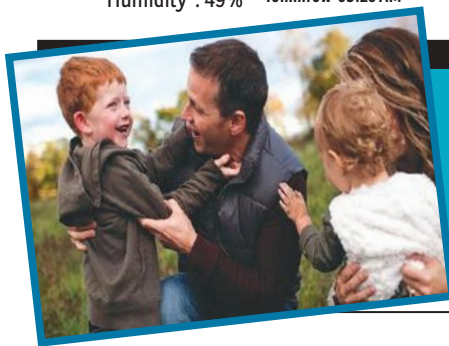




Maximum : 25°C
Minimum : 11°C
Humidity : 49%

SUNSET
Today 07:29 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:26 AM



News Digest

26 TH RAMAZAN			
	IFTAR TODAY	SEHRI TOMMOROW	
FIQAH HANAFIYA	07:32	03:48	
FIQAH JAFARIYA	07:41	03:46	

LG Visits Udhampur Railway Station

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu visited the Udhampur railway station on Tuesday to take stock of the facilities being provided to stranded people brought back in special trains. LG Murmu and his wife, Dr Smita Murmu, were briefed by Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, who is the nodal officer for management. **● P-02**

India, Pak Troops Trade Fire Along LoC

Jammu: India and Pakistan troops exchanged gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. "At about 0730 hours today, Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by small arm firing and mortar shelling along LoC in Sunderbani sector", a defence spokesperson said, adding the Indian Army retaliated befittingly. This is second ceasefire violation. **● P-02**

Militant Aide Held In Baramulla: Police

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a militant associate in Kreeri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that a joint team of police, army's 29RR and 176 Battalion CRPF nabbed a militant associate at a checkpoint in Kreeri area of the district this morning. "From his possession one Chinese pistol, one pistol magazine, eight pistol rounds and a matrix sheet were recovered," a **● P-02**

Doctor, 4 Others Suspended

Poonch: The authorities in this mountainous district suspended five Health Department officials including a medical officer for "negligence" in connection with work of COVID-19 management in SDH Surankote. The employees include Dr. Amir, Medical Officer, deployed at JNV Surankote, Mushtaq Hussain, (lab Asst.), Hayat Khan (Jr. Asst.), Yasir Ahmad (Lab Technician) and Naseem Aftab (Lab Asst.). "The employees of Health Department Poonch are placed **● P-02**

Srinagar Gears Up To Ensure Medical Facility In Case COVID Cases Rise

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Amid a spike in coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir, the Srinagar district administration has established 3000-bed capacity COVID Wellness Centres at six locations that aim to provide best facilities to mild and asymptomatic positive patients.

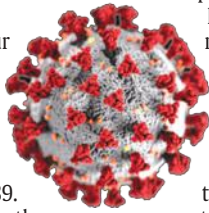
Kashmir recorded four deaths due to coronavirus since Monday, taking the death toll in the Union Territory to 16, while the total number of cases stood at 1,289. There are 1,129 cases in the valley and 160 in Jammu region. "We have readied 3000-bedded capacity in Srinagar to respond to any situation so that hospitals are

not overburdened," Srinagar city's Deputy Commissioner Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said.

With the ongoing trend, he said it was imperative to plan for any exigency for the future and accordingly the capacity was created, which was more than the existing bed capacity of hospitals in Srinagar.

He said medical equipment and technical logistics are also being placed for use in these facilities as wellness centres.

Nodal officers have been appointed and trained to activate these centres on demand of COVID hospitals at a very short notice, Choudhary said, adding that the hospitals in Srinagar are likely to get a much-awaited relief with **▶▶PAGE 02**



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PRESENCE OF SPOUSES WHO ARE CO-PARENTING CAN ALTER EACH OTHER'S BRAIN ACTIVITY: STUDY

When spouses, who are co-parenting, are together, they show higher similarities in brain responses to the infant stimuli than when they are separated, suggests a novel study. The study led by researchers at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore), was published in the journal Scientific Reports. The researchers analysed how the brain activity of 24 pairs of husband and wife from Singapore changed in response to recordings of infant stimuli such as crying, when they were physically together and when they were separated. This effect was only found in true couples and not in randomly matched study participants.....

.....LIFE & TIMES

P6

Hizb Commander Junaid Sehrai Killed In Srinagar Encounter



A LAYER OF THICK SMOKE EMANATING on Tuesday from the debris of houses damaged during overnight gunfight in Nawa Kadal area of Srinagar. Pic Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Junaid Sehrai, son of Hurriyat leader Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, was among two militants killed in an encounter with government forces in downtown Srinagar on early Tuesday.

The second militant was identified as Tariq Ahmed Sheikh, a resident of Pulwama.

The encounter began at

around 2 AM Tuesday after a joint team of the CRPF and Jammu and Kashmir Police launched a cordon and search operation in Kani Mazar locality of Nawakadal area in Srinagar city.

Shortly after the area was brought under siege, mobile internet and mobile telephony services, except on BSNL postpaid, were snapped in Srinagar.

A police official said militants trapped in the house, fired upon

search party and there was intermittent exchange of fire.

Addressing press conference in Srinagar DGP Dabagh Singh said that in the operation Hizbul Mujahideen's divisional commander for Central Kashmir Junaid Sehrai was killed. "Sehrai was assigned the task of heading Central Kashmir areas," Singh said. The DGP said that Nawa Kadal operation was a clean one as only one residential house caught **▶▶PAGE 02**

Nawa Kadal Locals Allege Arson, Loot

Cops Taking Rs 50,000 Salary Can't Resort To Loot: SSP

Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR: The residents of Kani Mazar in Nawa Kadal area of Downtown Srinagar on Tuesday accused government forces of arson and loot during the pre-dawn gunfight that left

two militants, including a commander of Hizbul Mujahideen dead, a charge strongly contested by police.

Residents alleged that contingents of police and CRPF appeared in Kani Mazar locality on Monday night and **● P-02**

Junaid Sehrai: From MBA To Militant

Thirty two-year-old Junaid Sehrai had closely followed and was inspired by the politics of his father Mohammed Ashraf Khan 'Sehrai' till he finally joined the militant ranks in 2018. Holding a Master

of Business Administration degree from University of Kashmir, Junaid worked with two multinational companies before returning to Kashmir where he actively participated in protests and demonstrations **● P-02**

Sehrai Leads Son's Funeral Prayers

Tehreek-e-Hurriyat chairman Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai on Tuesday led funeral prayers in absentia of his militant commander son who was killed along with his associate in a gunfight in Srinagar's old City. Hundreds of people attended funeral prayers in absentia of Junaid Sehrai at an open ground near his house in Barzulla Tuesday evening.

"Around 6:30 PM, Abba led Gaibana Nimaz-e-Jinaza. Despite curbs, over a thousand **● P-02**

DGP Visits Injured Cops, CRPF Men

Srinagar: Director General of Police J&K Dilbag Singh on Tuesday visited army's 92 Base Badami Bagh cantonment hospital to enquire about the CRPF personnel and cops injured in Nawa Kadal encounter.

Accompanied by IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar, the DGP also met the doctors treating the four injured security men, including three CRPF personnel and a policeman and impressed for all possible treatment for their early recovery, a police **● P-02**

4 Injured After House Falls At Gunfight Site

SRINAGAR: At least four people were injured when a house collapsed near a gunfight site in Nawa Kadal area on Tuesday evening.

According to the reports, after ending their Ramzan fast, many people thronged the encounter site in Kani Mazar locality of Nawa Kadal where two Hizbul Mujahideen militants were killed in a gunfight earlier.

They said as the people were watching the devastation, a partially damaged house collapsed, leaving four persons wounded.

Injured were shifted to SMHS hospital in Srinagar for treatment, officials said.

J&K Govt Issues Fresh List Of Red, Orange; Green Districts

Except Ganderbal, Bandipora; All Kashmir Districts Red Zones

Observer News Service

JAMMU- The Jammu and Kashmir Government today issued the fresh classification of districts in order to implement the lockdown 4.0 from May 20, 2020 (Tuesday).

In an order issued by State Executive Committee (SEC) headed by Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam, the government announced classification of districts in Jammu & Kashmir as Red, Orange and Green for the purpose of implementing the lockdown, with effect from May 20, 2020.

The order was issued by Chief Secretary, who is also chairman of SEC and it stated that all the districts of Kashmir province, except Ganderbal

and Bandipora are listed as Red zones, while as Kathua, Samba and Ramban districts of Jammu Province have been declared Red zones.

Similarly, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Reasi, Udhampur and Jammu districts have been classified under Orange category. Likewise, Doda, Kishtwar, Poonch and Rajouri districts have been put in Green category.

The order further stated that the Government of India vide its Order No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 17.05.2020 has authorized States/ UT Governments to delineate districts into Red, Orange and Green category after taking into consideration parameters laid down by the Ministry of Health

RED		
ANANTNAG		
BARAMULLA		
BUDGAM		
SHOPIAN		
SRINAGAR		
KUPWARA		
KULGAM		
PULWAMA		
KATHUA		
SAMBA		
RAMBAN		
ORANGE		
BANDIPORA		
GANDERBAL		
REASI		
UDHAMPUR		
JAMMU		
GREEN		
DODA		
KISHTWAR POONCH		
RAJOURI		

and Family Welfare (Mo-HFW), Govt. of India.

It added that a detailed review of the current COVID-19 situation in J&K was conducted with Financial Commissioner, Health; Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir divisions

and other officers on the basis of "an overall assessment of the situation pertaining to the spread of COVID-19 in Jammu and Kashmir; the trend in new cases particularly the recent spread/ spike in new cases in view of the movement **▶▶PAGE 02**

Baramulla Man Dies At SKIMS, J&K Toll 17

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- A 55-year-old man, who had tested positive for COVID-19, died at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura on Tuesday, taking the coronavirus death toll

in Jammu and Kashmir to 17, officials said.

The man from Rafiabad area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district at tertiary care hospital this morning, said Dr Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent, SKIMS Soura. **● P-02**

3 Expecting Mothers Among 28 Test Covid-19 Positive

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday crossed 1300 mark as 28 people, including two expecting mothers and two minors tested positive for virus, taking the total number

of infected people across Union Territory to 1317.

Out of the 28 fresh cases that were reported today, 22 are from Valley and the remaining six from Jammu province, officials said. The new cases in a day brought the tally to 1,317 in Jammu **● P-02**

New Domicile Law for Kashmir Evokes Sharp Reaction

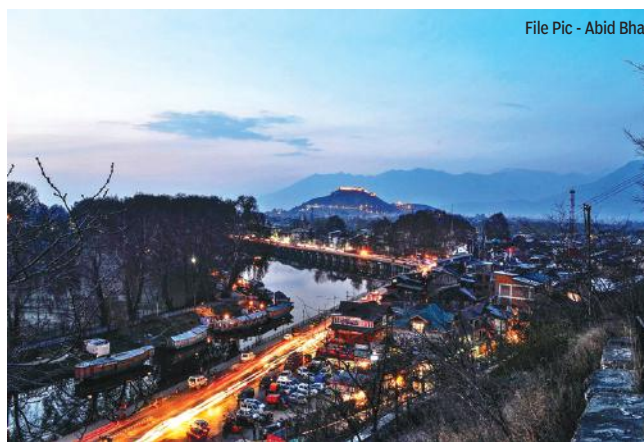
Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Parties cutting across ideological lines have flayed the newly introduced Domicile Law for Jammu and Kashmir known as Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 and Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules 2020 with many unionist parties demanding its immediate revocation.

Aimed at demographic change: Hurriyat

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq led Hurriyat Conference on Tuesday accused BJP led government in New Delhi of speeding up new ordinances in the midst of a pandemic to change demography of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued to media, a Hurriyat Conference (M) said that in the garb of coronavirus and the lockdown following it, the govern-



File Pic - Abid Bhat

ment of India was rapidly executing its plan of turning Kashmir into a Muslim minority territory.

"When the world is struggling to deal with a global pandemic, the government of India is sneakily speeding up new ordinances to ef-

fect demographic change in Jammu and Kashmir and turn its residents into a minority in due course of time," the spokesperson said.

"That this is being done at the time of the pandemic which follows the August lockdown **▶▶PAGE 02**

“THAT THIS IS BEING DONE AT THE TIME OF THE PANDEMIC which follows the August lockdown so that people already under duress due to the repeated lockdowns are unable to protest it, makes it more condemnable,”

India Rushes More Troops As Tensions With China Escalate In Ladakh

KO Web Desk

NEW DELHI- Situation in Eastern Ladakh is tense and India has rushed troops to its border with China after Beijing boasted that it had "bolstered" its military presence along the border on Monday, media reports here said on Tuesday.

On Monday, Chinese state media reported that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) had increased its presence on the border it shares with India in Ladakh. Hours later, India responded to what it viewed as China's "aggressive deployment," rushing in "additional troops" and constructing



Picture for Representation.

"defensive positions" along the Galwan Valley in Ladakh.

Galwan Valley is in the Aksai Chin region which remains under Chinese occupation since 1962 Sino-India war.

China deployed additional troops after a violent clash took place between the troops of both the nations in the Pangong Tso sector on May 5-6. Many of the soldiers were injured **▶▶PAGE 02**

Govt Turns To Clergy For Help To Prevent Shab-e-Qadr, Eid Gatherings

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday sought help from religious leaders to prevent public gatherings in Kashmir on the occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida and Eid-ul-Fitr in wake of coronavirus pandemic.

