.

Which countries have not reported any coronavirus cases?

In December 2019, the coronavirus was seemingly confined to China.

But, a few weeks later,



the virus, which causes the illness known as COVID-19, became a global pandemic. The virus, which leads to a respiratory illness that can be transmitted from droplets of bodily fluids - such as mucus and saliva, has now been reported in at least 185 countries.

Scientists, health officials and governments across the world have encouraged citizens to practice physical distancing and to avoid going out unless for

necessary purposes.

According to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University, more than 1.8 million people have been infected, and the global death toll is more than 110,000. More than 412,000 patients have recovered.

Here are a few countries that have not reported any cases of the coronavirus so far:

Comoros
Kiribati
Lesotho
Marshall Islands
Micronesia
Nauru
North Korea
Palau
Samoa
Sao Tome and Principe
Solomon Islands
Tajikistan
Tonga
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu
Vanuatu

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE



Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Ab Rehman Dar S/O Khurshid Ahmad Dar R/o Shalpora, Shalteng, Srinagar (Transferor) of Vehicle bearing registration No.

JK01P 0238

chasis No: MA6AB605EAH106690 Engine No: 3ek 10785 Model 2010 in favour of Sadiq Hassan Challoo S/o Ghulam Hassan Challoo R/o Shaheed Gunj (Transferee).

Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned.

No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NOJK-RTOK ----

Dated: -- Regional Transport Office, Kashmir

Sd/-



Lockdown Takes A Toll On MENTAL HEALTH, ANXIETY Levels Up As Job Loss Fears Rise

Press Trust Of India

A lot many are fearing loss of job, some have already seen pay cuts and appraisals are getting delayed almost for everyone. The COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing lockdown has left employees feeling anxious and worried about their future, prompting many corporates to look for ways to keep the staff motivated.

Some are roping in psychologists to conduct "happiness sessions" for staff members over video conferencing, others have decided to keep communicating with them regularly about business updates and a few are also promising necessary steps to safeguard their career progression along with additional perks for "performers" during such difficult times.

Experts said there is high stress that the current crisis has brought upon employees as well as organisations, and with the lockdown not looking to end soon, the emotional challenges employees are confronting have increased manifold.

"Yes, there is some amount of anxiety as it is a situation many of us including organisations have never been faced with. In terms of appraisals, it is too early to say on the stand of the organizations as Covid-19 has an impact on the employer as well in terms of business," Sudeep Sen, Business

Head- Industrial Manufacturing and Engineering \$\$\$ General Staffing, Team-Lease Services, said.

On top of it, some retail touch points have remained open during the pandemic and employees who are still working on-site in industries such as healthcare, food services and critical manufacturing operations will have different stress levels and concerns than those working from home.

Onsite employees are under extreme worry of being infected by co-workers or customers. They are worried if the organization will be able to provide sufficient workplace safety and one of their biggest worries is to travel to work without being stopped by cops.

At times like this, some employers are going the extra mile and rewarding their onsite employees in essential sectors with appreciation allowance, besides taking several steps to ensure employee safety including regular sanitisation of high-touch surfaces, provision of masks, installing sanitisers stations and conducting temperature checks for all associates.

"We are particularly grateful to associates who work in our stores and are selflessly serving the community at this time. In recognition, we will provide every field associate an appreciation allowance of Rs 200 per day over and above their pay for every day of attendance during the lockdown period,"

a Walmart India spokesperson said.

"We are also committed to ensuring safe transport for our store associates and are providing conveyance reimbursement to them in the absence of local transport," the spokesperson added.

In order to survive these tough times HR leaders and people managers are encouraging and supporting employees, communicating with them regularly about the business updates, positive news and actions organizations are taking to come out of the situation.

Many companies are also conducting special online sessions for the staff to keep them motivated and stress-free.

Psychologist and 'happiness coach' Sakshi Mandhyan, who was been roped in by various corporate houses for such online 'happiness classes', said we get anxious when we think about the future that is actually unpredictable and uncertain.

"If we talk about the current situation, many people would have made plans for April and the coming months on the basis of appraisals they were expecting this month. But sadly that is not happening," she said.

Mandhyan, who was earlier associated with Max Hospitals and now runs Mandhyan Care, said what people need to do is try to change things that are in their own hands, rather than worry about things outside their control.

"For example, whether one would have a job or not is not entirely in one's control

in such a scenario, but how to manage available finances is still controllable. So, spending smartly is the key point here.

"The good part is expenses have gone down due to people staying home mostly and therefore the way forward can be learning to get back to basics -- that is learning to manage with basic necessities and cut down on unnecessary or avoidable luxuries. We need to understand that a few generations back, such kind of expenditure was not happening and people were still happy," Mandhyan said.

