



Maximum : 19°C
Minimum : 09°C
Humidity : 68%

SUNSET
Today 07:19 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:37 AM



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FOOD SAFETY, SHOPPING & COVID-19: WHAT YOU SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T BE DOING

With online delivery slots fully booked for days ahead in big cities, doing shopping runs has been a necessity lately. Although people are trying to keep these trips to a bare minimum, contact with the outside world is inevitable, even if you are having groceries delivered to your doorstep. This is raising many questions about how safe grocery shopping is and whether the bags and containers could potentially expose people to the virus. These concerns have largely stemmed from the fact that the novel virus can survive on some surfaces for a few days.....

.....LIFE & TIMES
P6

News Digest

12 TH RAMAZAN		
IFTAR	SEHRI	
TODAY	TOMMOROW	
FIQAH HANAFIYA	07:21	04:03
FIQAH JAFARIYA	07:31	04:02

Ex IAS Officer Sharma Named PSC Chairman

Srinagar- Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday appointed former IAS officer B R Sharma as Chairman Public Service Commission. The order to appoint the B R Sharma as PSC chairman was issued by Dr Farooq Ahmad Lone (IAS) Secretary to the government on the directions of Lieutenant Governor G C Murmu. "In exercise of powers conferred by section 93 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, and S.O. 3937 (E) dated 31st October 2019, read with the order issued in ● P-02

Handwara Boy Buried In Cemetery For Unknown

Kupwara- A 14-year-old boy from Qaziabad village of Handwara in Kupwara district who was killed in the cross fire at Wangam crossing Sunday evening was laid to rest in Sheeri graveyard of Baramulla where usually unidentified foreign militants are buried. Family members of the slain boy said that their son, Hazim Shafi Bhat, only brother of three young sisters was laid to rest at Sheeri, Baramulla graveyard this morning with attendance of only 17 persons. ● P-02

Anantnag Deaths: DC Assures Strict Action

Srinagar: The district authorities in south Kashmir's Anantnag on Tuesday assured strict action against any negligence, if any, into the death of two pregnant women after completion of probe within three days. Addressing journalists in the south Kashmir district today, the District Magistrate, Anantnag, Bashir Ahmad Dar said that whoever will be found responsible of negligence will be ● P-02

Family In Quarantine, Burglars Loot House

Srinagar: Unknown burglars struck an abandoned house in north Kashmir's Tangmarg as the family is currently under quarantine at a government run health facility, reports said Tuesday. Taking advantage of the family in quarantine, unidentified burglars broke into the house of Muhammad Akbar Ganai in Hardu Chiloo village of Tangmarg decamped with many valuable items, news agency KNT reported. ● P-02

HC 'Rings A Bell' On Durbar Move

Asks Centre To Look Into Its Necessity

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU- The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday asked decision makers, including the Centre, to look into the necessity of the 148-year-old biannual Durbar move, keeping in mind the financial implication of more than Rs 200 crore incurred by the "hopelessly fiscally deprived Union Territory".

In its 93-page judgement, a division bench of the court headed by Chief Justice Geeta Mittal also listed the suggestion made by senior advocate Monika Kohli, who had highlighted the digitisation of officials records.

Hearing a self-adopted public interest litigation, the division bench gave the historical perspective of biannual Durbar move whereby the capital of Jammu and Kashmir is shifted every six months from Jammu (winter capital) to Srinagar (summer capital).

The court said that from the facts placed regarding the Dur-

bar move, the disregard of public interest in its origins and implementation, its adverse effects, the huge fiscal, social and economic costs, amply manifest that its propriety, feasibility and efficacy of the arrangement is one such matter "overlooked and forgotten".

"The material placed before us manifests that there has been no application of mind to the changed circumstances because of technological and scientific advances. Our judicial conscience compels us to ring the bell else we would fail in discharging our judicial duty or to perform our constitutional function as demanded in the interest of the Nation and the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially its common woman and man, the poor and the weak.

"We hasten to add that conscious of the limitations of our jurisdiction, we shall confine ourselves to 'ringing the bell' without anything more."

"We have recorded our reasons and judgment on the ●PAGE 02

WE HASTEN TO ADD THAT CONSCIOUS
of the limitations of our jurisdiction, we shall confine ourselves to 'ringing the bell' without anything more."

Mehbooba's Detention Under PSA Extended By 3 Months

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Public Safety Act against former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti was extended by three months on Tuesday, officials said.

In a brief order, district magistrate of Srinagar handed over the continuation of her custody at her residence, hours before her present



term under the PSA was to expire. She was initially detained on August 5 last year when the Centre abrogated special ●PAGE 02

Curbs, Concealed Cameras, Couriered Chips: How Kashmir Won Pulitzer

Jyotsna Bharti

NEW DELHI: FROM hiding their cameras in vegetable sacks to courier their chips to their New Delhi office through some airborne travellers, the two Kashmiri photojournalists did it all to picture Kashmir during its worst communication crisis last summer.

They recall the times with bemused faces, when they had to seek shelter in peoples' homes to stay close to the action spot.

With phones dead and internet snapped, following the abrogation of J&K's special status, these photojournalists like their tribe



couldn't contact their families for days together. And with additional troops manning the streets in the valley then, some of them even

faced the street hostility. However, nine months later, Mukhtar Khan and Dar Yasin, along with their Jammu-based Associated

Press (AP) colleague, Channi Anand, have bagged the prestigious Pulitzer for their remarkable work.

The award announced by Pulitzer board administrator Dana Canedy on Youtube amid the coronavirus outbreak has been given to Khan and Yasin for their exceptional work in the valley after the abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019.

Soon after the announcement, Mukhtar Khan who began his journalism career with Kashmir Observer was seen sharing a happy family frame.

Similar joyous scenes came from the Dar Yasin's home following the announcement. ●PAGE 02

Ex-KO Staffer Won Pulitzer

'Despite Pressure, Did My Job Honestly'

Auqib Javeed

FATEH KADEL, Srinagar — Twenty two years before he would win the prestigious Pulitzer Award, Mukhtar Khan had walked in Kashmir Observer newsroom as a promising rookie, whose photos were class apart on the daily's frontpage.

"Khan had that spark and eye for detail," Sajjad Haider, editor-in-chief of Kashmir Observer, said. "But I made him run around as I could see promise in him."

That promise culminated into the highest journalism award, Pulitzer, on Tuesday, when Khan along with his Associated Press (AP) colleagues, Dar Yasin and Channi Anand, won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography.

The trio got the prize for their "striking images of life".

"It was unbelievable," Khan told Kashmir Observer. "For a moment I couldn't believe that I have won the award." ●PAGE 02



Mukhtar along with his family was glued to laptop on Tuesday night to hear the announcement. And once the news came, the family broke into midnight celebrations.

KPC Greets Winners

The Kashmir Press Club (KPC) on Tuesday congratulated the Associated Press (AP) photojournalists Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand for winning 2020 Pulitzer Prize in feature photography. The three outstanding photojournalists from Jammu and Kashmir won the world's biggest journalism award for their coverage ● P-02

Rahul Faces Flak For Greeting Kashmir Journalists

The BJP on Tuesday attacked the Congress after Rahul Gandhi congratulated three photojournalists from Jammu and Kashmir for winning the Pulitzer Prize and asked if the opposition party considers the Valley as an integral part of India or not. BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra attacked the Congress over its leader's congratulatory tweet to the photojournalists, alleging that Gandhi had wished those who considered Kashmir a "contested territory". "Will Sonia Gandhi answer? Whether she and the Congress party concur with Rahul Gandhi on the issue of Kashmir not being an integral part of India! Rahul today congratulated those who got an award for considering Kashmir as a 'Contested Territory'!" Patra said ● P-02

Mother, 2 Minors Among 15 More Test Covid-19 Positive, J&K Tally At 741

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) corporator, a mother and her two minor daughters were among 15 more people who tested positive for coronavirus in Kashmir on Tuesday, taking the number of the infected people across the Jammu and Kashmir Union territory to 741, said an official.

"Fifteen new cases have been reported from Jammu and Kashmir in the last 24 hours," the officials said adding that seventeen patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals.

Nine of the cases out of 898 sam-

ples taken by the viral diagnostic lab of Valley's premier SK institute of medical sciences Soura here came positive for Covid-19. Among them, six are from Shopian, two from Baniptora and one from Baramulla in north Kashmir.

Another five new cases in Valley were confirmed by the officials at the Chest Diseases hospital here, while Udhampur district reported a fresh case, taking its tally of positive cases to 21.

The five new cases reported at CD hospital include a 34-old woman and her two minor daughters aged 7 and 13 from Wander Mohalla of Rainawari. Another case from Srinagar is

a SMC corporator from Narwara area of Old City. The fifth case is a 30-year-old woman from Telwani area of Anantnag district.

Regarding Shopian cases, they said, 55-year-old male from Manzpora while five others are from Heerpora, one of the worst-hit areas in the southern Kashmir district and include 18-year-old and 35-year-old women and three men—one of them a teenager (18) while two others are 25-year-old and 50-year-old respectively.

Baniptora reported two fresh cases—one of them a 6-year-old boy from Naidkhai and other 41-year-old man from Gund Kaiser while ●PAGE 02

Corporator Tests Positive

SMC Moves Many Into Quarantine

Four days after his brother tested positive for the novel coronavirus, swap samples of SMC corporator, a resident of Narwara Srinagar, on Tuesday, returned positive for the disease.

The development has prompted Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to move around a dozen corporators as well as staff associated with Mayor and his deputy to quarantine.

Nodal Officer Dr Saleem Khan confirmed that the corporator ● P-02

To Be, Or Not To Be, That's SMC's Quarantine Question

At a time when its ground staff is actively carrying out the disinfection drive to keep the novel coronavirus at bay, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) is witnessing a clear confusion in its higher ranks regarding the recent development.

SMC Commissioner and Mayor seem to be at the loggerheads over an order issued to corporators and staffers of the corporation to go under self-quarantine after a corporator's brother tested positive for coronavirus last week. While SMC Commissioner, Gazanfar Ali on Monday said that no order asking officials to go for home quarantine have been issued or received by his office, the Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu had a different story to narrate. In a 44-second video released from his residence, Mattu said that the brother of one of their colleagues in SMC has tested positive for the novel coronavirus and as an extra ● P-02

Security Forces Have Upper Hand Over Militants: Special DG CRPF Anti-Militancy Ops To Be Intensified: J&K DGP

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A day after three CRPF personnel were killed in a surprise militant attack in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, special Director General of CRPF Zulfiqar Hassan said Tuesday that the security forces continue to have upper hand over militant organisations and anti-national forces.

Talking to journalists after visiting the shootout spot in Qaziabad Handwara today, Hassan said that the attack was carried out on joint team of police and CRPF when they were performing their duties. He said the exchange of fire continued for nearly 30 minutes leaving three CRPF personnel killed.

"We have started working out on



it. Those responsible for this attack will not be spared and action will be taken against them," he said.