In a meeting with clerics today, Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer A Khan said that from the last few days, the number of cases has increased manifold and it becomes obligatory for all, especially religious heads to request people to perform night long prayers, Jumamah and other prayers besides celebrating Eid festival at home to prevent others from getting infected, an official statement released this evening said.

Advisor Khan lauded the role of Imams and Khateeb in mobilizing the masses to pray at home during the holy month of Ramazan and asked them to play pivotal role this time also to make people aware via electronic and print media.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Shahid Iqbal Chowdhary; Secretary Waqf Board, Showkat Ahmad Beigh; Prof. Tayaab Kamili, Khateeb Naqshband Sahab; Moulvi M Hussain Qadri, Imam Syed Yaqoob Sahab (R.A.) Sonwar, Moulvi Mushtaq Ahmad, Jamia Masjid Munawarabad; Moulvi Ab. Hamid Nayimee, Khateeb Syed Mansoor Sahab Zaldagar; Moulvi Gh. Mohiudin, Imam Syed Qasim Shah Nishat besides other religious scholars. On this occasion, DC Srinagar assured the **▶▶PAGE 02**

Hizb Commander Junaid...

fire which was controlled immediately. “The first thing we did in the morning was to evacuate the inmates. In that process, two forces personnel—one from CRPF and another from SoG were injured. In the final assault, the remaining militant hurled a grenade in which two CRPF men sustained injuries. He said all the injured were stable.

Earlier reports said there was a lull in the firing from 2:30 AM to 9 AM. “Contact was established again with the militants at 9 AM,” according to police.

Reports said that the house where the two militants were trapped was blasted and bodies of the slain were recovered from the debris.

Juniad, son of Ashraf Sehrai who heads Tehrik-e-Hurriyat, had joined militant ranks in March 2018. He was an MBA from the University of Kashmir.

Meanwhile, a police spokesperson in a statement issued here this evening said that Junaid was a master planner for carrying out sensational attacks upon the police and security forces in order to snatch their weapons. “He along with his associates was also involved in number of subversive activities including weapon snatching, bank robberies, attacks on security forces, grenade attacks in south and central Kashmir areas besides, motivating local youth to join militant ranks especially in HM outfit,” the police spokesperson said.

Giving more details of Junaid’s militant activities, the police spokesperson said that he and his associate shot at and injured an SPO Roman Rashid at Khanmohalla locality of Barzulla Srinagar. In Tral, Junaid, according to police, fired at Manzoor Ahmad Hajam for being police informer.

“He was also leading various unruly mobs and created law and order disturbance during anti-militancy operations. He was involved in instigating the youth to proceed towards encounter sites for making safe passage to holed up militant,” the police spokesperson claimed.

Nawa Kadal Locals Allege..

started banging the doors asking people to leave their homes. After this, the locals said the government forces barged into some houses and decamped with valuables when the area was resounding with gunfire.

The gunfight that started around 3:00 AM has left behind a trail of destruction. According to the locals, over a dozen houses have been destroyed.

“They looted our houses and then put them on fire,” alleged wife of Bilal Ahmed Rah, a resident of Kani Mazar.

Like others, she said her family too had to spent night in a house in the neighbourhood locality after the encounter broke-out.

“And when we returned, we saw our houses turned into rubble,” she added.

On Tuesday, thick curls of smoke were still emanating from the debris, a large number of people visited the spot to see the destruction. Women were seen wailing, and beating their chests.

There were accusations of valuables, cash and jewellery being stolen from the houses.

Videos surfaced on social media showing distraught residents alleging loot during the operation.

“They wreaked havoc here. Besides damaging our homes, they stole goods too and even they have decamped with LPG cylinders,” one woman could be seen in the video sobbing and alleging.

Superintendent of Police (SSP), Srinagar, Dr Haseeb Mughal denied the allegations levelled against the government forces by the residents. He said the cops rescued over 300 women before the encounter started.

“These allegations are baseless and motivated to malign the image of forces. How can someone takeaway their belongings when there are only bullets and raging fire,” SSP said.

“How can a policeman steal the utensils when he gets a salary of Rs 50,000?” he asked.

4 Injured After House Falls At Gunfight Site

Meanwhile at least four people were injured when a house collapsed near a gunfight site in Nawa Kadal area on Tuesday evening.

According to the reports, after ending their Ramzan fast, many people thronged the encounter site in Kani Mazar locality of Nawa Kadal where two Hizbul Mujahideen militants were killed in a gunfight earlier.

They said as the people were watching the devastation, a partially damaged house collapsed, leaving four persons wounded.

Injured were shifted to SMHS hospital in Srinagar for treatment, officials said.

Junaid Sehrai: From MBA...

He joined the militant ranks in 2017-2018, at a time when many educated youths were doing so, Junaid is the first son of any separatist leader to have joined the militant ranks.

Junaid is believed to have struck a good rapport with PhD scholar Manan Wani for a few months before he was killed in October 2018.

At the age of 22, Junaid, the youngest among six brothers and sisters, was first named in an FIR when he was caught during 2010 agitation triggered by the killing of teenager Tufail Mattoo.

Weeks after Sehrai took over the reigns of Tehrek-e-Hurriyat, Junaid disappeared on March 23, 2018 and never returned. His father submitted an application at Saddar Police Station on the next day informing about his son’s disappearance.

A few weeks later Junaid’s picture appeared on social media. He was brandishing an AK-47 and the post also mentioned a code name -- ‘Ammar Bhai’.

Sehrai had turned down a suggestion of the then Director General of Police S P Vaid for making an appeal to his son to shun path of militancy and return home.

Sehrai on Tuesday led funeral prayers in absentia for his son after police refused to give body to the family and instead carried it to Sonmarg for quite burial.

Sehrai Leads Son’s Funeral

people attended the funeral prayers,” Sehrai’s son-in-law Younis Ahmad said.

He said that the gathering would have been large but the police had imposed tough curbs to restrict movement of the people.

Ahmad said that family was not even given passes by the police to attend the last rites of Junaid, reportedly carried out by police at Sonmarg area of central Kashmir’s Ganderbal district.

“We were not given any passes. I also met SP, but he didn’t help,” Younus told Kashmir Observer.

DGP Visits Injured Cops...

spokesperson said today. He assured the injured personnel that all possible help and assistance will be provided to them.

J&K Govt Issues Fresh List..

of stranded persons to Jammu and Kashmir, which is still a continuing exercise, and the risk perception of the Health department vis-à-vis each district; the parameters laid down by MOHFW, Govt. of India.”

The order said that Chief secretary in exercise of the powers conferred under section 24 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, hereby orders that the classification of districts into

74,218 J&K Residents Stranded Elsewhere Brought Back So Far

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government has so far brought back 74,218 residents of the Union Territory, who were stranded elsewhere due to the ongoing lockdown, and transported them to their home towns through COVID special trains, buses and planes.

The government has evacuated 59,492 residents of Jammu and Kashmir, who were stranded in other states and Union territories, through Lakhanpur, besides bringing about 14,225 people back home through special trains at the Jammu and Udhampur railway stations, officials said.

In addition, 501 passengers, including students, have been brought back on special planes, they added.

Also, 1,844 stranded passengers have entered the Union Territory through Lakhanpur from May 18

to May 19 morning, while 890 passengers reached Jammu in the sixth COVID special train on Tuesday and about 510 passengers reached Udhampur from Moradabad in the 10th train, the officials said.

So far, six trains have reached Jammu with a total of 5,508 stranded passengers belonging to different districts, while 8,717 passengers have reached Udhampur in 10 special trains. Besides, two trains carrying about 1,400 passengers from Bhopal and Bengaluru are expected to reach Udhampur in the evening, they added.

The Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua and Srinagar district administrations, under the guidance of their respective deputy commissioners, have evolved a multi-pronged strategy to ensure that all requisite arrangements and facilities are in place for an organised and conve-

people.

Revoke It Immediately: NC

In a statement party has stated that both the S.O 1229 (E) Domicile law and S.O 166 prescribing the procedure for grant of Domicile Certificate are made in exercise of power under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019, challenged in number of petitions before the Supreme Court, the hearing before the Constitution Bench has commenced and is proceeding ahead. It is stated that with the constitutional validity of the Act impugned and the petitions under consideration of the Court, the Government of India in tune with the universally accepted principle of “constitutional propriety”, is under an obligation to desist from exercising powers under the impugned Act including the power to promulgate Domicile law and Rules in question. It is stated that the National Conference has taken a principled stand on the floor of the Parliament and outside that the decisions of 5th August 2019 taking away special status and constitutional guarantees available to Jammu and Kashmir and dividing and downgrading the State are unconstitutional, unilateral as also against the federalism, the basic structure of the Constitution. The Party has pleaded these grounds before the Court. The post 5th August events in Jammu and Kashmir also indicate massive public disapproval of the decisions in all the three regions.

The statement adds that though the Domicile Order and Rules would not be acceptable at any point of time because of well known stand of the Party that the measures are aimed at disempowering the people of Jammu and Kashmir and effecting demographic change, yet the timing of the Order and Procedure in question is also grossly inappropriate and unethical in as much as when entire mankind including the people of Jammu and Kashmir are in complete lockdown engaged in battle of survival against Coronavirus, the Government of India has found this opportune time to push in the measures, palpably anti people and unconstitutional.

This apart, the statement adds, the Domicile Order as well as Procedure are anti people as not only because these are ambiguous and misleading opening flood gates but these would push people with valid state subject certificates to uncertainty and hardship as the benefits would not be available unless they obtain Domicile Certificates under the Rules.

The Party while reiterating its resolve to continue its struggle through all peaceful means for realisation of political aspirations of the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, has asked the Government of India to immediately revoke the Domicile Order and Procedure as these measures will widen the gulf between the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the Country and add to alienation.

Flood gates opened for outsiders: Cong

Pradesh Congress committee(JKPC) has said that domicile law has opened flood gates for outsiders and enabled large number of outside residents to avail and share all the rights at par with original natives and residents of Jammu and Kashmir, contrary to repeated claims and assurances, during and post abrogation of Special Status.

In a statement PCC Chief G.A. Mir termed it a betrayal with the people especially youth of J and K, who were promised complete protection of rights to jobs and land, even post abrogation of art 370.

The ruling BJP time and again mislead and befooled those who opposed the abrogation of Special Status to allow the outside people to become eligible for all limited government jobs and land as well all other resources, hitherto availed by the locals of J and K. The government Authorities and BJP leaders would always assure the people that their all such rights shall stand protected, which came out to be false and fake. G.A. Mir said.

He said Lacs of people including their descendants from those included in the categories of domicile especially those having no ancestral linkages or a rightful claim, would be eligible for all available Government jobs and in future also, on the strength of having domicile right based on fifteen years of stay here, or any of their parents having served for a total of ten years or others having studied here for seven years.

Mir said thousands of jobs in Govt , semi govt sectors and Jk banks have not been filled up, with a view to make these categories of Outsiders to be eligible.

He said the Centre government has chosen the lockdown period of Covid - 19, to bring all such changes and introduce all these things against the rights and wishes of overwhelming majority of people in Jammu and Kashmir.

Inappropriate and untimely: JKAP

Jammu Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) on Tuesday termed framing of new Jammu and Kashmir Domicile rules as inappropriate and untimely in absence of a popular government in J&K.

“The timing of framing of these important rules is not only inappropriate but grossly unethical. There is no popular, elected government in place in J&K wherein the legislature could have thoroughly discussed and deliberated upon eligibility criteria for availing domicile credentials,” the JKAP spokesman added.

He demanded that the entire exercise be put on hold till there is an elected government in J&K. “The people in J&K are presently engaged in battle of survival against Coronavirus, and it would be constitutionally and morally indecorous to thrust these rules, framed by bureaucracy, on them,” he observed.

The spokesman reiterated JKAP’s stand to continue with its efforts to get this law revisited in its entirety in order to remove the loopholes till it satisfies the aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that the JKAP has already made public its stand with regard to Domicile Law and avowed to continue its struggle till the hostile sections in the law like, mandatory tenure for non-natives to reside in J&K and cut off dates to qualify for the domicile are not rectified as per the demands of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Govt Turns To Clergy ...

religious heads of every possible help required in order to

spread message for people to stay home during upcoming religious occasions across the length and breadth of the district.

The religious scholars assured the authorities of their full support.

India Rushes More Troops.

during the violent clash from both sides.

Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane said that Indian troops were maintaining their “posture” along the border. He added that infrastructure development work in the area was on track.

General Naravane added that the face-off involved aggressive behaviour by Chinese and Indian troops and resulted in minor injuries to personnel from both sides. He added that the troops disengaged, following a round of dialogue and interaction at local level.

India brought in reinforcements as it expected matters to escalate following the clash. A couple of Chinese military helicopters were spotted flying close to the un-demarcated Sino-India border on May 6 after the clash.

China accused India of “trespassing and illegally building defence facilities” in the Galwan Valley region. The Chinese government’s mouthpiece Global Times said that China has “enhanced control measures” across the border in Ladakh. China has accused India of building defence fortifications to disrupt their border defence troops’ patrol activities.

On May 5, Indian and Chinese troops clashed in the region using iron rods and sticks. According to reports, some even engaged in stone-pelting.

Srinagar Gears Up To ...

the establishment of these facilities.

He said special engineering teams along with officials from the administration completed these projects in less than six weeks’ time and added that experts from community medicine were also associated for technical advice at each stage.

The lockdown period across the country was aimed to be utilised for creating capacities both in hospital infrastructure and wellness centres, apart from flattening the curve by limiting the public movement.

