



Maximum : 23°C  
Minimum : 11°C  
Humidity : 59%

SUNSET  
Today 07:27 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 05:28 AM

# OBSERVER

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## A NEW WORLD AWAITS AFTER LOCKDOWNS

**H**umans are bad at assessing risk even in the best of times. During a pandemic when the disease is unfamiliar, people are isolated and stressed, and the death toll is rising our risk perception becomes even more distorted, with fear often overwhelming reason. This is a recipe for disastrous policy mistakes. To be sure, the danger posed by the Covid-19 out break should not be underestimated. The experiences of Italy, Spain, and the United States, in particular, have shown that delayed action to limit the virus's spread can lead to large-scale illness and death. But blind panic does nobody any good. In many countries, especially.....

.....OPINION  
**P4**

## News Digest

| 23 <sup>TH</sup> RAMAZAN |       |       |  |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|--|
| IFTAR                    | SEHRI | TODAY |  |
| FIQAH<br>HANAFIYA        | 07:30 | 03:51 |  |
| FIQAH<br>JAFARIYA        | 07:38 | 03:49 |  |

### Landslides Hit Highway, 1 Dead; 2 Missing

Srinagar: One person was killed while two others went missing on Saturday after a massive landslide hit the strategic Srinagar-Jammu highway burying nine vehicles, including some trucks. According to reports, a massive landslide hit Seri Ramban along the 270-km long Jammu-Srinagar highway this afternoon when a construction activity was going on in the area. The landslide swept away ● P-02

### Minor 'Commits Suicide' In Sopore

Srinagar: A minor allegedly committed suicide inside his house in a village in Sopore area of Baramulla district, reports said Saturday. The 10-year-old was found lying unconscious inside a bathroom in his house in Tujjar village of Sopore this evening, reports said. He was taken to the nearby Sopore hospital by his family for treatment. However, the doctors there declared him brought dead. ● P-02

### 5 Militant Associates Held: Police

Srinagar: State forces on Saturday busted a militant hideout and arrested five militant associates in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. A militant hideout in Arizal area of the central Kashmir district was busted by the security personnel, a police official said. He said five militant associates identified as Zahoor Wani, Younis Mir, Aslam Sheikh, Parvaiz Sheikh and Rehman Lone were arrested. Incriminating material, including arms and ammunition ● P-02

### Slain Pak Militant, 5 Others Charged

Srinagar: Police on Saturday filed a chargesheet against six people in a case related to an encounter in Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir in which a Pakistani militant was killed last year, officials said. "The police submitted a chargesheet before the competent court against the six accused, including one Pakistani militant who was killed in the encounter at Kullian in 2019. The case was registered at PS Gund in 2019 under ULA(P) Act," a police spokesperson said. ● P-02

## Another Covid-19 Death In Kashmir, Toll In J&K Reaches 12

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deadly coronavirus claimed another life in Jammu and Kashmir, as a septuagenarian man from central Kashmir's Budgam district died at a hospital here on Saturday, raising the death toll across Jammu and Kashmir to 12.

The 70-year-old from Buchru village of Chadura died this morning at the SK institute of medical sciences, where he was admitted on Friday night after suffering a heart attack, reports said. The doctors at the institute had taken swab sample of the septuagenarian man, who had complaint of uneasiness and breathlessness.

"His report for coronavirus came positive today. The body has been kept in mortuary and would be handed over to the family after completing formalities as per Covid-19 protocol," Medical Superintendent SKIMS, Professor Farooq Jan told a local news agency.

With his death, the toll due to the dreaded disease in Jammu and Kashmir rose to 12 today, 10 of the fatalities in Valley.

The Srinagar district has reported 4 of the deaths, highest in any district, followed ● PAGE 02



Pic By: Anil Bhat

## J&K Witnesses Record Surge In Covid-19 Cases

12 Pregnant Women, Infant Among 108 Test Positive

Observer News Service

Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday witnesses highest ever spike in coronavirus cases as over a hundred people, including 12 expecting mothers tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total number of infected across the Union Territory to 1121

"108 cases have been reported from Jammu and Kashmir in the last 24 hours," the officials said,

adding that 29 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals.

Of fresh cases, 86 were reported from Kashmir and 22 from Jammu division, they said.

In Kashmir, 47 cases were reported from Kulgam, 17 from Anantnag, 12 from Kupwara, 5 from Budgam, 3 from Srinagar and 2 from Baramulla district. In Jammu division, 12 cases were reported from Ramban ● PAGE 02

## Ladakh Students To Get 5 % Quota In NIT Srinagar



Representation image

Press Trust Of India

LEH- Five per cent of all reserved seats in under-graduate programmes of Srinagar National Institute of Technology will be earmarked for students of Ladakh

Union Territory, an officials statement said on Saturday. The Ladakh students would be accorded quota from within all reserved seats of the NIT-Srinagar from academic sessions 2020-21, it added. As per the Registrar, University ● PAGE 02

## Student Declared Covid Free Infects 4 Of His Family

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: In a case of sheer negligence and callousness in the times of a pandemic, a quarantined student declared Covid free by the health officials has tested positive for the virus and infected four of his family members.

The 21-year-old student from Jawalpora village of Budgam was put under quarantine at a government run centre in Narbal on his return from Rajasthan, reports said Saturday. The student's samples were collected by the Block Medical Officer Magam on May 10 and he was let off even when the test reports were yet to come.

"The student was allowed to

leave due to the intervention of a senior doctor. The BMO released the boy with a hope that his test report will come negative. However, that didn't happen," sources said.

But contrary to the BMO's belief, the student's report came positive for coronavirus. Four of his family members came positive for coronavirus today, setting off the alarm bells ringing among the health officials, sources added.

According to the reports, the student as well as his family members have been put under isolation while the health officials have started contact tracing.

Meanwhile, BMO Magam Dr Taha has given clean chit to the infected student and termed ● PAGE 02

## J&K Govt Urges Centre To Evacuate Kashmiris Stranded Abroad

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As calls for evacuation by stranded Kashmiris are getting louder with each passing day, the Jammu and Kashmir administration Saturday urged government of India to facilitate return of hundreds of residents stranded in foreign countries.

In a letter written to India's Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, J&K Chief Secretary B. V. R. Subrahmanyam has sought evacuation of J&K residents from

three foreign countries of Dubai, Oman and Iran. In his letter, Subrahmanyam has apprised Shringla that the J&K administration has also received evacuation request from these stranded people.

This is the second letter Subrahmanyam has written to government of India in a fortnight seeking help in evacuation of stranded J&K residents. Earlier, he had sought help in evacuating Kashmiri students from Bangladesh in view of Eid-ul-Fitr. Urging personal intervention ● PAGE 02

## Trains To Bring Back Stranded Kashmiris Today

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Speeding up its evacuation process, the Jammu and Kashmir administration Saturday said that special trains will ferry residents of the Union Territory stranded in other parts of the country from Sunday.

The administration has arranged trains for ● P-02

## Muslims Perform Last Rites Of Punjabi Sikh

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR- Srinagar- Amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown, Muslims performed last rites of a Sikh who passed away in Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Saturday.

Ranveer Singh, a resident of Punjab, who was working as a carpenter in Wakura area of Ganderbal district of central Kashmir died a few days ago, the officials said. Singh was living in the village about 35 kms ● P-02

## Pak Rejects 'Threats And Allegations' By Indian Army Chief

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday rejected what it called "threats and allegations" by Indian Army chief Gen MM Naravane against it.

Responding to a question about the possibility of India facing a two-front war along the borders with China and Pakistan in New Delhi on Friday, Gen Naravane said that it is a possibility and that the country will have to remain prepared to deal with such a scenario.

"We reject Indian Army chief's recent comments levelling allegations against Pakistan and hurling threats," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

It claimed that these are part of India's "attempts to divert the world's

attention" from Jammu and Kashmir. The FO also said that India's "attempted diversions, misrepresentations and continued belligerence imperil peace and security in South Asia".

It is important for the world community to take cognizance and urge India to act responsibly in the interest of regional peace and stability, the FO added.

The ties between India and Pakistan strained following the Pulwama attack and the subsequent Balakot airstrikes by the Indian Air Force.

The bilateral relations further nose-dived following the Indian government's abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in August last that revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. ● PAGE 02

## Professor's Pandemic Plea: 'Bring Them Home'

Jyotsna Bharti

**A**S phone rings and announces the alarming situation, senior Congress leader and former union minister Prof. Saifuddin Soz appeals Raj Bhavan and New Delhi to come to the rescue of stranded Kashmiris — some of whom have already reached on the verge of starvation and mental breakdown in some foreign land, during pandemic lockdown.

The senior leader has been actively participating in bringing back the marooned Kashmiris home from various Indian states and different parts of the world and making all the required arrangements for it.



For his 'selfless' gesture, the unionist has already become "Salvador" for these stranded Kashmiris.

Lately, as yet another evacuation call became an outcry, Professor beckoned Minister of External Af-

fairs, Subrahmanyam Jainshankar. "I pleaded strongly with him that it is a worrisome situation for Kashmir from where many people have travelled to Iran for studies and other pursuits in life," he said.

"I've requested him to ensure that these students should travel back to their families as per their requirement."

Even as the government says it's already on job, a video shot by stranded Kashmiris from Muscat is now doing rounds on the internet and shilling the evacuation cry.

"We're over 300 people stranded in Muscat," a Kashmiri man says in the video.

"Some of us have expired visas. We're stuck here ● PAGE 02



Representation image

## Airlines: 'Our Aircraft Ready To Fly Again'

Agencies

NEW DELHI: With the possibility of resuming domestic flights soon, airlines in India have submitted their aircraft's airworthiness report to the country's aviation regulator Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA).

As per the set protocol, airlines have to submit their aircraft details to the DGCA and the MoCA before the resumption of their flight operations.

"Airlines are submitting their aircraft's status and airworthiness report to the regu-

latory," sources in the MoCA told ANI.

The Central government is planning to start domestic flights with several guidelines, but as of now, no clear instruction has been given to them.

MoCA has informed all aviation stakeholders including airlines and airport operators through the draft SOPs that "people over the age of 80 will not be allowed to travel in the first phase of flight commencement."

No cabin baggage will be allowed at the initial level and only one piece of check-in baggage -- less than ● PAGE 02

**OVER 500 AIRCRAFT IN INDIA**  
and all are capable to repatriate Indians from the Gulf region and other countries," senior MoCA officials added.

## Policeman Killed In Kulgam Militant Attack



Pic By: Shah Junaidd

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A policeman was killed on Saturday in a militant attack in Frisal area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Unidentified militants lobbed a grenade and opened indiscriminate fire upon a police team manning a checkpoint in Frisal Chowk of the district this evening, reports said. In the surprise militant attack, a police head

constable was critically injured.

He was shifted to the nearby hospital for treatment. However, the doctors pronounced him brought dead on arrival. He had sustained gunshot injuries in his head, reports said.

The deceased cop has been identified as Mohammad Amin Bagad of Sangarwani Pulwama.

Meanwhile, soon after the attack government forces reached the spot and carried out ● PAGE 02

## CASO Ends In Anantnag After 18 Hours

**G**overnment forces carried out massive cordon and search operation (CASO) in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, reports said Saturday. Contingents of army, special operations group (SOG) of police and CRPF drove in armored vehicles to main town Anantnag around 11:30pm on Friday and laid a siege around several localities in Lal Chowk, witnesses told Kashmir Observer. The joint team, they said instantly started a door-to-door search operation in Mehmaan Mohalla, Kotwal Gali and Dandepora after asking the locals to assemble around Lal Chowk. "The inmates were taken out and asked to assemble ● P-02

## Govt Pulls Out 10 CAPF Companies From Jammu

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Union Home Ministry on Saturday ordered withdrawal of 10 CAPF companies from Jammu and Kashmir and sent nine such units to Maharashtra, officials said. They said the 10 units comprising over 1,000 personnel are being withdrawn from the Jammu region of the Union Territory.

It has also released nine companies — four from the Rapid Action Force, two from the Central Reserve Police Force and three from the Central Industrial Security Force — to Maharashtra. For Maharashtra, five companies have been withdrawn from Jammu, while rest four have been released from the Mumbai-based unit of the RAF, CRPF's specialised counter-riots force, they said. The state had sought 20 Central Armed Police Forces companies recently to relieve its police personnel who, it said, were overworked during the coronavirus-enforced lockdown.



# Arrests At Anti-Lockdown Demonstrations In Warsaw, London

**FRANKFURT:** Demonstrations took place Saturday in several European cities against restrictions aimed at controlling the spread of the coronavirus, with tear gas used on protesters in Poland and arrests made at a gathering in London's Hyde Park.

Police in several German cities enforced distancing rules as thousands of people gathered to express a mix of frustrations at restrictions battering the economy and a perceived loss of civic freedom. In some

places, people also voiced conspiracy theories and anti-vaccine views.

Police in Stuttgart said that the permitted number of 5,000 demonstrators was exceeded and directed arriving participants to another open space. Police said there were enforcing a mask requirement under threat of a 300 euro ( 325) fine.

The permitted number of 1,000 protesters was reached in Munich on the Theresienwiese event grounds, site of the now-

cancelled Oktoberfest beer festival. It was one of a number of gatherings across the southern state of Bavaria.