The Special DG further said that sometimes such incidents occur when the forces lose their own men

in the attacks "Militant attacks keep on happening in Valley. Indian army, CRPF and police have upper hand in fight against the militancy and anti-national organisations. ●PAGE 02

Militants Fled With 2 Rifles After Killing 3 CRPF Men

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: The militants fled with two assault rifles after killing three CRPF personnel in an audacious attack in north Kashmir's Handwara on Monday, reports said Tuesday.

Quoting a senior police officer, a news agency GNS reported today that the militants associated with little known outfit The Resistance Front (TRF) snatched two rifles from the spot in Wangam crossing in Kralgund Handwara after carrying out deadly attack on the paramilitary troops.

"The investigation is underway," the officer said and responded in affirmative when asked if the militants ●PAGE 02

2 Security Men Injured In Budgam Grenade Attack

Two security personnel including a police officer besides four civilians were injured in a grenade attack at Pakherpora area of Chrar-e-Sharif in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Tuesday afternoon.

Reports said that militants hurled the grenade towards joint deployment of 181BN CRPF and police in Pakherpora. In the attack, Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police ● P-02

Govt Okays Separate Meteorological Centre For Leh

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Government of India on Tuesday approved creation of a separate meteorological centre in the newly carved Union Territory of Ladakh for weather forecasts. So far the Met office was headquartered in Srinagar.

An order issued by the office of the Director General of Meteorology, New Delhi reads that, "It has been decided by the Government of India to establish meteorological centre (MC) at Leh, the capital of Union Territory of Ladakh, to meet the meteorological services of Ladakh."

"This Meteorological centre

will be headed by an officer of Group 'A' level, who will function directly under the control of Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC), New Delhi," reads the office order issued by Deputy Director General (Admin), Y K Reddy.

According to the order, a copy of which is in possession of Kashmir Observer, the new meteorological centre will cater to all the operational meteorological services of Ladakh and issue weather forecast and adverse weather warnings etc, as per the mandate of IMD and will keep close liaison with MC Srinagar, RMC New Delhi and the state government ●PAGE 02



Coffins of 3 CRPF men being carried away after wreath laying ceremony at RTC Humhama on Tuesday. Pic Abid Bhat

HC ‘Rings A Bell’ On Durbar Move...

several aspects which arise on account of the implementation of the Durbar move in the UT...we have also noted the several steps on which we have no information at all, say, for instance, the cost incurred on the security forces and the police utilised for ensuring” the move.

“We are sure that these costs will be equal to, if not more than the expenditure which has been disclosed to us,” Justice Mittal and Justice Rajnesh Oswal said in the judgement.

However, the court expressed its inability to pass an order saying it had listed its “limitations on the extent of our jurisdiction whereby we stand precluded from making a declaration on the permissibility or the continuation of the practice of the Durbar Move.

Deferring this task to the “best wisdom of those on whom the Constitution of India bestows this solemn duty”, the division bench asked that the judgement be served on Union home secretary and chief secretary of the UT “with the direction to place the same before competent authorities for examining the issues raised and taking a considered decision thereon.”

The judgement began with a question raised by the division bench asking “whether any government can afford the annual expenditure of at least Rs 200 crores (as disclosed and many more hundreds of crores of rupees of undisclosed costs) for shifting of its capital two times a year, a practice which started in 1872 from the discomfort of the then ruler of Jammu and Kashmir with the harshness of the winter in Kashmir?”

“More so, is this acceptable in a hopelessly fiscally deprived UT with severe underdevelopment and people deprived of bare basics which are essential part of their fundamental right of life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India,” the court asked.

Kohli drew attention of the court to a report that the Centre had already released around Rs 24 crore for purchase of hardware and software for the Civil Secretariat and also released funds for digitisation of official records.

She had submitted before the court that government records ought not be taken out of its safe holdings and it should be properly secured and preserved at a proper place.

Calling for urgent revisit of old paradigms Kohli gave a historical perspective of the biannual shifting and said the then Maharaja Ranbir Singh made the arrangement of shifting the Durbar from Srinagar to Jammu to escape severe winter in the Valley and Jammu heat in the summer.

“The discomfort on account of change of weather in either city, is, today compensated by efficient and modern environment control mechanism as air conditioning, heaters etc in both Jammu as well as Srinagar,” she said.

She argued before the court that both the cities were well connected by air and road and said, “It is clearly logical that the consideration of extreme weather in support of the Durbar move does not hold weight today.”

The court, in its judgement said, “It is necessary to bear in mind that the Darbar move requires moving government records out of the safe spaces of offices where they are maintained, packing in fragile trunks, loaded into vulnerable hired transportation and exposed to the risk of theft, pilferage, destruction and damage, as they are ferried on the public roads and the National Highway for over 300 kms in all kinds of weather conditions.

“These records would be including sensitive documents and old archives which cannot tolerate exposure of any kind... Such documents may be on matters of security of the country as well as of the Union Territory. This security ought not be compromised for any reason whatsoever,” it said.

Mehbooba’s Detention Under PSA Extended...

status of the erstwhile state and bifurcated it into two union territories -- Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Having spent over eight months in detention at two government facilities that were designated as sub-jails, Mufti was shifted to her home on April 7 as a partial relief to her.

Mufti heads the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which was in power in Jammu and Kashmir in alliance with the BJP till June 2018.

Initially, she was taken into preventive custody. Later on February 5 this year, she was slapped with the PSA along with Omar Abdullah, who was released in March. Farooq Abdullah had been released early last month.

Earlier, Mufti was lodged a government guesthouse in Chashma Shahi and a bungalow on Maulana Azad Road near Lal Chowk.

Daughter of Mehbooba, Iltija has moved a habeas corpus petition before the Supreme Court in February challenging her mother’s detention.

A three-judge bench had issued a notice to the Jammu and Kashmir administration seeking its response on the plea and posted the matter for a hearing on March 18. However, the petition was not taken up for hearing due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Habeas corpus is a writ seeking production of a person supposed to be in illegal detention before a court.

Curbs, Concealed Cameras, Couriered Chips: How...

In an official statement on their website, Pulitzer said the Kashmiri photographers were selected for their “striking images of life in the disputed Himalayan territory”.

The Pulitzer-winning photographers have risked their lives to showcase the turmoil and mayhem of Kashmiri People when curbs and curfew made Kashmir an information black-hole.

“It was always cat-and-mouse,” Yasin recalled the trying time. “These things made us more determined than ever to

never be silenced.”

“This honour continues AP’s great tradition of award-winning photography,” said AP President and CEO Gary Pruitt.

“Thanks to the team inside Kashmir,” Gary Pruitt added, “the world was able to witness a dramatic escalation of the long struggle over the region’s independence. Their work was important and superb.”

Channi Anand, AP’s Jammu photographer, said the award left him speechless.

“I was shocked and could not believe it,” he said, calling the prize-winning photos a continuation of the work he’s been doing for 20 years with the AP.”

People across the valley are showering love and respect to these “larger than life” photographers who chose to essay their story to the world in their way and let Kashmir depict its story via them.

Yasin says their prize-winning work has both professional and personal meaning to him.

“It’s not the story of the people I am shooting, only, but it’s my story,” Dar said. “It’s a great honour to be in the list of Pulitzer winners and to share my story with the world.”

The prizes, considered the most prestigious for US journalism, are associated with the Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism where the judging is done and is announced, although this year it was done remotely.

Besides a certificate, the prizes carry a cash award of \$15,000, except the public service category for which a gold medal is awarded.

‘Despite Pressure, Did My Job Honestly’...

Soon as the family’s happy frame went viral on social media, the entire Kashmir erupted in joy.

A resident of Fateh Kadal in old Srinagar, Khan was born in the year 1979. As a passionate photographer since his childhood, he comes from a well-to-do family where all his brothers inherited established family business spread beyond Jammu and Kashmir.

He despite being youngest and darling of the family opted out and chose the “tough and challenging” profession at the height of insurgency in Kashmir.

In his two decade long career, Khan has extensively covered Kashmir Conflict and its myriad shades.

Before joining AP in 2000, he worked as Kashmir Observer staffer for over three years.

“I learned a lot at Kashmir Observer,” Khan, who acquired photography skills from another noted photo journalist Rafiq Maqbool, said. “The friendly newsroom atmosphere boosted my confidence. We would daily discuss pictures like story ideas.”

He said the editor-in-chief of the daily would give his pictures prominent space in the newspaper.

Last summer, Khan along with his colleagues covered Kashmir amid complete lockdown which included a sweeping curfew and shutdowns of phone and internet services.

“It was very difficult time for my tribe to work in the field after the abrogation of Article 370 on 5th August,” Khan said.

“We would click pictures and reach the Srinagar airport, where we would convince Kashmiri passengers to drop photo chips to our Delhi office. There was lot of pressure but we had to show the ground reality to the world and I believe we did our job honestly.”

It was the time when journalists were falling in lines for internet connection in government-run “Media Facilitation Centre” in Srinagar.

Previously, Khan bagged the Commonwealth Photography award and Atlanta Photojournalism award.

The news of Pulitzer Award came at a time when the journalists in Kashmir are facing state summons.

“Summons, harassment and intimidation is part of job,” Khan said. “We should keep journalism ethics in mind and work honestly.”

KPC Greets Winners...

post-August 5 lockdown period.

KPC in a statement said that this is an incredible honor for not only for them but for Kashmir Press Club as well as Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan happen to be our members.

“This Pulitzer to the three photojournalists from J&K is an incredible honor and also a proud and big moment for all the media fraternity in J&K as the journalists in the region have always worked in toughest circumstances, risked their lives and always tried to deliver in a rationale and objective manner. This award is recognition of the hard work and professionalism of these photo journalists and the Kashmir Press Club wishes more power to their cameras,” the statement added.

The statement further said that the Pulitzer award to the two Kashmiri journalists is a reiteration that the independent journalism and free press are more important than ever in these times, when journalists in Kashmir have been working under the toughest conditions.

Rahul Faces Flak For

Greeting Kashmir Journalists

posting the message with the hashtag “anti-national Rahul Gandhi”.

The Congress leader in his tweet had said, “Congratulations to Indian photojournalists Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand for winning a Pulitzer Prize for their powerful images of life in Jammu & Kashmir. You make us all proud.”

The BJP leader also posted some photographs, which he said were taken by one of the winning photographers, to ask Gandhi if agreed with their content.

Three photojournalists from Jammu and Kashmir have been awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for their “striking images of life” in the Valley.

Channi Anand, Mukhtar Khan and Dar Yasin of the Associated Press won in the feature photography category.

Extension Of Mehbooba Mufti's Detention 'Cruel & Retrograde': Omar

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the decision to extend the detention of PDP president Mehbooba Mufti was “unbelievably cruel” and “retrograde”.

“Unbelievably cruel & retrograde decision to extend @Mehbooba-Mufti’s detention. Nothing she has done or said in any way justifies the way the Indian state has treated her & the others detained,” Omar tweeted.