Living up to this aim, the Srinagar administration headed by Choudhary, immediately after announcement of the first lockdown, started work on establishment of COVID wellness centres, officials said, adding in a period of less than two months the centres are ready to provide services to the hospitals.

The district administration converted stadiums, community halls and hostels into wellness centres and also developed some greenfield facilities.

These centres have been developed to provide space for treatment of mild and asymptomatic COVID-19 cases aiming to lessen the burden on hospitals, the officials said.

They said each COVID Wellness centre has several wards with serial numbered beds, charging points, personal comfort logistics, including bedding and warmers, make-shift first aid centre, doctors’ cabin, nursing centre, hygiene and sanitation point.

Screening and testing booths, mobile testing van, separate washrooms for different wards, pantry, security room and other establishments constructed with pre-engineered material were some of the other facilities available there, they said.

They said the PVC flooring has been done at wellness centres and arrangements put in place for proper ventilation. These centres have been established as per notified standards.

Each bed is provided with a kit for two weeks including towels, hand sanitizer, soap, dental kits, tissues and masks apart from immunity-boosting approved drugs, they said.

LG Visits Udhampur Railway Station

of stranded people arriving at the Udhampur station, official spokesman said.

Dwivedi briefed the LG about the various facilities being provided to the returnees and the procedures involved in the process. He informed the LG that around 60,000 people are expected to arrive on board 60 special trains.

Udhampur Deputy Commissioner Piyush Singla gave a detailed presentation on the processes involved in the reception and the dispatch of passengers to their home districts.

The DC informed that the passengers, after alighting from the train, register themselves on the transit management information system. Nodal officers have been appointed at different levels to ensure efficient working on the ground.

The LG observed that there should be strict implementation of all SOPs and stressed on ensuring the protocols to be followed during the process of bringing the stranded people of J&K back, the spokesperson said.

He emphasized on thermal scanning of these passengers to identify the potential COVID-19 cases.

Murmu underlined the importance of proper disposal of PPE kits and directed that availability of sufficient quantity of food for the returnees must be ensured, besides provision of fans and cooling facility in the holding area.

He directed Mission Director, National Health Mission J&K, Bhupinder Kumar to expedite the process of procurement of more PPE kits and provide sufficient number thereof to the district administration of Udhampur.

“Ensure greater coordination at all levels so that all the arrangements and logistics work smoothly,” he said.

The LG also enquired about the sample collection process in the district and stressed on maintenance of social distancing to prevent the spread of coronavirus. He also visited the platform area and interacted with staff deployed there for reception of passengers, the spokesperson said.

Later, the Lt Governor visited the holding area, food counter and the transport area, the official said, adding that he expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and appreciated the efforts made by the district administration.

India, Pak Troops Trade...

by the Pakistan Army in the last 12 hours along the LoC in Rajouri and Poonch districts, he said

The cross-border shelling between the two sides was going on when last reports were received, the spokesperson said.

There was no immediate report of any casualty during the Pakistani shelling.

Pakistan had on Monday night opened fire and shelled mortars along the LoC in Gulpur sector of Poonch.

Militant Aide Held In...

police spokesperson said.

The arrested person has been identified as Waseem Raja alias Jaana of Taktia Taapar and works as OGW/recruiter of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, the spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, Police has filed a case (FIR no. 43/2020) under relevant sections of law in police station Kreeri and started investigation.

Doctor, 4 Others Suspended

under suspension with immediate effect and they will remain attached in the office of block Medical Officer Surankote,” reads an order issued by Deputy Commissioner Poonch Rahul Yadav.

Moreover, the order said Dr. Mukarab Hussain Shah (MO SDHSurankote) has been asked to report to the office of Deputy Commissioner with immediate effect.

“Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer Poonch, shall initiate disciplinary action against the officer/officials under Rules and submit action taken report to this office at an earliest,” the order added.

Div Com reviews arrangements for Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Eid-ul-Fitr

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole today convened a meeting of senior officers of divisional administration to review arrangements for celebrations of Jumat-ul-Vida, Shab-e-Qadr and Eid-ul-Fitr.

The meeting was attended by all Deputy Commissioners via video conferencing while as Chief Engineer PDD, Director FCS&CA Kashmir, Regional Transport Officer Kashmir, SP Rural Traffic and representatives of other concerned departments.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned departments to ensure that mutton is being sold at government approved rates.

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19, he directed all the DCs and SSPs to ensure that the shop keepers follow all the related SOPs in letter and spirit, and in case of any violation action against such shop keepers be taken.

In order to curb black marketing, the Div Com asked for rigorous market checking teams comprising of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Revenue, Police, SMC, Legal Metrology, Drug & Food Safety Standards Department to ensure market checking of essential commodities.

He asked FCS&CA to make all possible arrangements for availability of ration like Rice, Atta, Sugar, K-oil and LPG cylinders in buffer stock on these occasions as per notified rates of standard quality.

Similarly, Controller, Drug and Food Safety Organization was directed to ensure that the standard quality of food items like Bakery & confectionery products, snacks, soft drinks, spices and other food stuffs are available in the market.

Divisional Commissioner directed Power Development Department to ensure uninterrupted power supply on the eve of Jumat-ul-Vida , Shab-i-Qadr and Eid-ul-Fitr. He also directed PHE Department to make adequate water supply available on Jumat-ul-Vida , Shab-i-Qadr and Eid-ul-Fitr besides ensuring availability of Water through tankers at the places where needed.

He exhorted upon the SMC to launch cleanliness drive at the mosques, shrines, besides ensuring that all street lights are made functional.

“SMC shall ensure frequent checks of the markets to ensure availability of quality food products like mutton, chicken, bakery, milk, vegetables, fruits etc in Srinagar city on the already fixed rates and incase of violation such persons shall be booked,” he directed.

On the occasion, Divisional Commissioner asked Animal Husbandry Department to ensure the availability of poultry birds on notified rates.

Samoon reviews school infrastructure status SKICC to be upgraded to top notch international level: Advisor Khan

SRINAGAR MAY 19: Principal Secretary, School Education and Transport, Asgar Hassan Samoon today held a meeting to review the status of school infrastructure in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, here.

The meeting was attended by Director School Education, Kashmir, Director School Education, Jammu, all Chief education officers of the UT of J&K, Chief Engineer PHE, Kashmir, Director Finance, other senior officers of R&B, Finance and JKPC.

The Director School Education, Jammu and all CEOs participated through video conference while other officers participated in person.

The meeting deliberated over rationalization of student-teacher ratio in schools, renovation of institutions, quality check of Mid-Day meals, distribution of Tabs, utilization of abandoned school buildings, establishment of school cultural wings, creation of attendance application for students and teachers, utilization of funds and other important issues.

During the meeting Principal Secretary directed Chief Education officers (CEO) to file a detailed report of the number of school buildings and related infrastructure including washrooms, laboratories etc that needs renovation, whitewashing and face lifting. He also instructed officers to prepare schools and fumigate these to make schools livable with all the facilities including drinking water before the opening of schools.

He directed the Directors of School Education, Kashmir and Jammu to establish smart classes and provide every school with television sets. He also instructed them to issue Health cards to the schools to maintain the health record of students.

Meanwhile, Samoon told officers to utilize the funds issued for the purpose of the development of education and institutions. He further told them to file the report for the requisition of funds within few days.

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer A Khan today chaired a meeting to review the functioning of SKICC here.

The meeting was attended by Director SKICC Javed Bakshi, Executive Engineer SKICC, Manager Administration, Incharge Operations and incharge House Keeping and other officers.

The meeting discussed works executed under PMDP which include development of tourist facilities at SKICC, development of tourist facilities at Dal Lake and works executed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme (PMDP) like development of floating cafeteria on Dal Lake at SKICC Ghat.

The Advisor directed the concerned to carry out the construction works of highest standard so that the SKICC is upgraded to top notch international level besides pacing up of pending works.

A threadbare discussion was also held over the upgradation of kitchen, promotion/sales and marketing conference exhibition and office expenditure, development of building including upgradations of banquet hall, landscaping and Audio-Visual and SI system.

The Advisor directed the officials to take the plan of revival of auditorium as per the latest modern trend and asked them to engage a consultant for the work.

He also sought the list of languishing projects so that the same are taken up at an earliest, besides the concerned officials of SKICC were also directed to furnish the details of liabilities pending with other government departments.

Later the Advisor also inspected the SKICC lawns and other developmental works being executed there.



- 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

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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

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

HIJRI
CALENDAR
26 Ramazan
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 49
ZUHR	12: 27
ASR	5:24
Magrib	7:23
ISHA	9:07

This Day In History

- 1916 Saturday Evening Post cover features Norman Rockwell painting
- 1918 - 1st electrically propelled warship (New Mexico)
- 1927 - Saudi Arabia becomes independent of Great Britain in the Treaty of Jeddah
- 1943 - French, British and US victory parade in Tunis, Tunisia
- 1944 -US Communist Party dissolves
- 1954 - Chiang Kai-shek becomes president of Nationalist China
- 1955 - Argentine parliament accepts separation of church and state
- 1956 - Atomic fusion (thermonuclear) bomb dropped from plane at Bikini Atoll
- 1956 - Jordan government of Samir resigns
- 1959 - Japanese-Americans regain their citizenship
- 1963 - Sukarno appointed president of Indonesia
- 1965 - Pakistani Boeing 720-B crashes at Cairo Egypt, killing 121
- 1967 - 10,000 demonstrate against war in Vietnam
- 1974 - Soyuz 14 returns to Earth
- 1976 - USSR performs nuclear test at Sary Shagan USSR
- 1978 -US launches Pioneer Venus 1; produces 1st global radar map of Venus
- 1991 - Soviet parliament approves law allowing citizens to travel abroad
- 1992 - India launches its 1st satellite independently
- 1993 - 10m meteor comes within 150,000 km of Earth (1993KA)
- 1997 - Cosmos Zenit-2 Launch (Russia), Failed
- 2002 - The independence of East Timor is recognized by Portugal, formally ending 23 years of Indonesian rule and 3 years of provisional UN administration (Portugal itself was the former colonizer of East Timor until 1976)
- 2013 - 133 people are killed and 283 are injured in a continued wave of insurgency in Iraq

From KO Archives

Grenade, Firing On Fateha Function

2 Killed, 18 Injured As Gunmen Attack Gathering

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR- Unidentified gunmen attacked a memorial service in Bagh-e-Mahtab on the outskirts of the city this afternoon leaving two people dead and eighteen others injured.

The attack was carried out during the fourth day ceremony of the Kashmir Salvation Movement (KSM) chief's brother. Abdul Ghani Bhat, who was shot dead by gunmen on Saturday.

The gunmen struck at around 2:30 pm at Bhat's residence when the KSM chief and former Hizb-ul-Mujahideen divisional commander Zafar Abdul Fatah, was addressing a large number of people gathered there for Fateha khwani, the CNS said

The attackers first hurled a grenade and then opened indiscriminate fire on the gathering, leaving two people, including Fatah and his two brothers Haji Ghulam Muhammad and Basheer Ahmad, injured.

Local residents and the police rushed the injured mourners to the SMHS and the Bones and Joints hospitals.

Two of the injured succumbed to their injuries at the SMHS hospital. The deceased have been identified as Mirza Aslam Beig, son of Khizir Muhammad a resident of Bagh-e-Mahtab and Imtiyaz Mohi-ud-din son of Ghulam Mohi-ud-din of Lal

Nagar Meethan.

The police cordoned off the area and conducted house-to-house searches after the attack but the gunmen had made good their escape before the search operations began

Among the injured were Special Police Officer Basheer Ahmad, Bilal Ahmad of Kralpora, Farooq Ahmad Dar and Mushtaq Ahmad Dar of Naupora. Sopore, Manzoor Ahmad Wazir of Handwara, Shahnawaz Ahmad of Parravpora. Manzoor Ahmad of Dagarpora, Handwara, Aijaz Ahmad of Barzulla and Farooq Ahmad Parray and his son Basheer Ahmad of Parravpora.

Talking to the CNS, Kashmir's inspector general of police, Javed Makhdoom, said that a gunman had lobbed a grenade and opened fire on a mourner's gathering in Shankarpura.

Police and the BSF had been deployed in the area, but the assailants opened fire immediately after hurling the grenade, and guards deployed with Zafar Abdul Fatah also fired back, but the attackers escaped during the exchange of fire. Abdul Ghani Bhat, for whom the memorial service was being held, was the elder brother of Zafar Abdul Fatah.

Fatah, whose real name is Zafar Akbar Bhat is a former divisional commander of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen who was a key figure in the failed talks between Hizb and the Centre in 2000. He launched a separatist political party, Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement after giving up violence.

He joined the moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq as a general council member.

No militant outfit has claimed responsibility for today's attack or the killing of Bhat on Saturday.

The attack on the mourners came just minutes after several senior leaders' of both factions of Hurriyat Conference had left the house of Bhat after expressing sympathy with the bereaved family, the sources said.

Chairman of National Front Nayeem Ahmad Khan, chief of Anjuman-e-Shaire-Shiayan Syed Agha Hassan Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mohammad Ashraf Laway all belonging to hardline faction headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Peoples Political Front president Fazal Haq Qureshi and Ghulam Nabi Shah, of Awami Action Committee, constituents of the moderate faction led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq had just left the house when the attack took place, the sources said.

