

NewsDigest

27TH RAMAZAN

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TODAY	TOMMOROW
FIQAH HANAFIYA	07:32 03:47
FIQAH JAFARIYA	07:42 03:45

STUDY: WORLD CARBON POLLUTION FALLS 17% DURING PANDEMIC PEAK

Maryland — The world cut its daily carbon dioxide emissions by 17% at the peak of the pandemic shutdown last month, a new study found. But with life and heat-trapping gas levels inching back toward normal, the brief pollution break will likely be “a drop in the ocean” when it comes to climate change, scientists said. In their study of carbon dioxide emissions during the coronavirus pandemic, an international team of scientists calculated that pollution levels are heading back up — and for the year will end up between 4% and 7% lower than 2019 levels. That’s still the biggest annual drop in carbon emissions since World War II.....

India, Pak Armies Trade Fire Along LoC For Fifth Day

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: India and Pakistan troops exchanged gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) for the fifth consecutive day Wednesday in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The Pakistan Army today opened fire and heavily shelled forward areas along the LoC in two sectors in Poonch district, drawing retaliation from the Indian Army, a defence spokesperson said. This is fifth consecutive day of firing and shelling by Pakistani troops along the LoC and IB in Jammu and Kashmir. “At about 0930 hours today, the Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along the LoC in Kirni and Degwar sectors of Poonch”, he said. He said the Indian Army retaliated befittingly and cross-border shelling between the two sides was going on when last reports were received. However, there was no immediate report of any casualty during the Pakistani shelling. On Tuesday, Pakistan shelled mortars along the LoC in Balakote sector of Poonch. Fear has heightened among villagers along the LoC in Rajouri, Poonch and Kupwara districts of the Union Territory since three civilians were killed last month in shelling by Pakistan. ● P-02

Domestic Flights To Resume From May 25: Govt

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Wednesday domestic scheduled commercial passenger flights will resume in a calibrated manner from May 25, two months after the services were shut due to coronavirus. All scheduled commercial passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 25, when the Modi government imposed lockdown to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. “Domestic civil aviation operations will recommence in a calibrated manner from Monday, May 25, 2020. All airports and air carriers are being informed to be ready for operations from 25th May,” Puri said on Twitter. “SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for passenger movement are also being separately issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation,” he added. DOMESTIC CIVIL AVIATION operations will recommence in a calibrated manner from Monday, May 25, 2020. All airports and air carriers are being informed to be ready for operations from 25th May,”

Militants Kill 2 BSF Men In Ganderbal, Escape With 2 Rifles

A GROUP OF SOLDIERS inspecting Pandach area of Ganderbal on Wednesday after a militant attack left two BSF men dead. Pic Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In an audacious attack on Wednesday, unidentified militants shot dead two BSF personnel in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district and escaped with their two assault rifles. Two-three motorcycle borne militants opened indiscriminate fire upon the personnel of BSF 73 battalion when they were manning a checkpoint near old road Pandach in the district this evening, a police spokesperson told Kashmir Observer. In the broad day militant attack, he said two BSF personnel were critically injured. They were rushed to the SKIMS hospital Soura for treatment.

NIA Claims Arrest Of Hizb Militant

A Hizbul Mujahideen militant allegedly involved in the killing of an RSS functionary and his PSO was arrested by the NIA in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district. ● P-02

Police Arrests 4 OGW's

P olice on Wednesday claimed to have arrested four militant associates of Lashkar-e-Taiba outfit in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Muzaffar Ahmad Dar ● P-02

ment. However, one of the BSF man was declared dead on arrival while another died before the doctors could start operating on him. According to Medical Superintendent SKIMS Dr Farooq Jan one of the paramilitary men was brought dead while another succumbed to his injuries before the doctors could start his treatment.

Truck Crushes Biker To Death

Srinagar: A motorcyclist on Wednesday was crushed to death by a truck in Sangam area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district. 25-year-old Subzar Ahmad Koka of Melhora area of Shopian was killed on the spot after a truck (JK02AP-7455) hit his motorbike near Sangam on Jammu-Srinagar national Highway this afternoon, officials said. “The motorcycle of youth was crushed under the wheels of the truck, resulting in his on spot ● P-02

Teenage Girl Hangs Self

Srinagar: In a shocking incident, a teenage girl hung herself to death on Wednesday in Bemina area of Srinagar city. The 15-year-old was found hanging by her parents in her room this morning in Bemina area of the city, reports said. She was shifted to the SMHS hospital where the doctors declared her brought dead on arrival. The reason of the alleged suicide was not immediately known. Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident.

SSB Personal Injured In Misfire

Srinagar: A paramilitary man was injured after his gun went off accidentally in Baghat area of the city, reports said Wednesday. Sunil Yadav of Sashastra Seema Bal, 18 Battalion was cleaning his pellet gun when it went off accidentally in Baghat area of this capital city. He was injured after scores of pellets hit him in his right arm. The injured paramilitary man was rushed to Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla for treatment. However, the doctors there referred him to SMHS Hospital Srinagar, reports added.

Cabinet Gives Ex-Post Facto Nod To Domicile Law In J&K

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Tuesday gave ex post facto approval to a law on specified domicile criterion for employment in the public sector in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. “The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its ex post facto approval for the Jammu & Kashmir (Adaptation of State Laws) Second Order, 2020 issued under section 96 of Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, an official statement said. This order has further modified the applicability of domicile conditions to all levels of jobs in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir under the Jammu & Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralisation and Recruitment) Act (Act No. XVI of 2010), it said. “This Order would apply the specified domicile criterion for employment to all posts in the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir,” the statement said, without mentioning further details. The Jammu & Kashmir ● PAGE 02

‘Domicile Certificate’ Replaces PRC For Admissions

SRINAGAR: Government on Wednesday ordered that the requirement of ‘Permanent Resident Certificate’ wherever prescribed for admission into Educational Institutions shall be replaced with ‘Domicile Certificate’. “With the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, series of ● P-02

Centre Using Lockdown To Push Domicile Laws In J&K: Sinha Group

SRINAGAR: The Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG) led by former Union Minister and BJP leader Yashwant Sinha said on Wednesday that Modi-led government at Centre was making attempts to incubate artificial political processes in Jammu and Kashmir and implement domicile laws for the Union Territory by using lockdown ● P-02

Woman Dies Of Covid-19, Toll Reaches 18

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- A 40-year-old woman, who had tested positive for COVID-19, died at Shyer-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura late Tuesday night taking the coronavirus death toll in Jammu and Kashmir to 18, officials said. The woman from Bijbehara area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district died at tertiary care hospital late last night, said Nodal officer for coronavirus control at SKIMS, Dr G H Yattoo. He said the woman was admitted from last few days in the isolation ward of the SKIMS Soura and had comorbidity. “She was in isolation after testing positive. She was ● PAGE 02

Probe Ordered After Scores Attend Funeral

The district administration in south Kashmir's Anantnag on Wednesday ordered probe into the mishandling of deceased Covid-19 patient after her funeral witnessed large gathering. Defying social distancing norms, scores of people assembled at Veeri village of Bijbehara when the body of the Covid-19 deceased woman was brought to her native village this afternoon, reports said. Dozens of people were ● P-02

2 Expecting Mothers Among 73 New Cases

Seventy-three more people, including two expecting mothers tested positive for COVID-19 in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, taking the number of cases in the Union territory to 1390, officials said. “73 cases have been reported from Jammu and Kashmir in the last 24 hours,” the officials said, adding that 31 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals. Of the fresh cases, 37 are from Kashmir and 36 are from the ● P-02