"The best trait humans have is their ability to adapt to things and to manage to survive in every kind of situation. There will be initial difficulties, but gradually, we all will get used to it and we will make peace with the changing situations. Having the natural survival instincts, human beings adapt to any given situation. There would be changes in the way we wind down, such as we may start having card parties at home rather than going to a party outside our homes," she added.

Many organisations are offering online toolkits and resources so all employees have what they need to operate productively. Some companies have also taken to this time to drive their Learning and Development initiatives.

"Organisations are equally worried about their employee well-being, positive

mental state and ability to remain stable and loyal. This worry is more so for employees who perform well or are potential performers," said Ashish Kaul - Associate Director, Advisory Services, SHRM India.

Providing these employees a clear and proper roadmap of their career post COVID-19 times has also been a priority, Kaul said adding that many organisations are offering coupons to order meals, ensuring benefits like access to online yoga classes etc as an incentive.

"This is a time of responsibility from both employers and employees. Corporates must show more empathy towards their staff, being transparent with business conditions and helping set clear expectations will help ease out stress," global executive recruitment organisation Antal International India Managing Director Joseph Devasia said.

Devasia further said that "in these tough times, corporations will care more about those who have contributed to the growth of the organisation".

He noted that every organisation will be faced with downsizing at some point over the next 12 months, hence reviewing salaries, perks, benefits and knocking off bonuses or increments would be normal.

In such circumstances loyalty and retention take a second stand, versus ensuring sustenance of business.

Scientists Identify Six Potential Drugs For COVID-19

Press Trust Of India

Scientists have identified six drug candidates from more than 10,000 compounds that may help treat COVID-19.

The research, published in the journal Nature, tested the efficacy of approved drugs, drug candidates in clinical trials and other compounds.

"Currently there are no targeted therapeutics or effective treatment options for COVID-19," said Professor Luke Guddat from the University of Queensland in Australia.

"In order to rapidly discover lead compounds for clinical use, we initiated a programme of high-throughput drug screening, both in laboratories and also using the latest computer software to predict how different drugs bind to the virus," Guddat said.

The project targeted the main COVID-19 virus enzyme, known as the main protease or Mpro, which plays a pivotal role in mediating viral replication, the researchers said.

This makes it an attractive drug target for this virus, and as people don't naturally have this enzyme, compounds that target it are likely to have low toxicity, they said.

"We add the drugs directly to the enzyme or to cell cultures growing the virus and assess how much of each compound is required to stop the enzyme from working or to kill the virus. If the amount is small, then we have a promising compound for further studies," said Guddat.

After assaying thousands of drugs, researchers found of the six that appear to be effective in inhibiting the enzyme, one is of particular interest.

"We're particularly looking at several leads that have been subjected to clinical trials including for the prevention and treatment of various disorders such as cardiovascular diseases, arthritis, stroke, atherosclerosis and cancer," Guddat said.

Researchers said compounds that are already along the pipeline to drug discovery are preferred, as they can be further tested as antivirals at an accelerated rate compared to new drug leads that would have to go through this process from scratch.

"With continued and up-scaled efforts we are optimistic that new candidates can enter the COVID-19 drug discovery pipeline in the near future," Guddat said.

Study Reveals Rare, Damaging Inherited Mutations Work Together To Reduce Lifespan

AGENCIES

The combined effects of rare and damaging mutations present at birth have a negative impact on healthspan and longevity, suggests a novel study.

The findings suggest that one additional inherited damaging mutation could carve off six months of life, and the combinations of these rare mutations determine how soon someone will develop diseases such as cancer, heart disease and dementia. The study was published in the journal eLife.

Most of the genetic variants linked to a lifespan that researchers currently know about have been found in people who live long, such as centenarians who live to 100 or older. The variants responsible for rest of the population's survival remain poorly understood.

Now, researchers have proposed that the remaining variance that contributes to lifespan could be attributed to the combination of very rare, but highly damaging mutations, which are present in every person's genome.

"The role of ultra-rare damaging mutations that decrease lifespan and healthspan has been largely overlooked," said co-senior author Vadim Gladyshev, Professor at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, US.

"They are different in different people, but in combination, they exhibit an unexpectedly large effect on



lifespan," Gladyshev added.

"Until recently, only common gene variants could be probed in genetic studies due to a small number of participants," explained co-first author Anastasia Shindyapina, a postdoctoral researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

"However, large datasets that sequenced tens of thousands of people now allow us to assess the effects of DNA variation that appear in less than one out of 10,000 subjects," Shindyapina said.

Ultra-rare protein-truncating variants (PTVs) are known to be some of the most damaging genetic variants. These tend to have a larger impact than more common genetic variants and can dramatically change the amount and function of important proteins in the body. Increased frequency of PTVs has been linked to complex diseases such as schizophrenia, epilepsy and autism.