He was reacting to the Jammu and Kashmir authorities’ decision to extend the detention of



the former chief minister by another three months.

“For a government that is making tall claims about normality in J&K the last few days coupled with the extension of Ms Mufti’s detention is proof enough that Modi ji has single handedly pushed J&K back decades,” Omar added.

Most of the top mainstream leaders, including Mehbooba, Omar and sitting Lok Sabha member from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah, and separatist leaders were detained a day ahead of the Centre’s announcement of abrogation of article 370 of the Constitution thereby repealing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August last year.

Mother, 2 Minors Among 15 More Test Covid-19 Positive,

Baramulla’s only case is said to be a 22-year-old female from Nowpora Sopore.

With these cases, Bandipora has 132 positive cases followed by Srinagar 113, Anantnag 110, Baramulla 104 , Shopian 89, Kupwara 66, Budgam 30, Ganderbal 14 (no active case), 11 Kulgam and Pulwama 9.

The total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir has now risen to 741.

Of the total number of cases reported so far, 678 are from Kashmir and 63 from Jammu. Eight people (seven in Kashmir and one in Jammu) have died and 320 patients (267 from Kashmir and 53 from Jammu) have recovered. The number of active cases stands at 413 (404 in Kashmir and 9 in Jammu).

More than 80,000 people have been kept under surveillance including those who are either in government established quarantine facilities or in home isolation.

Corporator

Tests Positive ...

has tested positive for the pathogen.

Commissioner, SMC, Gazanfar Ali said that the corporators and the Mayor and deputy mayor’s staff was moved quarantine soon after reports were received.

The brother of the Corporator after arriving in the Valley from outside J&K had concealed his travel history and was living with his family.

After neighbours informed district administration Srinagar about him, was put in quarantine on April 28 and tested positive on Friday last. (GNS)

To Be, Or Not To Be, That’s SMC’s Quarantine Question.

added level of precaution, nearly 50 corporators, some employees and staff members of SMC have been ordered into self-isolation and quarantine till the specific corporator tests negative.

“This is to reiterate and underline that the law is the same for everyone. No one is above the law. And as representatives of the people, we are committed to adhering to these laws and advisories 100 percent,” he said.

When contacted, SMC Commissioner Gazanfar Ali told Kashmir Observer Tuesday that several employees of the Mayor, including his private secretary, PRO and other staffers have gone for home quarantine. However, he quickly added that his office has not asked any employee to go for home quarantine.

“I don’t know what Mayor has said. I know of my office and I have given my statement about it. Corporators go to Mayor’s building; they have no dealing with us. We have two separate buildings,” Ali said.

Anti-Militancy Ops To Be

Intensified: J&K DGP ...

We are on top of the situation,” he said.

He said that investigations were being carried out into the death of a teenager in cross-firing.

When asked if militants used steel bullets in the Qaziabad attack, Hassan said that these were operational details and as such can’t be disclosed in public.

Meanwhile, the Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh said today that despite pandemic, the security forces will carry out anti-militancy operations across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking to the media persons at RTC Humhama on the sidelines of wreath laying ceremony of three slain CRPF troopers, Singh said that it was after a long time, police and security forces were facing multiple challenges in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Covid in itself is a big challenge. Thousands of policemen and other forces are deployed around quarantine centres and hospitals. Our teams are covering contract tracing teams and are looking after red and orange zones. And besides it, the forces are also tackling law and order situation and carrying out counter-terrorist operations,” he said.

Revealing details of Qaziabad encounter, DGP said that the CRPF troopers were facing an orchard when they observed a civilian crowd passing through it. The troopers, he said ordered the civilians to stop and come ahead for checking.

“Two men opened fire at the party. They also returned the fire. Two of our men died at the spot while another was critically injured. A mentally unsound boy who was part of the civil crowd also died in the incident,” he said.

Militants Fled With 2 Rifles

After Killing 3 CRPF Men...

fled with two service rifles from three CRPF men killed in the shootout.

The officer also said that the TRF was an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Toiba militant outfit.

Meanwhile, police have filed a case under FIR number 60/2020 under section 307, 302 IPC and 7/27 IA Act in connection with the incident in which three CRPF men were killed while a 14-year-old boy Hazim Shafi Bhat died in “cross firing”.

2 Security Men Injured In

Budgam Grenade Attack...

(ASI) Ghulam Rasool alias Dilawar, CRPF constable Santosh Kumar and four pedestrians sustained splinter injuries.

All the injured persons were evacuated to Sub-District Hospital Pakherpora for treatment.

A doctor at SDH Pakherpora said that the health facility has received six injured persons, including two security men and four civilians. He identified two of the four injured civilians as Shafeeq Ahmad Najar and Irfan Wani. The doctor said that the other two persons are women aged about 40 and 50 years.

The doctor said that the injured four civilians were referred to SMHS hospital Srinagar for advanced treatment.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Budgam Nagpure Amod said that a grenade was lobbed in the Pakherpora market. All Security personnel are safe. “2 civilians received minor injuries,” he said.

Meanwhile, soon after the blast, a joint team of CRPF, police, and army launched searches to nab the attackers. (GNS)

Govt Okays Separate

Meteorological Centre For Leh

authorities.

“All matters relating to the establishment, general administration, financial and technical matters for the MC will be dealt with by RMC, New Delhi,” the order adds.

The order has been issued after the Ministry of Earth Sciences approved the creation of the meteorological centre in March this year.

According to sources, the Leh meteorological centre will be either headed by Sonam Lotus or Mukhtar Ahmad. Ahmad is a resident of Drass.

Ex IAS Officer Sharma

Named PSC Chairman...

terms of sub-clause (i) of clause (c) of the proclamation issued by the President dated 31 ist October 2019, the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is pleased to appoint B R Sharma (IAS) (Retired), as chairman, Public Service Commission for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He shall hold the position of the Chairman, Public Service Commission, till he attains the age of sixty-two years,” reads the order.

Handwara Boy Buried

In Cemetry For Unknown...

Hazim, a 7th class student, was killed apparently in the cross fire, at a distance of half a kilometre from the shootout site.

Muhammad Shafi Bhat, Nambardar of the village and uncle of deceased Hazim, said that police intimidated them that the body won’t be handed over for last rites instead will be buried at Sheeri Baramulla and few family members will be allowed to attend the last rites.

He said early morning around 06: 30, they left along with a police team for the burial and about 07:00 am Hazim’s funeral prayers were offered with attendance of 17 people.

Earlier police in its statement said that a civilian had got killed during the exchange of fire at Wangam crossing in Kral-gund area stating that a case has been registered and further investigation is going about the circumstances of this crime. Three CRPF men were also killed an attack at Wangam, Handwara on Sunday evening.

Earlier reports said when the gunfire ceased, body of Hazim was spotted around half a kilometre from the shootout site.

“He along with other boys in the area had taken animals for grazing. While others fled, he could not as he was physically handicapped. He could not even properly talk and would occasionally fell down,” Mohammad Rayees, his immediate neighbour told local news agency GNS.

The family termed reports dubbing him as militant as “very unfortunate.” “He could not properly walk or talk. How can he be a militant,” Bhat said.

Anantnag Deaths: DC

Assures Strict Action...

dealt strictly as per law, an official handout said. He assured that enquiry will be completed within 3 days as per the aspirations of the people.

Dar said that orders have been issued for impartial enquiry and a committee under the supervision of ADC, Anantnag stand constituted to submit its report within 3 days.

“The committee has recorded statements at Salia Seer Hamdan and Kharpora regarding the incidents and a lady doctor and a staff nurse of SDH Seer Hamdan have been suspended,” he said.

The DC further said that wearing of masks is mandatory due to the prevailing situation and the district administration has distributed 6.20 lac double layered masks, free of cost among the BPL families while the masks are available for APL families at a minimum cost of Rs.5/-.

Regarding the evacuation of workers and students from other, he said that they have been thoroughly checked by the health department and are being kept under home quarantine.

Family In Quarantine,

Burglars Loot House...

All the family members were placed under quarantine after 3 positive cases of Covid-19 surfaced in three of the family members.

In the same village, 14 positive cases of coronavirus have been found so far.

Station House Officer, Police Station Tangmarg said that were ascertaining the facts and a formal case in this regard has been registered.

Rise in Jhelum water: Advisor Baseer inspects arrangements at EOC

AGENCIES

Srinagar:- Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Tuesday reviewed the arrangements at Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) established here at Hari Niwas in the backdrop of rise in Jhelum Water Level.

The government has established the Emergency Operation Centre to deal with any eventuality that may arise due to flood like situation.

The Advisor directed for establishing more Emergency Operation Centres (EOC); stocking up of sandbanks at the vulnerable Jhelum and Doodganga embankments; building stores for dumping of essential commodities; besides constituting teams comprising health, sanitation, revenue, police and SDRF for deployment at these centres to deal with any kind of emergency situation.

Expressing his satisfaction over the arrangements made at Hari Niwas EoC,

the Advisor said the need is to create more such facilities and evacuation centres with all basic amenities including essential supplies for safety of evacuated persons and families as and when need arises.

He said that the whole plan has to be dovetailed with transport and evacuation plan and making the provision of boats.

Noting that usually lakhs of population get affected during flood like situations, he said it is imperative that two more such (EOCs) centres are established in a bid to have sufficient arrangement.

“Besides, there is a need of mock-drills with the designated mohallah level-teams and volunteers at the local level,” he said.

He directed the concerned to make sure that every centre shall have a camp commander, who should be abreast with all the information including inventory, bedding capacity and stock position of essentials available at the centre.

Baseer Khan directed for sufficient stocks and supply of essentials like ration, drinking water, chlorine tablets, baby food items, female sanitary items, besides, critical equipment like tents.

The Advisor said besides stock up plan, an immaculate evacuation plan also needs to be put in place to avert any kind of loss in case of a natural disaster. He said boats should be kept ready at all the times around EoCs so that in case of flood like situation people would be immediately rescued.

Baseer Khan also directed for strengthening of river embankments, stocking up of sand bags at the identified vulnerable points of river bodies especially Jhelum and Doodganga. Men and machinery should always be kept in ready mode to deal with flood like situation emerging anywhere in the Valley, the Advisor said.

Besides, using drone, and the cameras placed at Nehru Park and Shankara-

charya, the Advisor said five to six more cameras should be installed at vulnerable spots especially at Lasjan and Bemina so that monitoring could be done from one place.

Earlier, the Advisor was briefed about various arrangements put in place at EoC and the steps taken to mitigate the threat of flood like situation in Valley by the officers of the Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Department (DMRRR).

The department also conducted a mock drill where the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) team exhibited their skills while rescuing a drowning person.

The Director DMRRR Amir Ali briefed the Advisor that besides, other arrangements put in place, the team would also be using drone services which would provide the images in real time. He said it would greatly reduce the risk of human losses in case of floods.

To curb misuse of movement passes, DM Srinagar cancels all passes issued before May 05

Srinagar: District Magistrate on Tuesday ordered cancellation of all movement passes issued by of before May 05 in order to curb the misuse of these movement passes. The DM said that new passes shall have 3-D hologram affixed on top.