Several dozen people protested anti-virus rules to loud music in Berlin in a taped-off demonstration area on the central Alexanderplatz square, overseen by 1,000 police who enforced a 1.5 meter (six-foot) distancing requirement and a ban on more than 50 people in one place, the dpa news agency reported. Among the permitted protest

groups were several dozen counter-protesters denouncing conspiracy theories and supporting the rights of migrants.

Germany and other countries have started to loosen some of the restrictions on movement, gatherings and businesses under restrictions on numbers of customers and spacing of seating. Retailers and restaurants have been hard hit and face uncertain futures. Germany's professional soccer league resumed matches on Saturday in stadiums without

spectators.

Dozens of people, including a senator, were detained during a protest by business owners in the Polish capital against coronavirus restrictions, while police used tear gas against protesters. The city of Warsaw said the gathering was illegal because it had not been previously approved.

Jacek Bury, a senator for the opposition Civic Platform party, said he was hurt by police when trying to defend another protester. Warsaw police said they

faced cases of aggression against police officers. Police denied using force against Bury.

In Britain, anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine protesters held a gathering in Hyde Park in central London and were met by a heavy police presence.

The protesters chanted Freedom and held handmade placards. Some sat on the grass and had picnics while observing social distancing guidelines while others ignored the rules and gathered in groups.

Officers tried to disperse the groups, threatening them with fines if they didn't comply. They arrested 13 people, the London Metropolitan Police Service said.

This is the first weekend since the British government eased lockdown rules for England, allowing people to spend more time outdoors. Activities they're now allowed to do include having a picnic and they are also allowed to meet one other person from another household as long as social distancing is obeyed.

## Rahul Gandhi Interacts With Home-Bound Migrant Workers Amid Lockdown

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday interacted with a group of migrant labourers near the SukhdevVihar flyover here and asked them about their problems as they walked home amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

Gandhi sat on the pavement and gave the migrant workers a patient hearing and assured them of help in reaching their homes, Congress leaders claimed.

Dressed in black pants and white kurta, he talked to the workers and heard their grievances.

Sources close to Gandhi said he had an impromptu hour-long meeting with a group of 20 migrants, including women and children, walking from their work site near Ambala to their village near Jhansi. The meeting took place as they sat on the footpath

on Mathura road in the national capital. Mahesh Kumar, a migrant worker from Madhya Pradesh who along with 14 of his family members was sitting at the footpath, narrated his tale of woe to the former Congress chief. "It was nice talking to him. At least someone heard us and our problems," he told reporters later.

The Congress claimed that the police detained some of the labourers later in preventive custody, saying they have "directions from the top to do so".

Police, however, denied that any migrants were detained. DCP South East District R P Meena said Rahul Gandhi and some Congressmen interacted with the 15 labourers, including four women and a child. "After spending about 15-20 minutes, he left the place," he said. Meena said the others ac-

companying the Congress leader were asked by SHO NFC to follow social distancing norms and later they took the migrant workers with them.

Party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra later tweeted thanking Rahul Gandhi and saying that someone has to talk to these migrant labourers and hear their ordeal.

"These are our own people. We will have to sit and talk with them. Their suffering has to be shared. They are nation builders. We cannot leave them alone in this time of crisis. Thank you my leader Rahul Gandhi," she said in a tweet in Hindi. Asked at a Congress media briefing about Rahul's meeting and the police allegedly detaining the workers, Congress spokesperson Gaurav Vallabh said eight crore migrants were interested in returning to their homes and Gandhi was

only trying to meet them and hear their grievances. "They cannot even meet Rahul Gandhi. What is the reason of their detention. They should not even tell Rahul Gandhi that the government has done nothing for them so far," he told reporters. A Delhi Congress leader said that Gandhi was passing from SukhdevVihar when he spotted the migrant workers stopped by the police. He intervened and talked to the migrant workers and assured them help.

Later, several Congress workers led by Delhi Congress chief Anil Chaudhary reached there and arranged help for the migrant workers. Chaudhary said that the migrants, including women, children and elderly, were walking from Haryana to their native place in Jhansi, when they were stopped by the police near Modi Mill flyover.

## Trump Fires State Dept. Watchdog Critical Of Admin Moves

**Washington:** President Donald Trump has fired the State Department's inspector general, an Obama administration appointee whose office was critical of alleged political bias in the agency's management.

The ouster is the latest in a series of moves against independent executive branch watchdogs who have found fault with the Trump administration.

A senior department official said Trump removed Steve Linick from his job on Friday but gave no reason for his ouster. In a letter to Congress, Trump said Linick,whos had held the job since 2013, no longer had his full confidence and that his removal would take effect in 30 days.

Trump did not mention Linick by name in his letter.

Democrats in Congress immediately cried foul, with the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Com-

mittee suggesting that Linick was fired in part in retaliation for opening an unspecified investigation into Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

This firing is the outrageous act of a president trying to protect one of his most loyal supporters, the secretary of state, from accountability, Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., said in a statement. I have learned that the Office of the Inspector General had opened an investigation into Secretary Pompeo. Mr. Linick's firing amid such a probe strongly suggests that this is an unlawful act of retaliation. Engel offered no details of the investigation, although two congressional aides said it involved allegations that Pompeo may have improperly treated staff. Linick's office has issued several reports critical of the department's handling of personnel matters during the Trump administration, including accusing some political appointees of retaliating against career officials.

If Inspector General Linick was fired because he was conducting an investigation of conduct by Secretary Pompeo, the Senate cannot let this stand, said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee must get to bottom of what happened here. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also condemned Linick's ouster, saying he had been punished for honorably performing his duty to protect the Constitution and our national security. "The president must cease his pattern of reprisal and retaliation against the public servants who are working to keep Americans safe, particularly during this time of global emergency. Linick, whose office also took issue with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she served as America's top diplomat, played a minor role in the Ukraine impeachment investigation into Trump.

## Another Covid-19 Death In Kashmir, Toll In J&K...

by Baramulla (3) and one each in Bandipora, Anantnag, Budgam, Udhampur and Jammu.

## J&K Witnesses Record Surge In Covid-19 Cases...

and 10 from Kathua district, they said.

The officials said that the total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir has now risen to 1121.

According to the reports, 51 tests came positive for novel coronavirus at the Army's Command Hospital Udhampur, 27 at SKIMS, 17 at Chest Diseases hospital and rest at Private Lab Srinagar.

The 27 cases confirmed positive by SKIMS here include, 10 travellers from Jammu, 12 from Kupwara, 03 from Anantnag and one each from Baramulla and Budgam. Among the 17 cases from CD hospital here are 12 pregnant ladies belong to Anantnag district while as 3 including a 6 month old male baby belong to Kulgam district, reports said.

The 12 pregnant Ladies include a 26 year old from Gutligund, 30 year old from Imooh, 22 year old from Zaadipora Khanbal, 27 year old from Sombbron Achabal, 21-year-old from Telwani Achabal, 30 year old from Oodsoo Anantnag, 21 year old from Toosu Anantnag, 35 year old from Munward Anantnag, 25 year old from Brenti Dailgam, 23 year old from Achabal, 22 year old from CS Pora Anantnag and 25 year old from Gandooro Verinag.

"The other patients include 26 year old lady from Kanganbal Achabal, 58 year old male from Momimabad Ashajipora who has travel history of Delhi besides 06 month old male baby from Khurbat pora Kulgam, 25 year old male from Narsingpora Kulgam and 21 year old female from Pahlloo Kulgam.

Of the total number of cases reported so far, 989 are from Kashmir and 132 from Jammu. Twelve people (ten in Kashmir and two in Jammu) have died and 542 patients (482 from Kashmir and 60 from Jammu) have recovered. The number of active cases stands at 567 patients (497 from Kashmir and 70 from Jammu), they added.

## Power Distribution To Be Privatised In J&K...

unveiled in the coming days which would focus on consumer rights, promotion of industry and sustainability of the power sector.

Under the revised policy, the discoms will not be allowed to pass on their inefficiencies and losses to consumers.

Discoms will also have to maintain certain service standards and would be penalised for load shedding, except in cases of natural calamities or technical failures.

The generation and transmission project developers would be selected through competitive bidding. It will also provide for direct benefit transfer of subsidies and installation of smart meters.

Singh had told industry representatives in a webinar that an informal group of ministers had approved the revised tariff policy which would be taken to the Union Cabinet for approval. He expressed hope that the policy would be rolled out within a month

## Airlines: ‘Our Aircraft Ready To Fly Again’...

20 kg -- will be allowed, as per the MoCA's draft SOP.

Meanwhile, the Government of India and the Airport Authority of India (AAI) has issued necessary steps before the flights resume stating that passengers have to download the Arogya Setu app on their smartphones before arriving at the airport.

"With the possibility of resuming domestic flights soon, the AAI has issued some steps that should be followed so that passengers can be fully dressed while travelling. Wear a mask, carry a hand sanitiser, keep the docs handy and register on the ArogyaSetu app," reads a post on the official Twitter handle of AAI.

Vistara has a smaller fleet size than other airlines -- 41 aircraft, IndiGo having about 260 aircraft in its fleet, 120 aircraft with SpiceJet and Air India group has over 155 aircraft in its fleet.

Recently a senior official from the MoCA had given a detailed

presentation before the Group of Minister (GoM) when India is taking a decision on mass repatriation flights for bringing back Indians from abroad under the Vande Bharat Mission.

"Over 500 aircraft in India and all are capable to repatriate Indians from the Gulf region and other countries," senior MoCA officials added.

A private airline has also given a detailed report to the MoCA and the DGCA, stating that its aircraft are ready for flying.

"We are regularly maintaining our aircraft even though aircraft are flying or not. We have maintained our necessary checks of the aircraft engines and other important equipment. Our aircraft are ready. However, difficult it will be since a booking window is required but we are just waiting to start as soon as we get a confirmation," sources of an airline told ANI.

Air India is operating domestic flights for those who are coming to India from abroad in repatriation flights under the Vande Bharat Mission.

There is a ban on the movement of commercial flights in India from March 17 to May 17 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Ladakh Students To Get 5 % Quota In NIT Srinagar

of Ladakh, the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has initiated a move to reserve five per cent seats in all under-graduate programmes of the NIT, Srinagar for eligible students of the UT of Ladakh within the overall quota seats of Jammu & Kashmir from academic year 2020-21, the statement said.

The Centre had revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution and bifurcated it into two UTs of J&K and Ladakh last year.

## Student Declared Covid Free Infects 4 Of His Family

this serious lapse as a miscommunication and judgment of error.

"Due to internet suspension, we got an incomplete report and I thought the student in question is Covid-19 free," he said, adding "It was not his fault at all," (KNT)

## Muslims Perform Last Rites Of Punjabi Sikh...

from here along with a few colleagues at a rented accommodation.

Soon after the news of his death spread, locals informed police and made arrangements for performing his last rites, the officials said.

Singh was cremated in the presence of officials of the civil and police administration, Wakura Tehsildar Ghulam Mohammad Bhat told PTI.

"The locals showed huge support and arranged everything for the cremation of the deceased. The expenses related to the cremation were made by the locals. They also deposited some money in the account of Singh's wife," he said.

"It is our duty to help neighbours irrespective of their religion," Abdul Rehman, a local resident, said.

He said many people from outside have been working in the area for the past several years and live there for most part of the year.

"Most of them leave the valley when winter approaches, but return in a few months. They become a part of the society. We try to help them in whichever way we can when they face any difficulty. So, when we heard about Singh's death, we came forward to arrange for his last rites," Rehman added.

## J&K Govt Urges Centre To Evacuate Kashmiris...

of Foreign Secretary in prioritizing the evacuation of stranded UT residents, J&K CS said that the prolonged stay abroad during the COVID-19 Pandemic has made them restless and fearful of catching the disease in a foreign country," it said.

"They are also desirous of celebrating Eid festival, which is, approaching on 25 May in Jammu and Kashmir," reads the official communiqué

In his latest letter, Subrahmanyam also praised government of India's 'Vande Bharat Mission', saying that the evacuation of Kashmiri students from Bangladesh has been greatly appreciated by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Trains To Bring Back Stranded Kashmiris Today

the J&K residents stranded in Karnataka and Gujarat from tomorrow, an official spokesperson said.

Those stranded in Karnataka can board the train at Tripura Vasini White Petals, Gate number 2, palace Grounds Bellary Road Armane Nagar Bengaluru from 2pm to 5pm. The administration has also released phone numbers to help the stranded residents.

"For any facilitation, the people can Whatsapp at 9480800601 or call at 01912466988," the official spokesperson said.

Similarly, those who have been stranded in Gujarat have to register themselves on Gujarat government's portal digitalgujarat.gov.in for their return to J&K. The registration for the only train from Gujarat to J&K will be done at 3pm Sunday.

For the stranded persons in Andhra Pradesh and Telengana, the government would soon schedule a train for J&K, the official spokesperson said.

He urged the stranded people to wait for further information and not to move on foot or in an unauthorized manner.

The official spokesperson said that the stranded residents can call on : 01912466988 for any issue in this regard.

## Policeman Killed In Kulgam Militant Attack...

a search operation. However, reports said no one was arrested during the searches that continued till dawn.

The militant attack on cops comes almost ten days after Hizbul Mujahideen commander Riyaz Naikoo and his associate were killed in an encounter by government forces in his native Beighpora village of Awantipora.

## CASO Ends In Anantnag After 18 Hours...

at Lal Chowk. They spent entire night under open sky," an eyewitness said.