(Kashmir Observer, 20 May, 2005)

EO/Pub/Tech/
Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Extension Officer Publicity Wing
Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir

Spring Advisory for Cattle

Winter is finally giving way to warmer weather i.e., spring which is characterised by lush greenpastures , intermittent rainfall and fluctuation in temperature . The precautionary measures which the livestock farmers should take to prevent the problems associated with the season at bay are;

- Protect the animal from exposure to rain by keeping them inside the cow sheds on rainy days .
- Ensure cow sheds remain dry by regularly disposing off the manure and proper drainage of stagnant pools of water and urine .
- If cows are put out to pasture, slowly adapt them to greens by restricting the time spent at pastures to avoid indigestion.
- Do not let your cattle graze pastures when they are wet due to rain or dew.
- Before letting them out feed them a little bit of hay and concentrate.
- Since spring is considered as calving season make necessary arrangementswith respect to calving like proper calving pens, regular cleaning of sheds appropriate bedding etc.
- During spring cattle are exposed to low magnesium levels due to grazing of lush green pastures therefore add supplement rich in magnesium to avoid disease related to its deficiency.
- Restrict your animal access to grasses like clovers (Batekh Neur) and lucerne(losan ghas).
- Ensure the cattle are vaccinated against FMD,HS,BQ before letting them out for grazing.
- Ensure the animals are dewormed against any parasitic infestation as prescribed by the veterinarian.

(Issued in public interest by the information Education cell Publicity Wing, Department of Animal Husbandry Kashmir).

DIPK-849/20

Dr. Ishrat Shakeel
Extension Officer
Publicity Wing, Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla

CORRIGENDUM

In respect of this office eNIT No. 08 of 2020-21 issued vide No. MIDB/CC/452-461 Dated: 15-05-2020 kindly read "The carriage/shifting charges" at S.No. 9, at page 2 of SBD as "The carriage/shifting charges wherever not included".

All other terms/conditions and stipulations as contained in the eNIT shall remain unaltered/unmodified.

No. MIDB/CC/512-521
D A T E :17/05/2020
DIPK-899/20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Baramulla

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RIGHT RIVER CIRCULAR ROAD DIVISION SRINAGAR KMR.
"QUOTATION"

For & on behalf of Lt.Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Sealed quotations affixed with Rs.5/- (Rs. Five) only revenue stamps are invited from the approved stationary dealers/ suppliers of J&K State for supply of office stationary for the year 2020-21, required by the office of Executive Engineer, Right River Circular Road Division, Srinagar. The list / details of stationary items are given in the Annexure "A" which is enclosed. The quotations must reach the office of the undersigned on or before 23 /05 /2017 upto 2.00 P.M through registered post/ insured post/ in person which will be opened on the same day or any other convenient day in presence of the quotationer's who may like to be present.

The quotationer is required to deposit the earnest money of Rs. 2000/= in the shape of Call Deposit receipt from a scheduled Bank pledged to Executive Engineer Right River Circular Road Division Srinagar. Call Deposit receipt shall be attached with the quotation, without which the quotation shall not be considered at all.

The quotationer must quote their rates including loading, unloading & carriage upto the division office Kak Sarai Karan Nagar Srinagar. The rates should be quoted inclusive of all the taxes/ GST as admissible under rules.

The supply of Stationary should be made from time to time during the financial year 2020-21.

DIPK-851/20

No.-RRCR/Camp/170-175
Dated:-15-05-2020

Executive Engineer
Right Riv.Cir.Rd. Div.Sgr.

ANNEXURE "A"
(OFFICE QUOTATION)

S.No.	Name of article / Item	Quality
1.	Photostat Paper A/4	Power
2.	Photostat Paper F/S Size Paper	Power
3.	Type Paper	Valley
4.	Paper Pins	Kingston/Pony
5.	Lace Green	Green
6.	Correction Fluid	Kores/ Camlin
7.	Ball Pens	Montex, Cello, Reynolds
8.	Pilot V5	Luxor
9.	Pilot V7, & V10	Luxor
10.	Highlighter	Luxor
11.	Office Slip Pads	Valley/ Sarasvati
12.	Blank C.D	Moserbear/ H.P
13.	Gluestic	Kores
14.	Receipt , Dispatch Register	Sarasvati
15.	Envelops	Taj
16.	Duster cloth	Cotton
17.	Ledger Various Types Superior Ledger Paper with Cloth Binding 200 pages.	Superior
18.	Long Register (300 pages)	Superior
19.	Peon Book	Superior
20.	Plain Register	Superior
21.	Rent Register Ledger Paper with cloth bindings 200 pages	Superior
22.	Deposit Receipt Register (200 pages)	Superior
23.	Contractor Ledger paper with cloth binding (200 pages)	-do-
24.	Works Register	-do-
25.	File Cover	-do-
26.	Tonner 12A Genuine Original and 88A	Laser jet 1020 Plus
27.	Tonner for Photostat Machine	PST 5020
28.	Pen Drive 4 Gb, 8 GB, 16 GB, 32 GB and 64 GB	Scandisk, HP
29.	Stapler with pins	Kangaro
30.	M-Book	Superior
31.	Carbon Paper	Kores
32.	Pencil	Natraj

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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Ease The Lockdown

The number of Covid-19 positive cases in Kashmir has gone past 1300 with 15 deaths, three of them over the past twenty hours. However, on a positive note, 609 patients have so far recovered. J&K stands at number 13 in terms of number of cases among all states and union territories in India. This does make it one among the significantly infected states. However, the number of cases has shown a marked rise in only over the past few days. Among them are five doctors, three from ENT department of Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital, an orthopaedic surgeon from SKIMS Bemina and a dentist of Government Dental College.

Across the country too, the cases have witnessed a considerable spike in recent days with numbers going past 5000 patients a day. This has taken the total cases to one lakh. A large number of these cases have recovered. At the same time, number of deaths remains low at over 3000. India's death rate remains below that of many western nations which have been hit the hardest. Its mortality rate for those with the disease is 3 percent, compared with 6 percent for the United States where around 89,000 people have died, 14 percent for the United Kingdom and Italy and 15 percent for France.

Maharashtra in the worst affected state by the pandemic, accounting for about one-third of the country's total cases followed by Gujarat. This has forced the government to extend the lockdown by another 15 days, albeit with considerable relaxations. For example, inter-state movement of vehicles, buses have been allowed with states and Union Territories being given the final power to delineate Red, Orange and Green zones. Also, local authorities have to ensure that shops and markets open with staggered timings, so as to ensure social distancing. The shops have to ensure six feet distance among customers and also not allow more than 5 persons at one time.

This is a welcome change. As it is, the country can't afford to be in a perpetual shutdown. This will cripple the economy rendering lakhs of people unemployed. In fact, two months of lockdown has already done so and further extensions will only further kill the businesses.

In Kashmir, the administration has been more strict with the lockdown than is warranted. And it's hitting the economy hard, already reeling from the lockdown since August 2019. It is time the government revisits the restrictions and eases them considerably to let the people return to businesses. What it can focus on instead is to strictly enforce the social distancing norms in public.

OTHER OPINION

Over To The States

The guidelines for Lockdown 4, announced by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs on Sunday, continue a trend that began about two weeks ago. The ministry had allowed a range of economic activities in the non-COVID 19 hotspots during Lockdown 3. It has relaxed many more restrictions during the latest phase of the lockdown. Significantly, the guidelines accede to a major demand made by the states during Lockdown 3 — they have been given considerable flexibility in setting the boundaries of the infection zones. Such devolution of decision making is welcome. The states will now have to take care that they open up in a manner that does not aggravate the pandemic, while also addressing economic and humanitarian imperatives.

The doubling rate of the coronavirus infection has improved to 13.6 per cent in the last three days, after a tough 15 days when it hovered around 11.5 per cent. The mortality and recovery figures of COVID-19 patients have also shown positive trends, according to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. However, these developments should not make state health authorities lose sight of the challenges they will face in the coming weeks. For example, according to a report in this newspaper, about two-thirds of the Shramik Special trains that ferry migrants back to their homes originate in COVID-19 hotspots. State authorities will have to make arrangements to test and, if need be, isolate the returning migrants in a dignified manner. The resumption of inter-state buses could make their task of managing the pandemic tougher. At the same time, improvements in transport could ease the desperation of the working class — that has borne a disproportionate burden of the country's battle against the coronavirus — and check the already large toll on India's roads and highways. That is why state governments need to be open-minded in exercising their transport-related powers during Lockdown 4.

State governments had alleged that the earlier criteria of designating entire districts as infection zones circumscribed their capacity to kickstart economic activities. The new guidelines allow them to designate "appropriate administrative units" — districts, municipal corporations, sub-divisions or wards — as containment zones. This would require constant conversation between state governments and local bodies. Such interactions are not always cordial even during normal times, especially when the party holding office at the state is different from the one running the local body. But the imperatives of combating the pandemic will require regular interactions between all levels of the government. Epidemiologists now say that the virus is here to stay. This means hotspots can change, the infection can recede from some areas and surge in other regions. The new guidelines allow the states to deal with such eventualities. Their micro-management of the battle against COVID-19 will be watched.

The Indian Express

MASOOD ALI MIR

“The propagation and popularity of these ideologies turned the entire world in to a colourful place and like a rainbow depicting different shades, sets and values of life living together. As long as these ideologies were peaceful and not used politically against each other, it hardly mattered for the people to which ideology one believes in. But when these ideologies turned hostile to each other and were propounded on the ground of good and evil, it started showing the negative character.”

"An idea is something you have; an ideology is something that has you"
--- Morris Berman

The 21st century world is a world of diversity. The diversities as you know are of different nature i.e. political, economic, social, cultural, moral, religious, ideological etc. Previously these diversities were less known because of the huge geographical barriers and the less information flow. But the revolution in telecommunication, transportation and the trade has led to the identification, recognition and popularity of these diversities all over the world.

With the passage of time, these diversities led to shape our views about different aspects of life in a diverse way. The different life styles, conditions of living, standards of life (social, economic, political, cultural and religious) led to the philosophers to conceptualise different (Better) world view which sometimes led to the rebellions and revolutions in the human history.

The different discoveries, inventions, thoughts, philosophies and theories of different philosophers, scholars, and scientists at different times influenced the people at large level and helped them to have their particular outlook and approach to the common living and it's economy, polity, society, religion, gender etc hence led to the formation of an ideology. Whether consciously or sub-consciously everyone subscribes to a set of ideas and ideology.

The term ideology was coined by a French philosopher Destutt de Tracy in 1796. The word ideology is of Greek origin and is composed of two words "Idea and Ology" meaning the 'Science of Ideas'. Ideology refers to "a framework of idea, beliefs and values that shape a person's world view" (Sandriyn). Adorno defines ideology as "Organise ideas, attitudes and values and the way of thinking about the man and society"

The world has been the centre of numerous ideologies propagated by countless writers, scholars and philosophers. The philosophers tried their best to make their philosophies turn in to common man's way of life. Many of them succeeded in their mission to manufacture the consent among the common masses as desired. The influenced lot of followers of different ideologies tried to live in the world designed and architected for them by their ideological gurus.

The propagation and popularity

of these ideologies turned the entire world in to a colourful place and like a rainbow depicting different shades, sets and values of life living together. As long as these ideologies were peaceful and not used politically against each other, it hardly mattered for the people to which ideology one believes in. But when these ideologies turned hostile to each other and were propounded on the ground of good and evil, it started showing the negative character. It disturbed the entire peace of mind both of the individual and the system alike. It became the source of chaos, confusion, conflict, hatred, suspicion, mistrust, antagonism and sometimes the war. The mistrust and antagonism led to the division of the

particular ideology. It has penetrated into every aspect of life and is dominating the entire discourse. It has led to the paradigm shift and the shaping of dangerous narratives. The situation has moved beyond the imagination now the democratic institutions, mostly unbiased in nature, too has bowed down before the new narratives and are following the ideological trend hence declining in their standards and status.

Through this ideological extremism and fundamentalism, every person has the misfortune to fall within the trap of this extremely position of hatred, dogmas and dictations either by propagating it or becoming the victim to it by being lesser privileged in

“The world has been the centre of numerous ideologies propagated by countless writers, scholars and philosophers. The philosophers tried their best to make their philosophies turn in to common man's way of life. Many of them succeeded in their mission to manufacture the consent.”

world, societies, cultures, economies and even the families.

People fall in love with their own heterodoxies (unorthodoxy) and double down when their wrong ideas come under attack. Ideologies begin to replace the reality and their focus gets ever more distorted. Once that ideology is lodged deeply in mind, it takes the control of all the perception. The world can come crashing down around a person and still the true believer will stick to their story.

Nowadays the ideologies get too much importance that sometimes becomes more important than the social fabric of the society, human life and the religion. People do follow and propagate the ideology in such a way that nothing else matter for them beyond their ideology.

These type of ideologies provide a perspective or lens through which the world is understood and explained. People do not see the world as it is, but only as the expect it to be, in other words, by adopting an ideology people see the world through the prism or a veil of ingrained beliefs, opinions and assumptions (Heywood).

This ideological blindness has shattered the world, particularly, our part of world that is South Asia. Here each and everything is viewed, presented and propagated even executed on the ideological grounds. Be it society, polity, economy or religion nothing matters more than the a

terms of power and position.

By this blindness the common man no longer sees the world, the people, the historical events, the religion, the society or the political system as they are, how they developed? for what they are meant for? Instead everything is seen through a distorted prism only and only to have the upper position and to get the power to rule.

These extreme ideologies have emerged a serious threat to the human security and are disturbing the peace and progress of the humankind. These are mere propaganda, a form of words or collection of slogans designed to win votes or attract popular support. These ideas and ideologies are therefore simply window dressing used to conceal the deeper realities of human life. The need of the hour is to shun the extreme positions and positioning of such ideologies whether political, economic, gender, religious or sectarian. A person is free to believe in his or her own world and the set of values through which he/she may live in that but at the same time he/she must have the understanding that others too may be allowed to live in their own system of choices that is what a true modern, educated and a democratic society deserves.