In on order, district magistrate Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said the movement passes issued by of before May 05 stand cancelled and invalid.

“Whereas, restrictions were

imposed within territorial jurisdiction of District Srinagar from 25th March 2020 with specific exemptions in view COVID containment requirements. In order to facilitate movement of essential services / medical emergencies/other specified services, movement Passes were issued in favour of various officials and non-officials,” reads the order.

The order further reads that the departments were asked to formulate plans with utmost caution

recommending names for issuance of movement passes, keeping in view the precautions required in containment areas.

Whereas, during various inspections conducted by the Magistrates and reports received from District Police large scale misuse of passes has surfaced including fake/ forged/scanned/copied passes, invalid passes and use beyond the notified jurisdictions. Instances of scanned e-Passes have also been noticed,” the order reads.

Loot of green gold: 0 forest officials suspended in Anantnag

Agencies


Srinagar: Forest Department Tuesday suspended two staffers over dereliction of duties amid the wanton loot of green gold in Hapatnarnar block of south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

In an order, the Range Officer Mattan said that they received a notice over the illicit felling of trees in Compartment 14 falling under Hapatnarnar block of the district.

The notice, as per the

order, was followed up by deputation of a departmental team, supervised by DO Mattan to ascertain the veracity (of the claims).

“One Kail green tree Dia fifty to sixty has been illegally cut by some unknown culprits, with 14/L converted to logs there,” the order, as per the findings of the team, reads. “The in-question stocks existing on the spot were seized by the team and kept at a safer place on proper Supardhnama.”




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
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI CALENDAR

12 Ramazan 1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 05
ZUHR	12: 28
ASR	5:19
Magrib	7:21
ISHA	8:52

This Day In History

- 878 - Battle of Edington: Alfred the Great and his West Saxon army defeat Viking army of Guthrum the Old [earliest possible date]
- 1312 - Pope Clement V closes Council of Vienna
- 1527 - Spanish & German Imperial troops sack Rome; ending Renaissance
- 1529 - Battle at Gogra: Mughal Emperor Babur beats Afghans and Bengals
- 1757 - Battle of Prague: Frederick II of Prussia's forces defeat Austrian army
- 1840 - World's first adhesive postage stamp, the "Penny Black", is first used in Great Britain
- 1864 - Battle of Port Walthall Junction, fought in Virginia begins (Battle of Port Walthall Junction), Union victory (US Civil War)
- 1864 - Battle of Wilderness, fought in Virginia, Confederate General James Longstreet seriously injured (Overland Campaign), inconclusive result (US Civil War)
- 1864 - Union Army General Sherman begins advance to Atlanta Georgia during the Atlanta Campaign (US Civil War)
- 1882 - Epping Forest, England, dedicated by Queen Victoria
- 1906- Tsar Nicolas II of Russia claims right to legislate by decree and restricts the power of the Duma (Russian Parliament)
- 910 - George V becomes King of the United Kingdom upon the death of his father, Edward VII
- on Cape Helles launch three attacks to enlarge their beachheads; after terrible losses, they advance about three miles
- East Africa is assigned to Britain and France, German South West Africa to South Africa
- 1933- Mohandas Gandhi begins a 21-day fast in protest against British oppression in India.
- 1945- V-E Day; WWII ends in Europe after Germany signs an unconditional surrender
- 1960- USSR & Cuba resume diplomatic relations
- 1961- 1st practical sea water conversion plant-Freeport, Texas
- 1967- Muhammad Ali is indicted for refusing induction in US Army
- 1980- World Health Organization announced smallpox had been eradicated
- 1989- US space shuttle STS-30 lands
- 2008- Dmitry Medvedev appoints Vladimir Putin as Russian Prime Minister
- 2013- 33 people are killed after an overloaded bus falls into a river in Himachal Pradesh, India
- 2013- Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi receives a four year prison sentence for fraud

From KO Archives

Tsunami theory has “support” in Kashmir

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR - The report on April 17 that a retired Atomic Energy Department scientist had attributed the Asian tsunami to planetary alignment has come as a boost for those who believe that cosmic changes influence events on earth.

A Kashmiri Naqash Ghulam Jeelani who says he has written about the phenomenon of interplanetary and cosmic forces having a bearing on what happens on earth as far back as 1W1, feels vindicated by the report. Also, he takes issue with the view by some scientists

I hat (he earthquake which caused the Asian tsunami might have changed the earth's spin, Naqash says: “My point is that if at all there is a connect ion between earth's spin, wobble, axial tilt and the tsunami, then the wobble, or change in spin or axial tilt must have occurred first, causing the Asian tsunami.”

“Because, primarily my opinion is based on the observation that cosmic changes or forces, and interplanetary changes affect intra-planetary activities and phenomena.”

Naqash says that he has neither the resources nor the equipment to collect data about natural disasters but his opinion stems, among other things, from “observations” about the varying frequency of incidence of events such as earthquakes, appearance of comets, cyclones and formation and extinction of geographical features, “which have sometimes occurred at a high rate of movement and sometimes at a comparatively low rate.”

Paramahatnsa Tewari, the retired Atomic Energy Department scientist, had said that his conclusion about the causes of the tsunami stems from his theory that all spinning cosmic objects including the sun develop electric fields that repel each other.

According to Tewari on December 26, 2004 when the Saturn, Moon, Earth and the Sun were perfectly aligned, there was an imbalance of these electrical forces on Earth, because the repulsive force due to Sal urn was reduced as it as shielded by the Moon which does not spin, while the Sun, which was on the other side exerted its force on Earth.

Tewari had said that the imbalance pushed solid earth away from the sun causing sc water to overflow due to its fluidity, causing the tsunami.

(Kashmir Observer, 06 May, 2005)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION BARAMULLA.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No:- 06/221-230/2020-21/RnB/Bla Dated 02.05.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors Regd. With J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money/ Bid Security (In Rs.)	Time	Class	MH of Account	Position of AAA/TS
1	Construction/ Restoration of CC Drain at Kanthbagh Baramulla near Masjid Sharief	3.17	200/-	3170/-	30days	SHG	MH-3054 -M&R	Under Submission
2.	Construction/ Restoration of CC Drain at Ushkura Fatehpura	3.69	200/-	3690/-	30days	SHG	MH-3054 -M&R	Under Submission

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the scheduled date given below.

1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	02.05.2020
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 04.05.2020 to 13.05.2020 11:00AM
3	Bid submission Start date	04.05.2020
4	Bid Submission End Date	13.05.2020 upto 4:00PM
5	Date and time of Opening of Bids (Online)	14.05.2020 upto 11:00AM in the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Barmaula

2. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form), this office NIT No: 01 of 2018-19 issued under No: 252-62 dated: 16.04.2018.

No. 221-230
Dated 02.05.2020

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Baramulla

DIPK-555/20

GOVT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT DISTRICT HOSPITAL KULGAM

NIT No. 09 of 2020
DATED 04 /05/2020

In view of poor response/non-eligibility of bidders to this office NIT No. 03 of 2020 dated 13/03/2020 fresh tenders are invited from the interested persons/parties for collection of entry fee for Car parking at District Hospital Kulgam on Auction basis for the financial year 2020-21. The NIT containing all the details/Terms and conditions can be downloaded from the J&K Govt official web site (www.jktenders.gov.in).

S.No.	Particulars	Due date
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	04/05/2020
2	Date of publication of NIT online	04/05/2020
3	Date for downloading the NIT online	04/05/2020
4	Date for submission of Bid online	04/05/2020
5	Last date for submission of Bids online	14/05/2020
6	Date for opening of bids online	15/05/2020
7	Earnest Money Deposit/CDR	Rs. 10000/- (Rs. Ten Thousand only)
8	Cost of tender documents	Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five hundred only)
9	Check list of documents required for bidder to be uploaded online	1) Labour Registration 2) PAN card 3) CDR 4) Receipt of Bid fee

Bids must be accompanied with the scanned copy of cost of Tender document in the shape of Bank deposit receipt in the J&K Bank, Main Branch Kulgam (A/C No. 0010040500020305) in favour of Medical Superintendent DH Kulgam J&K and Earnest Money in the shape of CDR pledged to the Medical Superintendent DH Kulgam. The Bids of responsive bids shall be opened online on same website in the office Medical Superintendent DH Kulgam (Tender receiving authority).

No.DHK/Acct/Parking/2020/170-73
Dated 04/05/2020

Medical Superintendent
DH Kulgam

DIPK-563/20

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Honour for Kashmir journalism

Pulitzer prize for feature photography for three J&K photo-journalists is a recognition of the merit of Kashmir journalism by the world. It has put Kashmir journalism on global map. Three recipients Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand deserved the honour for their great images that reflected the situation in the Valley during the lockdown following the revocation of Article 370 in August last. Kashmir was under security blockade and communication blackout during the period. But despite that Kashmiri journalists were out on the roads discharging their professional duty. They covered the extraordinary situation for the world at great personal risk.

Photographers through their images gave the world a feel of what was happening on the ground. Among them were three Pulitzer recipients who continued their work undaunted by the impossible situation. The Kashmir they captured is unfiltered and unmediated by the words or a fleeting video and their implicit and explicit politics. People got to see and experience the situation in Kashmir like it is, not how it has to be seen and experienced. Their confronted the state's narrative with its biggest challenge. They took the viewer into the lanes and bylanes of Srinagar and further afield into the countryside, its moffussil villages, orchards and fields, into the homes and kitchens of the people, all under lockdown.

Like others the awardees had no means to send their images to their offices, so they would go to Srinagar airport and plead with flyers to carry their memory cards and flash drivers to New Delhi. Clicking the pictures or covering a story was also a big ordeal. It required getting past roadblocks and security checks. But journalists in Kashmir broke all the barriers to tell the story, using keyboards and cameras. Pictures were an unmediated reflection of the situation in the Valley. It is their directness and raw quality that made the world notice the extent of crackdown in Kashmir. And now with the Pulitzer committee honouring the three J&K photo-journalists, it is the recognition of not only the coverage of the lockdown but the decades of the toil of reporting Kashmir. Despite the unhelpful environment, Kashmiri journalists have produced an impressive body of work and in turn a historical record of the past three decades. So, Pulitzer for Yasin, Khan and Anand is an occasion to savour and celebrate. And it is also an occasion to renew our commitment to highest standards of journalism.

OTHER OPINION

The challenge of lockdown 3.0

The first day of lockdown 3.0 has shown the challenges involved in the graded opening up of the country. On Friday, the Union government came up with a complex order — which categorised the country into red, green and orange zones; prohibited a set of activities nationally; and allowed other activities, in varying degrees, in the different zones. This made sense. India needed a calibrated loosening up to ensure that there wasn't an immediate surge in cases.