He said that due to the overnight search operation, many residents could not go home to have Suhoor.

According to the witnesses, women and children were also taken out during the search operation that concluded after nearly 18 hours.

Earlier reports said that the government forces launched search operation amid reports that two top Hizb militants Tariq Dar and Molvi Ashraf were hiding. 55-year-old Ashraf was recently appointed operational chief of Hizbul Mujahideen.

On July 25, 2018, gunfire resonated in Anantnag's Lal Chowk after 14 years when two Lashkar-e-Toiba militants engaged government forces in a six-hour-long gunfight. Bilal Dar of Khodwani in Kulgam and Abid Hussain Bhat of Doda were slain in the encounter that erupted in congested Mehmaan Mohalla in the wee hours.

Meanwhile, a search operation was also carried out by government forces in Lassipora area of the neighbouring Pulwama district during Friday night, reports said.

## Pak Rejects 'Threats And Allegations' By Indian Army

The move angered Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties with India and expelled the Indian High Commissioner.

## Professor’s Pandemic Plea: ‘Bring Them Home’...

without money. It's hard to sustain here. We're in utmost need."

Many of these Kashmiris are stuck in Muscat with their families.

"We don't have food to eat or money to feed our families," says another Kashmiri in the video.

"Our children are starving here. I strongly plead to the Indian Government to evacuate us, before we die here."

At this crucial time, Prof. Soz has once again resurfaced as the 'go to man' for stranded Kashmiris.

"I strongly pleaded with Minister for External Affairs, that he should immediately repatriate a group of Kashmiris stranded at Muscat," Soz said.

"I explained in detail to the minister that there're women and children in this group. Many among them had lost jobs and the system wants them to fend for themselves when the times have become very hard due to the coronavirus."

A seasoned parliamentarian, Prof. Soz, a native of Sopore, sought voluntary retirement from government service to enter politics in 1983.

That year, he contested Lok Sabha election, and won the Baramulla seat as a candidate of National Conference.

Soz went on to win three more Lok Sabha elections as NC member, before, in 1999, he was expelled from the party for voting against the Vajpayee government.

His vote brought the BJP government down which led the then Prime Minister to tender his resignation.

After joining Congress party in 2003, Soz was elected to the Rajya Sabha. Inducted as Minister of Water Resources in Manmohan Singh government in 2006, Soz was appointed President of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh (state) Congress Committee in 2008.

The recipient of Soviet Land Nehru Award, Prof. Soz earlier helped stranded Kashmiri labourers in Kagda and other areas of Himachal Pradesh to return to their homes.

"The government of Oman [Muscat] will not accept any kind of responsibility for what happens to the needy group of Kashmiris stranded there," the professor said.

"So, I earnestly pleaded with Dr Jai Shanker to repatriate the stranded group, as early as possible."

## Landslides Hit Highway, 1 Dead; 2 Missing...

one dumper, a JCBand buried several other vehicles, including trucks on the highway stretch.

Station House Officer Ramban Sunil Sharma said that one person was killed while four others were rescued and were shifted to Sub-District Hospital Ramban for treatment.

"Nine vehicles include trucks plying on the highway were buried under the debris," he told news agency GNS.

According to sources, two more persons are still believed to be buried under the debris and the rescuers were making their best efforts to find out them.

"As of now are they are feared dead but the rescue operation is still going on," sources said, adding "The traffic on the strategic highway has been suspended,"

## Minor ‘Commits Suicide’ In Sopore...

According to the reports, the minor had a mark on his neck. Meanwhile, police officials said that they have taken cognizance of the matter and further investigations are going on. (KNO)

## 5 Militant Associates Held: Police...

, were recovered from the hideout, the official said, adding a case has been registered.

## Slain Pak Militant, 5 Others Charged...

He said the accused are Farooq Ahmad Sheikh, a resident of Kullam, Rayees Ahmad Lone, a resident of Gund, Nisar Ahmad alias 'Batchi', a resident of Hajin, Tariq Ahmad Ganai, a resident of FrawHaknar, Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Kangan, and the Pakistani militant Zargam alias Talha who was killed during the encounter in November last year.

The spokesman said that as per the police investigation, the accused were involved in actively supporting, assisting and harbouring active militants in the area, and providing logistic support besides transporting them from one place to another.

As per the investigation, their involvement was established in unlawful activities, including militancy crimes, he added.

The spokesman said one of the accused, Nisar Ahmad alias 'Batchi', is an active militant affiliated with proscribed outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba.

"Based on the evidence collected during the course of the investigation, they have been found to be involved in the militancy crime case and accordingly while pursuing the investigations in a professional manner, on Saturday a chargesheet was presented before the Hon'ble court. All the five accused are lodged in judicial custody," the spokesman said.



## SKIMS Bemina discharged 11 more COVID-19 Patients

**S**SRINAGAR, MAY 16: The SKIMS Medical College & Hospital Bemina a designated COVID-19 Specific Hospital today discharge 11 more COVID-19 patients after full recovery.

The dedicated team of Doctors, Paramedics, Nursing staff, sanitation and security personals are putting up best efforts round the clock and their comfortable accommodation by the District Administration Srinagar has facilitated the delivery of high quality health care to the COVID patients including some highly co-morbid as well admitted in the hospital.

The Principal SKIMS Bemina Dr. Reyaz A. Untoo has complimented his staff and also put a message to the General Masses for respecting Lockdown, Maintain Social Distancing, constant use of Masks, Hand hygiene and avoid social and religious gatherings particularly in view of festive days ahead.

# Parents File Online Petition Demanding “No Fee To Students During Lockdown”

## Agencies

SRINAGAR: Parents in Kashmir have submitted an online petition demanding no fee to be charged for students during lockdown.

The School Education Department has asked parents to pay fee to private schools amid lockdown. As per the order, “Only tuition fee shall be charged from the students on monthly bases instead of quarterly bases for the lockdown period and no fee hike shall be made during the academic session 2020-21.”

It further says that annual charges, if any, can be charged monthly on pro-rata basis after school reopens and a view regarding transport charges shall be taken separately.

“No school shall deny access to online education, material/ classes to poor/deserving students’ unable to pay school fee due to prevailing situa-

tion,” it reads.

However, the order has not gone well with parents opposing it. Some parents have also filed an online petition demanding there should be no fee to students during lockdown.

As per the petition accessed by news agency, “it’s really sad to see how (Education Department) you have fallen into the hands of private schools in order to profiteer them at this difficult hour which the whole world is facing”.

“Are you serious about paying of full fees during the time of complete lockdown? Our shops, factories and businesses are closed. We know how we are making our ends meet and paying salaries to our staff from our pockets. So we can bear this burden, then why can’t these schools pay to their staff during lockdown?” the petition reads.

It says that schools have



been taking hefty fees from them since years. “Cannot they even pay the salaries of the staff on their own at this time when everyone’s life is compromised,” it says.

“And the gimmick of starting these online E-learning classes in order to justify charging the fees is all the more shameful. The quality of education through these classes is another low. They have become a burden on parents as everything the parents need to teach their kids, make them understand, help them with the assignments. Teachers are not even bothering to

correct the sent assignment and send it back. How do you justify the full TUITION fees too. Neither the students nor the teachers or the system is ready and equipped with these online classes. These are a sheer waste of time and energy. As of now peace of mind is more important and we need to accept the current situation. This too shall pass and we can lighten the studies burden for this year,” the petition reads.

“And what happened to the crores of money they have in their SURPLUS FUNDS. Can’t they pay their staff with that money which is also indirectly given by parents only,” the petition reads.

While Principal Secretary School Education, Dr. Asgar Hassan Samoon has said that most of the private schools are small standard and the salary of their teachers directly comes from the fee of the students.

## Timely Seed Distribution Sustains Agriculture Activity In Kashmir

SRINAGAR: With about 70% population directly or indirectly involved with Agriculture and rural population primarily dependent on this activity, the Agriculture Production department has been taking steps to reach out to the farmers in Kashmir to ensure that this activity carries on unhindered during the lockdown and covid-19 situation.

Agriculture department is trying to minimize the adverse effects of Covid pandemic and encouraging farmers to continue with cultivation of rice, maize, wheat, oil seeds, saffron, pulses, pea, oats, etc during rabi and kharif seasons.

“When the lockdown was announced in Jammu and Kashmir, the harvesting of Rabi crops had already started in the valley. With announcement of certain exemptions allowing resumption of certain economic activities including agriculture, the department has taken the responsibility to provide all assistance and expertise to the farmers. It has been spreading general awareness about observing social distancing while going to work in the fields,” a senior official of Agriculture department said in a statement.

“To cope with the shortage of agricultural labour, the department has channelised locals and family resources to harvest Rabi crops like wheat, oil seeds and oats. The department has asked young and healthy farmers to engage themselves in the agriculture activity and to

take adequate precautions while elderly have been advised to stay safe at home,” he added.

While adopting proactive approach, the officers and field functionaries have been asked to strictly adhere to the guidelines laid down for the containment and management of COVID-19 pandemic. “Recently a team of experts and agriculture officials visited Padgampora farm area to interact with the farmers and on the occasion, masks and gloves were distributed among the farmers and they were sensitized about the Covid-19 disease and the precautionary measures to be taken while in the fields,” the officer stated.

Agriculture department has also started 24X7 helpline to answer the queries of farmers and a dedicated team of experts has been nominated for the purpose. The main objective of setting up the helpline is to answer the queries of farmers and to make sure that every farmer and grower can access to credible and accurate information regarding different field crops and other agriculture activities on ground.

“In March and April, as farmers start sowing of seeds, the agriculture department would normally distribute seeds and seedlings among the farmers through division and district level offices, but during this crisis the department has taken up distribution of seeds by home delivery and this practice would continue to minimize the movement of farmers”, the department said.

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON STATE LEVEL PURCHASE COMMITTEE Animal Husbandry Department J&K Srinagar (Directorate of Animal Husbandry Kashmir)

GIST of e-NIT No. 09 -SLPC/DAHK of 2020  
Dated:- 14-05-2020

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders are invited under dual cover system (Technical & Financial Bid) by the Chairperson State Level Purchase Committee, Animal Husbandry Department J&K Srinagar from Original manufacturers/Dealers/Registered firms of repute (encumbrance free) possessing valid authorization of Principals for supply of Wheat Bhooosa, Turi, Barley Whole, Gram Whole (Black), Rice Husk and Saw Dust on terms & conditions given in the NIT.

The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website from 14-05-2020 to 10-06-2020. Clarifications, if any, will be entertained from 14-05-2020 to 18-05-2020. All the technical and financial bids should be uploaded on the website <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> from 20-05-2020 to 10-06-2020 upto 4 PM. The technical bids uploaded on the website will be opened on 15-06-2020 at 11:30 AM in the office of Chairperson, State Level Purchase Committee Animal Husbandry Department, J&K, Srinagar in presence of bidders who wish to be present. In case, the said date is declared as holiday, bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. A tender fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees one thousand) shall have to be paid at the time of purchase of the tender documents through crossed demand draft favouring “Accounts Officer, Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir” payable at Srinagar. The intending tenderers who download the tender document from the e-tendering website <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> will also have to pay the prescribed fee in the shape of demand draft. The local SSI units are required to pay the tender fee & EMD in light of Govt. Order No. 58-IND of 2016 Dated:- 15-03-2016. Tenders submitted without paying tender fee shall be summarily rejected. The tender fee is Non-Refundable. Tender fee can be deposited at Directorates of Animal Husbandry Kashmir/Jammu in the form of Demand Draft favouring Accounts Officer, Directorate of Animal Husbandry Kashmir. From 20-05-2020 to 10-06-2020 upto 04:00 PM in sealed envelopes on prescribed tender addressed to Chairperson State Level Purchase Committee, Animal Husbandry Department J&K Srinagar. Earnest money (EMD) of Rs. 0.50 Lakh (Rupees fifty thousand) in the shape of CDR/FDR with validity not less than Twenty-four (24) months, from any Nationalized bank/Scheduled Bank (preferably J&K Bank Ltd) pledged to the Member Secretary, State Level Purchase Committee, Animal Husbandry Department, J&K Srinagar should be uploaded on the Tendering Portal. However, the original CDR/FDR shall have to be deposited with the Chairperson SLPC before finalization of rate contract in favour of the successful bidder.

**Member Secretary  
State Level Purchase Committee,  
Animal Husbandry Department J&K  
(Accounts Officer AHD Kashmir)**  
**DIPK-809/20**

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir CHAIRPERSON STATE LEVEL PURCHASE COMMITTEE Animal Husbandry Department J&K Srinagar (Directorate of Animal Husbandry Kashmir)

GIST of Re-NIT No. - SLPC/DAHK of 2019  
Dated:- -05-2020

For and on behalf of Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders are invited under dual cover system (Technical & Financial Bid) by the Chairperson State Level Purchase Committee, Animal Husbandry Department, J&K Srinagar from Original manufacturers/Registered Dealers/ Registered firms for fixing the rate contract for the year 2020-21 for supply of ANIMAL HEALTH CARDS (SAMPLE BASED) as per below mentioned specifications and on the terms/conditions given in the NIT.