Live and let live.

Masood Ali Mir is a freelancer and a social activist and can be mailed at masoodalimir@yahoo.co.in



OBSERVER
MAIL

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

► **MAIL YOUR LETTERS**

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Eid During COVID-19

Let's celebrate with physical distancing not with socially distancing.

COVID-19 a pandemic declared by W.H.O Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on March, 11 2020 needs no introduction. It would not be wrong to say that the world has come to a standstill because of Covid-19.

The virus is not differentiating poor, rich, old young, citizens of developed, developing or under developed countries although the fatality rates are varying, but no one knows whose immunity is stronger to fight this deadly virus.

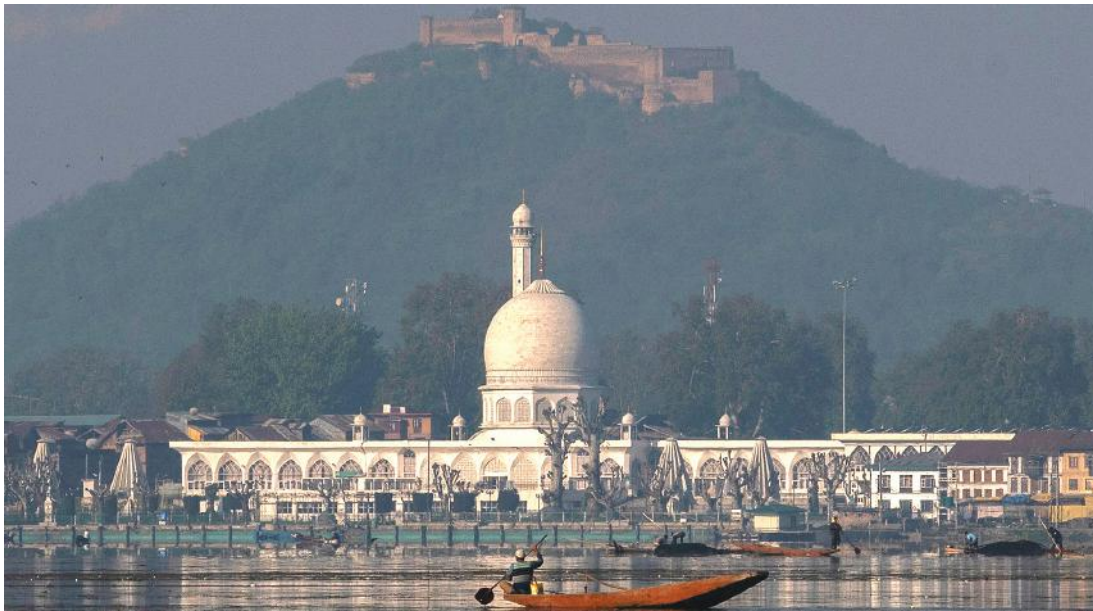
Coming to point, a number of religious and cultural festivals were consumed by the corona and no one could celebrate them with usual gaiety and fervor. Eid is just round the corner and it's unlikely to be celebrated with traditional fervor. We will not be able to gather in Eidgah to offer Salat al-Eid, may not be able to visit our friends, family members or our near and dear ones. This doesn't mean that we should forget our duties. Saying Eid greetings, taking care of poor and needy giving charity are some of the activities which we should perform with more vigour and enthusiasm now than ever.

Jeremy Freese, Professor of Sociology at Stanford University says, "Social Distancing makes it sound like people should stop communicating with one another, while instead we should be preserving as much community as we can even while we keep our physical distance from one another." He added "We need to do physical distancing to protect everyone's physical wellbeing, but mental wellbeing is obviously also important, and social isolation is not good for mental wellbeing.

An epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove said on March 20, "We are changing to say physical distance and that's on purpose because we want people to still remain connected."

Physical Distance is measured in metric meters or centimeters. It is geographical distance from person A to person B while "social distance" is a measure of distance across social boundaries.

Nowadays everyone especially COVID-19 war-



riors-the frontline workers which includes doctors, paramedics and all other employees associated who are behind the curtains and facing mental dilemma as many of them hadn't visited their families since long thus taking toll of their mental and physical health. Celebration of festivals like Eid-ul-Fitr that too in social isolation may increase the mental stress during the pandemic COVID-19 and we have to try our level best to decrease the mental strain of our people. Our little effort in decreasing social isolation and encouraging physical distancing may be helpful in flattening the curve and help reduce the stress levels.

Technology right now has advanced so greatly that we can keep connected in many ways without actually physically being in the same room or at the

same space with people. A number of social networking platforms are helping to stay us connected with all our dear ones and we should encourage the social connections that too in this pandemic.

To conclude, in these strange times of the virus, let's encourage clear physical distance (minimum two meters) but at the same time remain close to each other "socially".

On the holy and auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, Let's pray together, "May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala cure the whole world and forgive us!"

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Media Feels Pandemic Strain

MELLISSA FUNG

The current Covid-19 pandemic has made the situation even worse. As the virus made its way around the world, it gave authoritarian governments an excuse to seize even greater control over information. The Chinese government suppressed any reporting when the virus was first ravaging Wuhan, denouncing doctors who issued early warnings, and detaining others who tried to give voice to those warnings. It is now using state-owned media outlets to try to rewrite history. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán's government has proposed new legislation that would allow authorities to punish anyone spreading "false information" about the virus.

I had been captive in Afghanistan for about two weeks when the government of my home country, Canada, contacted those attempting to negotiate my release. They told negotiators to get me on the phone the next day, when the United States military would be flying a drone over where they thought I was being held, in order to determine my whereabouts.

The negotiators were unable to secure that concession. (I was released a couple of weeks later in a prisoner exchange.) But the US government's willingness to help find me, a Canadian journalist who had been kidnapped while on assignment in Afghanistan, represented some semblance of a safety net for people doing a dangerous job. Eleven years later, that safety net is gone - and journalists are in more danger than ever.

Since my release in November 2008, 626 journalists worldwide have been killed while doing their jobs. Today, according to a tally by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 64 journalists remain missing and 250 are in prison. And a new report by the United Kingdom-based charity Article 19 - named for the article in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that enunciates the right to seek and receive news and express opinions - concludes that freedom of expression is at its lowest point in a decade, and declining.

In fact, three of every four people worldwide "are experiencing a deteriorating environment for freedom of expression," the Article 19 report notes. Thomas Hughes, the organisation's former director, partly blames governments' use of 'digital technology to surveil their citizens, restrict content, and shut down communications.'

The current Covid-19 pandemic has made the situation even worse. As the virus made its way around the world, it gave authoritarian governments an excuse to seize even greater control over information. The Chinese government suppressed any reporting when the virus was first ravaging Wuhan, denouncing doctors who issued early warnings, and detaining others who tried to give voice to those warnings. It is now using state-owned media outlets to try to rewrite history. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán's government has proposed new legislation that would allow authorities to punish anyone spreading "false information" about the virus.

According to a recent CPJ report, both authoritarian and elected governments are increasingly



introducing legislation ostensibly intended to curb 'fake news' and cybercrime, but which, in many cases, effectively criminalises journalism. From Egypt to Turkey to Cameroon, journalists have been harassed, intimidated, fined, and detained over dubious claims that they were spreading fake news.

And when it comes to discrediting journalists' efforts to hold the powerful to account, the United States - historically the world's foremost defender of the free press - has been showing these countries how it is done. US President Donald Trump's nearly daily coronavirus briefings have devolved into attacks on reporters who challenge his lies and misinformation about how his administration has handled the crisis.

As The New York Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger pointed out last year, by consistently mocking and threatening reporters and news organizations, Trump has "effectively given foreign leaders permission to do the same with their countries' journalists, and even given them the vocabulary with which to do it." And the Trump administration's unwillingness to defend journalists has produced a culture of impunity.

I can't be sure what would happen if I were kidnapped in Afghanistan today. But, judging by the Trump administration's record, it is safe to assume

that the US government would simply shrug and question why I was there in the first place.

Yet it is precisely those countries that are beset by conflict or under the leadership of authoritarian regimes where independent journalists are needed the most. Fortunately for these countries' people, brave local reporters continue to fight every day to expose corruption, ensure transparency, and hold the powerful to account, even if it means putting themselves in harm's way.

Today, reporters globally are fearlessly tracking the spread of Covid-19, in a world where personal protective equipment means masks and gloves instead of Kevlar vests and helmets. They are telling the stories of the stricken, honouring the dead, and providing vital information to the public. Most important, they are debunking misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Reporters should not have to worry about being attacked by their own governments for doing their jobs. The norms that are now being destroyed won't be easily rebuilt, regardless of who occupies the White House. But the future of global press freedom demands that we try.

Melissa Fung is the author of Under An Afghan Sky: A Memoir of Captivity.

Change Your Diet To Stay Mentally Strong

AUSTIN PERLMUTTE

With all the focus on Covid-19, immunity has become a fixture in the news and conversation. Yes, immunity is key to fighting off infections. But it's actually a much bigger deal. In fact, it plays a major role in conditions like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. More surprising still, it shapes our thinking.

To alter our thoughts, the immune system has to reach the brain. We usually only hear about brain cells called neurons. But as it turns out, the brain actually has its own resident immune cells. These are called microglia. Researchers discovered microglial cells around a century ago. However, we've only recently understood their immense importance.

Microglial cells are implicated in a wide assortment of brain diseases. These include Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, and many others. There's an easy connection: these brain problems are characterised by neuronal damage and death. Microglial cells are involved with neuron repair, as well as keeping them alive.

With this in mind, the link between microglia and our thoughts becomes clearer. Our thoughts and actions are a reflection of the brain's wiring. The core of this wiring is made of neurons, which are influenced by microglia. So, having healthy microglia is essential to healthy cognition. But here's the thing about these cells: they're very temperamental.

Microglial cells are like reserve troops. They wait in an inactive state until they are needed. When they get the right signal, they undergo a dramatic shift. This includes changing shape, moving to where they're needed, and manufacturing a specific set of chemicals. In this cascade of events, the initial molecular signal determines the final personality of the cell.

Once exposed to a certain set of molecules, microglia become specialised. One of these specialised forms is called M2 microglial cells. These help to grow new neurons and heal brain damage. If presented with another set of messages, they can morph into another specialised form called M1 microglial cells. These appear to aid in removing pathogens like bacteria from the brain. But there's a catch: a sustained elevation of the M1 cells may spell disaster. Left unchecked, they appear to damage and disable good brain function.

A central theme leads to both M1 activation and its negative consequences. As it turns out, this may also be a key in connecting microglial cells with our mood and cognition. What is the link? In a word: inflammation.

In the presence of inflammation, microglia preferentially turn into the M1 subtype. These cells then produce more inflammation. This is really important because elevated levels of inflammation are associated with neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. So, it's no surprise that M1 microglial cells are thought to play a role in these conditions. More recently, this same brain inflammation has been connected to mood disorders. As you might then expect, M1 microglial cells are implicated in depression.

Over the course of the last few decades, various

trials have confirmed that inflammation contributes to depression. Early research noted that patients receiving interferon for hepatitis displayed depressive symptoms. And it's been repeatedly confirmed that inflammatory markers in the blood are higher in people with depression. Lastly, giving volunteers an injection that increases inflammation leads to depressive symptoms. All of this indicates that inflammation may indeed cause depression. But the question is: How? For some possible answers, we again turn to the microglia.

Microglial cells can be seen as signal amplifiers - when they hear a message, they promote it widely. This is especially relevant for inflammation and its downstream effects. When inflammation reaches the brain, it induces microglial cells to create even more inflammation. This damages neurons. More importantly, it may actually block their creation. That's because a decrease in new neuron production (called neurogenesis) in a certain part of the brain may have a role in both depression and cognitive decline.

You've likely heard of the 'memory centre' of the brain. It's called the hippocampus. We actually have two hippocampi, one on each side of the brain. Volume loss in the hippocampus predicts the severity of cognitive decline. In fact, atrophy of this part of the brain is used to diagnose Alzheimer's disease. Interestingly, volume loss in the hippocampus is also seen

in major depressive disorder. Finally, higher levels of inflammation predict a smaller hippocampus. And of course, microglial cells have a central role in all of this.

Let's tie all of this together. Our cognitive ability and our mood is a reflection of the wiring of our brains. This is majorly influenced by our immune systems, especially the cells called microglia. Microglial cells are differentially activated by the signals they receive. When exposed to inflammation, microglial cells start generating inflammation in the brain, which has been linked to cognitive decline and to depression. This may specifically be the result of damage to the hippocampus.

This story is fascinating and certainly incomplete. There remains much to learn about the factors influencing our cognition and mood. But while new data continue to be generated, it's important for us to act with what we do know. Understanding the connections between inflammation, mood and cognitive decline makes it all the more important to lower systemic inflammation in our bodies.

The most universally relevant methods of reaching this goal include avoidance of the standard American diet, moderate levels of exercise, adequate sleep, and stress-reduction techniques. Individuals may benefit from a more personalised plan including gut-healing strategies, specific dietary protocols, and more formal assessments of inflammatory status.

Austin Perlmutter is a board-certified internal medicine physician and the co-author of the upcoming Brian Wash

Psychology Today

Digital Employees Will Drive The Future Of Work

HAMAD OBAID AL MANSOORI

The digital generation, those born after 2000, are about to knock on our doors for work. Are we ready to receive them and even employ their skills, let alone develop them? Do we really realise the psychological and educational background of these young people who have not lived a single moment in a world without the Internet?