Anantnag Emerging Covid-19 Hotspot

Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir is emerging as a COVID-19 hotspot, with nearly one-third of the cases detected from the District Police Lines (DPL). As many as 78 police personnel posted at the Anantnag DPL have tested positive for COVID-19 so far, officials said. The authorities in the district have undertaken a massive drive to trace primary contacts of these policemen, but are facing difficulty given the nature of different tasks assigned to ● P-02

‘Review, Revoke’: Rage Reactions Relentless On New Domicile Order

Sajad Bhat | Mrinal Pathak

SRINAGAR: Reading distressing reactions on her social media handle, Iram Rizvi is getting worried for her three-year-old son. Will things be the same for him when he grows up in Kashmir? The 36-year-old mother wonders, as union territory administration set the new domicile order in motion, almost on a war-footing. The manner in which non-locals will be made domiciles of J&K on the basis of a ration card, electricity bill or labour card unsettled Rizvi, who runs boutique in Srinagar. “While these non-locals can easily avail domicile certificates online, I see natives falling in big lines in near future to prove their resident-ship on the basis of PRCs,” Rizvi said. “It’s as good, as falling in line for the NRC process!” The new controversy reared its head after New Delhi made a turnaround on the notification released on April 02, 2020 regarding the new domicile law in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). “While this law was bound to see the light of the day in Jammu and Kashmir after Article 370 was abrogated last summer, but the manner they’re implementing it makes the entire process sinister,” Iram continued. “Sadly, what’s equally emboldening New Delhi and its local bureaucratic machinery to toy and tinker with the laws of the erstwhile state is the absence and growing silence of local unionist camp.” Even as the beleaguered ● PAGE 02

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Nawa Kadal Gunfight: Boy Injured In House Collapse Dies

SRINAGAR: A minor boy injured in a house collapse at the encounter site in Nawa Kadal area on Tuesday, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital here on Wednesday. 12-year-old Basim Aijaz of Chota Bazar succumbed to his injuries at the SMHS hospital here this evening, reports said. A class 7th student, ● P-02

Hurriyat Puts Off Martyrs Rally At Eidgah Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Hurriyat Conference (M) on Wednesday announced that the commemorative public rally at Srinagar's Eidgah on Thursday to observe the death anniversaries of Mirwaiz Molvi Mohammed Farooq and Abdul Ghani Lone will not be held this year in view of the coronavirus pandemic. In a statement issued to media, a Hurriyat Conference spokesperson said that the collective Fateh Khawani and commemorative public rally at the martyrs graveyard in Eidgah on May 21 to honour Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Molvi Mohammed Farooq and Shaheed-e-Hurriyat Khawaja Abdul Ghani Lone and Hawal martyrs stands deferred in wake of the health advisory issued over the Covid-19 pandemic. “Besides All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq also continues to be under arbitrary house detention since August last year,” the spokesperson said. He urged people to pray individually at home for the martyred leaders and the people, who laid down their precious lives in the Kashmir struggle from 1931 till date. Describing Mirwaiz as a great preacher and religious scholar, the Hurriyat spokesperson said that his services in the educational and social upliftment of his people will always be recalled with respect. “A dearly loved and popular leader Shaheed Mirwaiz led his ● PAGE 02

Militants Kill 2 BSF Men In Ganderbal, Escape ...

of police and CRPF also reached the area and searches were started to nab the assailants, reports added. The attack on BSF comes a day after Junaid Sehrai, Hizbul Mujahideen commander was killed in a gunfight with government forces in Srinagar's Nawa Kadal area on Tuesday. His associate Tariq Ahmed Sheikh, a resident of Pulwama was also killed in the gunfight that left a trail of destruction in Kani Marzar locality of Nawa Kadal.

NIA Claims Arrest Of Hizb Militant...

officials said on Wednesday. He was apprehended by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) from the Hanjala area of the district Tuesday night, they said. The militant has been identified as Rustam Ali. He was named in a chargesheet filed by the NIA in the killing of RSS activist Chander Kant Sharma and his Personal Security Officer in April last year, the officials said. Hizbul Mujahideen militant allegedly involved in the killing of an RSS functionary and his PSO was arrested by the NIA in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, officials said on Wednesday. He was apprehended by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) from the Hanjala area of the district Tuesday night, they said. The militant has been identified as Rustam Ali. He was named in a chargesheet filed by the NIA in the killing of RSS activist Chander Kant Sharma and his Personal Security Officer in April last year, the officials said. Jammu and Kashmir Police had on September 23 last year arrested Hizbul Mujahideen militants – Nissar Ahmed Sheikh, Nishad Ahmed and Azad Hussain – in connection with the murder cases of a senior BJP leader and an RSS functionary in the region.

BJP state secretary Anil Parihar was killed in 2018, while senior RSS functionary Sharma and his PSO were shot dead in April last year. Both the killings had triggered protests in Kishtwar. The killings were part of a conspiracy to revive militancy in Kishtwar and were hatched by longest surviving Hizbul Mujahideen commander in the area Jahangir Saroori, according to the officials.

Police Arrests 4 OGW's...

, Mudasir Ahmad Lone, Younis Waza, all residents of Budran and Nazir Ahmad Sheikh resident of Poshkar Khag were arrested by police and army's 2RR after acting on a credible input, a police spokesperson said. He said all the four were involved in providing logistic support and shelter to the active LeT militants operating in the area besides other unlawful activities. The police spokesperson also claimed recovery of incriminating materials; arms & ammunition including one pistol and a grenade from their possession "Case FIR No. 82/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Magam and further investigation in the matter is in progress," the police spokesperson added.

India, Pak Armies Trade Fire Along LoC For Fifth Day...

There were a total of 646 incidents of ceasefire violation along the International Border (IB) as well as the LoC between January 1 and February 23 this year, Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said in March. Over 3,200 ceasefire violations by Pakistan's troops were recorded in 2019. There is a 198-km IB and over 510 km of LoC with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.

Cabinet Gives Ex-Post Facto Nod To Domicile Law In J&K...

(Adaptation of State Laws) Second Order, 2020 was notified by the Home Ministry on April 3. Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir administration had on Monday issued new rules allowing people belonging to West Pakistan, Valmiki, women marrying outside their communities, non-registered Kashmiri migrants and displaced people to get domicile. Children of the people in these categories can now also get jobs in Jammu and Kashmir as they will be entitled to rights after they are granted domicile, according to the Jammu and Kashmir grant of domicile certificate (procedure) rules, 2020.

‘Domicile Certificate' Replaces PRC For Admissions ...

constitutional changes have been effected. In terms of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2019, any reference by whatever form to "permanent residents of the State or hereditary State subject", wherever they occurred in any Act or notification issued or rules, orders made there under, stands omitted with necessary grammatical variation," reads a government order. "The Government has notified the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020, vide S.O 166 dated 18th of May, 2020," it said, adding, "Consequent upon the above, it has been decided that the requirement of 'Permanent Resident Certificate' wherever prescribed for admission into Educational Institutions shall be replaced with 'Domicile Certificate'." All Administrative Secretaries have been advised to immediately effect changes in statutes and rules wherever there exists prescribed requirement of "Permanent Resident Certificate" for admission in Educational Institutions.