The tender documents can be downloaded from the website <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> from 14-05-2020 to 10-06-2020.. Clarifications, if any, will be entertained from 14-05-2020 to 18-05-2020. All the technical and price bids should be uploaded on the website <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> from 20-05-2020 to 10-06-2020 upto 4 PM. The technical bids uploaded on the website will be opened on 15-06-2020 at 11:30 AM in the office of Chairperson SLPC J&K (Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir) in presence of bidders who wish to be present. In case the said date is declared as holiday, bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The tender documents will be available for sale from 14-05-2020 to 10-06-2020 upto 04:00 PM at the office of Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir/Jammu on all working days. A tender fee of Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One thousand) shall have to be paid at the time of purchase of the tender documents through crossed demand draft favouring “Accounts Officer, Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir” payable at Srinagar. The tender fee is Non-Refundable. The SSI units of J&K State are required to pay the tender fee as prescribed by the J&K Govt (latest industrial policy in vogue). Tender fee in the form of Demand Draft favouring Accounts Officer, Directorate of Animal Husbandry Kashmir payable at Srinagar can be deposited at Directorates of Animal Husbandry Kashmir/Jammu up to 12-06-2020 upto 04:00 PM in sealed envelopes addressed to Chairperson State Level Purchase Committee, Animal Husbandry Department J&K Srinagar. Earnest money (EMD) of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees Fifty thousand) in the shape of CDR/FDR with validity not less than 24 months, from any Nationalized bank/Scheduled Bank (preferably J&K Bank Ltd) pledged to the Member Secretary, State Level Purchase Committee, Animal Husbandry Department, J&K Srinagar should be uploaded on the Tendering Portal. All other terms & conditions can be had from the office on any working day.

**Member Secretary  
State Level Purchase Committee  
Animal Husbandry Department  
(Accounts Officer AHD Kashmir)**  
**DIPK-794/20**

| Government of Jammu and Kashmir.<br>Office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Tral.  |   |                   |         |                   |                    |                 |                            |
|---|---|-------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS<br>Short Term e-NIT NO: 04 OF 2020-21   |   |                   |         |                   |                    |                 |                            |
| For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT J&K e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K UT Government for following works:- |   |                   |         |                   |                    |                 |                            |
| S. No   | Name of Work  | Adv. cost in Lacs | E/Money | Class of Contract | Time of Completion | Head of Account | Tender Receiving Authority |
| 1   | Construction of cement concrete lining wall and bed treatment on Peth khul from RD 2518-2568 mts near house of Mohammad Sultan and Manzoor Ahmad Bhat at village Waggy Mohalla, Seer Jagir. | 1.68              | 3360/=  | DEE               | 10 Days            | 2702 M&R        | 200/=                      |
| 2   | Clearance of blockades at RD 880 mt and restoration of damaged retaining wall at RD 1200 mt of Medura Canal   | 1.43              | 2860/=  | DEE               | 10 Days            | 2702 M&R        | 200/=                      |
| 3   | Const of lining wall on left embankment of Ganie Khul at RD 1000 to 1050 mts at spots near land of Mohd. Sadiq Dar (effective length 20mtr)   | 1.18              | 2360/=  | DEE               | 10 Days            | 2702 M&R        | 200/=                      |
| 4   | Const of crated pick up bund on Bud khul Rd 9050m near off take of Den Kujan Minor and resectioning of Den Kujan Minor @ Rd 0-570m.   | 1.15              | 2300/=  | DEE               | 10 Days            | 2702 M&R        | 200/=                      |
| 5   | Const of retaining wall on damaged right bank of Parganlar RD 7500 mt near land of Ab Majeed Sheikh at village Chatrogam.   | 1.26              | 2520/=  | DEE               | 10 Days            | 2702 M&R        | 200/=                      |
| 6   | Construction of lining wall on damaged left bank of Medura Canal RD 4800 - 4830 mts   | 1.67              | 3240/=  | DEE               | 10 Days            | 2702 M&R        | 200/=                      |

01. The NIT consisting of qualifying information eligibility criteria specifications 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](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) from :-

|                 |                           |                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1               | Publishing date           | 15/05/2020 (02:00 PM) |
| 2               | Download date start       | 16/05/2020 (09:00 AM) |
| 3               | Bid Submission date start | 16/05/2020 (11:00 AM) |
| 4               | Bid Submission date Ends  | 27/05/2020 (04:00 PM) |
| Date of opening |                           | 28/05/2020 (11:00 AM) |

The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in).

- The bids uploaded on the Web Site up to due date and time, will be opened in the office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation Division Tral in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case of holiday or office, happening to be closed on the basis of opening of the bid the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- The Department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons. The bid submission date is the final date and can't be extended in any manner.
- Documents to be appended :-
  - Scanned copy of GST registration along with verified PAN Number.
  - Scanned copy of CDR equivalent to 1% of advertised cost duly issued by any recognized bank pledged to Ex. Engineer Irrigation Division Tral.
  - Scanned copy of Tender Document fee in the shape of E-Challan (with S. No / Name of work else tender will be rejected) deposited under MH-0701 Remittance in favour of Ex. Engineer Irrigation Division Tral payable at any treasury office.
  - Scanned copy of Contact No. and valid email-ID.
  - Scanned copy of Registration card along with Latest renewal.
- If the tenderer fails to append any one of the above mentioned documents, his tender will be cancelled during the tender opening process by the tender opening authority on their own responsibility.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited if :-
  - Any bidder / tenderer withdraw his bids /tender during the period of bid validity or make any modification in terms and conditions of the bid.

**DIPK-777/20** **Sd/=**  
**Executive Engineer,**  
**Irrigation Division Tral.**

## 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 - ( Open )
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)



HIJRI

CALENDAR

23 Ramazan  
1441

## PRAYERS

|        |        |
|--------|--------|
| FAJR   | 3: 52  |
| ZUHR   | 12: 27 |
| ASR    | 5:21   |
| Magrib | 7:30   |
| ISHA   | 9:04   |

## This Day In History

- 1756-Britain declares war on France (7 Years' or French & Indiani War)
- 1803-John Hawkins & Richard French patent the Reaping Machine
- 1814- Denmark cedes Norway to Sweden (National Day)
- 1865- The International Telegraph Union (later the International Telecommunication Union) is established.
- 1897-The first successful submarine that can run submerged for any considerable distance and combines electric and gasoline engines is launched in the USA by its designer John Philip Holland
- 1902- Greek archaeologist Valerios Stais discovers the Antikythera mechanism, an ancient mechanical analog computer.
- 1940-Germany occupies Brussels, Belgium & begins invasion of France
- 1940- Nazis bombs Middelburg/B IJzerdrat begins illegal defiance
- 1948- Soviet Union recognized Israel
- 1949- British government recognises Republic of Ireland (previously Irish Free State)
- 1958- Emergency crisis proclaimed in Algeria
- 1960- 1st atomic reactor system patents, J W Flora of Canoga Park CA
- 1968- European Space Research Org launches 1st satellite
- 1969- Russian probe Venera 6 landed on Venus
- 1976- Earthquake in Uzbekistan: thousands killed
- 1983- Israel & Lebanon sign a peace treaty
- 1990- World Health Organization takes Homosexuality out of its list of mental illnesses
- 1993- Intel's new Pentium processor is unveiled
- 2007- Trains from North and South Korea cross the 38th Parallel in a test-run agreed by both governments. This is the first time that trains have crossed the Demilitarized Zone since 1953.
- 2013- 90 people are killed and 200 are injured after a series of bombings across Iraq

## From KO Archives

## Move to shift capital Sparks debate

A M Sofi

**S**SRINAGAR - Even as the proposal to shift the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir is yet to take off, controversy dogs the idea with debate rag-ing for and against the govern-ment move.

Giving vent to the opposi-tion to shifting of the capital, several political parties, includ-ing main opposition National Conference, said the massive expenditure needed for moving the secretariat and other offices could be diverted to building schools, hospitals and roads in the state.

“We need no new capital at an exorbitant expenditure of Rs 3.500 crore which could be uti-lized for the betterment of Kashmiris by constructing schools, colleges, hospitals and roads which are in a dilapidated condition across the valley.” NC President Omar Abdullah told PTI.

Ridiculing the idea, another senior leader of the party Ali Mohammad Sagar said “instead of finding ways and means to mitigate the problems of the people the PDP-led coalition government is trying to squan-der the funds for unproductive projects.”

He asked the coalition gov-ernment to desist from changing the capital for “petty polit-i-cal gains.”

CPI(M), which supports the coalition government from out-side, opposes the idea. State Secretary of CPI(M) M Y Tari-gami said “I don’t think it is a very serious move yet.

The government complexes should be moved a little away from the market and the beauti-ful city but not relocated in any other place. Why go there (Parihaspora) to Lalitaditya. The kings are buried there let them rest in peace.

“It is wrong to assume that government wants to benefit villagers by moving the capital city. The government has in fact done very little for the upliftment of rural areas,” he said.

Author of the proposal to shift the capital and Finance Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig said the basic objective behind a new capital was to decongest and develop Srinagar as an exclusive tourist resort ‘with heritage villages and other amenities to make it among the most attractive tourist destinations on the globe.

The proposal for a new capital has received the Centre’s nod which would be ready within next three years at an. estimated cost of Rs 3.500 crores, he said.

Opposing the idea, Chair-man of National Democratic Front and former MP Abdul Rashid Kabuli accused the gov-ernment of not attending to the problems of Srinagar, a city of 15 lakh people.

Shifting capital from Srinagar to Parihaspora and moving government offices to rural areas is like shifting of Union capital from Delhi to South India, Kabuli said.

The city of great antiquity has had a chequered history which dates back to 250 BC when king Ashoka founded Srinagar as capital which occupied the site of the present Pandre-than about five runs from Srinagar and named it as Srinagari.

The place was the venue of the Buddhist conference during the reign of Kanishka and Muslim preachers, Syed Sharifuddin Bulbul and Mir Syed Ali Hamdani chose this place to spread Islam, he said, adding the latter capitals of Kashmir founded by successive rulers lost their importance to the city.

It was during the Dogra rule (1846-1947) that Srinagar be-sides being the capital of Kashmir was elevated to the status, of the summer capital.

Travellers and tourists have been drawn in numbers to see symbol of the paradise on earth and pilgrims and preachers have found the city a place for attainment of ultimate spiritual contentment.

(Kashmir Observer, 17 May, 2005)



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NO HOLDS BARRED



There are upsides that can be capitalised on. For graduating medical students, nurses, researchers, and people eyeing up jobs in the pharmaceutical industry there are an abundance of opportunities. The same too for the technology sector, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Education Technology. For students considering other professions, you may have to take stock and re-evaluate your options.

# A New World Awaits After Lockdowns

KAUSHIK BASU

Humans are bad at assessing risk even in the best of times. During a pandemic - when the disease is unfamiliar, people are isolated and stressed, and the death toll is rising - our risk perception becomes even more distorted, with fear often overwhelming reason. This is a recipe for disastrous policy mistakes.

To be sure, the danger posed by the Covid-19 outbreak should not be underestimated. The experiences of Italy, Spain, and the United States, in particular, have shown that delayed action to limit the virus's spread can lead to large-scale illness and death.

But blind panic does nobody any good. In many countries, especially in the developing world, it is leading to policies that generate more risks - such as economic hardship, food insecurity, and generalised anxiety - than they mitigate. Smart policymaking will require leaders and citizens alike to gain a broader perspective.

While it's difficult to know Covid-19's precise fatality rate, we are much better at counting fatalities than the number of people who are infected, since the latter requires testing on a massive scale. And from the fatality data, it is evident that the risk of death remains very low for most people - that is, anyone who is not elderly and has no comorbidities. In most developing countries, one has a much higher chance of dying in a road accident than from Covid-19. In India, more than 150,000 people die in road accidents each year.

But most people are not nervous wrecks when they drive on a highway, whereas many have been terrified to go outside since the pandemic began. The large literature in psychology on "salience" helps us understand this, as the Nobel laureate economist George Akerlof has shown.

Say you were looking to buy the safest-possible car. You would probably read up on models' safety data - how many electronic or mechanical failures, accidents, or fatalities occurred for every, say, 10,000 cars on the road - and choose the model with the lowest number. But the night before you plan to purchase the car, you meet up with a friend, who tells you that a skidding accident in the model you've chosen left their cousin gravely injured just a week after he started driving it.

This conversation would cause many people to doubt - and even change - their decision, because the risk their chosen car poses is now more salient than the dry data about 10,000 cars.

Even the way the numbers themselves are presented can distort the picture. If one list shows the total number of accidents involving various kinds of cars, one brand may appear to be doing far worse than others, simply because it is more popular. It might seem obvious that accident rates are more important than the total number of accidents, yet that nuance can be lost, especially when fear is involved.

Something similar is occurring today with Covid-19 data. In recent weeks, people all over the world have been watching the number of confirmed US coronavirus-related deaths climb steadily, to nearly 70,000. This is, of course, far more than Belgium's 8,000 deaths. But, per ten million residents, Belgium's record (just under 8,000) is far worse than America's (about 2,120). As of now, a person in Belgium is more



The risk of destitution, however, is much higher in India than in Germany. Yet, rather than factor these differences into their policymaking, many developing-countries have focused single-mindedly on mitigating the ultra-salient, but statistically low risk of dying from Covid-19.

than three times more likely to die from Covid-19 than someone in the US.