But for this approach to succeed, there were two prerequisites. The first was proper bureaucratic implementation — and this was always going to be difficult because of the inability of local police officials or district authorities to distinguish between what was permitted and prohibited, and who to allow and who to stop. But the second, more important prerequisite was citizens exercising a high degree of responsibility.

On day 1, this was missing. The most egregious reflection of this was in liquor shops. People lined up in hundreds, often without masks, jostling with each other, to buy cases of alcohol. The police authorities had to, in some cases, resort to lathi-charge or close shops. Liquor is an important source of revenue for state governments. Given the dire straits of public finances, as well as popular demand, opening stores made sense. But if citizens behave with such irresponsibility, then don't rule out a revision of rules in the future. In times of the pandemic, it is not just about drinking responsibly — but also purchasing it responsibly. It is about maintaining social distancing and knowing that the right to step out comes with responsibilities.

Hindustan Times

PANDEMIC Of Misinformation

Misinformation Campaign & Easy Rescue in context of COVID-19 Pandemic

DR. MUHAMMAD MUZAMIL

VIRUSES are always in news for their morbidity and mortality. These tiny creatures despite having such a bad reputation can sometimes be very friendly to the humans, as they can be used as therapeutic agents by reprogramming them to treat the various diseases. Owing to their complex nature, Andre Lwoff- the French microbiologist and Nobel laureate rightly stated that “viruses are viruses”.

Currently, “SARS-CoV-2” (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) with the very little genetic information is ruling the world rendering masses sleepless as this nanoparticle is now traversing all latitudes and longitudes. But, the misinformation campaign is going more viral than the virus itself, thereby creating a parallel pandemic of misinformation.

Many conspiracy theories are being propagated. Some pinpoint a passage from 1981 book ‘The Eyes of Darkness’ by Dean Koontz. Some exaggerate the Simpson & Nostradamus predictions, some doubt the Wuhan Institute of Virology and say it is an artificially created bioweapon. Some believe in the hypothesis that bats passed on this virus to an intermediate host and then it passed on to humans and the uncertainty goes on.

Though the current pandemic is very threatening because of high infectivity and transmission rate, it is not going to end the world. The way information is presented by the media regarding this pandemic depicts that losses loom larger than gains, and so when the options are framed in terms of deaths rather than cures, we get more fearful and accept more risks to try to avoid deaths. Although it is always better to stay overactive than non-reactive while dealing with a pandemic, overwhelming oneself by the negative emotions will in no case prove fruitful. Everyone is magnifying the deaths but no emphasis is given on the fact that most COVID-19 cases are mild and recovering and that the mortality rate of this disease is just 3.4% as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO).

In such circumstances we have to stay rational and put into action all the precautionary measures like practicing of social distancing which will eventually break the chain of transmission. But, the misinformation chain also needs to be dealt with by acting with responsibility. Instead of storming people with biased news, necessary information needs to be conveyed to them with absolute objectivity. It's very unfortunate that sometimes the virus is given a communal colour merely on the basis of self-fulfilling prophecies, which as per Robert Merton (1968) are false definitions of the situation that evoke a behavior which makes the originally false conception to come true. Merton emphasizes that people with racial prejudices may treat people of other races in a way that leads to the confirmation of their prejudices. A classic example in this regard is reflected in Shakespeare's play – Macbeth, in which the witches tell Macbeth that he will become the king, he believed so blindly that he choose to be a murderer and then used prediction of witches as the base for his actions. In quite the similar way, some sections of media are using their prejudices as a base to attribute the spread of virus to a particular community. A diverse set of realities has been created for diverse people based on the type of the media accessible to them.

Now as death is dancing in the streets, it is better time for all of us to bid good bye to the prejudices and draw our attention towards the rights of people who are under isolation & quarantine because of the ongoing pandemic. Isolation is about separating persons who have tested positive for a disease from those who are not sick or may be sick because of some non-contagious disease. Quarantine separates or restricts movements of people who were exposed to the contagious disease, in order to check if they become sick. If we don't follow these practices in their essence both will be rendered useless. Quarantine is ethically more problematic than isolation because it involves the confinement of individuals who may not be necessarily infected. Besides, it



Sign erected by residents outside their village to keep off Covid suspects in North Kashmir- KO Photo

forces people to be in spatial proximity with the infected ones, so here the fulfillment of principle of collective easy rescue gathers scope.

Easy rescue means that if someone is doing something to yield significant benefit to others, it is his moral obligation to practice it. In other words, if you can prevent something very bad from happening by making only a moderate sacrifice, then it would be wrong not to do so. Peter Singer has very aptly explained it by saying “If I am walking past a shallow pond and see a child drowning in it, I ought to wade in and pull the child out, this will mean getting my clothes muddy, but this is in-

“Though the current pandemic is grave it is not going to end the world. The information presented depicts that losses loom larger than gains, and so when the options are framed in terms of deaths rather than cures, fearful end up taking more risks.

significant, while the death of the child would presumably be a very bad thing”. In this context people are morally bound to declare travel history and opt for self-quarantine in case they have recently arrived from the affected regions. Willingly opting for quarantine has a psychological advantage over being enforced to go for the quarantine.

The present crisis calls for a collective easy rescue duty. Administrative bodies have to be very careful about providing safety to the quarantined people because there are chances that in developing countries they may not get access even to the basic facilities like water and sanitation. In some cases they may not be placed away from the positives which is as necessary as preventing their contact with the susceptible. Besides, considering the highly contagious nature of the disease, healthcare workers may face the dilemma whether to prefer patient care or self-care.

A moral theorist may say that health profes-

sionals have a duty to treat just like firefighters have the duty to fight fires and hence the personal attributes of the patient in the form of nature of disease should not become a base for discrimination. In line with this notion, the current pandemic demands special positive duties from the health professionals because risk is the part and parcel of profession of medicine. If someone has chosen to enter the public safety roles, society expects him to accept the risk attached to the same. But the medical professionals here have the right to dissent as they have not given any consent to the employer, for bearing the risks associated with treatment of infectious disease and all the physicians are not infectious disease specialists. A research study carried out in western settings by Alexander and Wynia (2003) reported that among the one thousand physicians associated with American Medical Association, only about half of the respondents believed that they have duty to treat even in case of the outbreak of unknown deadly disease. The same may or may not hold true in the context of Jammu & Kashmir, but we cannot assume that they have given the consent to treat infectious diseases by default and thereby do nothing for the sake of their rescue.

As the health care workers are leading from the front to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, effective steps need to be taken by the administrators. Before the situation in our hospitals gets out of control, enough of personnel protective equipments (Goggles, face-shields, masks, gloves, gowns, head covers and shoe covers) need to be procured for preventing the break down of health care system, as the pandemic advances. The administrative bodies, health professionals, academicians, media and the people need to create a point of intersection where from the efforts can be channelized properly to deal with the pandemic in a planned manner.

Author is Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Kashmir. He can be reached at: drmuzamil@uok.edu.in



OBSERVER
MAIL

All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

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If We Don't End War, War Will End Us: SOS from LOC

Chaos, confusion, competition and conflict are such known words which every body experiences during lifetime. But there are certain ways to deal with these processes. Institutions are built for the regulation of human urges, to create order in nasty human behavior. Social scientists consider institutions as prerequisite. But unfortunately procedures of life also stand on the blood of ordinary people. As per this norm you have to paint your walls with the blood of people in order to create this order.

In the present situation when the entire world is grappling with Corona virus, two Asian giants are fighting on the borders of Kashmir. No won-

der both countries after 70 years of independence remain ill prepared for natural disasters, like the current pandemic. They lack basic health facilities. One PM is begging developed nations for monetary help, at the same time other is appealing local capitalists to credit their share in Care Relief fund. What an irony that both countries spend billions on armament purchases from the developed world to sustain the ir machoism while their hospitals lack basic tools to fight diseases. The other day Times of India published a news report on doctor's plea to the Government of India for proper protection gear. Same is the case in Pakistan where they rely on Chinese masks and the Pakistan Gov-

ernment is unable to fulfill the needs of their underdeveloped health sector and poor people.

Both countries have ordered their citizens to remain inside their homes in order to break the chain of Covid-19 pandemic but left their soldiers out to take on each other on borders. Not only that the lives of poor soldiers are consumed in this never ending conflict but the people living in areas close to LOC are also suffering unimaginable miseries for no fault of theirs. On both sides of the LOC, we the people of Jammu & Kashmir suffer silently and nobody is paying heed to our pleas. We mean nothing to governments and politicians running the show. Our lives, lives of our children, our cattle every-

thing is in the line of fire. Now the Covid outbreak has added to our miseries. We quiver in bunkers while its raining shells. How can we maintain social distancing under these circumstances. What does calls for physical distancing and slogans like Jan Hai tau Jahan Hai mean for us?

Our children tremble with fear during dark and scary nights and they are shaken out of their beds by the roar of big guns. Is any one listening out there?

Abdul Qayoom Shah & Shahid Bashir
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India has over 500 million active Internet users: IAMAI

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: An estimated 71 million children aged between 5-11 years in India access the Internet on devices of their family members, constituting about 14 per cent of the country's active Internet user base of over 500 million, according to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

According to IAMAI's 'Digital in India' report, India had 504 million active Internet users, who logged onto the web at least once in the last one month, at the end of November 2019.

"Of the overall Internet population, 433 million are of the age of 12 years and above, and 71 million are in the age

ber of accessing Internet daily had grown by 30 million from March 2019, it added.

Interestingly, close to one-third of users access Internet for 'more than one hour' on Sundays/holidays versus a normal working day.

The time spent on the Internet continues to be higher in urban India compared to rural parts of the country.

According to the report, 26 million new female Internet users were added in November 2019. This is an increase of 21 per cent, higher than the 9 per cent rise seen in number of new users (male).

"While the proportion of male Internet users in rural India is more than double than



bracket of 5-11 years who access the Internet on the devices of family members," the report added.

The data has been curated by Nielsen, based on IRS data.

The report noted that nearly 70 per cent of the active Internet population in India are daily users with nine out of 10 Internet users in urban India accessing Internet at least once a week.

In rural India, the num-

female Internet users, usage of Internet among females is growing at a fast clip," it said.

Mobile phones continued to remain the device of choice for accessing Internet in both urban and rural parts of the country.

Given the affordability of mobile devices along with the availability of cheaper data plans, accessing the Internet through a mobile device has clearly become the first choice, the report said. PTI

Boys Locker Room: Student detained, 22 identified in controversial chat group case

Agencies

New Delhi: Soon after the Delhi Police swung into action in order to probe the Boys Locker Room controversy, one school student has been detained by the Cyber Cell in connection with the Instagram chat group where rapes were glorified and photos of underage girls were shared and they were objectified.

The one who has been nabbed so far is a 15-year-old student of a prominent school in South Delhi. "22 other boys have also have been identified and they would be called for investigation," the police said on Tuesday. The detained accused would be produced before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB).

Leaked screenshots of the private Instagram chat group stirred up a storm over rape culture in India after numerous boys were allegedly seen sharing photos of underage girls, objectifying them, and planning "gang rapes".