It is necessary to work sooner in the field of human resources, to develop the current competencies in order to embrace the digital generation and work with them to achieve customer happiness

Half a century ago, the dominant workplace culture was based on the centrality of the corporation (owners and shareholders), and the prevailing logic was to prioritise the corporation first, then the employee and the customer. The rationale behind this was that a strong organisation would be able to secure the lives of its employees, thus providing goods to its clients.

After the emergence of e-Government, a new culture of prioritising the customer/client evolved, based on the thought process that customer satisfaction would guarantee sustainability of the institution, and therefore the salaries of its employees and the profits of its owners.

Today, we need to look at it from a different angle. In light of



the digital transformations and destabilising technologies, 70 to 80 per cent of the value of work is based on service, not commodity. This necessitated comprehensive and radical revisions in the management methods, and especially in the area of human resources. The new equation is that a digitally qualified employee is the one capable of understanding the customers/clients and meeting their expectations and require-

ments, and therefore he/she can achieve the institution's material and non-material goals. So, how do we get there?

We need to review the future of work, the future that we are already living in. In today's world, digitisation is a key element for business success. Digitisation is not just technical transformation, rather it is a smart integration in the digital age with all its concepts and tools. It is not only a

culture, but a lifestyle.

The digital generation, those born after 2000, are about to knock on our doors for work. Are we ready to receive them and even employ their skills, let alone develop them? Do we really realise the psychological and educational background of these young people who have not lived a single moment in a world without the Internet?

This digitally savvy generation joining us is a matter of time. In order to avoid the shock that might arise from this, it is necessary to work sooner in the field of human resources, to develop the current competencies in order to embrace the digital generation and work with them to achieve customer happiness. The first element to be considered is the concept of the job itself. Human resources in a digital organisation are more focused on work than on the job.

What is the difference?

The job is a 'job description' that revolves around a basic skill that gives the employee his/her

importance in the organisation. But in the digital organisation, work means that an employee, would necessarily possess a 'basket of skills' without which he/she would not be able to do the job. For example, a sales employee cannot succeed without a certain amount of data analysis skills, digital marketing skills, and planning skills. The corporate communications employee needs to have content, technology, social media, and design skills as well as strategic planning, and many others.

Finally, when we talk about prioritising the employee, are we contradicting ourselves while promoting customer priority? Definitely not. In order to prioritise the customer in this crucial moment, we must take steps towards a digital employee that is significantly different from what we have always known.

Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori is the Director General, TRA

Khaleej Times



Presence Of Spouses Who Are Co-Parenting Can Alter Each Other's Brain Activity: STUDY

Agencies

SINGAPORE- When spouses, who are co-parenting, are together, they show higher similarities in brain responses to the infant stimuli than when they are separated, suggests a novel study. The study led by researchers at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore), was published in the journal Scientific Reports.

The researchers analysed how the brain activity of 24 pairs of husband and wife from Singapore changed in response to recordings of infant stimuli such as crying, when they were physically together and when they were separated.

This effect was only found in

true couples and not in randomly matched study participants.

The area of the brain the researchers monitored is the prefrontal cortex, which is associated with complex behaviour and emotional states.

When similar brain activity in the same area of the brain (i.e. greater synchrony) is observed in two people, it suggests that both are highly attuned to each other's emotions and behaviours.

The senior author of the study, NTU Associate Professor Gianluca Esposito, who holds a joint appointment in the School of Social Sciences and the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, said, "Our study indicates that when spouses are physically together, there

is greater synchrony in their attentional and cognitive control mechanisms when parenting."

"Since the brain response of parents may be shaped by the presence of the spouse, then it is likely that spouses who do not spend much time together while attending their children may find it harder to understand each other's viewpoint and have reduced ability to coordinate co-parenting responsibilities. This may undermine the quality of parental care in the long run," the professor added.

Assoc Prof Esposito who also leads the Social and Affective Neuroscience Lab (SAN-Lab) at NTU said more time together while attending a child may

seem a "waste of time". However, it may prove to help the couple with parenting.

"This finding is particularly useful for parents who are working from home during this "circuit breaker" period in Singapore - as families spend more time together at home as part of social distancing measures in the fight against COVID-19. The entire family interacting together for an extended period may be stressful, but parents can take this time to tune into each other's behaviour and emotions while caring for their children," Assoc Prof Esposito said.

The study, undertaken in collaboration with researchers from the United States' National Institute of Child Health and Human

Development and the Italy's University of Trento, was published in the Nature Scientific Reports in May 2020. The researchers used functional Near-infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS), a non-invasive optical imaging technique to measure the brain signals based on the level of oxygenated and deoxygenated blood in the brain.

Prior to the experiment, couples answered a questionnaire that aims to measure how often the mother or father takes the lead in co-parenting. The couples were then exposed to infant and adult laughter and cries, as well as a static sound either together (in the same room at the same time) or separately (in different rooms at different times).

The NTU research team compared the couple's brain activity to calculate brain-to-brain synchrony and found that couples showed a greater degree of synchrony when they were together than separated. This degree of similar brain activity was found to be unique to real couples and was not observed between randomly matched couples.

The paper's first author Ms Atiqah Azhari, an NTU PhD candidate at the SAN-Lab said, "Our study brings us a step closer in uncovering how the parental brain may be shaped by the physical presence of the co-parenting spousal partner.

To ascertain how synchrony may be beneficial or not for the couple

or child, future research should look into how synchrony during positive and negative emotional situations directly affects coordinated caregiving behaviours."

The paper's co-first author Ms Mengyu Lim, who is a Project Officer at the SAN-Lab at NTU, said, "The findings of this study may be empowering for those who experience parenting stress - that we should not think of parenting as an individual task, but a shared responsibility with the spouse. Co-parenting requires active teamwork, communication, and trust in each other."

The study builds on Assoc Prof Esposito's earlier studies on the effects of parenting stress in the brains of both mothers and their children.

Too Much Sitting Causing Stiff Muscles? Here's What To Do

Agencies

NEW DELHI- With fitness centres closures and little workout activity at home, most Indians are not moving around as much as they should. Prolonged sitting at home, often in uncomfortable positions, can cause muscles to stiffen up.

Here are easy tips to reduce muscle stiffness and any accompanying pain and discomfort.

It is no brainer that flexibility tends to include the range of motion in one's joints. It is the ability to move your joints effectively. Being flexible can help you keep injuries at bay. Stretching on a daily basis can be opted for. Stretching everyday can help you make sure that the muscles present on each side of your joint have an equal pull to allow your joints to move freely without difficulties.

Stretching can strengthen your joints and help you reduce stiffness, says Dr Gautam Zaveri,



Spine Surgeon, Zen Multispeciality Hospital, Chembur.

Cardio, strength training exercises, swimming, walking, and yoga can do the trick. In yoga, cat and cow pose, and cobra stretch can be helpful. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) can be helpful for

the fitness enthusiasts out there.

Pilates can help your muscles become flexible. It involves slow and controlled exercises for your whole body. The static holds and dynamic stretching can improve flexibility. Avoid going overboard and stop immediately if you en-

counter pain.

An appropriate balanced diet can help your muscles. We are what we consume. Including good-quality protein post-exercise, as part of a balanced diet, is a good move. When collagen, which is made from the building blocks of protein, is combined with Vitamin C, it may help to decrease joint pain, supporting tendons and aiding recovery and reducing muscle soreness.

Take a warm bath. While a warm bath or shower may have more of a psychological benefit, it is worth a try. In this summer season, most of us take cold shower baths.

One of the things that you have to overcome in stretching and increasing flexibility is the muscles natural protective response. So if you can relax the muscles via a warm shower or bath, you could potentially get more out of your stretches because you are starting with nice, warm, relaxed muscles.

Cocktail Of Antibodies May Block Coronavirus Infection: Study

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON- A combination of antibodies, including those from a patient who had recovered from the 2002-03 SARS pandemic virus infection, can effectively block the novel coronavirus, according to a study which may lead to new therapeutics against COVID-19.

The study, published in the journal Nature, noted that antibodies, produced by the immune system of recovered people, can neutralise the virus, and help in the development of antiviral treatments or vaccines.

A particular kind of antibodies can target one specific protein on a pathogen, the researchers, including those from the University of Washington in the US, said.

They added that identifying



these monoclonal antibodies that can bind to the spike protein found on the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and other similar viruses, may aid efforts to treat or prevent COVID-19.

In the research, Davide Corti and his colleagues identified monoclonal antibodies from a patient who recovered from the 2002-03 SARS pandemic disease.

They said these could inhibit SARS-related coronaviruses from both humans and animals. When the scientists inves-

tigated the potential for 25 of these antibodies to inhibit SARS-CoV-2, they found that eight of them could bind to both the free virus, and infected cells.

One candidate, named S309, showed particularly strong neutralising activity against SARS-CoV-2, they said.

By understanding the crystal structure of S309, the scientists demonstrated how the antibody binds to the viral spike protein, which aids in the entry of the pathogen into host cells.

They revealed that S309 can act in combination with another, less potent, antibody that targets a different site on the spike protein of the virus.

This tandem activity could enhance neutralisation while reducing the chance of resistant mutations emerging, the scientists noted in the study.

Study Explains Parents' Concern About Privacy, Body Image Impact On Tweens Using Health App

Agencies

Health applications have become a go-to tool among teens and adults to keep track of their fitness, weight loss, sleep, and even menstrual cycles.

However, most parents of children between the age group of 8-12, have concerns about the impact of such apps on their tweens, according to the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health at Michigan Medicine.

Two-thirds of parents of tweens worry about advertisements with inappropriate

content targeting kids and three-fourths agree that having children track what they eat may lead them to become too concerned about their weight or body image.

The nationally representative report is based on responses from 832 parents who had at least one child aged 8-12.

"Health apps are widely used among both adults and teens, but we don't have much information on tween use," said Mott Poll co-director Sarah Clark, M.P.H.

"There are many considerations for allowing younger children to use these apps, in-

cluding privacy concerns, exposure to advertisements, and the potential for children to become overly focused on food and weight," Clark noted.

"We found that parents had mixed opinions on health app use among tweens and recognized both the potential harms and benefits to their child's health," Clark added.

Health apps include games that teach about health and devices that track health data, such as calories consumed or burned, exercise intensity, sleep, and other health habits. Many apps allow users to set goals and give feedback on

progress, as well as motivational messages or tips to improve health behaviors.

Nearly half of parents have used a health app themselves, but just 1 in 20 say their tween is using health apps, according to the report.

Despite laws designed to protect children's privacy online, research has also shown that many apps contain advertising, collect and share personal information without verifying the age of the user or gaining parent consent.

Parents should read the fine print on privacy policies when helping their tween choose a health app,

and use settings that restrict data sharing, Clark suggested.

Another top concern is that tweens would use apps designed for teens or young adults and that advertising - including content targeting older ages involving alcohol, sexual activity, or other inappropriate content - could reach younger children.

"Tweens look up to older teens and often want to view content designed for an older age group. It's up to parents to look for information that indicates whether a health app is targeted specifically to younger children," Clark said

Dairy-Rich Diet Lowers Diabetes, High Blood Pressure Risk

Agencies

LONDON- Eating at least two daily servings of dairy-rich diet is linked to lower risks of diabetes and high blood pressure, as well as the cluster of factors that heighten cardiovascular disease risk (metabolic syndrome), say researchers.

Dairy products included milk, yoghurt, yoghurt drinks, cheese and dishes prepared with dairy products, and were classified as full or low fat (1-2 per cent).

Butter and cream were assessed separately as these are not commonly eaten in some of the countries studied.

The observed associations were strongest for full-fat dairy products, indicated the findings published in the journal The BMJ Open Diabetes Research iamp; Care.

For the study, researchers

drew on people taking part in the Prospective Urban Rural Epidemiology (PURE) study.

Participants were all aged between 35 and 70 and came from 21 countries including in India.

Usual dietary intake over the previous 12 months was assessed by means of Food Frequency Questionnaires.

Dairy products included milk, yoghurt, yoghurt drinks, cheese and dishes prepared with dairy products, and were classified as full or low fat (1-2 per cent). Butter and cream were assessed separately as these are not commonly eaten in some of the countries studied. Data on all five components of the metabolic syndrome were available for nearly 113,000 people blood pressure, waist circumference, low levels of high-density cholesterol; blood fats and fasting blood glucose.

Israel Linked To A Disruptive Cyber-Attack On Iran Port Facility

Agencies

Washington: On May 9, shipping traffic at Iran's bustling Shahid Rajaei port terminal came to abrupt and inexplicable halt. Computers that regulate the flow of vessels, trucks and goods all crashed at once, creating massive backups on waterways and roads leading to the facility.

After waiting a day, Iranian officials acknowledged that an unknown foreign hacker had briefly knocked the port's computers offline. Now, more than a week later, a more complete explanation has come to light: The port was the victim of substantial cyberattack that US and foreign government officials say appears to have originated with Iran's arch-enemy, Israel.

The attack, which snarled traffic around the port for days, was carried out by Israeli operatives, presumably in retaliation for an earlier attempt to penetrate computers that operate rural water distribution systems in Israel, according to intelligence and cybersecurity officials familiar with the matter.

A security official with a foreign government that monitored the May 9 incident called the attack "highly accurate" and said the damage to the Iranian port was more serious than described in official Iranian accounts.