The difference between death rates in North America and Europe, on the one hand, and Africa and Asia, on the other, is even starker. The chances that a person will die from Covid-19 in Europe is typically 2-4 thousand times higher than in Africa or South Asia. Even when considering only the better-performing European countries, the gap is large: the risk of Covid-19 fatality in Germany is about 100 times higher than in India.

The risk of destitution, however, is much higher in India than in Germany. Yet, rather than factor these differences into their policymaking, many developing-countries have focused single-mindedly on mitigating the ultra-salient, but statistically low risk of dying from Covid-19.

The costs of this approach are mounting. In emerging economies in Africa and South Asia, prolonged lockdowns represent a tradeoff not between saving lives and saving stock prices, but between saving some lives from Covid-19 and condemning far more people to destitution, hunger, and death by other means.

Some will argue that this conclusion is premature. Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, and Nigeria, which have low fatality rates today, could face a devastating wave of infections tomorrow. Policymakers must anticipate future risks and act early to mitigate them.

But it is not at all clear that the outbreak will follow the same trajectory in South Asia and Africa as it has in Europe and North America. The magnitude of the differences between all countries in Africa and South Asia, and virtually all countries in North America and

Europe is large enough to suggest that other factors may affect Covid-19 virus transmission. One possibility is widespread use of the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine, which protects against tuberculosis, in South Asia and Africa, where TB and malaria infections are far more common.

This is not to say that developing-country leaders should not prepare for future risks, especially given how much we still don't know about Covid-19. They certainly must not dismiss or downplay the risks, as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has done, even as the bodies pile up.

But leaders must also avoid counter-productive, fear-driven responses. Instead, they must make difficult but balanced choices based on accurate data and expert advice; adapt their policies as information and conditions change; and keep people informed. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron are both models of such leadership.

The same goes for citizens. To help protect our communities, we must take all appropriate and feasible public-health precautions, such as wearing masks and minimising physical contact, especially with vulnerable people. We must recognise, however, that a large part of such behaviour is necessary not because of the risk to oneself, but because of the social responsibility that confronting an infectious disease necessarily implies.

*Kaushik Basu, former Chief Economist of the World Bank and former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.*

## Beware Of The Pandemic Of Hate

Brad J. Bushman

No matter how bad things are, you can always make things worse," said Randy Pausch, professor of computer science, Carnegie Mellon University

The coronavirus pandemic is definitely a bad thing. Sadly, people can make bad things even worse than they already are. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the coronavirus pandemic is unleashing "a tsunami of hate and xenophobia, scapegoating and scare-mongering". He also provided several examples of how this pandemic is quickly becoming a "human rights crisis."

"Anti-foreigner sentiment has surged online and in the streets. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories have spread, and Covid-19-related anti-Muslim attacks have occurred."

Migrants and refugees "have been vilified as a source of the virus - and then denied access to medical treatment."

"With older persons among the most vulnerable, contemptible memes have emerged suggesting they are also the most expendable."

"And journalists, whistleblowers, health professionals, aid workers, and human rights defenders are being targeted simply for doing their jobs."

Why do people act this way? People divide the world into "us" and "them" categories, with "us" being the groups they belong to and "them" being the groups they do not belong to. People tend to show favoritism to their own groups, and hostility to other groups.

A European research team led by Henri Tajfel decided to conduct a programme of studies that would determine when people would begin to show this ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility. They formed the following research plan: They would start out with groups that were so meaningless that people would not show any ingroup favoritism; then they would gradually add in other variables and see at what point the ingroup favoritism started to occur. But their research plan failed because the research team could never get to the starting point. They were unable to make a group that seemed so arbitrary or trivial that no ingroup favoritism was found. If the experimenters did nothing more than flip a coin to assign participants to a "red team" and a "blue team," the red team thought they were superior to the blue team (and vice versa). This automatic preference for members of one's own group, even when group membership is randomly determined, is called the minimal group effect.

These findings suggest that people are naturally predisposed to dividing the world up into "us" and "them" and to adopting a negative stance toward "them." Sadly, prejudice and discrimination naturally follow from this predisposition. Furthermore, this predisposition can make a bad situation like a global pandemic even worse. For example, ingroup members tend to blame the outgroup members for starting the pandemic, such as blaming Chinese people for the virus.

How does one fight against this natural tendency? Learning about the minimal group effect is the first step. Understanding this natural tendency can help you guard against showing hostility to outgroups.

"And I ask everyone, everywhere, to stand up against hate, treat each other with dignity, and take every opportunity to spread kindness," Guterres said. It is always important to treat people kindly, but even more so during a pandemic. Let's not make bad things worse by hating others.

*Brad J. Bushman is a Professor of Communication at The Ohio State University.*

To say we are living in unprecedented times is an understatement. Who would have thought at the start of the year, when we were full of hope and promise, that the world would be where it is now? In a state of lockdown, stalled economies, cancelled examinations, and surrounded by sickness and fear. Our concerns back then pale in comparison to today.

There is no doubt that we have reasons to be sad or feel hard done by from the fallout of COVID-19, but what we have to remember is that this virus has impacted everybody one way or another, not least the thousands of students around the world who were due to sit examinations. They were at the pinnacle of their education careers and have been robbed of their chance to show what they are capable of.

Today's university graduates are leaving with nothing but paper degrees. They are not having the opportunity, now considered a luxury, of a graduation ceremony and subsequent celebrations. Sadly, we are living in a new, parallel world where there are other things to think about. There are many unknowns about university placements for graduating six formers, uncertainty about the jobs market for university graduates, and huge questions about the future jobs market in general. But, with every cloud comes a silver lining.

We cannot allow ourselves to wallow in self-pity. There are upsides that can be capitalised on. For gradu-

## We Need Adapt And Innovate In A Post-Covid World

Only adaptability is the key to success in our increasingly uncertain planet

SIR ANTHONY SELDON | GULF NEWS

ating medical students, nurses, researchers, and people eyeing up jobs in the pharmaceutical industry there are an abundance of opportunities. The same too for the technology sector, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Education Technology. For students considering other professions, you may have to take stock and re-evaluate your options.

It is one tough time, there is no denying it, but it is not all doom and gloom. It is also a time for optimism. And, it is important to remember that history shows that the people that flourish are those that are most adaptable. They are the ones who are willing to change and the most willing to be optimistic.

My message to these ambitious school leavers and

university graduations is this: Don't get swamped by everything that is wrong. Look for the positives. The people who do, will stand tall and pull us out of this dire straits. They will help the world recover. For students in younger years, I would like to urge you to embrace online learning and digital technology, which is coming at a rapid pace.

If you adapt, you will flourish. As I said in one of my books, AI is not something to be afraid of, it is something that can liberate and enhance humanity rather than entrap and infantilise us. Let's put it to good use and use it to our advantage.

It is not just learning that is going to be different. Jobs of the future and the way we socialise will change

forever. This is the biggest thing that has happened to the world in 100 years. One thing that is incredibly important to remember, is that no matter what, the number one priority is to look after our well-being, because if we don't look after ourselves, nobody else will.

Sure, we have people who love us and care for us, but we should be held accountable for our own physical and mental health. The better we are physically, the better we feel. So, make sure you exercise regularly and look after your mental well-being. A healthy body leads to a much healthier mind. So too does an optimistic mind.

To conclude, with probably a much-overused quote from Charles Robert Darwin: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most responsive to change." With that in mind, remember that history shows that those who flourish are not necessarily the most intelligent, or the hardest working, but those that are most willing to adapt.

So, use this as your greatest opportunity not to become immersed in sadness for the things we can no longer have. The greatest opportunity in your lives now is to adapt and innovate. Now go out and do it and make a difference!

Sir Anthony Seldon is one of the UK's leading contemporary historians, educationalists, commentators and political authors. He is currently Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham in the UK



# Why Are We All So Tired?

Some of us have more time to sleep yet we feel fatigued, wasted and stressed out

JENNA JONAITIS

While you might have more opportunities to rest during this period, additional time in bed doesn't necessarily improve your sleep quality. "Your bed should be the place that you crave for sleep," says Robbins, co-author of "Sleep for Success!" If you allow yourself to lie there and toss and turn, "you can actually start to develop insomnia because the bed starts to be that stressful place ... as opposed to where you fall into peaceful slumber."

Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, I wake up most days already tired. Coffee is mandatory, and that wasn't the case before. My husband is more sluggish too. We have increased responsibility, taking care of our toddler while still working full time from home. It's also harder for him to fall asleep and harder for me to keep my eyes open in the afternoon.

This pandemic is exhausting, mentally and physically. Our worlds have shifted, and it takes emotional energy to cope with that. Health-care workers are spending long shifts in hospitals and care homes trying to keep patients alive. Other essential workers are pulling overtime in grocery stores, warehouses, fields, production plants and delivery trucks to ensure the country has enough food, toilet paper and face masks. At-home workers are doing their jobs and, in many cases, also caring for and educating children.

But some of us actually have more time to sleep. If we're working from home, our commutes have been eliminated. We don't have to get ourselves ready for work and the kids — and their lunches — ready for school. We can sleep in, or perhaps even squeeze in a nap. But with these supposed sleep luxuries at our disposal, it's still common to feel downright drained. Why?

If you theoretically have more hours to spend sleeping but "are experiencing sleep difficulty, it's absolutely logical," says Rebecca Robbins, a postdoctoral fellow and sleep researcher at Harvard Medical School. Though you might be working from home or be in a low-risk category, "the worry of being impacted can loom larger than life on your sleep and mental bandwidth." The uncertainty of the pandemic, concern for others and ourselves, and the utter lack of control is a perfect storm for insomnia and sleep difficulty, Robbins says.

A study out of Wuhan, China, involving 3,637 participants who were covid-19 free found that the prevalence of insomnia increased significantly along with worsened insomnia symptoms during the outbreak. The main causes included anxiety, depressive symptoms and fear of getting infected, but also economic-related stress, difficulty handling social distance restrictions and changes in daily life.

As we experience repetitive days under duress over a long period of time, we move from acute stress to chronic stress, which takes a toll on the brain, says Gail Saltz, associate professor of psychiatry at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and the Weill-Cornell School of Medicine, and host of the "Personology" podcast. "Chronic stress raises cortisol levels ... and it can certainly cause you to have more awakenings during the night. It doesn't matter if you have the time to sleep."

Finally, "everything we're doing is new and [it] takes a lot of energy to do new things," says Lori Russell-Chapin, a professor of counsellor education and co-director of the Centre for Collaborative Brain Research at Bradley University in Illinois. The mental and emotional burden of novel experiences — from being hyper-alert while grocery shopping to grieving the loss of a loved one from afar — wears on us.

While you might have more opportunities to rest during this period, additional time in bed doesn't necessarily improve your sleep quality. "Your bed should be the place that you crave for sleep," says Robbins, co-author of "Sleep for Success!" If you allow yourself to lie there and toss and turn, "you can actually start to develop insomnia because the bed starts to be that stressful place ... as opposed to where you fall into peaceful slumber."

Saltz says oversleeping can lead to problems, too, such as impaired cognitive function. "Oversleeping is likely to make you feel 'less sharp-minded' and 'blah' in terms of mood," she writes via email. Getting seven to nine hours of sleep each night on a consistent schedule is recommended, not logging 12 hours just because you can.

It's certainly tempting to stay up late when you don't have to be in the office early, or snooze for a couple of hours midday because you're at home. But with those



habits, "we're messing around with our natural circadian rhythms," Russell-Chapin says. "If you nap in the daytime, you're not telling your body that [you're] supposed to nap at night for eight hours."

The tenets of good sleep hygiene — such as getting some exposure to sunlight and limiting caffeine intake — shouldn't be overlooked. Setting and sticking to a sleep schedule should be a priority, because our circadian rhythm acts as a well-oiled machine, Robbins says. "Commit to keeping your bed and rising time as close to the same time" every day of the week, she writes via email. "If you are a true night owl and prefer late bedtimes, find a schedule that you can keep throughout the workweek and operate on your preferred rhythm."

But keeping a consistent schedule is only part of the solution. During the pandemic, it's common to "lie down and your mind is still going because there's just no downtime," says Alyza Berman, founder and clinical director of the Berman Centre, which offers mental health treatment in Atlanta. You might be thinking about how you forgot to buy hand sanitiser at the store, whether you have enough toilet paper left or how your nurse friend is coping with being on the front lines.

To improve your sleep quality, you have to calm that brain activity, something Robbins said she didn't learn to do until she went to a meditation retreat. "What we have to do to fall asleep is quiet our mind," she says, "and that's exactly what you're doing when you're meditating."

But you don't need a retreat or even an app to get started. The one tool Robbins suggests? A five-minute timer. Before lying in bed, find a quiet place. Sitting comfortably with your eyes closed, try "calming the mind, breathing heavily and deeply, and moving away from stressors in your environment," she says. As thoughts enter the mind, "acknowledge them and then come back to the breath, come back to something that's tangible in the present." The goal is to slip away from stress and prepare your brain and body for sleep. Robbins says that those who meditate regularly experience better quality sleep, because they fall asleep faster and into a deeper sleep.

Both Robbins and Saltz agree that meditation takes practice, so you're not likely to see life-changing results the

first time you try it. But sticking to some meditation for even five days could help you reap the rewards of better, deepersleep, Robbins says.

While it's unlikely that we'll return to our lives as they once were — at least for some time — some workplaces are beginning to reopen across the nation. We might see different schedules or more opportunities to work from home, but some of us will go back to a set schedule that might be a difficult jump from our current state. If you have enjoyed not having to commute or put in long hours away from home, how can you ready yourself for this shift?