Centre Using Lockdown To Push Domicile Laws In J&K...

as an opportunity. In a statement released to media, CCG members Yashwant Sinha, Wajahat Habibullah, Kapil Kak, Bharat Bhushan and Sushobha Barve said that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is far from normal as political leaders continued to remain under detention, communication lockdown continues, the economy is in disarray, the media is facing harassment and the militant continues to rise. The members said that the situation was unlikely to take a positive turn in the months ahead. Under these circumstances, the CCS said it recommends release of all political prisoners ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, restoration of high speed internet, an end to the intimidation of accredited media personnel, Announcement of specific financial packages for the artisans and extending bank loan deferment and facilities to J&K businesses as in the rest of the country. The group also called for unfettered market access and adequate distribution channels for horticultural produce, adherence to laid down health protocols to alleviate peoples' fears about returning to Kashmir and to ensure healthcare facilities remain ahead of the coronavirus curve in the UT. "Open up the political space in J&K without which militancy cannot be controlled. Do not use the lack of a legislative as-

Standoff Ends, Congress Buses Turn Back From Rajasthan-UP Border

LUCKNOW/JAIPUR/NEW DELHI: Hundreds of buses massed by the Congress on the Rajasthan-Uttar Pradesh for migrant workers turned back Wednesday evening, signalling an end to the party's standoff with the UP government that also led to the arrest of its state unit president.

In a video message, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the party is taking back the 1,000 buses it had arranged if the Uttar Pradesh government didn't want to use them to help stranded migrant workers return home.

Vadra said the buses will remain at the UP border till 4 pm, when it would be 24 hours since they were brought there.

If you don't want to use them, it doesn't matter. We shall send them back, she said, adding that the party had turned back some buses a few days earlier as well.

Her message was put out minutes before the 4 pm deadline given Tuesday night.

An hour and a half later, a police official in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district said the buses had started

returning from the border.

In Lucknow, UP Congress spokesperson Lallan Kumar confirmed this later.

Congress workers held a dharna at the party's Uttar Pradesh headquarters, displaying banners and placards, over the denial of permission for the buses by the state's BJP government.

Lallan Kumar said similar dharnas were held at party offices in other districts.

They were also protesting over the arrest, initially on Tuesday evening, of UP Congress president Ajay Kumar Lallu.

Lallu was arrested in Agra for violating lockdown rules when he led a protest over the buses being stopped at the Rajasthan-UP border.

An Agra court granted him bail on Wednesday. But the party said he was later rearrested in connection with another FIR registered at a Lucknow police station.

Lallu and Priyanka Gandhi's personal secretary Sandeep Singh are charged with cheating and forging documents in the Lucknow FIR registered on Tuesday.

The UP government claimed the list submitted by the Congress contained unsafe buses and registration numbers of vehicles like autorickshaws, cars and trucks.

Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma repeated the allegations on Wednesday, while calling the Congress offer to send buses a political stunt.

He said about 460 buses mentioned in the Congress list of 1049 buses were fake , implying that the state government could not make use of them. He said 297 of the buses were junk , an apparent reference to the government claim that they lacked either insurance papers or fitness certificates. Ninety-eight vehicles in the list submitted to the state government by the Congress are cars, ambulances and three-wheelers, he said. "Should we run the unfit buses and put the lives of the migrant labourers at risk? he said.

Sharma claimed that the buses belonged to roadways corporation of Rajasthan, where the Congress is in power. How can the resources of a state government be utilised by a political party? he said.

the tall claims of administration over Covid-19 prevention and precautions.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, Bashir Ahmad Dar has ordered a probe into the mishandling of the body after the viral video sparked outrage.

"I had asked SDM Bijbehara to ensure the protocol is followed in the burial of the woman. However, the video on social media shows the protocol has been compromised," Dar said. He said he will look into the matter and take strict action against the officials found involved in the negligence.

2 Expecting Mothers Among 73 New Cases...

Jammu region, they said. In Kashmir, 17 cases were reported from Kupwara, eight from Baramulla, five each from Anantnag & Kulgam and one each from Pulwama & Bandipora districts, while 20 cases were reported from Jammu, five from Udhampur, three each from Kishtwar & Ramban, two from Samba and one each from Poonch, Reasi & Kathua districts, they said. The new cases in a day brought the tally to 1,390 in Jammu and Kashmir, they said. "Of these, 1188 are in Kashmir, while 202 are in the Jammu region," the officials added. A total of 678 people (612 in Kashmir, 66 in Jammu) have recovered from the infection, leaving 694 active cases in the Union Territory – 560 in Kashmir and 134 in the Jammu region. The UT has witnessed 18 (16 from Kashmir, 2 from Jammu) coronavirus-related deaths , including the one that took place on Wednesday.

Anantnag Emerging Covid-19 Hotspot...

policemen in the union territory. Anantnag, in south Kashmir, was COVID free till mid-April. The first positive case in the district was recorded on April 15. However, now the district has the highest number of COVID cases in the union territory 247 and has witnessed four deaths so far. When the first policeman from the DPL tested positive, his contacts were sampled and out of them 18 tested positive. On further contact tracing, 55 more of them tested positive and now we have 78 positive cases in the police 55 from an IRP battalion and 23 from the district police, the officials said. They said while few policemen from other areas of the valley have tested positive, the sudden surge in number of cases from the DPL and the spread of COVID-19 among policemen was a cause of concern.

It is a cause of concern, more so because several of those personnel who have tested positive were on duty at the mess and even manned the gates of the police lines, the officials said. The officials, however, said it would not affect the maintenance of law and order as most of the cases pertain to a battalion of the Armed Police.

Most of these cases are from the Armed battalion of the Police which is not linked to anti-militancy operations or law and order duties, so it won't affect the normal policing, they said. They said the policemen who have tested positive have been shifted to a COVID facility in the district.

So far more than 250 police personnel have been tested, while an aggressive contact tracing drive has been undertaken, the officials said.

Families and immediate colleagues of the positive policemen are being traced and put in quarantine, he said.

A police official, who did not wish to be named, said while all efforts are being made to trace the contacts of these police personnel, there might always be a possibility of some contacts slipping away.

Police personnel are being used for many duties like anti-militancy front, law and order, enforcing social distancing apart from normal policing. Most of the time, the cops do not remember the number of people they have come in contact with. So, it is not possible to establish all the contacts, he said. The deputy commissioner and senior superintendent of police concerned were not available for comments as calls to their numbers went unresponsive.

Hurriyat Puts Off Martyrs Rally At Eidgah Today...

people from the front in their political struggle. He was an advocate of the realisation of the will of the people of J&K in deciding their future, as well as a great believer of peace between the neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan," the spokesperson said.

Paying rich tributes to Abdul Ghani Lone, the spokesperson said that he was a heedful and fearless leader who sacrificed his life for his belief in a peaceful and pro-people resolution of the Kashmir issue.

"His contribution in the formation of people's platform of Hurriyat conference is unforgettable," the statement said, adding "The people of J&K will always remember these selfless leaders and will follow the path they showed."

The Mirwaiz Umar Farooq led Hurriyat reiterated that it will pursue the vision and mission of these great stalwarts in seeking the resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

‘Review, Revoke’: Rage Reactions Relentless ...

unionists raised their pitch against the move, the ruling BJP party called it a long overdue move.

According to the new law, anyone who has resided in Jammu and Kashmir for 15 years or has studied there for seven years and appeared for the Class 10 and Class 12 examinations in a school located in the Union territory is a domicile.

"As far as I can see it," Habel Shah, a resident of Srinagar, said, "it's badly going to affect our future in Jammu and Kashmir."

Political Row

Voicing Shah's concern, Panthers Party's Harsh Dev Singh termed the new domicile rules as gross betrayal with J&K youth.

"Unlike the 371 protected states like Arunachal Pradesh where domicile rules are very tough, the BJP-led central government has made the domicile certificate a cakewalk for outsiders in Jammu and Kashmir. The way gates have been thrown open for the rest of the country is a big betrayal with people of J&K." Singh who earlier protested against the domicile notification wherein only class 4th jobs were kept reserved for J&K youth demanded revocation of the law.