A case was registered under section 465 (forgery), 471 (using forged document), 469 (Forgery for purpose of harming reputation), 509 (intending to insult the modesty of any woman) of the IPC and 67 and 67A of the Information Technology (IT) Act at cyber cell of Delhi police.

Earlier on Monday, the police received a complaint from the principal of a prominent school in South Delhi's Saket at the Saket police station requesting for a probe into the matter, the same was forwarded to the Cyber Cell thereof.

Apart from this, another complaint was filed at a police station in North Delhi by a parent in connection with this Instagram group.

On Monday, the police had asked photo sharing app Instagram to share the details of all the participants of the said group where photos of underage girls were being shared and they were being objectified.

Speaking to IANS over the phone Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Cyber Crime, Anish Roy said, "We have asked Instagram to share the details of the members and admin of the said group including their name, IP addresses etc."



India's unemployment rate soars to 27.11 amid COVID-19 crisis CMIE

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: The COVID-19 crisis has led to a spike in the country's unemployment rate to 27.11 per cent for the week ended May 3, up from the under 7 per cent level before the start of the pandemic in mid-March, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has said.

The Mumbai-based think tank said the rate of unemployment was the highest in the urban areas, which constitute the most number of the red zones due to the COVID-19 cases, at 29.22 per cent, as against 26.69 per cent for the rural areas.

Analysts have been warning about the spectre of unemployment ever since the country was put under a lockdown on March 25 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to arrest the spread of the virus infections.

Scenes of migrants fleeing urban centres like Delhi

and Mumbai only confirmed the long-held concerns on their employment as the economic activity came to a grinding halt.

The government has so far announced income and food support to the vulnerable people as part of a Rs 1.70 lakh crore fiscal stimulus to the economic, financial and possibly humanitarian crisis, and is also mulling a second round of measures soon.

The US has seen a huge spike in unemployment as over 26 million people have claimed for state support because of losing their jobs. Experts often rue the absence of a good gauge of jobs in India, which is predominantly an unorganised-sector led economy.

CMIE's weekly series of data pointed to a steady increase in unemployment since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in India, with the week to March 29 showing the sharpest spike to 23.81 per

cent.

As per CMIE's data, the monthly unemployment rate in April stood at 23.52 per cent, up from March's 8.74 per cent.

As of the end of April, Puducherry in South India had the highest number of unemployment at 75.8 per cent, followed by neighbouring Tamil Nadu 49.8 per cent, Jharkhand 47.1 per cent and Bihar 46.6 per cent.

Maharashtra's unemployment rate was pegged at 20.9 per cent by the CMIE, while the same for Haryana stood at 43.2 per cent, Uttar Pradesh at 21.5 per cent and Karnataka at 29.8 per cent.

Hilly states had the lowest incidence of unemployment as of April, the think tank said, pointing out that the rate in Himachal Pradesh stood at 2.2 per cent, Sikkim at 2.3 per cent and Uttarakhand at 6.5 per cent. PTI AA MKJ

64 flights to bring stranded Indians from abroad, government reveals airfare

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Air India will operate 64 flights from May 7 to May 13 to bring back around 15,000 Indian nationals stranded abroad amid the COVID-19-induced lockdown, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday.

The minister, while addressing a virtual press conference, said private Indian airlines may join the repatriation effort after May 13.

Those availing the repatriation flights will be charged, Puri said.

A passenger on a London-Delhi flight will be charged Rs 50,000 and on a Dhaka-Delhi flight Rs 12,000, the aviation minister said.

On arrival from abroad, all passengers will be screened and put under quarantine for a period of 14 days as a COVID-19 precautionary measure, Puri said.

These 64 flights would be conducted by Air India and its



subsidiary Air India Express to repatriate Indians from 12 countries such as the UAE, the UK, the US, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.

India will conduct 10 flights to the UAE, seven flights each to the US and the UK, five flights to Saudi Arabia, five flights to Singapore and two flights to Qatar to repatriate Indian nationals between May 7 and May 13,

the minister said.

During this time period, India will also conduct seven flights each to Malaysia and Bangladesh, five flights each to Kuwait and Philippines, two flights each to Oman and Bahrain, Puri said.

India has been under lockdown since March 25 to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. All commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period.

Social Distancing Norms Tossed Aside As Crowds Throng Liquor Shops - Again

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi/Amaravati: Undeterred by steep price hikes or the urgent need to maintain distance, impatient crowds were back outside liquor vends on Tuesday, pushing and jostling in many places as they sought to lay their hands on a bottle of their favourite tipple.

A day after lockdown curbs were eased and liquor shops opened across large parts of India, triggering near riot situations, lakhs of people lined up or gathered outside from early morning, counting the hours for the shutters to go up and then more hours till they reached the counter.

The scenes played out in towns and rural centres in states such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Delhi, just as they did on Monday, the fear of COVID-19 eclipsed by the eagerness to access alcohol after more than 40 dry days.

On Tuesday, the Andhra Pradesh government enhanced prices by 50 per cent, over the 25 per cent hike it had imposed the day before. Late

on Monday, the Delhi government announced a 70 per cent 'special corona fee' on alcohol.

But it clearly didn't matter much, not to casual drinkers who wanted to stock up their bars and not to the more serious tipplers and addicts reduced to despair without any alcohol. The price, whether of premium scotch or wine or of humbler spirits, was of no consequence it seemed.

"It's not the cost. It's the availability that matters right now. See the crowd even though the shop has not opened yet," said Prateek Singh, a student, pointing to the crowds outside a liquor shop in east Delhi's Shakarpur locality early in the morning.

Ayush, who works in a private company was waiting near him to buy his booze. He said he was not a regular drinker and the price did not really matter.

"Everything is costly during lockdown. Prices of food items are more than usual. The hike is exorbitant but still I am here to buy because it has been more than a month since I had a drink," he said nonchalantly.

Shiv Sena demands surgical strike to avenge Handwara; Colonel Sharma cremated

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Shiv Sena on Tuesday pitched for a surgical strike without tom-tomming about it to avenge the killing of five security personnel in an encounter with

jawans. It is not a good sign that five of our jawans are killed in one go," the party said.

India had carried out retaliatory surgical strikes on seven terror launch pads across the LoC,



terrorists in Kashmir's Handwara area two days ago.

It is not a good sign that the brave men were killed in one go on India's own land, an editorial in Sena mouthpiece Saamana said, adding that this happened when a strong and quite patriotic government is in power at the Centre.

The country has forgotten "Kashmir war" due to the war situation triggered by COVID-19, but Pakistan has not, the former NDA constituent said.

Noting that the armed forces recently saluted the efforts of frontline workers in the battle against COVID-19 by conducting flypasts and showering flower petals on hospitals, the Shiv Sena said the fight against coronavirus and the appreciation of policemen, doctors and nurses will continue, but Kashmir cannot be "ignored".

"Let there be a surgical strike without tom-tomming about it to avenge the martyrdom of the five

with the Army targeting terrorists preparing to infiltrate from PoK after the Uri terror attack in September 2016.

Opposition parties like the Congress had later accused the BJP of using the surgical strike for political gains. "Our jawans are getting killed on our own land. It is happening at a time when a strong and quite patriotic government is in place in Delhi (Centre)," the Shiv Sena said.

Without naming any party or government, the Shiv Sena said somebody should also shower petals on the kin of the five security personnel killed in the Handwara encounter.

It said the security personnel who made supreme sacrifice for the country included a Muslim, and asked those who are into Hindu-Muslim politics not to forget this.

An Army colonel and a major were among five security personnel killed in an encounter with terrorists at a village in north

Vijay Mallya files appeal against extradition order

Vijay Mallya on Monday filed an application seeking leave to appeal in the UK Supreme Court, exactly two weeks after the embattled liquor baron lost his London High Court appeal against an extradition order to India on charges of fraud and money laundering related to unrecovered loans to his now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

The 64-year-old businessman had 14 days to file this application to seek permission to move the higher court on the High Court judgment from April 20, which dismissed his appeal against a Westminster Magistrates' Court extradition order certified by the UK home secretary.



"The leave to appeal has been filed. We have until May 14 to respond," said a spokesperson for the UK Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which represents the Indian authorities in the legal process of the extradition.

The leave to appeal to the Supreme Court is on a point

of law of general public importance, which according to experts is a very high threshold that is not often met.

"The High Court effectively ruled that even if the approach of the chief magistrate was wrong, her decision was not wrong. It is therefore clear that Mallya now faces

a significant hurdle in getting it to the Supreme Court," notes Toby Cadman, co-founder of Guernica 37 International Justice Chambers and an extradition specialist.

As a further step, in principle, Mallya can also apply to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to prevent his extradition on the basis that he will not receive a fair trial and that he will be detained in conditions that breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which the UK is a signatory.

The threshold for an ECHR appeal is also extremely high, with very limited chance of success in Mallya's case because he would also have to demonstrate that his arguments on those grounds before the UK courts have been previously rejected.

Branded as witches, 3 women forced to drink urine in Bihar; 9 held

Muzaffarpur: Three women in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, were allegedly forced to drink urine and their heads tonsured by a group of people who branded them as witches, following which nine people were arrested, police said on Tuesday.

The arrests were made on Tuesday, a day after the incident took place, a police official said.

A video of the purported incident went viral on social media. Opposition party Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) also shared the video, which is 2.20 minutes long, on Twitter.



"The incident occurred in Dakrama village of the district on Monday. Of the 10 people named in the FIR, nine were arrested," Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) (East) Amitesh Kumar said.

"Police are conducting raids to nab the remaining accused, who apparently had tonsured the heads of the women," he said.

Kumar said neither the victims nor the villagers informed the police about the incident.

"It is a very serious matter. The police acted swiftly and arrested nine people after they came to know about the incident from the media," he said, adding that more details would be available after investigation.

Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) (East) Kundan Kumar said, "The police will take action as per the law after the probe." PTI

FOOD SAFETY, SHOPPING & COVID-19

What You Should And Shouldn't Be Doing



Agencies

With online delivery slots fully booked for days ahead in big cities, doing shopping runs has been a necessity lately. Although people are trying to keep these trips to a bare minimum, contact with the outside world is inevitable, even if you are having groceries delivered to your doorstep. This is raising many questions about how safe grocery shopping is and whether the bags and containers could potentially expose people to the virus.

These concerns have largely

stemmed from the fact that the novel virus can survive on some surfaces for a few days, leaving many worried when unpacking groceries at home.

But what are the chances of contracting the virus from packaging or food itself? What must we do when preparing food to minimize risks? Here's what the experts say.

But what about those instances where viruses were found in infected people's feces?

There is no evidence yet that COVID-19 sickens people through their digestive systems. According to Stout, the presence of the

virus in the stool is more likely a reflection of systemic infection, rather than its ability to survive the digestive tract.

When it comes to food and COVID-19, experts say the biggest risk is not the things you eat but rather contact with other customers and employees in grocery stores. It's why stores are limiting the number of people they let in, asking customers to practice social distancing and using tape to mark how far apart people should stand.