Robbins suggests preparing for your transition as you would an upcoming trip. If you were heading to London, for example, "in the week leading up to that trip, you'd be starting to switch your calendar a little bit closer to your destination." She says to take small steps each night, such as going to bed 15 minutes earlier, to move in the direction of your new schedule. These incremental adjustments give your body and mind time to adapt.

Besides our sleep schedules, there can be additional stress and exhaustion as we re-enter the world. From worrying about whether we'll be infected to wondering whether we'll still have a job, some fear of the unknown remains — and that, as we know, is tiresome.

Digging into the "what-ifs" usually causes anxiety, Saltz says, which expends a lot of energy. "We're not going to be able to get uncertainty to go away." The best approach for dealing with uncertainty, Saltz says, is to first pick a trustworthy source for information, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organisation, to help you make decisions such as whether to wear a mask. Then, allow the remaining uncertainty to sit with you, rather than fight with it or run away from it. "The only way you can coexist with [uncertainty] is to sort of let it float like a cloud and be there. It won't be in your front windshield. It'll be off to the side ... so you can drive."

Jenna Jonaitis is a writer who covers relationships, marriage, and lifestyle.

Gulf News

## Go Back To Nature, Leave Animals Alone

ENRIC SALA

The Seychelles, a string of 115 verdant, rocky islands in the Indian Ocean, recently announced - in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic - that it would protect 30 per cent of its glittering turquoise waters from commercial use.

Safeguarding some 410,000 square kilometres of the sea will benefit wildlife on the shore and in the water, including 100,000 giant tortoises and some of the world's last pristine coral reefs. But, beyond helping such species, establishing the new Marine Protected Areas - which was made possible through an innovative debt-swap deal - will also bolster the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of the Seychellois, who number under 100,000 but cater to more than 350,000 visitors each year.

Currently hosting only a handful of tourists stranded by the pandemic, the country is under a lockdown aimed at preventing the further spread of the virus. President Danny Faure's decision to press ahead with this protection effort, even as his country deals with a public-health emergency, serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of nature to people's physical and economic wellbeing - and not just in the Seychelles.

The human, economic, and social consequences of the rapid and devastating global spread of the coronavirus will last for years to come. And with the pandemic still unfolding, the most urgent priority is to support those directly affected by the virus and its associated hardships.

But this pandemic has also provided us with unprecedented and compelling proof of how closely our fate is linked with the health of the natural world. And right now, our relationship with nature is broken. We have cut down forests, overgrazed grasslands, built ports and roads, and expanded our cities at a rapid rate, destroying countless natural habitats. At the same time, we trade wildlife globally, moving common and endangered species alike



across the world as if they were inanimate commodities.

All of this is bringing us into closer and more frequent contact with viruses that can spread from animals to people, including the Covid-19 coronavirus and dozens of other deadly and debilitating illnesses, from HIV to Ebola. Likewise, our degradation of marine ecosystems causes blooms of pathogens that can cause potentially fatal diseases such as cholera.

The good news is that far-sighted political leaders and the United Nations are already formulating nature-focused action plans that could help to stop the next pandemic before it starts. These strategies include conserving ecosystems and wilderness

that are still untouched by human activity, clamping down on wildlife trade (including by educating people about the risks of consuming wildlife), and restoring and protecting significant areas of land and ocean.

The world already safeguards 15 per cent of its land and 7 per cent of the ocean. But, for the sake of our health and prosperity, we must do more. Indeed, there is increasing agreement among countries that we need to return half the planet to nature and use the other half responsibly, and that we should start by protecting at least 30 per cent of it by 2030.

Both nature and people would benefit. Research shows that abundant animals, plants, insects, and

The human, economic, and social consequences of the rapid and devastating global spread of the coronavirus will last for years to come. And with the pandemic still unfolding, the most urgent priority is to support those directly affected by the virus and its associated hardships.

microbes living in complex, mature ecosystems can limit the spread of disease from animals to people.

But natural places do much more than provide a safety net against illness. They also shield us from the destructive power of extreme weather, safeguard us from our own pollution, and supply us with food, medicine, and leisure opportunities.

When the worst of the pandemic has passed and the world embarks on the hard work of nursing its people, societies, and economies back to health, we must not overlook the need to care for nature and let nature care for us. A healthy environment is our best antiviral, and protecting more of it will help us to rebound from this pandemic and stop the next one before it starts.

Enric Sala is Explorer in Residence at the National Geographic Society.  
-Project Syndicate



# 'Schools To Invest More In Tech Infra, Colleges In Online Assessment Tools'



Press Trust Of India

Schools and colleges will have to invest in permanent technology infrastructure in the post-coronavirus-lockdown world, teacher training will focus more on digital skills and higher educational institutions may replace traditional exams with online assessment tools, according to a study by Pearson.

Based in London, Pearson is a leading education publishing and assessment service for schools and corporations, as well for students directly, offered across the globe.

"COVID-19 outbreak is catalysing adoption of digital learning across levels as well as increasing popularity of short courses. These changes

have certainly caused a degree of inconvenience, but they have also prompted new examples of educational innovation. There are signs suggesting that it could have a lasting impact on the trajectory of learning innovation and digitization," the study on emerging trends in education post COVID-19 said.

"Schools and colleges likely to increase use of digital learning platforms and continue leveraging platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Teams and emails to achieve teaching-learning objectives. Academic institutions will see a significant development in infrastructure in order to facilitate teachers and students to continue learning even when away from campus and invest in permanent

technology infrastructure to become fully equipped for providing quality access to online education," it added.

According to the study based on different practices being adopted in different countries, higher education institutes may replace traditional exams with online assessment tools and leverage online proctoring services to enable students to take exams from home.

"Public-Private Partnerships to promote seamless education facilities will see a rise and government might take certain policy measures to boost the edutech sector and encourage education institutions to work out ways and means to integrate technology in their teaching learning process," it said.

According to UNESCO estimates, over 154 crore

students are severely impacted by closure of educational institutions across the world amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

More than 4.3 million cases of COVID-19 have been recorded worldwide, including at least 2,97,000 deaths. The deadly virus has brought several countries to a standstill with many of them imposing international travel restrictions.

In India, the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 2,549 and the number of cases climbed to 78,003 on Thursday, registering an increase of 134 deaths and 3,722 cases in the last 24 hours, according to the Union Health Ministry. The country has been under a lockdown since March 25, which has been extended till May 1.

## COVID-19 Will Lead To Over 28 Million Cancelled Surgeries Worldwide

Press Trust Of India

**LONDON-** More than 28 million planned surgeries across the world could be cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to patients facing a lengthy wait for their health issues to be resolved, according to a study.

The CovidSurg Collaborative, a 120-country research initiative formed to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on surgeries, has projected that, based on a 12-week period of peak disruption to hospital services due to COVID-19, around 28.4 million elective surgeries worldwide will be cancelled or postponed in 2020, the researchers said.

The modelling study, published in the British Journal of Surgery, indicates that each additional week of disruption to hospital services will be associated with a further 2.4 million cancellations.



Led by researchers from the University of Birmingham, the study collected detailed information from surgeons across 359 hospitals and 71 countries on plans for cancellation of elective surgery.

This data was then statistically modelled to estimate totals for cancelled surgery across 190 countries.

The researchers project that worldwide 72.3 per cent of planned surgeries would be cancelled through the peak period of COVID-19 related disruption, adding that most cancelled surgeries will be for non-cancer conditions.

Orthopaedic procedures will be cancelled most frequently, with 6.3 million

being exposed to COVID-19 in hospital, and to support the wider hospital response, for example by converting operating theatres into intensive care units," said Aneel Bhangu, from the University of Birmingham.

"Although essential, cancellations place a heavy burden on patients and society. Patients' conditions may deteriorate, worsening their quality of life as they wait for rescheduled surgery. In some cases, for example cancer, delayed surgeries may lead to a number of unnecessary deaths," said Bhangu.

Dmitri Nepogodiev, also from the University of Birmingham noted that each additional week of disruption to hospital services results in an additional 43,300 surgeries being cancelled.

Therefore, it is important that hospitals regularly assess the situation so that elective surgery can be resumed at the earliest opportunity, he said.

## Physically Demanding Jobs Mean Shorter Work Tenure, More Sick Leaves

Agencies

Physically demanding jobs are linked to shorter working lives, more sick leaves and unemployment than jobs that don't rely on muscle and heavy exercises, say researchers.

For the findings, published in the journal The BMJ, the researchers looked at the working life expectancy of 1.6 million people in Denmark between the ages of 18 and 65 who had a job as of November 2013.

The level of physical demand required for each person's job was measured by the job exposure matrix or JEM for short. This covers 317 different types of occupation. The JEM score was categorised as low physical demands (below 16); moderate (16-28); and high (28 plus).

"This study showed that high physical work demands are a marked risk factor for a shortened expected working life and increased years of sickness absence and unemployment," the study authors from National Research Centre for the Working Environment in Denmark, wrote.

Jobs scoring high, included those in construction; manual labour, such as carpentry, masonry, painting and plumbing; cleaning; and manufacturing industries.

Periods of sick leave, unemployment, and disability pension

payments were recorded for each participant for the next four years until 2017.

The final analysis is based on workers aged 30, 40, and 50. It showed that more men than women were categorised as having very physically demanding jobs according to the JEM score. Men in this group were, on average, nearly three years younger than their peers in physically undemanding jobs. Women, on the other hand, were around 10 months older. For both sexes, a physically demanding job was strongly associated with shorter working life expectancy, and more sick leaves and unemployment compared with a physically undemanding job.

At the age of 30, working life would be expected to last almost 32 years for men with physically



the analysis showed.

The equivalent figures for a man would be two years; and 12 and eight months, respectively.

The researchers point out that there are likely to be other factors in the ability to work, which were not accounted for in this analysis, including lifestyle factors, such as obesity and smoking, as well as long term conditions.

## Amazon Engineers Build Low-Cost Face Shields For Frontline Workers

Agencies

Seattle- Amazon engineers from its drone delivery unit have developed reusable face shields for frontline workers, donating nearly 10,000 face shields to date and is on track to deliver 20,000 more in the coming weeks.

The company said it will sell the face shields on its website at a significantly lower price - almost a third of the cost.

The Amazon Prime Air engineers team worked with a group of 3D printing volunteers in Washington State and a team of doctors and received approval on their new design by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). "With this approval, medical professionals knew the shields were authorized to the national standard and could feel comfortable accepting them as donations, or if they wanted to produce them on their own," the company said in a statement on Thursday. In one week, Amazon engineers, in coordination with the open source group, took the initial design and drastically improved it. Making sure the shields could be produced quickly and at scale, they produced a detailed open sourced design package for both 3D printing and injection molding. "It's no secret Amazon has expertise in supply chain. Putting our scale to use for good, we repurposed our manufacturing facilities and are working with outside vendors to produce these new face shields quickly, and at a fraction of the cost," said Amazon.

## Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

**Scholarship Name 1: Nikon Scholarship Program 2020**

**Description:** Nikon India Private Limited invites scholarship applications from students (Class 12 passed onwards) pursuing photography courses. The scholarship program is meant to support students facing financial problems in pursuing their programme.

**Eligibility:** The scholarship is open for Class 12 passed onwards students pursuing photography courses with a duration of 3 months or more. The annual income of the family should be less than INR 6 lakhs per annum.

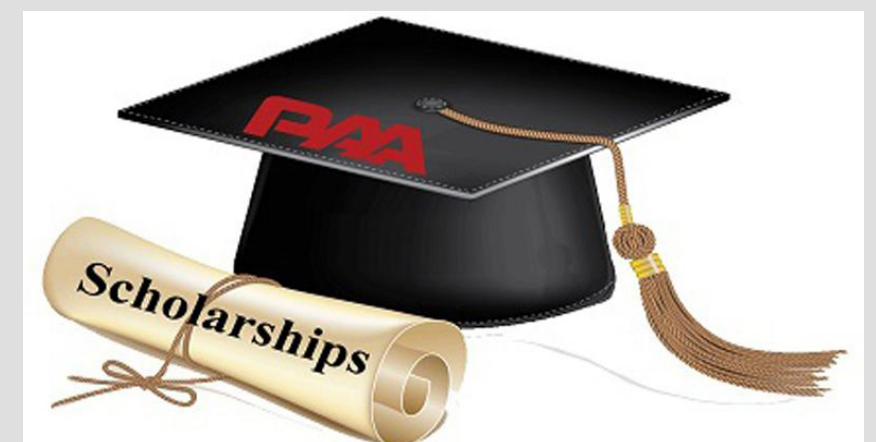
**Prizes & Rewards:** Selected students will get award up to INR 1 lakh.

Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2020

Application mode: Online application only

Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/NSP3](http://www.b4s.in/observer/NSP3)

**Scholarship Name 2: Innovative Student Projects Award 2020**



**Description:** Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE) has announced this award for the innovative and creative BE/BTech/ME/MTech/PhD students working on various research projects and provide them with early recognition and incentives.

**Eligibility:** Indian applicants who have completed B.Tech/B.E thesis by 30th June 2020 or M.E./M.Tech students whose thesis is examined from 1 July 2019 up to 30 June 2020 or have PhD thesis examined and accepted/recommended for the award from 1 June 2019 up to 31 May 2020, can apply for this award.