"Panthers Party won't accept any kind of betrayal with the youth of J&K," Singh said. "The youth are very angry right now, and they're waiting for this lockdown to end. What happens next will solely be the responsibility of the government."

Before Panthers Party, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq led Hurriyat Conference accused BJP-led New Delhi government of speeding up new ordinances in the midst of a pandemic 'to change demography of Jammu and Kashmir'.

"This order of the Union Territory government is illegal and unconstitutional and it is murder of democracy," said Saifuddin Soz, a veteran politician whose party, Congress, said the domicile order will open floodgates for outsiders.

The domicile order as well as procedure, said National Conference, are anti-people.

"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," Kashmir's grand old party said.

The timing of framing of these important rules is not only inappropriate but grossly unethical, JKApni Party (JKAP) said. "There's no popular, elected government in place in J&K where-in the legislature could have thoroughly discussed and deliberated upon eligibility criteria for availing domicile credentials."

Mainland Indian Take

Kartik Bhatt, 53, a Rajkot-based architect while talking about the new law, said, "The intent of the new domicile is to restore normalcy."

The government should invite other people for business and work for normal functioning of the region, he added. Goutam Bhaduri, 62, a retired government employee from Kolkata has a different perspective on the matter.

"Reserving jobs for Kashmiri youth who have not been the beneficiary of any government scholarship scheme or had the means to go outside of Kashmir for higher studies, for political and financial reasons, will be benefited from this amended new rule," Bhaduri said.

"I hope," he continued, "this further encourages government to further invest in the regional universities, giving the aspirational Kashmiri youth a good reason to stay."

While many people see this as an attack on natives of the region, ZafarIqbal, advocate at Gauhati High Court, cites Clause 6 of the Assam Accord which protects and preserves its indigenous people.

"This might sound good to the rest of the country as everyone will be able to buy land and in turn flourish the economy," Iqbal said. "But the state of J&K and its people will be alienated from their land."

If other states have provisions to protect its people, the advocate asked, "then why people of J&K are deprived of such rights which had been guaranteed by the constitution."

Many see this move as opening of the door for Kashmiri Pandits' return to the Valley.

Aayush Razdan, an IT professional from Jammu, said, "Yes, people from Jammu region and Kashmir region fear that there will be a change in demography of the state, but I don't think the culture of place will get negatively affected by this new law."

As per the new notification, others who can be deemed to be a domicile include the children of those central government officials, all-India services officers, officials of PSU and autonomous bodies of the central government, public sector banks, officials of statutory bodies, central university officials and those of recognised research institutes of the central government, who have served in J&K for 10 years.

An army official from Goa, on the condition of anonymity, said, "The implementation has to be done properly; otherwise, it may not go in favour of Kashmiris."

Many Indians believe that the law will also lead to an inter-cultural collaboration between the states.

"It's a good move, if few tweaks are sorted," Aashray from Lucknow believes. "Kashmiris will get a new outlook."

Growing Concerns

However, most Kashmiris are not buying these arguments.

Many see the law as an onslaught on their identity and culture. "This move will add to the existing woes of unemployment," said Tahira Nazeer, a resident of Anantnag.

And the way Tehsildar, the domicile-issuing authority, has been directed to issue the certificate within seven days or pay Rs 50,000 as penalty from his own salary makes many believe that the move is beyond 'normal'.

"It's like putting a knife on Tehsildar's throat," says Basit Sultan, a post-graduate student from Baramulla. "Even if he wants to resist changes or reject cases, he won't do it now for the obvious reasons."

Nawa Kadal Gunfight: Boy Injured In House Collapse Dies

Aijaz was injured along with three other persons on Tuesday evening at Nawa Kadal encounter site when a house there got collapsed.

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, including the groups commander Junaid Sehrai was killed in a 12-hour gunfight. They said as the people were watching the devastation, a partially damaged old structure collapsed suddenly, leaving four persons, including Basim wounded.

GOC Joshi Briefs LG On Situation

LoC and the successful anti-militancy operations being conducted by the Army in co-ordination with Jammu and Kashmir Police and Central Armed Police Forces in the hinterland, an official spokesperson said today.

The LG and GOC Joshi discussed several issues relating to the security management and other important issues to meet the security challenges in J&K.

"The Lt Governor lauded the role being played by the Army in safeguarding the territorial integrity and the internal security of Jammu and Kashmir," the official spokesperson added.

Truck Crushes Biker To Death

death," they said. The officials said that the body of the youth was taken to SDH Bijbehara for medico-legal formalities.

Early scab infection worries Apple growers in Kashmir

Agencies

Srinagar: An early scab infection in apple orchards in Kashmir has worried fruit growers who have already suffered massive financial losses due to lockdown imposed by the Central government to prevent spread of deadly COVID-19.

The appearance of scab infection on leaves and fruits has dashed hopes of a bumper apple crop in Kashmir this year where fruit industry has suffered severe setbacks due to August 5 clampdown and early snowfall. “The

sub-standard pesticides and fungicides are responsible for appearance of scab in our orchards,” a group of apple growers told news agency.

They also said there has been no advice from the Horticulture department on measures to be taken to control scab.

“We have been visiting offices of Horticulture department to get advice for them about controlling scab but these offices remain shut and officials remain busy in dealing with covid-19 due . Nobody is guiding us” they said.

Dr Tariq Rasool, a senior scientist at SKUAUST Kashmir said that

last year’s incessant rains and early snowfall have caused scabs in orchards of Kashmir.

He said growers must spray fungicides 2- 3 days before rainfall or after rainfall in order to stop spread of Scab infection. “Every year, a large chunk of fruit gets affected with scab disease due to inclement weather and untimely fungicide spray,” he said. He said improper pruning and trimming is also responsible for spread of scab in orchards.

“Due to improper pruning and trimming, sunlight is not reaching the

dense branches, which keeps moisture for long time even in case of light rain and helps scab like infections to sprout,” he said.

He said people have skipped the spray of fungicide at green tip and pink bud stage of apple crop. He said growers must spray as per the schedule issued by SKUAUST not on the recommendations of pesticide sellers.

The fruit industry is considered as backbone of Kashmir’s economy. The apple growers earn Rs 8000 crore annually from horticulture sector—(KNO)

Measures afoot to ensure e-marketing facilities for farmer: Navin Choudhary

JAMMU : The Jammu and Kashmir government, as part of its measures being initiated in the wake of COVID Lock-down, has issued detailed guidelines regarding elimination of intermediary brokers, buyers, distributors, decongestion of major fruit and vegetable Mandies across Jammu & Kashmir besides timely marketing of Agricultural and Horticultural produce.

It may be recalled that Agriculture Production Department in view of COVID-19 situation had allowed Deputy Commissioners in their respective jurisdictions to notify the places where farmers can bring their produce for marketing without any intermediary interference.

The guidelines said that collection or aggregation centre in the proximity of production areas may be set up by a person after getting it registered by the concerned Market Administrative Committees. The person will have to comply with a set of guidelines, particularly refraining from any kind of hoarding, un-

der Essential Commodities Act.

The guidelines further clarified that direct wholesale purchase can also be carried out outside the Principal market Yard, Sub-Market Yard, Market Sub-Yard and Private market Yard. Besides, Market Administrative Committees may declare the place of such purchase as Collection Centre for direct Marketing without establishment of any permanent structures etc.

Meanwhile, the Market Administrative Committees have been authorized by virtue of Government Order, “to seek any type of additional information from the registered direct marketing farmers, and can also inspect and issue direction relating to functioning of such wholesale purchase/sale and the activities incidental thereto.”

All the Market Administrative Committees of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir have been asked to allow and facilitate functioning of such Collection and Sale Centres without any hindrance.