In this study, Shindyapina, along with co-first author Aleksandr Zenin, a researcher at Gero, Singapore and their colleagues set out to learn how the number of PTVs -- a person is born with influences their

lifespan. They also wanted to see whether accumulating additional PTVs throughout life can affect overall health and length of survival.

The team analysed genomic data from more than 40,000 people registered in the UK Biobank who on average were in their mid-fifties. They compared the individual 'burden' of PTVs (the total number of PTVs per each person's genome) with their lifespan and their 'healthspan' -- the time taken to develop complex diseases including cancer, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, stroke and dementia.

The team found that people, who had a high burden of ultra-rare PTVs, had a shorter healthspan and lifespan. Each additional ultra-rare PTV in a person's genome accounted for a reduction in lifespan of six months and a reduction in healthspan of two months.

In addition to the genetic variants we are born with, we accumulate more as we age. The research predicted that the natural accumulation of PTVs increases proportionally with age but their effects are likely to be minor compared with the effects of PTVs we are born with.

"This implies that the genetic variation we accumulate throughout life only accounts for a small fraction of the increased risk of disease, and the death that we all face as we grow older if our theoretical calculations are correct," said author Andrei Tarkhov, a researcher at Gero and PhD student at Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology, Moscow, Russia.

'Consuming vitamin D rich food may have heart-protective effects'

Intake of food rich in vitamin D may show good results with heart-related problems, suggests recent research.

The research was published in the Journal of Human Nutrition and



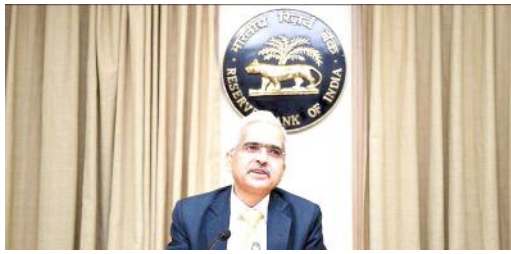
Dietetics.

The study was conducted during 2001-2012 and included 1,514 men and 1,528 women from the greater Athens area, in Greece.

In the lowest, middle, and highest categories of vitamin D intake, cardiovascular events (such as heart attacks and strokes) occurred in 24%, 17%, and 12% of men and 14%, 10%, and 11% of women.

In contrast with vitamin D supplementation trials that have shown modest to neutral beneficial effects on heart health, this study revealed that increased vitamin D intake from food sources may protect against heart-related problems, especially in men.

India's near-term growth outlook has deteriorated sharply: RBI Gov



MUMBAI: All-out efforts are needed to mitigate the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the RBI will use any instrument necessary to revive growth and preserve financial stability, according to the minutes of the central bank's policy meeting.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das, was originally scheduled for March 31, April 1 and 3, 2020, but was advanced in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

After the three-day meeting which ended on March 27, the RBI reduced the key policy rate by 75 basis points.

To mitigate the economic difficulties arising out of the virus outbreak, the government of India has announced a comprehensive package of Rs 1.70 lakh crore, covering cash transfers and food security, for vulnerable sections of society.

As per the minutes of the MPC meet, released by the RBI, Das said the global macroeconomic situation has abruptly worsened in the last fortnight or so. He stated that the authorities and central banks in many countries have deployed an extensive range of targeted policy instruments to deal with the macroeconomic fallout of Covid-19 caused by lockdowns and social distancing. In his opinion, "there is a rising probability" of a global recession, which may be deeper than the one experienced during the global financial crisis. "In India also, the near-term growth outlook has deteriorated sharply: initially reflecting global spillovers and the amplification of the impact of Covid-19; and thereafter, due to the much-needed efforts by the government to contain the pandemic by declaring a nationwide lockdown," he said.

Covid19 lockdown may cost Rs 7-8 lakh cr to Indian economy

NEW DELHI: The world's biggest lockdown that shut a majority of the factories and businesses, suspended flights, stopped trains and restricted movement of vehicles and people, may have cost the Indian economy Rs 7-8 lakh crore during the 21-day period, analysts and industry bodies said. Acuite Ratings & Research Ltd earlier this month estimated that the lockdown will cost the Indian economy almost USD 4.64 billion (over Rs 35,000 crore) every day and the entire 21-day lockdown will result in a GDP loss of almost USD 98 billion (about Rs 75 lakh crore).

"Nationwide complete lockdown is likely to shave off at least Rs 7-8 trillion," it said.

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has not only disrupted the global economy but also triggered a partial shutdown in many parts of India from early March and an almost complete shutdown from March 25. PM Modi likely to detail post-lockdown scenario on Tuesday.

With the intent to contain the spread of COVID-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi with effect from March 25 announced a nationwide complete lockdown that brought as much as 70 per cent of economic activity, investment, exports and discretionary consumption to a standstill. Prime Minister Modi is likely to detail the post-lockdown scenario in an address to the nation on Tuesday morning. Only essential goods and services such as agriculture, mining, utility services, some financial and IT services and public services were allowed to operate.