**Prizes & Rewards:** Financial award up to INR 25,000 will be awarded to the selected applicants.

Last Date to Apply: 07-07-2020

Application mode: Apply via post to :- Ex. Director INAE 6th

Floor, Sector 49, Sohna Road, Gurgaon - 122018

Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/ISP2](http://www.b4s.in/observer/ISP2)

**Scholarship Name 3: Sightsavers India Fellowship Program 2020**

**Description:** Sightsavers India has announced this fellowship for young ophthalmologists to help them master the craft as a clinician and a surgeon.

**Eligibility:** Young and promising ophthalmologist in India who are a post-graduate or a diploma holder in ophthalmology (MS/DNB/DO) from any recognized institute/university in India, can apply for this fellowship.

**Prizes & Rewards:** Selected candidates will multiple financial and professional benefits.

Last Date to Apply: 31-05-2020

Application mode: Apply online

Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/SIF2](http://www.b4s.in/observer/SIF2)

**Scholarship Name 4: New India Foundation Fellowships 2020**

**Description:** New India Foundation, Bangalore is offering this fellowship for scholars and writers who are working on different aspects of the history of independent India and will provide monthly stipend to them.

**Eligibility:** Indian scholars or writers working on different aspects of the history of independent India, can apply for this scholarship.

**Prizes & Rewards:** A total of 5 to 10 fellowships will be awarded. The fellowships are awarded for one year and carry a stipend of INR 1.5 lakhs per month.

Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2020

Application mode: Apply online

Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/NIF4](http://www.b4s.in/observer/NIF4)



## China Calls On US To Pay Its Debts To The United Nations

Press Trust of India

United Nations: China on Friday issued a statement calling on all UN member states to “actively fulfill their financial obligations to the United Nations,” stressing that Washington owes the organization more than USD 2 billion.

“As of May 14, the total unpaid assessments under the UN regular budget and peacekeeping budget amount to 1.63 billion and 2.14 billion US dollars respectively,” the Chinese statement said, citing a report from UN Secretary-General’s office and a meeting held on Thursday.

Including arrears that stretch back several years, “the United States is the largest debtor, owing 1.165 billion

and implemented by President Donald Trump in 2017 cut that payment to 25 percent, meaning Washington runs up an annual shortfall of USD 200 million.

The United States also has a fiscal year that runs from October to October, which can make it look like an even bigger debtor at certain times of the year. There was no immediate response from the US mission to China’s statement.

The payment of contributions by member countries for peacekeeping operations has a direct impact on the reimbursements the UN pays to countries that contribute troops to the 15 or so missions around the world.

In a report on May 11, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that “there



and 1.332 billion US dollars respectively,” China added.

The US is the biggest contributor to the UN budget, paying 22 percent of its annual running costs, a bill which adds up to around USD 3 billion, and 25 percent of its peacekeeping operations, which amount to some USD 6 billion a year.

Officially, Washington is meant to pay 27.89 percent of the peacekeeping budget, but a decision made by Congress

may be significant delays towards the middle of the year, unless the cash position across missions improves significantly.” On Thursday, around 50 of the 193 member states, including China, paid their contributions in full, which Beijing -- the second largest contributor, far behind the United States -- noted in its statement. China pays around 12 percent of the UN’s running costs and around 15 percent of the peacekeeping budget.

## Medics Around The World Face Hostility Over Virus Stigma

Agencies

Cairo: Dr. Dina Abdel-Salam watched in terror last month as scores of strangers gathered under the balcony of her aunt’s empty apartment in the Egyptian city of Ismailia, where she’d temporarily sheltered after leaving her elderly parents at home to protect them from exposure to the coronavirus.

The crowd called out her name, hurling threats until she dialled the police for help.

“You have moved here to make us sick,” someone shouted. Abdel-Salam’s ordeal is just one of many in a wave of assaults on doctors, illustrating how public fear and rage can turn against the very people risking their lives to save patients in the pandemic.

While many cities across the world erupt at sundown with collective cheers to thank front-line workers treating COVID-19 patients, in Egypt, India, the Philippines, Mexico and elsewhere, some doctors and nurses have come under attack, intimidated and treated like pariahs because of their work.

The pandemic, especially in places with limited healthcare infrastructure, has already subjected doctors to hardships. But medical workers, seen as possible sources of contagion, face another staggering challenge in these countries: the stigma associated with the illness.

“Now more than ever, we need to recognize the importance of investing in our health workforce and take concrete actions that guarantee their well-being and safety,” Ahmed al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization’s regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, said in a virtual news conference earlier this week.

But in many places, that’s a difficult task as mistrust, fear and misinformation can have devastating effects. Decades of poor education and scant government services in some places have created deep misgivings about the medical profession.



## At least 1,000 Rohingya stuck at sea, says Amnesty International

Agencies

Jakarta: At least 1,000 Rohingya are stranded at sea as Southeast Asian nations tighten their borders to keep out the new coronavirus, Amnesty International said on Friday, urging action to ensure they were not buried in an “invisible graveyard” at sea.

Rights groups believe at least two boats carrying Rohingya, members of a Muslim minority from Myanmar, are off the coast of the Indonesian province of Aceh, but officials said they had no clear information.

Spokesmen for the Western Fleet of the Indonesian navy as well as Aceh’s disaster mitigation agency and search

Refugees from two other boats landed in Bangladesh since mid-April, many starving and emaciated after weeks at sea. Survivors from one said dozens died on board. Saad Hammadi, from the South Asia Regional Office of Amnesty International, said the refugees could have been sailing for several weeks or even months without food or water

and rescue team told Reuters they were trying to confirm the location of the vessels. Refugees from two other

boats landed in Bangladesh since mid-April, many starving and emaciated after weeks at sea. Survivors from one said dozens died on board. Saad Hammadi, from the South Asia Regional Office of Amnesty International, said the refugees could have been sailing for several weeks or even months without food or water. —Reuters

Dhaka Authorities have reported the first coronavirus case in the crowded camps for Rohingya refugees in southern Bangladesh, where more than 1 million refugees are sheltered. The person from the Rohingya community and a local person who lives in the Cox’s Bazar district, who also tested positive have been isolated.

## Pak resumes domestic flights partially as nationwide lockdown eased

Press Trust of India

Islamabad: Pakistan on Saturday resumed domestic flight operations in a phased manner as the government eased the nationwide-lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus that has claimed the lives of over 830 people in the country.

The resumption of the do-

at 1 pm along with flights for Lahore and Islamabad via private airlines,” the report said.

A spokesperson for the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCCA) said domestic flights will be operated by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and one private company for now.

The ban on international flight operations, meanwhile,

5 major airports namely Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Quetta with effect from 16th May, 2020,” the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority said in a tweet.

The PCCA said that it has set very strict Standard operating Procedures (SOP), ensuring disinfection, sanitising, social distancing and safety for the airline crew and passengers.

“It is highlighted that the SOPs for domestic passengers and chartered flight operation require disinfection of the aircraft prior to boarding, at least one vacant seat between the passengers, compulsory wearing of masks and use of hand sanitiser,” PCCA said in a further tweet.

As per the norms, no food and beverages will be allowed during domestic flight.

Airlines are required to maintain emergency Personal Protective Equipment in every aircraft to deal with any health emergency during flight.

“Every passenger will be required to fill a health declaration form prior to boarding the aircraft, which include identification of the passenger, brief travel history during the past two weeks, current health state and an undertaking to comply with the SOPs,” the PCCA said in the series of tweets.



mestic flight services under strict restrictions from five major airports on Saturday came as the Pakistan government last week said that it would begin a phased lifting of the lockdown due to its effect on the economy and the workforce, the Geo News reported.

“The first Pakistan International Airline (PIA) flight carrying 84 passengers departed from Karachi for Lahore

has been extended until May 31.

PCCA in a series of tweet on Friday said it would be keeping a close monitor of the passengers before they board the flight to ensure there is no further rise in COVID-19 cases.

“In view of the difficulties being faced by passengers in travelling between major cities in Pakistan, Pakistan has been pleased to allow limited domestic flight operation from

## Italy to allow international travel from June 3

Agencies

Rome: Italy’s government on Saturday approved a decree which will allow travel to and from abroad from June 3, in a major development as it moves to unwind one of the world’s most rigid coronavirus lockdowns.

The government will allow free travel across the country from that same day. Some re-

the United States and Britain.

In a bid to contain the contagion, Italy was the first European country to impose nationwide restrictions in March, only sanctioning an initial relaxation of the rules on May 4, when it allowed factories and parks to reopen.

Shops are due to open on May 18 and the government decided that all movement with-



gions had pushed for a swifter rollback, but prime minister Giuseppe Conte has insisted on a gradual return to normal to prevent a second wave of infections.

More than 31,600 Italians have died of COVID-19 since the outbreak came to light on Feb. 21, the third-highest death toll in the world after that of

in individual regions should be allowed that same day, meaning people will be able to visit friends.

The inter-regional and foreign travel ban will remain in place until after Italy’s June 2 Republic Day holiday, preventing any mass travel over that long-holiday weekend.

## Google Accused Of Stifling Competition, Faces Onslaught Of Antitrust Cases In US

Agencies

Mountain View: Federal and state regulators in the U.S. are preparing to file antitrust lawsuits alleging Google has abused its dominance of online search and advertising to stifle competition and boost its

without elaborating on the nature of the talks. “Our focus is firmly on providing services that help consumers, support thousands of businesses, and enable increased choice and competition,” the company said in a statement.

This isn’t the first time Google has been thrust under the



profits, according to a report published Friday.

The Wall Street Journal cited unidentified people familiar with the probes in a story about the upcoming offensive by the U.S. Justice Department and the attorneys general from several states.

The Justice Department may file its case as early as this summer while Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton may take action in the fall, along with his peers in other states, according to the Journal.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr has previously said he hoped to decide whether to pursue an antitrust case against Google by the summer. Texas and other states announced they were looking into Google’s business practices last September.

Google acknowledged it has ongoing discussions with the Justice Department and Paxton

microscope of antitrust in the U.S. The Federal Trade Commission closed an extensive investigation into Google’s alleged abuses in 2013 without taking any action because it concluded the Mountain View, California, company wasn’t hurting consumers.

Since then, Google has grown even more powerful under the umbrella of the corporate parent, Alphabet, that it spawned in five years ago. When the FTC closed its case, Google was generating annual revenue of \$50 billion. Last year, earned Alphabet raked in \$162 billion in revenue.

Most of the money comes from a digital ad market that Google dominates along with social networking rival Facebook — another potential target of antitrust regulators. There has been no word, though, whether Facebook might be sued.

## NEW MAKERS

Chicago: The way the FBI tells it, William Rosario Lopez put on a surgical mask and walked into the Connecticut convenience store looking to the world like a typical pandemic-era shopper as he picked up plastic wrap, fruit snacks and a few other items.

Then, when the only other customer left, he went to the counter, pulled out a small pistol, pointed it at the clerk and demanded that he open the cash register.

The scene, the FBI contends in a court document, was repeated by Lopez in four other gas station stores over eight days before his arrest on April 9. It underscores a troubling new reality for law enforcement: Masks that have made criminals stand apart long before bandanna-wearing robbers knocked over stage-coaches in the Old West and ski-masked bandits held up banks now allow them to blend in like concerned accountants, nurses and store clerks trying to avoid a deadly virus.



## Number of instances where criminals are taking advantage of pandemic to commit crimes is climbing in US

“Criminals, they’re smart and this is a perfect opportunity for them to conceal themselves and blend right in,” said Richard Bell, police chief in the tiny Pennsylvania community of Frackville. He said he knows of seven recent armed robberies in the region where every suspect wore a mask.

Across the United States, masks have become more and

more prevalent, first as a voluntary precaution and then as a requirement imposed by governmental agencies and businesses. And people with masks — as well as latex gloves — have found their way into more and more crime reports.

Just how many criminals are taking advantage of the pandemic to commit crimes is impossible to estimate, but law

enforcement officials have no doubt the numbers are climbing. Reports are starting to pop up across the United States and in other parts of the world of crimes pulled off in no small part because so many of us are now wearing masks.

In March, two men walked into Aqueduct Racetrack in New York wearing the same kind of surgical masks as many racing fans there and, at gunpoint, robbed three workers of a quarter-million dollars they were moving from gaming machines to a safe. Other robberies involving suspects wearing surgical masks have occurred in North Carolina, and Washington, DC, and elsewhere in recent weeks.

The problem isn’t limited to robberies. In the troubled Cook County Jail in Chicago, the virus has led to at least nine deaths and sickened hundreds of inmates and correctional officers. Staffers must wear masks and inmates are issued a new one every day — a policy that helped one inmate escape on May 2.

## Just don’t want to talk to Xi Jinping right now: Trump

Washington: US president Donald Trump has said that he does not want to talk to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping right now, indicating his displeasure at the Chinese leadership’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak which has now spread across the world, killing over 300,000 people.

“Just don’t want to talk to him right now. We will see what happens over the next little while,” Trump told reporters at the White House, when asked why he did not want to speak to Xi.

China, as per the trade deal inked earlier this year, is buying a lot more of American goods than last year.

“They are spending a lot on the trade deal, but the trade deal I don’t know somehow I



lost a little flavour for it, you can understand,” Trump said.

Earlier in the day, Trump said he did not want to talk about the trade deal.