Indian Embassy in Tehran waits for the nod of Kashmir administration

Srinagar: Families of stranded Kashmiri pilgrims in Iran hold yet another protest in Srinagar to demand evacuation of their loved ones.

22 pilgrims including a child and 12 females are stranded in Qom city of Iran since February 17. The pilgrims from Kargil stranded in the same city were evacuated due to the efforts put in by Kargil Deputy Commissioner and other officials, but the Kashmiri pilgrims are still stranded there.

“We are 22 Kashmiri pilgrims stranded in Qom Iran from last three

months, have left on the mercy of Allah. We have kids and old aged people with us. We are depressed, having other ailments. Embassy people are saying they don’t have any requisition from Indian Home Ministry and Civil aviation,” reads a text of a stranded pilgrim sent on WhatsApp to news agency KNT.

The family members of these stranded pilgrims staged a protest and med Divisional Commissioner, who assured action and evacuation. The protesters allege that State Administration is not doing enough.

CUK, ISPA workshop on ‘Mental Health, Life skills and Adjustment’ concludes

Ganderbal : The three-day online workshop on “Mental Health, Life skills and Adjustment,” organised by the School of Education and Directorate of Students Welfare (DSW) Central University of Kashmir (CUK) in association with the Indian School Psychology Association (ISPA) for the Secondary School Teachers of the Valley concluded on

Wednesday.

In his valedictory address, Vice-Chancellor, CUK, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir, said the online workshop was a huge success in meeting its intended objectives. Prof. Mir also announced that CUK will collaborate with Central University of Jammu and Central University of Pondicherry for jointly organizing such workshops on a big-

ger platform in order to increase the reach across the length and breadth of the country.

Indian School Psychology Association (ISPA), President, Dr. Panch Ramalingam, in his remarks appreciated the overall organization, structure and success of the aforementioned workshop and thanked the CUK for its collaboration.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory Mechanical Division, Srinagar.

Tel: 0194-2497056Email: xenmds@gmail.com

GIST OF NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NO. MDS/TENDER/2020-21/ 04 ; DATE: - 19 .05.2020

Sealed tenders affixed with Rs. 5/- revenue stamps are invited for and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory from registered firms/Contractors for:-

Description of the work	Est. Cost (in Rs.)	E/M Deposit	Cost of Tender document	Time of completion
Electrification of Chowkidar Hut at Snow clearance Control Room Tul-labagh, Ganderbal.	61,500/-	Rs. 1300/-	Rs. 200/-	10 days
Date of sale of tender documents	20 -05-2020 to 05 -06-2020 (up to 4.00 pm)			
Last date of receipt of tenders	06 -06-2020 (up to 2.00 pm)			
Date of opening of tenders	06-06-2020			
Tender receiving & opening authority	Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division Srinagar			

The Tender document can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours against cost mentioned above, in the form of IPO/Demand Draft or cash payment. The tender documents shall be issued subject to production of following documents:

- Self attested copy of Certificate of GST Registration.
- Valid “A” Class Electrical Registration certificate/card.
- Application for Issuance of Tender Document from the firm duly signed and stamped by the Proprietor, however, in case the Proprietor of the firm wishes to purchase the tender document through his representative , a valid authorization letter duly signed and stamped by the proprietor shall be produced prior to purchase of the document.

In case the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a non-working day due to any reasons, the tenders shall be received in this office on next working day.

NO: MDS/TS / 81-85
Date: 19 -05-2020
DIPK-931/20
Sd/= (Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat) Executive Engineer Mechanical Division, Srinagar.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B SUB-DIVISION MAGAM

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No: - 11/ R&B of 2020-21 DATED: - 19/05/2020.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor J&K Union Territory, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs.)	E/M (InRs.)	Time	T&D of Opening of Bid	Class.	MH of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Temporary Restoration of 85 Mtr long bridge in Km 17th of Narbal Tangmarg road Phase 2nd.	20.00	800/-	40000/- + (Addl. Security if applicable)	25	01-06-2020	B/C	

Position of AAA/TS Submitted
Position of funds Assured

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

S.No.	Date of issue of tender Notice
1	Date of issue of Tender Notice
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents
3	Bid submission start date
4	Bid submission end date
5	Date & time of opening of bids (online)

20. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).
22. In case any new circular / instructions / order is issued by the competent authorities during the current financial year, the same shall be implemented / treated in force on all the tenders floated from time to time.

DIPK-932/20

No:-R&B/479-99
Dated: 19-05-2020

Sd/-

Executive Engineer,
R&B Sub-Division Magam

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI

CALENDAR

27 Ramazan
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR 3: 48

ZUHR 12: 27

ASR 5:23

Magrib 7:32

ISHA 9:08

This Day In History

- 1260 - Hao Jing, envoy of Mongol leader Kublai Khan imprisoned on order of the high Chancellor of China, Jia Sidao at the Song Dynasty court of Emperor Lizong while attempting to negotiate with the Song
- 1420 - Treaty of Troyes: Henry V of England and his heirs would inherit the throne of France upon the death of King Charles VI of France
- 1809 - Battle of Aspern-Essling: Austrian archduke Karl beats Napoleon
- 1856 - Lawrence, Kansas, is captured and sacked by pro-slavery forces
- 1864 - Russia declares an end to the Russian-Circassian War and many Circassians are forced into exile. The day is designated to be the Circassian Day of Mourning.
- 1879 - Battle of Iquique: Chilean naval forces overcome Peruvian ships (War of the Pacific)
- 1911 - French troop enter Fez in Morocco to quell anti-European agitation
- 1918 - US House of Representatives passes amendment allowing women to vote
- 1920 - Mexican President Venustiano Carranza is executed by army generals after fleeing an armed rebellion in Mexico
- 1931 - Belgian government of Jaspar falls
- 1940 - Allied counter attack at Atrrecht, northern France
- 1940 - Reynaud forms French government
- 1941 - SS Robin Moor becomes the first US ship sunk by a U-boat during World War II
- 1941 - German airforce occupies airport at Maleme, Crete
- 1944 - Hitler begins attack on British/US "terror pilots"
- 1953 - French government of Mayer resigns
- 1956 - Jordan government of Said el-Mufti forms
- 1956 - US explodes 1st airborne hydrogen bomb over Bikini Atoll
- 1957 - French government of Mollet resigns
- 1958 - Indonesian paratroopers reconquers Morotai Island
- 1966 - Muhammad Ali TKOs Henry Cooper in 6 for heavyweight boxing title
- 1968 - USSR performs nuclear test (underground)
- 1981 - Francois Mitterrand becomes president of France
- 1982 - British troops land on Falkland Islands
- 1985 - Israel exchanges 1,150 prisoners with the PFLP-GC in return for 3 Israeli soldiers
- 1987 - Military coup in Fiji under Lt. Col Sitiveni Rabuka
- 1988 - US performs nuclear test at Nevada Test Site
- 1992 - China performs nuclear test at Lop Nor, PRC
- 1993 - Venezuela president Carlos Andres Perez fired
- 1994 - South Yemen secedes from Yemen
- 1998 - Indonesian president Suharto resigns after 31 years in power
- 2001 - French Taubira law officially recognizes the Atlantic slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity.
- 2003 - An earthquake hits northern Algeria killing more than 2,000 people.
- 2006 - The Republic of Montenegro holds a referendum proposing independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. The Montenegrin people choose independence with a majority of 55%.
- 2012 - 120 people are killed and 350 injured by a suicide bomb in Sana'a, Yemen
- 2013 - Microsoft announces the release of Xbox One
- 2014 - José Mário Vaz is elected President of Guinea-Bissau
- 2014 - Russian President Putin signs agreements with China in Beijing in relation to trade and infrastructure
- 2014 - Thai army declared martial law and closes down several news stations
- 2016 Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, leader of the Afghan Taliban is reportedly killed by a US drone in Pakistan

From KO Archives

Time Ripe For Kashmir Pact: Pak

KUALA LUMPUR : The time is ripe for a deal between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and the two countries should seize the opportunity to end the long running issue, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said on Thursday.