Stating that the pandemic came at the most inopportune time for India whose economy was showing signs of recovery after bold fiscal/monetary measures, Centrum Institutional Research said the country again stares at the possibility of low single-digit growth for FY2021 (April 2020 to March 2021).Transport, hotel, restaurant, retail and real estate sectors are most severely impacted All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) secretary-general Naveen Gupta said the accumulated losses to trucks during the first 15 days of lockdown were about Rs 35,200 crore given an average Rs 2,200 loss to per truck per day.



COVID-19: Hajj & Umrah Business Industry Witnesses Heavy Losses

SRINAGAR: Amid COVID-19 outbreak the Hajj and Umrah business industry has been suffering heavy losses.

President Jammu Kashmir Association of Hajj & Umrah Companies (JKAHUC) in statement said their downturn started from lockdown on August 5 when the entire industry was busy in operating and managing Hajj in Saudia.

"We the Tour Organizers of J & K got caught in extremely vulnerable situation when we were with groups in Saudi Arabia. Every organization irrespective of nature of work while in operation needs to have flawless support system. Leaving aside Internet and phone services, imagine the situation when we were not even having Banking facilities," he said.

The statement said several groups were supposed to leave on 5th and 6th of August, and there was complete chaos and confusion. "Friends and relatives of aspiring pilgrims were left with pain and depression instead of happiness and celebrations. They were left with apprehensions of uncertainty and ambiguity about this life time journey.

People somehow managed to reach airports. Most of the aspirants are old aged and usually depended on their families about arrangements of travels, weather packing of their baggage or arranging cash for them. But this time they didn't get time to do all these arrangements and responsibilities shifted to organizing companies with obvious and uncontrollable reasons," the statement said.

"When travel groups in general and Hajj & Umrah Travel group's in particular reach any foreign destination, first thing after passport control, customs and baggage collections their first and preferred Rendezvous is Cellular Companies for procuring mobile sims to get connected with their near and dear ones. But this time nothing

such has happened as we all were knowing by then that we may not be able to connect back home. We somehow managed to perform Hajj though with severe difficulties, without any support system from our back offices, without financial support which is essential part while organizing Group Tours," the statement reads.

The statement says after completion of Hajj, first thing they do is to make advance bookings with Airlines International/Domestic, Hotel Bookings and Renewal of Umrah Licence with Ministry of Hajj (KSA) and many other arrangements for upcoming season. "This time we couldn't do anything because of lockdown and disruption of phone and internet services. Come December when things slightly ease out, there were limited movements of people in markets.

People approached Umrah companies for Umrah packages and as most of us have made packages on assumptions as we were not having any access to prevailing market due to internet disruption. On purchasing tickets both international and domestic for upcoming months we were caught between devil and deep sea," the statement said.

The cost of tickets as per the statement have gone all time high, without having done any advance preparedness for upcoming season we had to face heavy losses while purchasing these tickets and even we had to pay extremely higher rates for accommodation leaving us in heavy debts this year .The statement said COVID19 was the last nail in coffin when 1st March 2020 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia put all Umrah activities on halt.

"Groups supposed to leave on and after 1st March were told to cancel the tour. All advance bookings were cancelled and simultaneously all advance purchase from service providers for upcoming months got cancelled thus leaves us Penney less," the

statement said.

They said their next hope of business was Ramadan, but few days before Saudi Arabia including other countries worldwide are extending lockdown making it obvious that we have lost this opportunity too.

"Now we have Hajj which is yet to come, some days before I called one of my service providers and asked his observations regarding Hajj, he reminded me one important aspect of Saudi Authorities precautionary measures.

Every year all Hajj / Umrah aspirants worldwide are told submit a valid vaccination certificate with a Quadrivalent (ACWY) meningococcal vaccine administered no less than 10 days prior to arrival to Saudi Arabia. So in that case how it is possible Saudis will allow more than 2.2 million people to come inside their country without having Vaccine for CORONA.

"Our major issues and challenges are: Rents of our premises, salaries of our staff, taxes, levies and compliances, electricity and water bills, necessary establishment costs, to keep industry on breathing mood we need 10% to 20% of our annual turnover as capital infusion. "Worldwide people in general and business community in particular are looking towards their respective Governments. These entire stimulus, financial and economic packages are not any favor to the people. during good times people pay to their government in shape of Taxes and other charges to make nations float and Governments run , similarly during these rough times which is worst ever in last century, Governments have duty to pay back to the people to keep them surviving. These governments of the day need not to do it as favor or goodwill, but duty with Compassion, Empathy and feeling for humanity," the statement added.

OPEC, Russia approve 'historic' oil cuts amid coronavirus



VIENNA: Top oil-producing countries agreed on "historic" output cuts to prop up prices hammered by the coronavirus crisis and a Russia-Saudi price war, sending crude prices soaring on Monday. The US benchmark WTI climbed 7.7 percent to \$24.52 a barrel in early Asian trade while Brent was up 5.0 percent at \$33.08.