In short, you should be worrying more about contracting salmonella from chicken or eggs,

and E. coli from improperly washed romaine lettuce than the coronavirus.

To wash or not to wash

While you should be washing all the fruit and vegetables you buy in plenty of water (warning do not use liquid detergent to wash food), there are some food items that do not need to be washed.

You should never wash meat, chicken or fish. Simply touching raw meat or poultry, or rinsing it under the tap, spreads bacteria in the sink, on countertops and other kitchen surfaces – via your hands as well as splashed water.

Contrary to popular belief, water also does not remove pathogenic microorganisms.

Eggs also shouldn't be washed before placing them in the refrigerator as it allows bacteria to move from outside of the shell to the inside.

Speaking of raw foods, raw and cooked foods should be kept apart, and you shouldn't use the same cutting board for both meat and salad. The same goes for kitchen utensils and worktops. Immediately after using them, you should clean them with dish soap and hot water. And regardless of the coronavirus, to save yourself from food poisoning, be sure to cook and/or heat foods at a sufficient temperature, at least 72 Celsius (161 Fahrenheit) for two minutes can help.

On the topic of markets, experts recommend you keep your hands to yourself as much as possible and avoid touching your face when shopping. Although stores and supermarkets are taking all necessary measures to ensure sterilization, people should be wary about surfaces that are constantly touched by people, such as trolleys or elevator buttons.

Here are a few rules to follow when shopping in-person at stores.

Do not go to the supermarket if you are sick, order on-

line.

Make sure you keep a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet) from other shoppers.

Do not touch the items you do not intend to buy.

Go shopping in less busy hours, do not go in the hours designated for the elderly.

Have a list of the items you want and be prepared; get in and get out as quickly as possible.

Pay by credit or debit card or try contactless payment.

Is food packaging safe?

As for packaging-associated risks, there have been no cases of COVID-19 contamination from containers to date, but experts say the risk should be considered in theory and precautions should be taken. However, they add that as long as you make sure every time you touch packaging, you won't need additional measures.

When you bring foods into your house, you can put them away directly or use gloves to open the packaging. The important point here is to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before and after unpacking your groceries.

When you are done unpacking, you should throw away or recycle the materials or clean them well. Cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces where the packaging was placed is also a good practice.

If you are still worried about getting infected from food packaging, experts say to keep your hands away from your face and washing your hands before and after every step of work should be more than sufficient.

Can I get COVID-19 from food?

Now, let's address the food debate.

There is a reason why health officials are not warning people about eating food contaminated with the new coronavirus. The answer has to do with the varying paths organisms take to make people sick.

Respiratory viruses like the new coronavirus generally attach to cells in places like the lungs. Germs like norovirus and salmonella can survive the acid in stomachs, then multiply after attaching to cells inside people's guts.

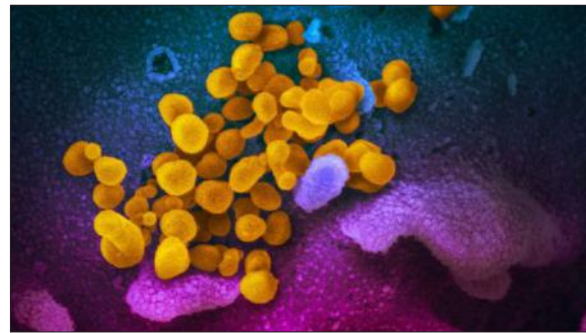
"Specializing in what tissues to attach to is typically part of the disease's strategy to cause illness," according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Experts say it may also be harder for viruses to survive on food itself.

"It's a porous surface. The chances of anything surviving or coming out of it are small," said Alison Stout, an expert in infectious diseases and public health at Cornell University.

THESE CONCERNS HAVE LARGELY STEMMED
from the fact that the novel virus can survive on some surfaces for a few days, leaving many worried when unpacking groceries at home.

'How Coronavirus Infects Intestine Cells Decoded'



Press Trust Of India

London- Researchers have shown that the novel coronavirus can infect and multiply in cells of the human intestine, a finding that could explain why many COVID-19 patients experience gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea.

The scientists, including those from Hubrecht Institute in the Netherlands, successfully propagated the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, in cell culture models of the human intestine, and monitored the response of the cells to the virus.

They said the findings, published in the journal Science, could explain the observation that nearly one third of COVID-19 patients experience symptoms such as diarrhea, and the fact that the virus often can be detected in stool samples.

Patients with COVID-19 show a variety of symptoms associated with respiratory organs such as coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, and fever, and the disease is transmitted via tiny droplets that are spread mainly through coughing and sneezing.

One third of the patients, however, also experience gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea and diarrhea, the researchers said. Long after the respiratory

symptoms have been resolved, the virus can be detected in human stool, they added, suggesting that SARS-CoV-2 can also spread via so-called "fecal-oral transmission".

Though the respiratory and gastrointestinal organs seem very different, the study noted some key similarities.

One observation, it said, is the presence of the ACE2 receptor through which the SARS-CoV-2 virus can enter cells.

The researchers said the inside of the intestine is loaded with these receptors.

Until now, they said it was unknown whether intestinal cells could actually get infected and produce virus particles.

So the scientists attempted to culture the viruses in human intestinal organoids, which are tiny versions of the human intestine that can be grown in the lab.

"These organoids contain the cells of the human intestinal lining, making them a compelling model to investigate infection by SARS-CoV-2," said study co-author Hans Clevers from Hubrecht Institute.

When the virus was added to the organoids, the cells were rapidly infected, the study noted.

According to the scientists, the virus entered a subset of the cells in the intestinal organoids, and the number of cells that were infected increased over time.

Airlines Inch Toward Securing Aid Needed For Lengthy Slowdown

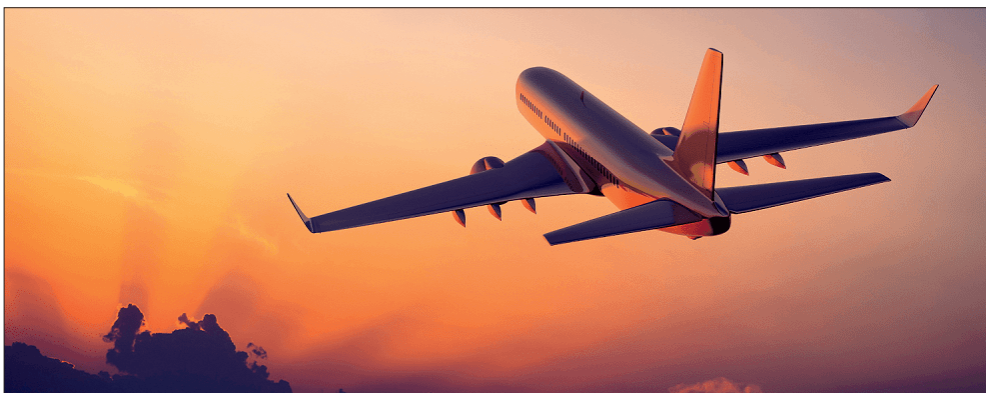
Bloomberg

Airlines made progress toward bolstering their finances over the weekend, with Deutsche Lufthansa AG nearing a deal for state aid and Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA winning bondholders over to a debt-to-equity swap.

Lufthansa expects to finalize talks with the German government on an aid package "soon," the company said in a letter to employees seen by Bloomberg. The governments of Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium have together been looking at a rescue plan that could top 10 billion euros (\$11 billion) in total.

Norwegian Air's agreement with bondholders, reached after some initially failed to support the plan, takes the airline one step closer to securing state loan guarantees needed to keep the struggling carrier afloat.

Such loan guarantees are "crucial to getting through the crisis," Norwegian Air Chief Executive Officer Jacob Schram said in a statement on Sunday, ahead of a shareholder meeting Monday to



vote on the overall proposal.

Governments have committed more than \$85 billion to prop up airlines after the coronavirus pandemic wiped out travel demand and grounded jet fleets.

Here's a roundup of developments over the weekend:

Deutsche Lufthansa

The German group faces a substantial loss in revenue due to the worldwide grounding of most of its fleet. It owns so-called flag carriers in four countries after more than a decade of acquisitions, and is seeking their help with cash in danger

of running low.

In the letter, CEO Carsten Spohr told employees that negotiations are an intense and constructive. Bloomberg News reported Friday that Germany's government had settled on a unified position that foresees the state owning at least 25% of the airline and taking a seat on the board, with the possibility of a silent participation for some of the holding.

Lufthansa's Swiss unit will need to slash nearly 20% of costs, the director of Switzerland's Federal Finances Administration

told newspaper SonntagsZeitung in an interview. The reduction is part of a business plan worked out when the airline secured 1.275 billion francs (\$1.3 billion) in loan guarantees from the Swiss government.

Norwegian Air

The debt-for-equity exchange is part of a plan to meet terms set by Norway to give the airline access to a 3 billion-kroner (\$290 million) package of loan guarantees. In earlier talks, Norwegian Air had failed to get the required two-thirds majority support from one of its four

bondholder groups.

CEO Schram said his main priority now is to reach an agreement with the leasing companies that provide their planes. Norwegian has total debt of about \$7.8 billion. Under the conversion plan, lessors would control the largest stake in Norwegian, with existing shareholders retaining about a 5% stake.

Korean Air

Korean Air Lines Co. will hold a board meeting this month to discuss a rights offering as large as one trillion won (\$819 million) as part of a restructuring plan, Yonhap News reported. The airline will also consider a potential sale of assets including land to raise an additional 500 billion won, Yonhap said, citing unidentified industry sources.

Icelandair

Iceland may look at taking a stake in Icelandair Group hf if the government injects funds into the airline, Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir told local radio on Sunday. A possible loan is contingent on financial restructuring by the carrier, which is working toward a stock offering this month.

Older People With Persistent Insomnia Symptoms More Likely To Remain Depressed

Agencies

Lack of sleep has long been considered a potential risk factor for mood disorders. According to a new study, older people with depression, who also experience persistent and worsening sleep disturbances, are at much higher risk of remaining depressed.

The study from researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, published online in the journal Sleep, analysed data from almost 600 people over 60 years old who visited primary care centers in the Northeast US. All patients met clinical criteria for major or minor depression at the outset of the study.

The researchers found that those with a pattern of worsen-



ing insomnia symptoms over the following year had almost 30 times the odds of having a diagnosis of major depression at the end of that year, compared to patients whose sleep had improved during that year.

The patients with worsening insomnia also were much more likely to have a diagnosis of minor depression. Additionally, they were more likely to report suicidal ideation at the end of the year.

Compared to patients

whose sleep improved, the study found that those with insomnia symptoms that persisted but did not worsen also were more likely to have persistent major or minor depression, but their risk was not as high as patients with worsening sleep.

"These results suggest that, among older adults with depression, insomnia symptoms offer an important clue to their risks for persistent depression and suicidal ideation," said study senior author Adam Spira, PhD, a professor in the Department of Mental Health at the Bloomberg School.