“I don’t want to talk about it. I can say China is buying a lot of our products. But the trade deal - the ink was barely dry - when this (coronavirus) came in from China. So, it’s not like we’re thrilled,” he said.

“This should have never happened. This came from China. It should have been stopped in China before it got

out to the world. One-eighty-six countries are affected. Each country that’s affected is the same thing. Russia now is badly affected. France is badly affected. You look at each country and you can say “affected” or you can say “infected,” either way you want to put it,” he said.

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany told reporters that President Trump is frustrated with China.

“I will leave it to the president as to when he resumes speaking with the Chinese leader. But look, China slow walked this. I’ve shared with you guys before on human-to-human transmission. It was really important that the world knew of that aspect of the disease, but that information was slow walked through to the WHO,” she said.



## Govt To Ease FDI Norms In Defence To Permit Up To 74 Pc Investment Under Automatic Route

**NEW DELHI:** The government on Saturday said it will relax foreign direct investment norms in defence manufacturing by allowing 74 per cent FDI under the automatic route with a view to attracting overseas players in the sector.

As per the current FDI policy, 100 per cent overseas investments are permitted in the defence industry -- 49 per cent under the automatic route, while beyond that government approval is required.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the FDI limit for the sector under automatic route will be raised from 49 per cent to 74 per cent.

"It will have security clearance and everything else as always," she told reporters here while announcing the fourth tranche of the Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus package for the coronavirus-hit economy.

India's defence industry received FDI of USD 8.82 million (Rs 51.93 crore) during April 2000 and December 2019.

Asked about more details on the revised policy, she said: "The ministry concerned will come up with the details...also notification stating how that is going to work out."

Earlier in July 2018, the government had relaxed foreign direct investment norms in the defence sector by allowing FDI up to 49 per cent under the automatic route.

## Economic Package 4Th Tranche - Highlights

**NEW DELHI:** Following are the highlights of the fourth tranche of the Rs 20 lakh crore comprehensive economic package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to tide over the COVID-19 crisis:

**Defence:**

- \* FDI in defence manufacturing to be hiked to 74 per cent from 49 per cent under automatic route
- \* Govt to notify a list of weapons/platforms banned for imports, such items can only be purchased from India
- \* To promote indigenisation of imported spares, focus on lowering defence import bill
- \* Separate budget provisioning for domestic capital procurement
- \* Faster decision making in defence procurement
- \* Govt to corporatise Ordnance Factory Board

**Civil Aviation:**

- \* Restrictions on utilisation of the Indian air space to be eased for increasing efficiency of passenger aircraft, to cut fuel usage and time
- \* To rake in Rs 1,000 crore per year benefit for the aviation sector
- \* 6 more airports to be privatised
- \* India to become a global hub for Aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), tax rates rationalised

**Coal and mineral:**

- \* To introduce commercial mining in coal sector
- \* Entry norms to be liberalized, nearly 50 blocks to be offered immediately
- \* Coal Gasification /Liquefaction to be incentivised through

rebate in revenue share

- \* Rs 50,000 crore earmarked for infrastructure development in coal sector
- \* Coal Bed Methane (CBM) extraction rights to be auctioned from Coal India's mines
- \* To introduce seamless composite exploration-cum-mining-cum-production regime in minerals sector; 500 mining blocks to be auctioned
- \* Introduce joint auction of bauxite and coal mineral blocks
- \* To rationalise stamp duty payable at the time of award of mining leases

**Power Distribution:**

- \* To bring out reform in tariff policy, privatised Discoms in Union Territories

**Social Infrastructure:**

- \* Govt's share in viability gap funding for development of social infrastructure, including hospitals, hiked to 30 per cent from 20 per cent, total outlay Rs 8,100 crore

**Space:**

- \* To allow private sector companies in satellites, launches and space-based services
- \* Private sector will be allowed to use ISRO facilities and other relevant assets to improve their capacities

**Atomic Energy:**

- \* To set up a research reactor in PPP mode for the production of medical isotopes to help make available affordable treatment for cancer and other diseases
- \* Establish facilities in PPP mode to use irradiation technology for food preservation – to complement agricultural reforms and assist farmers. PTI



Representational image. (AP)

## Coronavirus Havoc Continues In India As Total Cases Inch Towards 86K

**NEW DELHI:** The death toll due to Covid-19 rose to 2,752 and the number of cases climbed to 85,940 on Saturday, registering an increase of 103 deaths and 3,970 cases in the last 24 hours, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The number of active cases stood at 53,035, while 30,152 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said.

"Thus, around 35.08 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said.

The total confirmed cases include foreign nationals too.

Of the 103 deaths reported since Friday morning, 49 were in Maharashtra, 20 in Gujarat, 10 in West Bengal, eight in Delhi, seven in Uttar Pradesh, five in Tamil Nadu, two in Madhya Pradesh, one each in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh.

Of the 2,752 fatalities, Maharashtra tops the tally with 1,068 deaths, Gujarat comes second with 606 deaths, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 239, West Bengal at 225, Rajasthan at 125, Delhi at 123, Uttar Pradesh at 95, Tamil Nadu at 71 and Andhra Pradesh at 48.

The death toll reached 36 in Karnataka, 34 in Telangana and 32 in Punjab, the ministry said.

Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir have reported 11 fatalities each due to the disease, while Bihar has registered seven and Kerala has reported four deaths.

Jharkhand, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Odisha have recorded three COVID-19 fatalities each, while Assam has reported two deaths.

Meghalaya, Uttarakhand and Puducherry have reported one fatality each, according to the ministry data.

More than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to co-morbidities (existence of multiple disorders), the ministry added.

## 24 Migrant Workers Killed, 36 Injured In Truck Collision In Uttar Pradesh

At least 24 migrant labourers were killed and 36 people sustained injuries when a trailer truck carrying them collided with another truck in the early hours of Saturday in Uttar Pradesh, police said.

Both the trucks were carrying the labourers. The accident took place between 3 am and 3.30 am, they said.

"The accident took place in Mihauli in which 24 people died, and around 36 were injured. A trailer truck carrying around 50 migrant labourers was coming from Rajasthan and it collided with another truck. ?

The accident took place on Saturday between 3.00 am and 3.30 am," Circle Officer, Auraiya, Surendranath Yadav told PTI.

Auraiya, which falls under the Kanpur division, is in the south-west Uttar Pradesh. It is on the National Highway-19 and is 400 km away from Delhi and 200 km from Lucknow.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the deceased.

Elaborating on the incident, Yadav said, "The trailer truck hit the other vehicle, which was coming from Delhi and heading towards Chhatrapur in Madhya Pradesh. Both the vehicles turned upside down after losing control."

The chief minister, in a statement released by the state government, directed the divisional commissioner and IG Kanpur to visit the site and give a report on the cause of the accident immediately.

"UP chief minister has taken note



of the unfortunate incident in Auraiya. He has expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the labourers who lost their lives. He has also directed that all the injured be provided medical care and the Divisional Commissioner and IG Kanpur to visit the site and give the report on the cause of the accident immediately," the statement said.

Talking to PTI over phone, Inspector General, Kanpur, Mohit Agarwal said most of the migrant labourers in both the vehicles were from Jharkhand and West Bengal.

"The accident took place when some of the labourers travelling on the truck (coming from Delhi) halted on the Auraiya-Kanpur Dehat Road to have tea at a local shop. At this point of time, a truck coming from Rajasthan hit the station-

ary vehicle. The intensity of the hit was so huge that both the vehicles turned upside down and fell into a ditch on the roadside," he told PTI.

"Of the 36 injured, as many as 14 labourers with serious injuries have been admitted to PGI in Saifai (in Etawah district), while 22 have been hospitalised in Auraiya," he added.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said, "Going by the information received till now, there were a couple of migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district. Most of the deceased labourers were from West Bengal and Jharkhand."

When asked whether any financial assistance will be provided to the families of the deceased, he said information in this regard will be given soon.

## Global Economy Could Witness Losses Up To \$8.8 Trillion: ADB

**NEW DELHI:** The global economy is expected to suffer \$5.8-8.8 trillion in losses due to the coronavirus pandemic, Asian Development Bank (ADB) said on Friday.

Of this, the impact on South Asian gross domestic product (GDP) will be to the tune of \$142-218 billion.

"The global economy could suffer between \$5.8 trillion and \$8.8 trillion in losses -- equivalent to 6.4% to 9.7% of the global GDP -- as a result of the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic," ADB said in a new report subsequent to its economic outlook released in early April.

The GDP in South Asia will also be lower by 3.9-6%, mainly reflecting the tight restrictions in place in countries like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, ADB said in its updated assessment of the Potential Economic Impact of Covid-19.

The Manila-headquartered multi-lateral funding agency said the economic losses in Asia and the Pacific region could range from \$1.7 trillion under a short con-

tainment scenario of three months to \$2.5 trillion under a long containment scenario of 6 months, with the region accounting for about 30% of the overall decline in global output.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) could suffer losses between \$1.1 trillion and \$1.6 trillion.

In the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020 published on April 3, the agency had estimated Covid-19's global cost to range from \$2 trillion to \$4.1 trillion.

Earlier on March 6, it had estimated the economic impact globally ranging from \$77 billion to \$347 billion (0.1 to 0.4% of global GDP).

ADB said its new analysis which expects global impact of \$5.8-8.8 trillion is excluding the impact of policy measures.

The agency's new estimate is more than double the World Bank's estimate of



2-4% decline in global GDP and higher than the IMF's World Economic Outlook estimate of 6.3% decline in global GDP. -- PTI

## Rahul Gandhi To Centre: Stop Acting Like Money Lender, Reconsider Economic Package



**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said the Centre should stop acting like a "money lender" for its children by giving them credit instead of cash, and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reconsider the Covid-19 economic stimulus package.

Interacting with journalists of regional media via video conferencing, he said he was trying to put pressure on the government for generating demand by putting money into the accounts of the poor and vulnerable sections of society.

Gandhi said a 'storm' was brewing on the economic front that will cause damage and hurt many. "The storm has not come yet, it is coming and will cause big economic damage and hurt many," he said.

The Congress leader asserted that if demand is not generated, the country will suffer a bigger loss economically than from coronavirus.

He also said that it is important to lift the lockdown intelligently without sacrificing the old and vulnerable population to the disease.

### NEWS MAKER

## Just Wanted To See His Dying Son: Story Behind Photograph Of Crying Man That Shook India

The photograph of a man on the phone, his face twisted in grief, was circulated widely on social media and resulted in help being provided to him to reach his home in Bihar. PTI photographer Atul Yadav recounts his meeting with Rampukar Pandit on a Delhi roadside and the powerful image that captured the tragedy of migrants across India:

He was talking on the phone and sobbing uncontrollably on the Nizamuddin Bridge. And I just couldn't drive on.

In the last few weeks, I have come across and photographed so many migrants, one more helpless than the other, and honestly I didn't expect to feel surprised at the sight

of a grown man crying. But I was. Inured as we are, his naked grief shook me. I felt personal enough for me to not simply click a picture and move on. I just had to know what was bothering him. His son was unwell and might die, and he just wanted to go back home, the desperate father told me. I asked him where, and the 40-something man just managed to say "udhar" (there) in between sobs, pointing at the expanse of the road stretching across the Yamuna and meandering towards Delhi's border some miles away. It was only much later that I realised home was Bariarpur in Begusarai in Bihar, almost 1,200 km away.

He said he worked as a labourer



in Najafgarh and, in the absence of any public transport, had started walking home like thousands of other migrants across the country.

His journey abruptly came to a halt after the police at the bridge refused to let him go further. The man,

broken and defeated, had been stuck at the Nizamuddin Bridge for three days. I offered him biscuits and some water and tried to reassure him. But can any consolation be ever enough for a father scared he won't see his son ever again?

## Covid 'Demon' Can Only Be Killed By Divine Forces: Priest Body Urges Pm To Reopen Temples

An all-India organisation of priests has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reopen temples and pilgrimage centres to help combat the Covid-19 outbreak, saying the novel coronavirus is an "asur (demon)" and can only be killed by divine forces.

"If all temples, shrines and pilgrimage centres are reopened, the coronavirus cannot do any harm (kuch nahi bigad sakta hai)," Akhil Bhartiya Tirth Purohit Mahasabha national president Mahesh Pathak said in a letter to the prime minister on Saturday.

He said the closure of temples has also adversely impacted the economic condition of priests and demanded special financial pack-

age for them.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Pathak said the religious sites can be reopened with some restrictions under the present circumstances. The government has banned congregations and closed temples and other religious sites, besides schools, colleges, malls and factories, to check the spread of the novel coronavirus, which has infected more than 85,000 people and killed over 2,750 in the country so far.

Pathak said India is perhaps facing the "wrath of deities" as they have been treated "at par with factories" during the ongoing lockdown.

"Coronavirus is an asur (demon) and it can only be killed by divine forces. I am quite sure

divinity would rescue devotees from the coronavirus after joint prayers," he told reporters here. He said the closure of temples and shrines has widened the distance between gods and devotees, and the separation cannot be erased through prayers at home. He said though the portals of 'Char Dham' temples have been opened in Uttarakhand, entry of devotees has been banned. "The deities provide solace to a disturbed mind," he said and demanded that devotees be allowed there.

The opening of the temples under a guideline would also provide some financial support to priests who have been badly hit by the coronavirus-triggered lockdown.