OPEC producers dominated by Saudi Arabia and allies led by Russia thrashed out a compromise deal via videoconference Sunday after Mexico had balked at an earlier agreement struck on Friday.

In the compromise reached Sunday they agreed to a cut of 9.7 million barrels per day from May, according to Mexican Energy Minister Rocio Nahle, down slightly from 10 million barrels a day envi-

sioned earlier.

OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo called the cuts "historic".

"They are largest in volume and the longest in duration, as they are planned to last for two years," he said.

The agreement between the Vienna-based Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and partners foresees deep output cuts in May and June followed by a gradual reduction in cuts until April 2022.

Barkindo added that the deal "paved the way for a global alliance with the participation of the G20". Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, who chaired the meeting together with his Russian and Algerian counterparts, also confirmed that the discussions "ended with consensus".

Job loss, pay cut on cards for Indian IT industry due to lockdown

HYDERABAD: Indicating that prolonged lockdown to contain coronavirus spread may lead to job cuts in the Indian IT industry, NASSCOM former president R Chandrasekhar has said that the work-from-home culture may become a positive development in the long run as it opens up newer avenues and save investments by IT firms.

The former bureaucrat also said startups which are surviving on funds infused by venture capitalists may face tougher situations if the present scenario deteriorates.

"The larger companies may not be actually cutting jobs for two reasons. One is that they do not want to lose their employees and they have money to pay. Many of them (big companies), even if they do shed some jobs it might be at the most people who are on temporary or intern type and all. But they would not want regular and permanent employees to go. So as long as they have sufficient flexibility in their books, they would continue," said NASSCOM former president.

"But beyond a point that it goes on, for let us say, two months or three months, then even for them, they will feel the pressure. They may not just keep on providing subsidies to the employees. So the key question will be how long that goes on," Chandrasekhar said.

He also said the work-from-home systems being adopted by several firms across the globe, including India, may have a negative impact on the industry in the short-term, but in the long run it would change the work culture which hitherto was not experienced by many of the IT firms in India.

On impact of the prolonged lockdown on startups, he said it would be a big challenge for the budding enterprises as the investments they get are based on their ideas and future revenues and the present situation under which peoples movement is curbed may shackle their progress.

"Where will they (startups) get money to pay salaries to their employees. Venture capital investors would not pay the money or invest their money to pay salaries because they are not in the charity business."

If the employees are not paid and if they leave and it is difficult for the startup again to come up. So the whole investment plan goes for a toss, he said.

Former chairman of NASSCOM, B V R Mohan Reddy said a clear picture as to what is going to happen has not yet emerged as the situation with all respects is still evolving. Reddy said there will be a demand shrinkage for the IT industry as the entire world is under stress. "There is no economy in this world that is going to do well in this situation.

Agriculture Department Designates Officers to guide farmers

SRINAGAR: Department of Agriculture, Kashmir, today launched a 24x7 Helpline and senior officers of the Department have been designated to provide guidance, to the farmers, pertaining to the agricultural activities during Covid-19 lockdown.

The main objective of setting up the helpline is to answer the queries regarding different field operations and agricultural activities to the callers and to make sure that every farmer and grower can access credible and accurate information regarding different field crops and other agriculture activities on ground.

In this regard, the officers who have been designated to provide the requisite guidance to the farming community round the clock include Altaf Aijaz Andrabi, Director Agriculture Kashmir, (General Agriculture), 9419008391, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, Joint Director Agriculture Kashmir Extension/Inputs Kashmir, (General Agriculture), 9419104117, M. I. Khateeb, Joint Director Agriculture Engineering, (Engineering), 9419149569, Dr. Syed Waseem Ahmad Shah, Agrostologist, (Fodders),



7889749020, Mr. Fida Iqbal, Floriculture Development Officer, (Floriculture), 9419013818, Manzoor Ahmad Shah, Seed Production Officer, (Vegetables), 7006902014, Mr. Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Manager Padgampora, (Pulses & Cereals), 7889566938, Navtej Singh, Mush-

room Development Officer, (Mushroom Cultivation), 7780819894, Waheed-ur-Rehman, Assistant Entomologist, (Bee Keeping), 9419091753, Sheikh Imran, Assistant Director, Law Enforcement, (Pesticides/ Insecticides/ Fertilizers), 7889555622.

Sensex ends 470 points lower, Nifty below 9,000 mark

MUMBAI: Equity benchmark Sensex on Monday tumbled about 470 points, dragged by losses mainly in index heavyweights HDFC twins, RIL and ICICI Bank as investors weighed the possibility of a lockdown extension amid mounting Covid-19 cases in the country.