“At the moment conditions are particularly propitious.” he told reporters during a stopover in Kuala Lumpur on his way home from visits to Australia and New Zealand.

“Both leaders have to show courage and take difficult decisions and the pact there are peace constituencies in both countries should be a help to them,” Mr Kasuri said. He said a major confidence-building measure in the search for a solution to the Kashmir issue would be an agreement on the Siachen glacier in talks beginning on May 25. “It is doable” I think if we have agreement on this it will act as a major confidence-building measure. It will also help in the process of resolution of Jammu and Kashmir. It requires just a bit of political will. The defence secretaries need to try to convince each other that their fear and apprehension is misplaced.”

(Kashmir Observer, 21 May, 2005)

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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New Domicile Rules

The J&K Government has notified new domicile certificate procedure rules 2020 and set the process in motion to issue the certificates within a stipulated time of 15 days. The new rules have empowered a tehsildar to issue such certificates. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner will do so in the case of migrants. The applicant can also both submit the application and receive the certificate electronically.

At the same time any tehsildar who fails to issue a certificate to applicants on time may attract punishment of up to Rs 50,000 that will be withdrawn from their salary. According to the rules, individuals who have resided in J&K for 15 years or have studied for seven years or appeared in examinations for class 10th or 12th can be eligible for the grant of a domicile certificate.

The National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have rejected the new domicile rules saying it is "aimed at changing the demography of the erstwhile State of J&K".

The rules have struck off the term 'permanent resident' and replaced it with 'domicile', which means anyone who has resided in J&K for fifteen years. The rule has been relaxed for the central government officials who must have served in the region for ten years for them as also their children to qualify for domicile status. The rule is even more lenient for the students from outside the region, who must have "studied for a period of seven years and appeared in Class 10th/12th examinations".

Much like the revocation of Article 370, the domicile law has been issued without taking J&K's public and political opinion on board. This has only further deepened a sense of political disempowerment among people. More so, when there is no political leader in Kashmir in a position to stick his neck out. Two former J&K Chief Ministers Dr Farooq Abdullah and the son Omar Abdullah have been largely silent since their recent release from months-long detention following withdrawal of Article 370 in August last.

However, considering the far-reaching fallout of the new law on the demographic landscape of J&K, the situation in the UT has been plunged into a deep uncertainty. The move has already eroded any shred of legitimacy that New Delhi blessed new J&K politics might have enjoyed. It has also dented the credibility of the established mainstream politicians who are now blamed for bringing this upon the region by always siding with New Delhi. However, any visible expression of the public anger against Centre is likely to be contained by the ongoing preoccupation with coronavirus. That said, New Delhi should review the new law as a confidence building measure towards J&K. This would go a long way to address the alienation in the Union Territory.

OTHER OPINION

The new normal is here

The fourth phase of the lockdown, announced by the government on Sunday, represents a departure from the past three phases. While relaxations were gradually introduced in each phase, India is now substantially opening up. Inter-state travel is allowed; markets — excluding malls — will resume business; there will be more vehicular movement, including of taxi aggregators; more people will now go back to offices; and the everyday rhythm of life, interrupted since March 25, will be restored to some extent. States have been given the authority to demarcate red, orange and green zones, and will have more liberty in determining the extent of activity permitted in them. To be sure, there will be strict control in containment zones, but the big picture in lockdown 4.0 is of an India getting back on its feet.

Here is the paradox. India is opening up on the very day that it neared 100,000 positive cases. Delhi has crossed 10,000 cases, the fourth state to have hit the number after Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. In the last fortnight, the coronavirus disease also hit 180 additional districts, taking the total affected districts to over 550. Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh witnessed the sharpest increase in the number of districts — which is primarily being attributed to the return of migrant workers home, who are now testing positive. This is the case at a time when most migrant workers have not yet returned home, or been tested. So with more relaxations and travel, expect a further spike in numbers.

Remember that India imposed the lockdown when there were just a little less than 500 cases. It is opening up when there is a clear surge. The lockdown, as this newspaper has argued, was yielding diminishing returns on the health front and was causing economic devastation of an unprecedented scale. The relaxations are, therefore, legitimate. This period has also been used to ramp up health infrastructure to a limited extent — with more dedicated hospitals, testing kits, personal protective equipment, the evolution of a health protocol around testing-tracing-isolation-treatment, and consistent messaging on social distancing. India will now have to learn to live with this contradiction — between the rising number of cases and relaxations and resumption of economic activity. Adjusting to this "new normal" will not be easy. Government systems will come under stress. There will be more panic as more and more people test positive. But there is no choice. Citizens can do their bit by abiding by social distancing norms, wearing masks and taking precautions, while the State must ensure that gains on the health front are not squandered, and the balance between lives and livelihoods is managed as well as possible.

Hindustan Times

FAWAZ TURKI

Isolation from others is rendering us strangers even to our selves; nostalgia for the comfortable absolutes of a world we know will never again be habitable in quite the same way as it was before; and fear of death by contagion at a time before we had found something to die for

Send your write ups and feedback at
editpage.ko@gmail.com

Is There A Meaning To This Pandemic?

As human beings we are wired to connect, and our need to do so is basic to being human

The devastation that pandemics have wrought throughout the ages is encoded in our historical consciousness as in our history books — from the Black Death in the 14th century to the deadly influenza outbreak in 1918.

And every time, after a virus had had its way with us, from the Middle Ages to the modern era, the untold ruin inflicted collectively on our social structures and individually on our internal psychic economy was incalculable.

These days we are living in the time of Covid-19, a virus that has, as it were, unhinged us off our own time. You talk to friends — you are enjoined, of course, against meeting, touching, hugging or kissing them, Arab-fashion, on both cheeks — and discover that they, like you, have concluded that the pieces of their lives no longer fit.

Isolation from others is rendering us strangers even to our selves; nostalgia for the comfortable absolutes of a world we know will never again be habitable in quite the same way as it was before; and fear of death by contagion at a time before we had found something to die for

We all wish, unquestionably, that all this had not happened in our time, but at the end of the day, as we "stick together, apart", we have to decide on how to cope.

The new normal

So three weeks ago I sent a questionnaire to a dozen or so friends asking them to respond to one forlorn query of mine, namely, how they were coping and what thoughts animated their minds during the "new normal" that the coronavirus has imposed on our lives.

The answers, I hoped, would yield insight into the triple theme that defines our condition today — isolation from others, which is rendering us strangers even to our selves; nostalgia for the comfortable absolutes of a world we know

will never again be habitable in quite the same way as it was before; and fear of death by contagion at a time before we had found something to die for.

Clifford Joyce, a retired professor of English literature (whom we often called "the Shakespeare freak", on account of his obsession with the bard), who at 69 remains both intellectually inquisitive and socially engaged, sent me a rambling, seven-page email that barely addressed itself to what he missed or how he coped.

Rather he confined himself to explaining how there were at least five major outbreaks of bubonic plague in England during Shakespeare's time, and how, while these outbreaks did not reach the devastation of the Black Death, they nevertheless left an impact on the population.

Wealthy Englishmen, he wrote, often took Chaucer's advice — written during the Black Death — to "run fast and run far". Eccentrics abound in my circle of friends.