"There was total disarray," said the official, who spoke on the condition that his identity and national affiliation not be revealed, citing the highly

sensitive nature of the intelligence. A US official with access to classified files also said that Israelis were believed to have been behind the attack.

The Washington Post was shown satellite photographs depicting miles-long traffic jams on highways leading to the Shahid Rajaei port on May 9. In a photograph dated May 12, dozens of loaded container ships can be observed in a waiting area just off the coast.

The Israeli Embassy did not respond to requests for comment. The army declined to comment. Iran has repeatedly denied involvement in the failed April 24 hacking attempt on Israeli water distribution networks.

If accurate, the reports point to a new round of tit-for-tat blows between the two bitter Middle East rivals, although US cybersecurity experts said the most recent exchanges have been relatively restrained so far.

"Assuming it's true, this is in line with Israeli policy of aggressively responding to Iranian provocation, either kinetically or through other means," said Dmitri Alperovitch, a cybersecurity policy fellow at the Harvard Belfer Center and founder and former chief technology officer of CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm. "Anytime you see Iranian escalation, as with their buildup of rocket capacity in Syria, you have consistently seen Israeli retaliation with bombing runs on those positions. So it appears they have now applied that doctrine in cyberspace."

French Cinemas Get Heated Over Lockdown Drive-In



Agencies

PARIS: French cinema owners are up in arms because a drive-in film festival is beating the country's lockdown while they are forced to stay closed.

They are angry at a travelling drive-in film festival which began in the southwestern city of Bordeaux this weekend, and which is set to cross the country showing a mixture of arthouse films and crowd-pleasing French hits.

The federation of French cinema owners (FNCF) said that the festival and a plethora of other outdoor projections were leeching audiences away when "local and national authorities should be concentrating on battling to reopen cinemas".

The drive-in festival gets around French coronavirus social distancing restrictions by having the audience stay in their cars to watch the films. Although the lockdown in France was relaxed somewhat last week, restrictions remain tight in a large swathe of the country including the capital Paris.

While most shops have reopened, there is little prospect of cinemas opening their doors till at least July. And even then it will be with social distancing measures that could mean that screenings may have to be up to three-quarters empty.

But the organisers of the Drive-in Festival said that they were not trying to take the bread from cinema owners' mouths.

Mathieu Robinet, a former head of BAC Films, one of Europe's leading independent film production companies, said that they "simply wanted to give people a chance to experience some culture during confinement" and that the festival was not a money-making venture.



Trump Threatens Permanent Freeze On WHO Funding

Agencies

Washington: US President Donald Trump has threatened to permanently halt funding for the World Health Organization (WHO) if it does not commit to "substantive improvements" within 30 days.

In a letter to Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the WHO, Trump criticised what he said were repeated "mistakes" in the global health agency's handling of the coronavirus outbreak. The "only way forward for the [WHO] is if it can actually demonstrate independence from China," Trump wrote.

"If the WHO does not commit to major substantive improvements within the next 30 days, I will make my temporary freeze of United States funding to the WHO permanent and reconsider our membership," he said in the letter posted on Twitter.

Trump suspended the US's contributions to the WHO last month, accusing it of promoting China's "disinformation" about the coronavirus outbreak. Officials at the United Nations health agency have denied the accusations and China says it has been transparent and open.

In his letter, Trump listed what he said were examples of the

WHO's shortcomings in managing the pandemic, including ignoring early reports of the emergence of the virus.

He accused the UN body of caving in to Chinese pressure by declining to declare the new coronavirus a global health emergency in the initial days of the outbreak. He went on to criticise the WHO for praising China's "transparency", despite reports Beijing had punished several doctors in Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak, for speaking out about the viral infection in late December.

Bitter dispute

The US and China are locked in an increasingly bitter dispute about the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 300,000 people and brought the global economy to a standstill. Critics say Trump who had earlier praised China's response, is trying to divert attention from his handling of the pandemic in the US, which has suffered by far the highest death toll.

The WHO has now bowed to calls from most of its member states to launch an independent probe into how it managed the international response to the pandemic. The probe is expected to shed light on the origins of the

virus and China's early handling of the outbreak.

During a virtual meeting of the WHO's annual assembly earlier on Monday, Tedros acknowledged there had been shortcomings and told the assembly he welcomed calls for a review.

"We all have lessons to learn from the pandemic. Every country and every organisation must examine its response and learn from its experience. WHO is committed to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement," Tedros said.

The review must encompass responsibility of "all actors in good faith", he added.

But he also emphasised that the WHO declared the coronavirus outbreak to be a global health emergency on January 30, its highest level of alert, at a time when there were fewer than 100 cases outside of China. In the following weeks, the WHO warned countries there was a narrowing "window of opportunity" to prevent the virus from spreading globally.

The WHO declared the outbreak to be a pandemic on March 11, after the virus had killed thousands globally and sparked large epidemics in South Korea, Italy, Iran and elsewhere.

Chinese Scientists Believe New Drug Can Stop Pandemic 'Without Vaccine'

Agencies

Beijing: A Chinese laboratory has been developing a drug it believes has the power to bring the coronavirus pandemic to a halt.

The outbreak first emerged in China late last year before spreading across the world, prompting an international race to find treatments and vaccines.

A drug being tested by scientists at China's prestigious Peking University could not only shorten the recovery time for those infected, but even offer short-term immunity from the virus, researchers say.

Sunney Xie, director of the university's Beijing Advanced Innovation Center for Genomics, told AFP that the drug has been successful at the animal testing stage.

"When we injected neutralising antibodies into in-

fectected mice, after five days the viral load was reduced by a factor of 2,500," said Xie.

Sunney Xie, director of the Beijing Advanced Innovation Center for Genomics, told AFP that the drug has been successful at the animal testing stage.

That means this potential drug has [a] therapeutic effect."

The drug uses neutralising antibodies — produced by the human immune system to prevent the virus infecting cells — which Xie's team isolated from the blood of 60 recovered patients.

A study on the team's research, published on Sunday in the scientific journal Cell, suggests that using the antibodies provides a potential "cure" for the disease and shortens recovery time.

Xie said his team had been working "day and night" searching for the antibody.

"Our expertise is single-

cell genomics rather than immunology or virology. When we realised that the single-cell genomic approach can effectively find the neutralising antibody we were thrilled."

He added that the drug should be ready for use later this year and in time for any potential winter outbreak of the virus, which has infected 4.8 million people around the world and killed more than 315,000.

"Planning for the clinical trial is underway," said Xie, adding it will be carried out in Australia and other countries since cases have dwindled in China, offering fewer human guinea pigs for testing.

Sunney Xie said his team had been working "day and night" on the new drug. — AFP

"The hope is these neutralised antibodies can become a specialised drug that would stop the pandemic," he said.

2 Daesh terrorists sentenced to death in Pak suicide blast case

Agencies

Islamabad: The judge also ordered the convicts to pay a collective fine of Rs14 million each to the state.

A Pakistan anti-terrorism court has sentenced two men, said to be associated with Daesh terror group, to death in a case pertaining to the 2017 suicide blast at a shrine in Sindh province that killed around 70 people.

On Monday, the judge of the Anti-Terrorism Court-XVI found the two men, Nadir Ali and Furqan, guilty of facilitating suicide bomber Barar Brohi who on February 16, 2017 blew himself up at the packed-to-capacity courtyard of the Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan, reports Dawn news.

The court handed them capital punishment on 70 counts (for killing of 70 victims) and ordered to pay a collective fine of Rs14 million each to the state.

It also ordered the convicts to pay a collective fine of 14 million PKR, as compensation to the legal heirs of victims.

The judge also awarded 10-year imprisonment to each convict for also injuring 65 people. They were ordered to pay

a fine of Rs100,000 for causing wounding each victim.

Additionally, the convicts were awarded a collective sentence of 24-years each for their involvement in the bomb blast and ordered to pay Rs100,000 fine each, said the Dawn news report.

Nadir Ali was further given life imprisonment for possessing explosives in addition to seven-year imprisonment for possessing illicit weapons and a Rs50,000 fine.

However, their death sentences were subject to confirmation by the Sindh High Court. Other sentences of imprisonment would run concurrently.

The case against five alleged absconding accomplices was kept on dormant file until their arrest or surrender.

The court ordered protection of two private witnesses, who voluntarily turned up to testify against the convicts, during the trial leading to their conviction.

The prosecution recorded testimonies of 29 witnesses, including police officials, who deposed that minutes before the blast three men hugged the suicide bomber and congratulated him on the premises of the shrine before leaving.

Pakistan SC Says Malls, Markets Can Open Seven Days A Week

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: Observing that shopkeepers in Pakistan will "die of hunger rather than the coronavirus" and that the virus does not go anywhere on Saturdays and Sundays, the Supreme Court on Monday ordered that shopping malls and markets should be allowed to operate throughout the week across the country.

"Coronavirus does not go anywhere on Saturday and Sunday. What is the reason behind keeping markets closed on Saturday and Sunday?" Justice Ahmed asked.

The chief justice also questioned the "logic" behind keeping malls closed and ordered that shopping malls and markets should remain open seven days a week.

Pakistan has reported



Markets and shopping malls in Pakistan were shut down during the lockdown imposed to curb the coronavirus pandemic.

A five-member Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed was hearing a suo moto case regarding measures taken against the virus outbreak.

During the hearing, Justice Ahmed remarked that if shops are shut down then shopkeepers will "die of hunger rather than the coronavirus".

Rejecting the provincial governments' logic to keep markets closed on weekends to reduce the spread of the virus, he said, keeping businesses shut for certain days in a week violates the Constitution.

over 42,000 coronavirus cases and more than 900 deaths due to the disease.

"Provinces should not create hurdles in opening shopping malls after getting permission (from the health ministry). The court expects that the health ministry will not create any unimportant hurdles and will (allow) businesses to open," the chief justice observed.

During the hearing, the Sindh provincial government showed reluctance to allow malls to reopen but the court rejected the reservations.

The court said it will be the provincial governments' responsibility to ensure that standard operating procedures (SOPs) are being followed and implemented.

US President Trump taking anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Donald Trump, in a surprise announcement, said on Monday he is taking hydroxychloroquine as a preventive medicine against the coronavirus despite medical warnings about the use of the malaria drug.

"I'm taking hydroxychloroquine," Trump told reporters. "I've been taking it for the last week and a half. A pill every day."

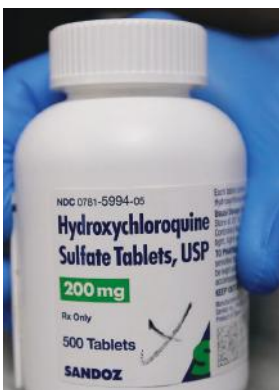
Trump volunteered the disclosure during a question-and-answer session with reporters as he met restaurant executives whose businesses are reeling from the impact of the virus.

Weeks ago Trump had promoted the drug as a potential treatment based on a positive report about its use against the virus, but subsequent studies found that it was not helpful. The Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning about its use.

In an April 24 statement, the FDA said it is "aware of reports of serious heart rhythm problems" in patients with COVID-19 treated with hydroxychloroquine or an older drug, chloroquine.

Trump, 73, who is tested daily for the virus, said he had asked the White House physician if it was OK to take the drug, and the doctor told him, "well, if you'd like it."

The president, a well-



known germaphobe, has nonetheless refused to wear a protective mask in the West Wing.

The disclosure came as Moderna Inc reported progress in a potential vaccine for

the virus. The only drug that has emerged so far as a potential treatment is Gilead Sciences Inc's remdesivir.

Fox News Channel, immediately after Trump's remarks, interviewed Dr. Bob Lahita, chairman of medicine at St. Joseph University Hospital, who cautioned people not to take hydroxychloroquine.

"There's no effect that we have seen and we have treated multiple patients with it," he said.

Trump said he also took a single dose of azithromycin, an antibiotic which is meant prevent infection. In conjunction with hydroxychloroquine, Trump said he was taking zinc.

Denver Salon Receives \$5,800 from Grateful Customer

Ilisia Novotny of Denver received an unexpected windfall after a grateful customer left a massive tip on May 9.

Novotny was not even scheduled to work at Floyd's 99 barbershop at the University of Denver on Saturday, but now she is certainly glad she did. When a gentleman walked in for one of a host of badly needed post-pandemic haircuts, Novotny greeted him and chatted about their mutual love of the Chicago Cubs.

The unnamed customer went to the counter to pay. As he left, he told Novotny "Just so you know, it's not a mistake." The stylist only had moments to be confused before her coworkers

rushed her with the news: he had left her a \$2,500 tip for the trim. And the good news just kept coming: \$1,000 was



left for the salon's manager, \$500 for the receptionist, and \$100 for each of the salon's 18 other staff members.

"I cried," Novotny said.

"I'm a single mother. It's been rough the last few months not knowing what's going to happen, not knowing when we might reopen so I could go back to work." After months spent trying to make arrangements for rent and utilities, Novotny was able to use the tip to pay for June in advance.

Novotny expressed her gratitude — not only for the anonymous stranger's good will, but the community's support in general. "Coming back and having clients, even people you don't know, show so much love, it felt great," she said.

Mumbai Prepares For Covid-19 Peak With Beds In Parks, Planetarium

MUMBAI: Mumbai, India's financial hub and the epicentre of the nation's coronavirus outbreak, is converting several of its iconic structures into quarantine facilities as it races to prepare for a predicted peaking of infections this month.

From a new hospital being built just a short stroll away from the US Consulate building and the India offices of Citigroup Inc. to quarantine centres being set up in a nature park and planetarium, the metropolis is readying 100,000 beds, or little under five times the current number of positive diagnoses.