After hitting a low of 30,474.15 during the day, the 30-share BSE barometer ended 469.60 points or 1.51 per cent lower at 30,690.02.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty dropped 118.05 points or 1.30 per cent to 8,993.85. Bajaj Finance was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, slumping over 10 per cent, followed by M&M, Titan, Hero MotoCorp, ICICI Bank and Tech Mahindra.

On the other hand, L&T, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cements and NTPC were among the gainers.

Sensex heavyweights HDFC twins fell as much as 3.12 per cent, while Reliance Industries shed 2.46 per cent.

Indian bourses opened on a neg-



ative note tracking subdued global market peers in Asia, said Narendra Solanki, Head- Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi. "Sentiments remained downbeat due to rise in Covid-19 cases in the country and fears of extended lockdown weighed in which led sell-off and short-term profit booking in most financial services and bank stocks," he noted.

The markets remained volatile ahead of release of CPI data later in the day, he added. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Tokyo and Seoul ended significantly lower. Stock exchanges in Europe remained closed for 'Easter Monday'.

Meanwhile, the rupee provisionally settled for the day on a flat note at 76.27 against the US dollar. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 2.06 per cent to USD 30.83 per barrel.

The commodity had rallied earlier in the day after Opec producers dominated by Saudi Arabia and allies led by Russia thrashed out a compromise deal on Sunday to cut production by nearly 10 million barrels per day from May.

The death toll due to the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to 308 on Monday after 35 new fatalities were reported, while the number of cases climbed to 9,152, according to the Union Health Ministry.

Migrant workers case: SC asks Centre about steps taken for payment of wages to them

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre what steps it was taking to address the issues concerning payment of wages to migrant workers employed in private industries and those rendered unemployed in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, legal news website BarandBench.com reported.

The Bench comprising Chief Justice of India SA Bobde and Justices L Nageswara Rao and Mohan M Shantanagoudar took up a batch of petitions concerning the plight of migrant workers via video conferencing. Petitions on this issue include those filed by former bureaucrat Harsh Mander and RTI activist Anjali Bhardwaj, as well as a letter petition by Member of Parliament Mahua Moitra.

In its status report submitted earlier, the Centre had detailed all the steps taken for the welfare and benefit of migrant workers. It had submitted that no migrant workers were left stranded on roads as on March 31, and that they were being lodged in shelter homes. The court had then passed directions to make sure that the inmates in these shelter homes are provided with adequate food, water, medicines et al. On Monday, Justice Rao asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta whether the Centre was taking steps for payment of wages or for providing

some income to workers who have no means to support themselves during the lockdown.

SG Mehta referred to a status report filed by the Centre, which details the amount of money released towards being deposited in the accounts of daily wage workers through a direct benefit scheme. The court, however, did not have these documents being referred to. In the absence of the requisite documents being referred to, the court asked for the same to be circulated. It has fixed the next hearing for next week, noting that no orders can be passed without the information furnished by the Centre.

As regards wages, the Supreme Court had earlier stated that it does not wish to pass any directions to interfere with the policy decisions taken by the Centre in the present situation, at least for some time. The Centre subsequently apprised the court of the amount of money released towards payment of wages to the migrant workers. During the hearing of Moitra's plea, it was argued that the government was not doing enough. Setting up a helpline number or developing an app was not adequate. She asked how the government intended to ensure the implementation of its advisory asking employers not to lay off workers and to pay their wages during the lockdown.

Weak economy, lower consumption to dent advertisement spends in media: KPMG

MUMBAI: In what can be seen as a marker of difficult days for the media and entertainment sector, a consultancy firm on Monday said weak economy and lower consumption will dent advertising spends even after the Covid-19 crisis is over.

A change in consumption habits to consume more of digital media is the silver-lining, but others like theatres and events-based segments are set to have a longer period of struggle, according to a note on the sector by KPMG.

The country is presently under a three-week lockdown due to the pandemic, which is most likely to continue longer. Much ahead of the lockdown, a lot of key states like Maharashtra had completely stopped theatres, and fears of more waves of infection are likely to dent the sector longer even after the crisis is over. The consultancy firm said the media and entertainment sector has grown at 11.5 per cent per year over the last five years to Rs 1.63 lakh crore as of end of FY19. "Ad-spend pressures will linger on the back of weak economy and lower domestic consumption," the consultancy firm said in a special report on the sector, which comes amid widespread concerns on the impact of the crisis.

It added that monetisation is predominantly reliant on advertising, which has seen a major contraction and the poor performance of key advertisers in FMCG, e-commerce, automotive, financial services, real estate sectors will also have an impact.

On a segmental basis, the firm said while TV viewership has grown, it has not been accompanied by a surge in ad revenues, and also faces the increased competition from the over the top (OTT) segment from a long-term perspective.