Kim Hartley, 33, the pastry chef at Angles, our favourite Runyon-esque hangout in the Adams Morgan neighbourhood in Washington, was brief and to the point.

It hurts

"Gosh, I miss my aimless walks in Rock Creek Park", she wrote. "So much so it hurts". Equally brief and to the point was Ibrahim Abu Salma, a Jordanian now in his mid-eighties, who in his younger days served as a member of the late King Hussein's security detail but retired soon after the royal passed away in 1999.

Ibrahim, still true to his tribal roots, wrote: "I submit to what He wills. There's reason in His design. It's all written".

We all knew Conrad Boorstein as an unrepentant hippie, though at 72 he should have known better than to be that. "I don't miss nothing, buddy", he wrote — deliberately subverting grammar — from his retreat outside Portland, Oregon.

"I have my music. What more could I want? There's always Charlie Parker on alto sax. John Lee Hooker on guitar, the dude who invented his own version of the 12-bar blues. And, sure, there's also Edith Piaf's "Je ne regrette rien" testing every nerve in you. Yes, also the ethereal music of Ravi Shankar".

Then, harking back to the radical chic lingo he had used as a regular contributor to Ramparts magazine in the early 1970s, Conrad wrote: "Music, man, that's all there is. The grammar of the unfathomable is all centred there. It is in music, I tell you, where our human souls are so markedly and enduringly translated. As for the virus, it can go [expletive] itself".

Sam Pappas, a professor of philosophy, now teleteaches a course — at college in the boondocks of Kansas — dealing with the work of Martin Heidegger and Gottfried Leibniz and these two philosophers' preoccupation with being and nothingness.

"I don't have the time to miss anything", he wrote. "My concern is to put before my students the proposition that we "are" instead of "not being" — and make them evince genuine astonishment at the fact." After delving into more arcane trivia, he continued, "I know, I know, people like you think people like me rob the world of the mythopoetic, of its sense of enchantment" And on and on. The virus? Seemingly not his concern.

Other friends, of course, wrote. And if there's a theme there linking their responses to my query it is that they all, each in his or her own way, bemoaned the fact that they miss the company of others, that as human beings we are wired to connect, and our need to do so is as basic to our human being as food, water and air.

Meanwhile, until the beast is tamed, we keep our fists clenched.

Gulf News

Count Your Blessings In Times Of Crisis

NAJMA KHORRAMI |
HOMA AHMADZIA

To everyone around the world: At a time when no one thought relief could come faster, people are being uplifted, moved and feeling hope in the ins and outs of each day. We know this, in part, because Najma volunteered as a Crisis Counselor as the coronavirus picked up its ravaging impact near the end of March. Her first and only week of training was the last week of March 2020, because she decided that she wanted to finish as quickly as possible, in order to start reaching out to those in crisis. She felt compelled to do her part and inevitably brought relief to many, including those who were overwhelmed with anxiety or grief, those who found hunger and isolation unbearable - all understandably so - in the middle of a pandemic brought before our very eyes in the light of day and lasting into the stretches of the night.

As public health professionals, we've seen the benefits of empowerment and uplifting that human outreach can have. Serving as a Crisis Counselor has strengthened, in return, Najma's interest to serve others during this devastating time.

Of course, there are some lifestyle changes Homa has experienced while working in healthcare at a stressful time like this. For example, showering before hugging loved ones or expanding the quarantine even within the home, especially if a loved one is elderly or immunocompromised, in order to stay at least 6 feet apart. This can be particularly tough when you try to explain to children why they cannot hug their grandparents. However, we appreciate the moments we do have together, in an outdoor setting often, even more so now than before.

As families with frontline medical workers, we feel like we are going through this, like everyone else, together. Our sacrifices, we feel, are small. Our ability to make it through every single day, however, feels easier when we know we are in it to-



gether. This is the power of coming together, a message of unity-and of gratitude - that as public health professionals, we feel is urgent to tell.

Gratitude goes beyond words. It is a feeling that measures our combined love and respect, in many ways, for families across the world and for frontline heroes spread in every corner of each country affected by coronavirus. Gratitude for the members of each family, whether of nuclear or blended type, have us recognising the role of mothers, the role of fathers, the role of daughters and sons, the role of husbands and wives, and the role of loved ones. Together, we synchronously feel, and share in love, for each other and our world while adapting and recovering from what is a global experience. Our gratitude extends beyond our families and frontline heroes, and actually has allowed us to realise a collective gratitude for the planet that we share.

Interestingly, many international and national conferences are now being converted to virtual platforms

and remote meetings becoming more efficient as people find workarounds for prior issues such as time zone differences. Ironically, we have become more interconnected through this time of staying isolated. Quarantine lifestyle has forced us to slow the pace of our schedules that are overpacked with activities. It has made remote working the norm and spending less time commuting has allowed us to spend some more quality time during key times of the day with our loved ones.

Have you thought about how the air might seem cleaner lately? A bit crisper? The sky a bit bluer or the grass a bit greener? Perhaps on a walk outside, an outside for which we have more gratitude for than ever before. Our gratitude for our way of life, our togetherness as families, for frontline heroes - including doctors, nurses, public health professionals, grocery store workers, delivery personnel, caregivers, first responders, teachers, neighbours - and every single person feeling uncertainty, fear or pain includes

gratitude for everyone.

What is gratitude? Appreciation for our love and togetherness. It is simple, but a practice that removes us from the sad and depressing and has us recognise the inspirational and treasured parts to our lives.

Gratitude for families, even if it is a single-member family, is our tool for sharing our combined love and respect for each person doing their part to save our communities and world during this difficult time. Gratitude for all who are staying at home. This is for the mothers, the fathers, the daughters, the sons, the neighbours, the caregivers and for the loved ones and friends we recognise and honour. This is to support healthier families and a healthier world, into and beyond the time of coronavirus.

Najma Khorrami is a public health professional. Homa Ahmadzia is an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at George Washington University (GWU). - Psychology Today

Shattered Tourism Industry Of Kashmir

MUSHTAQ A HURRA

Let our charitable acts not be confined to some particular groups of people. The lockdown has left many devoid of any earnings. All the daily wage earners are going through terrible times. People crave for a bowl of rice and two rotis. The message of Ramazan is loud and clear that we should spend on needy, poor and destitute to earn more for our here and hereafter. And this is the best time to spend on others because the reward is multiplied to seventy times.

Every year, the dawn of March ends the monotony of winter in Kashmir. March is synonymous to the inception of Spring in the valley of Kashmir. The spring air infuses a new lease of life into the virtually dead flora of the valley. Green sprouts and chromatic flowers make spring invigorating and enliven. The kaleidoscopic scenes allures people across the globe, and tourists throng the valley from different parts of the world through road and air. No doubt, winter also attracts a good number of tourists to the valley during the bone chilling months of December, January and February but spring has its own appeal and charm which is unparalleled.

The tourist season is believed to begin here in late March or early April. Ah ! that Spring seems to be annoyed with Kashmir and Kashmiris for many years, now. Though the ice has melt, icicles have vanished, warmth of sun has helped the earth to sprout the greenery from thousands of species of plants but the swallows of fortune and good omen have refused to come back to my land. The natural calamity called COVID19 has undoubtedly brought the whole world to a virtual deadlock but hospitality industry is the most effected sector of life because the lockdown and the social distancing has deeply wounded this industry. And we all are well aware about the importance and role of tourism sector in our economy.