The goal is to be able to treat and isolate at least 75,000 cases, a projection based on last month's data when cases were doubling almost every week, said Ashwini Bhide, additional commissioner at Mumbai's municipal corporation. The pace has since slowed amid the world's strictest lockdown and, "while we are unlikely to touch those projections by the end of May, we continue to plan for the worst case scenario," she added.

Mumbai's race against time spotlights the challenges for

the densely populated Asian nation, which has failed to flatten its virus curve despite the harsh shelter-at-home restrictions. Home to globe-trotting executives and poor migrant labourers living in tiny slum shanties, Mumbai, like New York city, is fertile ground for the highly infectious pathogen.

"We had some scary projections for virus infections and deaths in Mumbai city and the state, had the lockdown not been announced," Uddhav Thackeray, chief minister of the state of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital, said in a televised speech Monday. "While we have not been able to break the chain of infection, we have definitely put a break on the speed at which the infections are increasing."

Here's a rundown on some of Mumbai's preparations:



Bandra Kurla Complex

This patch of land in the heart of the city has developed into a financial hotspot, comparable with London's Canary Wharf. It houses the headquarters of several global investment banks as well as the country's capital markets regulator, posh restaurants and five-star hotels.

Congress Calls Opposition Meet On Migrants' Plight, Changes In Labour Laws



The Congress has called a meeting of like-minded opposition parties on Friday to discuss the plight of migrant workers and the changes in labour laws by some states, sources said.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi will chair the meeting of leaders of opposition parties, the sources said on Tuesday.

Around 17 opposition parties have agreed to participate in the meeting which will be held via videoconferencing. The Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party have not yet confirmed their participation, they said.

Rendered jobless due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, which began on March 25, and desperate to get home, thousands of migrant workers across the country are undertaking long and ar-

duous journeys to their native places on foot, on bicycles or packed into trucks.

Many of them have been killed in accidents in different parts of the country.

The Opposition has criticised the government over its handling of the migrant crisis.

The Congress and other opposition parties have also attacked the Centre for allowing BJP-ruled states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat to amend labour laws to lure foreign investors and "to strip workers of their basic rights".

These changes include exempting industrial units from labour welfare statutes, allowing them to take steps such as increasing daily and weekly working hours of workers, and depriving workers of their right to move court.



India's Covid Count Crosses A Lakh Despite 56 Days Of Lockdown

NEW DELHI: The number of coronavirus cases crossed the one lakh mark in the country on Tuesday, while the death toll due to the infection touched 3,163, according to the Union Health Ministry.

A total of 134 deaths and 4,970 Covid-19 cases were reported in the country in the past 24 hours since 8 pm on Monday, it said.

The total number of coronavirus cases has risen to 1,01,139, the ministry said.

The number of active Covid-19 cases stood at 58,802 while 39,173 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said.

"Thus, around 38.73 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said.

The total confirmed cases include foreigners.

Of the 134 deaths reported since Monday morning, 51 were in Maharashtra, 35 in Gujarat, 14 in Uttar Pradesh, eight in Delhi, seven in Rajasthan, six in West Bengal, four in Madhya Pradesh, three in Tamil Nadu, two each in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, and one each in Bihar and Telangana.

Of the 3,163 fatalities, Maharashtra tops tally with 1,249 deaths. Gujarat comes second with 694 deaths, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 252,

West Bengal at 244, Delhi at 168, Rajasthan at 138, Uttar Pradesh at 118, Tamil Nadu at 81 and Andhra Pradesh at 50.

The death toll reached 37 each in Karnataka and Punjab and 35 in Telangana.

Jammu and Kashmir has reported 15 fatalities due to the disease, Haryana has 14 deaths while Bihar has registered nine and Kerala and Odisha each have reported four deaths.

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

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

According to the ministry's website, more than 70 per cent of the deaths are due to co-morbidities, the existence of multiple disorders in the same person.

According to the health ministry's data updated in the morning, the highest number of confirmed cases in the country are from Maharashtra at 35,058, followed by Tamil Nadu at 11,760, Gujarat at 11,745, Delhi at 10,054, Rajasthan at 5,507, Madhya Pradesh at 5,236 and Uttar Pradesh at 4,605.

The number of Covid-19 cases has

gone up to 2,825 in West Bengal, 2,474 in Andhra Pradesh and 1,980 in Punjab.

It has risen to 1,597 in Telangana, 1,391 in Bihar, 1,289 in Jammu and Kashmir, 1,246 in Karnataka and 928 in Haryana.

Odisha has reported 876 coronavirus infection cases so far, while Kerala has 630 cases. A total of 223 people have been infected with the virus in Jharkhand and 196 in Chandigarh.

Tripura has reported 167 cases, Assam has 107, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh have 93 cases each, Himachal Pradesh has 90 and Ladakh has registered 43 cases so far.

Goa has reported 38 Covid-19 cases, while the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has registered 33 infections.

Puducherry has registered 18 cases, Meghalaya has 13 and Manipur has seven cases. Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Dadar and Nagar Haveli have reported a case each till now.

"814 cases are being reassigned to states," the ministry said on its website, adding "our figures are being reconciled with the ICMR".

State-wise distribution is subject to further verification and reconciliation, it said.

Millions Evacuated As India And Bangladesh Brace For Super Cyclone Amphan

India and Bangladesh are evacuating millions of people from coastal areas ahead of what could be the biggest cyclone in more than two decades.

However, coronavirus precautions and India's lockdown are hampering efforts.

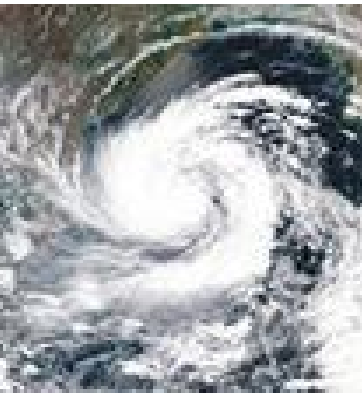
Cyclone Amphan currently has wind speeds of around 140mph, though they are expected to weaken before it makes landfall on the border between India and Bangladesh on Wednesday, bringing heavy rainfall too.

Amphan is the most intense and second super cyclone after the 1999 Odisha cyclone which left almost 10,000 dead.

"We are dealing with a multi-hazard scenario, extensive damage is expected, no one should be outside, people in low lying areas are to be evacuated," said India's meteorological chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

"We are utilising all tools and technologies to monitor it," he further added.

Mr Mohapatra also said flooding



was a danger in Kolkata, a city of almost 15 million, due to its dense population, poor drainage and the fact that Amphan's storm surge could raise river levels in the Bengal delta.

It is feared Amphan will cause large scale and extensive damage to coastal areas.

India has deployed about 25 teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to raise awareness of

the cyclone and begin evacuations.

Another 12 teams are on standby should they be needed.

"For the first time we are having to face two disasters simultaneously, we are facing a dual challenge of the cyclone in the time of Covid-19," Satya Narayan Pradhan, head of India's National Disaster Response Force, said.

"We are taking action according to the enormity of this challenge."

Last year, Cyclone Fani hit Odisha in May, killing more than 70 people in Odisha and West Bengal.

Fani was also an Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm with maximum sustained wind speeds of 135 mph.

In neighbouring Bangladesh, 2.2 million people are being evacuated from coastal districts, State Minister for Disaster Management Enamur Rahman said at a media briefing in Dhaka.

The country plans to raise the danger signal to the maximum level at 6am on Wednesday and said after this it will be impossible to evacuate people after this.

NMC Founder BR Shetty Owes Over \$250M To Bank Of Baroda: Court Document

Bank of Baroda is seeking to recover loans worth more than \$250 million from NMC founder BR Shetty and his companies and an Indian court has barred him and his wife from selling or transferring some properties while it hears the case, a court document showed.

The 16 properties in several Indian cities including Bengaluru were among guarantees put up by Shetty and his wife against the Rs19.13 billion (\$253 million) loans, according to a May 16 court order seen by Reuters. The court in Bengaluru set the next hearing in the case for June 8.

NMC, the largest private healthcare provider in the UAE, was placed under administration in April after months of turmoil. It disclosed in March it had debts of \$6.6 billion, well above earlier estimates of \$2.1 billion.

Finally, in which Shetty has a controlling stake, said in April it may have nearly \$1 billion more in debt than previously reported.

Shetty and Bank of Baroda did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

In the court filing seen by Reuters, Bank of Baroda said Shetty had an obligation to handover the title deeds of



the 16 properties and mortgage the assets with the bank.

Govt Implements Cut In EPF Contribution To 10% For May, June, July



The Ministry of Labour & Employment has implemented the decision to cut employees' provident fund (EPF) contributions to 10 per cent from the existing 12 per cent for three months till July. This would increase 4.3 crore organised sector employees' take home pay and reduce the liability of 6.5 lakh employees reeling under liquidity crunch under lockdown to contain COVID-19.

The decision is estimated to infuse liquidity of Rs 6,750 crore in next three months. The labour ministry in a notification issued on Monday stated that the reduction in EPF contributions shall be applicable "in respect of wages payable by it for the months of May, June and July, 2020".

Therefore the take home pay due in June, July and August would increase, while the employers' contributions due in June, July and August would reduce.

Giving reason for the move it stated "whereas due to COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown is in force across the country and the Central Government after making necessary inquiry is satisfied that to provide liquidity in the hands of employers and employees, there arises a need to amend the notification of April 9, 1997."

Last week, Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced reduction of statutory provident fund contribution by both employers and employees for next three months.

The Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and public sector undertakings (PSUs) will however continue to contribute 12 per cent as employer contribution to the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). This reduction of the EPF contributions will be applicable for workers who are not eligible for 24 per cent EPF support under PM Garib Kalyan Package and its extension.

The government is contributing employers and employees contributions of 24 per cent of basic wages for those establishments that have up to 100 employee and 90 per cent of whom earn under Rs 15,000 monthly wage since March.

Last week, Sitharaman had also announced the extension of the benefit under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) for three months, where the government would contribute entire 24 per cent of EPF contributions till August, giving relief to 3.67 lakh employees and 72.22 lakh employees.

NEWS MAKER

28 Employees Of Zee Media Test Covid Positive



NEW DELHI: As many as 28 employees of a media house tested positive for coronavirus in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) on Monday, officials said.

Of the 28 employees of Noida Sector 16A-located Zee

Media who have tested positive for COVID-19, 15 reside in Gautam Buddh Nagar while 13 are in Delhi, Faridabad and Gurgaon, according to officials.

The Zee Media said in a statement it initiated 'mass testing' after one of its employee was detected with the COVID-19 infection last Friday.

Referring to the spread of COVID-19 from a 39-year-old man in Zee Media, Gautam Buddh Nagar District Magistrate Suhag L Y said, "The man lives in Delhi's Laxmi Nagar but works at Zee Media office in Sector 16A Noida."

"He was found COVID-19 positive on May 15. His 51 contacts were tested at Max

Lab in Delhi. His 15 contacts, who are employees in the same organisation, residing in Gautam Buddh Nagar have tested positive," he added.

Another 13 contacts of the man who reside in Delhi, Faridabad and Gurgaon have tested positive for coronavirus and the administrations of their respective districts were doing the needful, as per protocols.

In a statement shared on Twitter, Zee Media said last Friday one of its employees tested positive for COVID-19.

"As a responsible organisation, we initiated mass testing of all those who could have been in direct or indirect contact with the said individual," it said.

"So far, 28 of our team mates have tested positive. Fortunately, most of them are asymptomatic and not complaining of any discomfort. We believe this is because of early diagnosis and pro-active intervention," it added in the statement.

"We are following the best practices to break the cycle and contain the infection, in coordination with all government and health authorities. All health protocols and official guidelines are being followed. Our office, newsroom and studios have been sealed for sanitisation. The Zee News team has been shifted to an alternative facility for the time being," Zee Media said.

Sensex Gains 167 pts, Nifty Up By 0.63 pc

MUMBAI: Equity benchmark Sensex rose over 167 points on Tuesday led by gains in Bharti Airtel, HDFC and ITC amid positive cues from other Asian markets.

After rallying over 700 points in a volatile session, the 30-share index finished 167.19 points or 0.56 per cent higher at 30,196.17.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty advanced 55.85 points or 0.63 per cent to end at 8,879.10.

Bharti Airtel was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying around 11 per cent, followed by ONGC, UltraTech Cement, ITC, PowerGrid and NTPC.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Indus-

tries, L&T and SBI were among the laggards.

Analysts said the average revenue per user (ARPU) increase speaks of Bharti Airtel's ability to command a price premium in the market, given that competition in the mid/high-end subscriber base had now moved to network quality.

According to traders, hopes of a vaccine for COVID-19 enthused global investor sentiment.

In a significant development towards developing a vaccine for the coronavirus, an American biotechnology company Moderna has said its initial vaccine tests in people had shown promising results and can stimulate an immune

response against the virus.

However, the rising number of cases in the country kept market participants on edge, said traders.

The number of COVID-19 cases in India spiked to 1,01,139, while the death toll rose to 3,163, according to the Health Ministry.

Globally, the number of cases linked to the disease has crossed 48 lakh and the death toll has topped 3.18 lakh.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul settled with strong gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a negative note in early deals.

International oil bench-



mark Brent crude futures were trading 0.63 per cent lower at USD 34.59 per barrel.

On the currency front, the rupee appreciated 25 paise to provisionally settle at 75.66 against the US dollar. PTI