The study's lead author was Joseph Gallo, MD, MPH, a professor in the Bloomberg School's Department of Mental Health.

Researchers Discover Neural Circuit That Drives Physical Responses To Emotional Stress

Agencies

A neural circuit that drives physical responses to emotional stress has been discovered by researchers in a recent study.

This circuit could be a key target for treating stress-related disorders such as panic disorder and PTSD.

The circuit begins in deep brain areas, called the dorsal peduncular cortex and the dorsal tectal tectal (DP/DTT), that send stress signals to the hypothalamus, a small region in the brain that controls the body's vital functions. The findings were published in the journal Science.

Emotional stress activates the sympathetic nervous system, which leads to physical responses, such as a rise in blood pressure and body temperature and a faster heart rate. Such responses are thought to be coping mechanisms in humans and many other mammals to boost physical performance in fight-or-flight situations.

But nowadays, when most people rarely encounter such situations, these responses could perhaps have an adverse effect on their health. Excessive stress may cause symptoms such as psychogenic fever, a condition of abnormally high body temperature.



Activists aim to counter Trump's 'disinformation'

Agencies

WASHINGTON: A political action committee has launched to counter false and misleading statements about the coronavirus pandemic from US President Donald Trump with a wide-ranging, tech-infused social media campaign.

Defeat Disinfo, which started last week, plans to use "a sophisticated set of tools that allows us to spot misinformation just as it's beginning to go viral on social media," according to a statement.

It also aims to promote the "truthful counter narrative" about Covid-19 with tweet-for-tweet responses to limit the impact of inaccurate information.

Curtis Houglan, director of the committee and head of a technology firm which has worked to counter online propaganda from Russia and extremists of the militant Islamic State group, said artificial intelligence would play a role in the effort.

The technology "uses techniques such as natural language processing and machine learning classifiers to deter-

mine the emotions, themes and messages animating the conversation in a predictive way," Houglan said.

"The technology is unique in its ability to geo-infer the location of data to understand the attitudes of voters in states such as Wisconsin or Arizona.

We also have the ability to identify who has interacted with or been exposed to disinformation." He said this technology "was incubated and tested at the front-line of ISIS propaganda" and has been updated for the latest initiative.

The committee is not aligned with any candidate but argues that Trump "is denying the facts on his administration's coronavirus response," adding that "we're holding him accountable." "President Donald Trump is the largest amplifier of disinformation in the United States," said Houglan. "People are dying as a result of his political agenda." The effort is already in full swing with messages aimed at pointing out the danger of Trump's comments suggesting injecting disinfectant could help fight the coronavirus.

Defeat Disinfo said it



US Internal Report Suggests 3K Coronavirus Deaths Per Day By June 1

Press Trust Of India

Washington: The number of coronavirus deaths in the US will jump to over 3,000 and new cases to about 200,000 per day by June 1, an internal draft report has said, even as more than two dozen American states announced to open up their economy amid the health crisis. The US is the worst-hit country from the pandemic. By Monday, more than 1.2 million Americans tested positive for the COVID-19 and the total number of fatalities increased to more than 69,000.

The country's economy has come to a standstill and over 30 million Americans have applied for unemployment benefits.

Multiple media reports on Monday quoted the draft report projecting the horrifying figures of about 200,000 confirmed cases per day accompanied with 3,000 daily deaths by June 1.

The numbers underscore a sobering reality: while the United States has been hunkered down for the past seven weeks, not much has changed. And the reopening to the economy will make matters worse, The New York Times reported.

There remains a large number of counties whose burden continues to grow, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC) warned according to the daily.

However, both the White House and the CDC disavowed the report. The slides carry the CDC's logo, The Washington Post reported.

According to the report, the projection was prepared by Justin Lessler, an associate professor of epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

I had no role in the process by which that was presented and shown. This data was presented as an FYI to CDC it was not in any way intended to be a

Task Force or gone through interagency vetting.

This data is not reflective of any of the modelling done by the task force or data that the task force has analyzed, he said.

The President's phased guidelines to open up America again are a scientific driven approach that the top health and infectious disease experts in the federal government agreed with. The health of the American people remains President Trump's top priority and that will continue as we monitor the efforts by states to ease restrictions,

The numbers underscore a sobering reality: while the United States has been hunkered down for the past seven weeks, not much has changed. And the reopening to the economy will make matters worse, The New York Times reported.

forecast, Lessler told The Washington Post.

Lessler said he didn't know how the update was turned into a slide deck by government officials and shared with the news organisations.

There are reopening scenarios where it could get out of control very quickly, he said.

Judd Deere, a White House Spokesperson said, This is not a White House document nor has it been presented to the Coronavirus

Britain outpaces Italy with Europe's highest official coronavirus death toll

Agencies

London: Britain has overtaken Italy to report the highest official death toll from coronavirus in Europe with more than 32,000 deaths, figures released on Tuesday showed.

The high death toll could increase political pressure on Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who waited longer than other European leaders to order a lockdown to curb the spread of the virus in March.

Weekly figures from Britain's national statistics office added more than 7,000 deaths

in England and Wales, raising the total for the United Kingdom to 32,313.

The figure is one of several methods for calculating deaths and difficult to compare with other countries, but it offers the clearest sign yet that Britain could emerge as the worst-hit country in Europe, despite being hit later than other countries.

Opposition parties have raised questions about Johnson's initial decision to delay a lockdown at a time when hospitals in Italy were already being overrun.

Read: UK PM Johnson listened to his scientists about coronavirus, but they were slow to sound the alarm

They also say his government was too slow to introduce mass testing and provide enough protective equipment to hospitals.

The true figure for deaths from coronavirus may be even higher. The Office of National Statistics said 33,593 more people had died than average up to April 24 in England and Wales, compared to 27,365 cases in which coronavirus was mentioned on the death certificates.

World will be worse after 'banal' virus, says French writer

Agencies

PARIS: Controversial French writer Michel Houellebecq said on Monday that he believes the world will be just the same after the coronavirus — only worse.

The novelist, seen by his fans as a modern prophet of a nihilistic, individualistic age, poured cold water on those who see the pandemic as a possible turning point.

"I do not believe for a half-second the declarations that 'nothing will be like it was before'," said Houellebecq who rose to international fame through his 1998 novel "Atomised".

"We will not wake up after the lockdown in a new world. It will be the same, just a bit worse," he said in an essay for French public radio. "The way this epidemic has panned out is remarkably normal," he argued.

He described Covid-19 as a "banal virus" with "no redeeming qualities...It's not even sexually transmitted." But he warned that the self-distancing and "home-working" that the epidemic has brought would accelerate the technological push to isolate and atomise people.

It was a great excuse, he said, to push further the "obsolescence of human relationships".

he ridiculed writers who had compared the moment to his apocalyptic 2005 novel, "The Possibility of an Island", when the human race is on its last legs.



"The West has not the eternal divine right to be the richest and most developed zone in the world. "It is no scoop to say that, it has been all over for a long time," said the novelist, who is married to Qianyun Lysis Li, a Chinese student of his work 34 years his junior.

Even the death toll reflected the world as we have known it, he claimed.

"France is coming out of it better than Spain and Italy but not as well as Germany. No big surprise there." Houellebecq also poked fun at a string of French literary stars for pronouncing on the crisis from the comfort of their country or seaside retreats, without clarifying if he had remained holed up himself in his home in a Paris tower block.

Iran Parliament Approves Currency Overhaul Bill

Agencies

Tehran: The Iranian parliament has approved a bill to allow a major overhaul in the country's currency rial.

Lawmakers in the Majlis on Monday approved articles and subarticles of the Bill to Reform the Country's Monetary and Banking Act, a law which has dominated financial and economic exchanges in Iran since 1972.

The first article of the bill passed on Monday stipulates that Iran's currency would be

new currencies could simultaneously circulate in Iran for a maximum of two years.

It also said that forex rates under the new currency will depend on the amount of Iran's currency reserves and other factors.

"The exchange rate for toman against foreign currencies ... would be introduced by the Central Bank of Iran in the framework of the dominant foreign currency system and observing the country's forex reserves and if necessary, the country's commitments to the International Monetary



reversed to toman, a legal tender that was in use nearly 100 years ago in the country, and each toman will be equal to 10,000 rials.

An earlier version of the bill discussed in the committees of Majlis earlier this year had named the small unit for the new Iranian currency as Parseh.

However, the bill approved on Monday said each toman will be equal to 100 qirans, a reference to the currency of Iran between 1825 and 1932.

Article II of the bill on currency overhaul sets up a "Period of Transition" from rial to toman, saying the old and

Fund," said subarticle 1 of Article I of the bill.

The bill also requires the government to pass and announce laws for implementation of the currency overhaul scheme within the next three months.

Iranian authorities have rejected the notion that currency redenomination could offset the negative impacts of the American sanctions on the economy.

However, experts say the move could prove successful as part of a wider set of measures adopted by the government to improve economic indicators in the country and diversify the economy away from oil revenues.

NEWS MAKERS

World leaders pledge \$8bn for vaccines, treatments research

BRUSSELS: Celebrities, world leaders and philanthropists pledged some 7.4 billion euros (\$8.1bn) on Monday for research into coronavirus vaccines, treatments and testing during an EU-led video conference that was snubbed by the United States.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen, who hosted the conference, said a vaccine was the best chance of beating Covid-19, which has so far killed nearly a quarter of a million people around the world — 140,000 of them in Europe.

At least 3.5 million people are now known to have been infected.

Major European powers,

along with Japan and Canada, made the biggest pledges but the lack of US representation raised the prospect of an uncoordinated competition to develop and produce a vaccine.

Some wealthy American individuals did take part, and pop star Madonna's million-dollar contribution was feted by EU officials.

Covid-19 has killed nearly a quarter of a million people

The conference narrowly missed its target of 7.5bn euros — although a handful of contributors did not put a sum on their pledges — but UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that much more would be needed, putting the final sum required near 38 billion euros.

"These funds are a kind of down payment for the develop-



ment of new tools at the speed needed," Guterres told the conference. "But to reach everyone everywhere we likely need five times that amount."

Nonetheless, World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hailed the fundraising as a powerful show of "global solidarity".

The donations came from

around 40 countries, the UN, research institutes and philanthropic bodies including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

But the initiative was undermined by the absence of the United States, with President Donald Trump at loggerheads with the WHO over its handling of the pandemic.

Trump — fighting for reelection in November — said on Sunday the United States would have a coronavirus vaccine ready by the end of the year.

His prediction was met with scepticism in some quarters, with Germany's Health Minister Jens Spahn warning it could take years for anyone to develop a vaccine.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Office of the Executive Engineer, Irrigation

Division Ompora Budgam

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: Construction of Lad Shanger Khul Khan sahib by way of constt of supply channel Head works lining wall lined channel retaining wall and crate work.

Reference:- This office : e-NIT No 07 of 04/2020 issued under No: 373-404 dt: 30-04-2020.

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