How Kerala Is Poised To Win The Fight Against Covid-19

KOCHI: Of all of India's states, Kerala is the best poised to win the fight against the novel coronavirus. As things stand, there's a clear indication of a flattening of the infection curve in the state.

The number of fresh cases has fallen to the least in the country and the number of cured patients is escalating every day.

On Sunday, only two fresh Covid-19 cases were reported from the state, the least number in the past few weeks. On the same day, 36 patients recovered and emerged from quarantine.

If the state continues to maintain for another two weeks the current trend of fewer new cases and higher number of cured patients, it will have come out triumphant from the jaws of this killer epidemic.

The state of 35 million people is already being touted internationally as a model for fighting Covid-19.

The difference is stark when one compares Kerala and Maharashtra.

At the beginning of the lockdown period, both states started out with almost the same number of Covid-19 cases. On March 26, Maharashtra had 122 corona positive cases and Kerala 120.

In the three weeks since then, the number of corona positive cases in Kerala has risen to 375 positive cases, with 179 cured patients and two deaths, while Maharashtra's numbers ballooned to 1895 cases and 127 deaths.

Kerala's success is evident from several epidemic indices.

MORTALITY RATE

Though the first Covid-19 case in Kerala was reported on January 30, the death rate has been only 0.54 per cent, which is way below the global average of 6.12 per cent. Only two deaths have been reported in the state so far though the number of confirmed cases is 375.

As of April 12, Madhya Pradesh had the highest death rate of 7.65 per cent (562 cases/43 deaths) in India followed by Maharashtra with a mortality rate of 6.70 per cent (1895 cases/127 deaths) and Gujarat with 4.66 per cent (493 cases/23 deaths).

In contrast, worst-hit countries like Italy have a mortality rate of 12.78 per cent while in the US the fatality rate is 3.94 per cent.

Though Kerala was the state with the highest number of positive cases in the country for a couple of weeks, the state has since then kept the infection and death rates relatively low despite aggressive tracing and testing.

Ratio of positive cases to number of tests

As of April 12, Kerala sent 14,989 samples for the Covid-19 diagnosis test, of which 13,802 came back negative. The state tests at the rate of 400 per million, which is much higher than the test rates in most of the other states. Delhi also has a high number of Covid tests.

BEST RATE

The recovery rate in Kerala also is the highest compared to other states and countries. Of the 375 corona positive cases confirmed in the state, 179 patients have been cured and discharged so far. That's a recovery rate of 47.73 per cent, which is the highest in the country.

According to data from the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the total number of confirmed cases in India is 9152 while the number of cured patients is 857. The recovery rate is only 9.36 per cent.

Globally, with 18,50,220 confirmed cases and 4,30,455 recovered patients, the global recovery rate is 22.86 per cent. In the US, the recovery rate is as low as 5.82 per cent and 21.87 per cent in Italy.

NUMBER OF HOTSPOTS

In Kerala, seven districts were initially identified as Covid-19 hotspots: Kasargod, Kannur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram. However, some districts like Ernakulam have not recorded even a single fresh case in the past one week. There has been a considerable decrease in the number of persons under observation as well.

Currently, Kasargod and Kannur have the highest number of patients under treatment and both these northern districts are under tight restrictions.

India in the process of flattening the curve, says scientist

Press Trust Of India

BENGALURU: Eminent scientist and NITI Aayog member V K Saraswat said on Monday the number of COVID-19 cases is not going to go beyond what's being reported daily in India as he maintained that the country is in the process of flattening the curve.

The former Scientific Adviser to Defence Minister said the coronavirus positive cases

and that has also been one of the factors for the kind of rise that has taken place."

But he said India is in a much better shape compared to other nations in the battle against COVID-19. "I can only say that the rate is not going to go beyond what has been going on now, may be 700 to 800 cases per day. So, we are in the process of flattening the curve."

The government's deci-



have seen a sharper rise in the last four-five days because of increase in the number of testing.

"It's a good sign; all those asymptomatic cases lying hidden they are also coming out," Saraswat told PTI. "We certainly had a catalytic factor which was basically this (Nizamuddin) Markaz problem which has actually created clusters at different places

sion to declare nation-wide lockdown has paid dividends, Saraswat, a former chief of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, said. Noting that India has seen a series of virus attacks in the last 15-20 years including Chikungunya and Dengue, he said the emphasis now should be on more and more R & D to find vaccines in advance.

Real estate players fear pay cuts, job losses as coronavirus lockdown hits revenue

NEW DELHI: Real estate sector, which is estimated to incur a loss of over Rs 1 lakh crore due to nationwide lockdown, is likely to see pay cuts and job losses as cash-strapped builders will look to reduce their fixed cost at a time when their sales revenue has almost come to a grinding halt, according to industry players.

However, property developers and consultants believe that damage could be minimised if the government announces a big relief package for the industry as well as the

of business organizations. So, a pay cut might be the first reaction across business organizations, some jobs being lost might be the second."

He said that revenues of developers, which had already been facing liquidity crunch, would be badly hit, resulting in defaults in repayment of debts. "If outstanding payments get defaulted on, and the numbers keep rising, companies may go bankrupt, this in turn will directly impact jobs. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, job



overall economy.

"Real sector is the second-largest employer after agriculture and provides for both blue and white collar jobs. Construction and other allied workers comprise a very important segment of the Realty Sector. There might be job losses and pay cuts," CREDAI (National) Chairman Jaxay Shah said.

As of now, he said, the priority is to provide labourers with basic amenities. "It's too soon to say anything on pay cuts as this will totally depend on how long the pandemic continues," Shah said.

NAREDCO President Niranjan Hiranandani said: "There will be an obvious impact on sales, and that in turn will impact profitability

losses were around 15 per cent of the total workforce, this may increase to 25 per cent," Hiranandani said.

However, he said if the government soon announces a stimulus package, "Things may not end up being so bad, in terms of companies going bankrupt or jobs being lost."

Puravankara Ltd MD Ashish Puravankara said, "While the listed players, like us, who are geographically de-risked and have diverse business portfolio, will be able to plan and organise the next steps; the current impasse may pose a problem in the long term for a few companies who might have to take some austerity measures in the shape of job losses or pay cuts."

Supreme Court terms PIL against PM CARES Fund 'misconceived'

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking quashing of the decision to set up the PM CARES Fund, where people can donate money, to deal with the situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde described the PIL filed by lawyer M L Sharma as "misconceived" and dismissed it in a hearing conducted through video conferencing.

The bench, which also comprised justices L Nageswara Rao and M M Shantanagoudar, did not agree to the contention of the lawyer that the fund has been created without following

the schemes enumerated under Articles 266 and 267 (which deal with the contingency and the Consolidated Funds of India) of the Constitution.



On March 28, the Centre set up the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund with the primary objective to deal with any kind of

emergency situation like the one currently posed by the COVID-19 outbreak and provide relief to those affected.

The prime minister is the ex-officio chairman of the fund and the defence, home and finance ministers are its ex-officio trustees.

"That cause of action arose to the petitioner on March 28, upon having press release for the formation of impugned PM CARES Fund and appeal by the Prime Minister of India to donate funds in that trust to fight COVID-19 and aid healthcare in future without any ordinance and gazette notification by the government of India," the PIL has said.

The plea had made all the trustees of the fund as

well as the prime minister parties to it and had sought a transfer of the donations received so far in the fund to the Consolidated Fund of India, besides a court-monitored Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the setting up of the fund.

It said the trust had to be created in accordance with Articles 267 and 266(2), which deal with the contingency and the Consolidated Funds of India, of the Constitution.

"Impugned trust has not either been created by Parliament/state legislator within Article 267. It is neither passed by Parliament nor approved by the President of India. There is no ordinance/gazette notification in this regard," the PIL has said.

BOTTOM LINE

Uttar Pradesh: Muslims fear lynching post lockdown due to intense communal profiling over Corona

NEW DELHI: Muslims in Uttar Pradesh are now worried that the intense communal profiling of the Corona patients by the official agencies could lead to lynching incidents once the lockdown is lifted.

Muslim scholar and former SP spokesman, Abdul Hafiz Gandhi, on Monday said, "The manner in which the government agencies are identifying persons belonging to Tablighi Jamaat in the list of Covid-19 patients is now translating into intense communal profiling which has been prohibited by the World Health Organization and the central government. A very small

percentage of Muslims subscribe to the Tablighi Jamaat ideology but the impression going around is that the Muslim community, in general, is spreading coronavirus."

He said that there was a strong possibility of Muslims, in general, being attacked after the lockdown is lifted.

"This is exactly what happened on the cow slaughter issue. Even a small rumour led to people being lynched by mobs across the country. Corona is a pandemic and should be treated like one. We should fight against the virus together instead of creating a communal di-



vide. Every day, the government spokesman lays down the number of Corona positive cases and then goes on to say how many of them are from Tablighi Jamaat," he explained.

Amir Haider, a social activist and also a veteran Congress leader, echoed similar sentiments when he said, "We strongly condemn the Tablighi Jamaat for ignoring the protocols and holding the congregation but why is the state government repeatedly harping on the religious angle. Shia and Sunni clerics are repeatedly asking the people to adhere to government guidelines

and follow safety protocols.

He said that efforts to create a communal divide on the corona issue could have dangerous ramifications after the lockdown is lifted."

A retired IAS officer, who did not wish to be named, said, that people have already started objecting to taking home deliveries from Muslim employees.

"My neighbours refused to take delivery of groceries from a Muslim boy. This is just the beginning of the narrative that is being drilled into the minds. We must check this before it explodes into something very dangerous," he said.