Tourism is considered to be the backbone of our economy. But, this backbone has been bearing the brunt of political turmoil in the valley for the last three decades. The recent years witnessed the steep surge in political uncertainty and bandhs in the valley which have broken the backbone of our economy, and consequently, our economy is creeping and crawling by imperceptible degrees. After the deserted summer of 2016, the valley witnessed a Lull during 2017 and 2018 but 2019 again proved a disaster for our tourism industry. The icy land is yet to feel the warmth of Spring, since August 2019 though the mid-May dawn is already hotter and brighter. The last summer and the recent winter of our tourism industry fell prey to political instability in the valley. And 2020 fell to the rage of COVID19 pandemic. The world is under the lockdown for last two or three months but the valley of Kashmir is encompassed by the dreaded clouds for last ten months which has brought our hospitality sector to shambles.

After the gloomy summer of 2019, our tourism industry was yearning for a grand tourist season in 2020. Different stakeholders associated with it , had built lots of hopes , dreams and aspirations. They were expecting a bumper tourism season ahead. Shikarawalas, Taxi walas, hoteliers, houseboat owners, horse keepers, fine art artisans like shawl weavers, papier mache artists and others had almost pulled up their socks for a fresh and new beginning after the unpleasant summer of 2019, but, Almighty Allah had something else in store for the Kashmiris, particularly for the different stakeholders of tourism industry. No doubt, COVID 19 pandemic has brought the whole world to a standstill but it came like a shocker for our tourism sector because it has already gone through tough and difficult times. The COVID 19 pandemic razed the castle of hopes of our people into rubble.

Globally famous Dal lake is narrating the tale of its prolonged solitude. The empty houseboats seem to be stiffened in the thick ice cover of winter. The



Dal Lake Sans Tourists

desperate faces of Shikarawalas, staring at the empty Boulevard road with a hope to get a tourist or two, to row their boats deep into the heart of the lake, are enough to wither the smiles of a soulful and sensitive person. Gulmarg, Pahalgam and other tourist attractions are exhibiting a state of desolation and wretchedness. The snow clad mountain peaks and the lush green velvety meadows are mourning the plight of their guardians and caretakers.

COVID 19 pandemic seems to stay with us for longer periods. No doubt, the lockdown has to be lifted, though gradually, but, will people dare to visit their favourite destinations again, that too in near future ? A big "No" seems to be the most probable answer, particularly for the coming months. The plight of tourism related People is sure to worsen. This summer seems no better than the previous one. And the coming summer is not looking somewhat pleasant or different. It is a big fight which the different stakeholders of our tourism industry have to win together. Government has a greater role to play. A Papier mache artist has to look for an alternate job when his art finds no customers, clients and buyers. So has a Shikarawala because his Shikaara is not synonymous to Alladin's lamp of Arabian Nights' tale which can rein a giant to provide him the necessities and comforts of life in a jiffy.

Now, the onus is on our Government. It should devise a comprehensive strategy to save the future of this industry. A big financial package should be announced for tourism industry because it is facing the heaviest brunt of the lockdown. This industry is in virtual shambles. Mere bucks can't save it. It needs a hefty financial bonanza otherwise the different stakeholders associated with this sector will come on the streets with begging bowls in their hands. It will also effect our centuries old heritage and culture . Many things of past may vanish completely. If the lockdown is completely lifted yet I don't see an Euro-

pean, an American or an Indian coming here to buy a Papier mache decorated box or jar. And we can't stop an artist from switching to other money fetching jobs if it can't satiate his belly. The logjam for the hospitality sector is sure to last for a year or more. The possibilities of exploring a vaccine for the pandemic seems ceasing with every passing day . Thus, the implications of the pandemic will last longer. So, to save our ancestral legacy, a big financial package is required.

Now, let me come to our individual and social obligations and responsibilities. Though big hoteliers don't deserve our alms but the poor horse keepers, Shikarawalas, taxi drivers and others need to be identified and reached out to. Though the authorities have announced a paltry sum of one thousand rupees for three months to the different stakeholders of the industry viz Taxiwalas, Shikarawalas and others but it is not sufficient. Affluent and rich should extend their all possible help to such needy people. It is not easy to reach out to these needy people because their self-esteem resists their urge to extend their empty hands before others to extinguish the fire of their bellies. They prefer death to dishonour. So, we need to identify them, and reach out to them in a way that their self-esteem is not hurt.

Let our charitable acts not be confined to some particular groups of people. The lockdown has left many devoid of any earnings. All the daily wage earners are going through terrible times. People crave for a bowl of rice and two rotis. The message of Ramazan is loud and clear that we should spend on needy, poor and destitute to earn more for our here and hereafter. And this is the best time to spend on others because the reward is multiplied to seventy times.

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MARGARET O'MARA

Twitter is out of the office. Last week, the social media company's chief executive, Jack Dorsey, informed employees that many of them would be allowed to work from home permanently, even after the Covid-19 pandemic subsides.

Other tech giants, including Google and Facebook, have not gone quite so far but have also said that they plan to continue working remotely at least through the end of 2020.

This may be a sign of where things are headed for the other white-collar industries that take their cues from Silicon Valley in the design and culture of their workplaces. For an industry that thrives on disruption, this might be its most disruptive move yet.

If even a fraction of companies follow Twitter's lead and make working from home permanent, the effects will ripple through many other sectors and into all the cities where tech companies have corporate homes

Part of what makes the move to remote work so remarkable is that the technology industry has resisted it for so long. From the midcentury-modern palaces to the playful campuses of today's tech giants, the industry has invested heavily in the idea that "knowledge work" depends on carefully designed office environments.

As Silicon Valley grew in the 1980s, its offices were often hastily constructed, proudly ugly concrete "tilt-ups." But leaders of those companies still wanted to set them apart.

Why would you ever go home?

Tandem Computers had an on-site swimming pool. Intel built jogging paths. These amenities helped recruit employees and delivered a message to them: With an office this great, why would you ever go home?

Thanks to Steve Jobs, the belief that serendipitous office encounters fuelled creativity became gospel. When he was the chief executive of Pixar in 2000, he led a design for a new headquarters building that would maximise human interaction. At one stage, he recommended a single group of bathrooms for the entire campus.

Other ideas became more influential. As Google expanded around the globe, it looked for locations

Are We Looking At The End Of Office As We Know It?

Tech thrives on disruption but Twitter's move might be its most disruptive move yet



with large footprints.

Having as many employees as possible on the same floor was thought to increase the chance of random encounters, so staircases were to be avoided. Facebook designed its headquarters in Menlo Park along the same principle.

As the largest companies grew richer, their facilities became grander. Amazon created spherical greenhouses at its Seattle headquarters where employees

could gather to think and talk. Microsoft built "tree houses" for employees in nearby Redmond.

Even IBM, which had once encouraged telecommuting as it expanded into consulting services, pulled thousands back to the office in the 2010s with facilities featuring "huddle rooms" and "idea parking lots."

Ironically, it has been over the past decade — as mobile and cloud-based products made it far easier to work remotely — that companies invested in ever

more lavish offices and doubled down on their commitment to having employees work in those offices, not remotely.

These ideas from Silicon Valley — about space, proximity and company culture — set a pace that other industries followed.

Free snacks became common in all kinds of white-collar workplaces. The open office — the ultimate expression of Steve Jobs's belief in serendipitous encounters — has become ubiquitous, despite mounting evidence that such unrestrained hubbub dampens collaboration rather than encourages it.

What happens now?

So what will happen now? If even a fraction of companies follow Twitter's lead and make working from home permanent, the effects will ripple through many other sectors and into all the cities where tech companies have corporate homes. Commercial real estate will suffer, along with the janitors, shuttle drivers and security guards who keep high-tech campuses going.

At the same time, a remote work environment could be a welcome change for employees. Life in Silicon Valley and other leading tech hubs was becoming so expensive as to be unsustainable, even for those earning six-figure salaries.

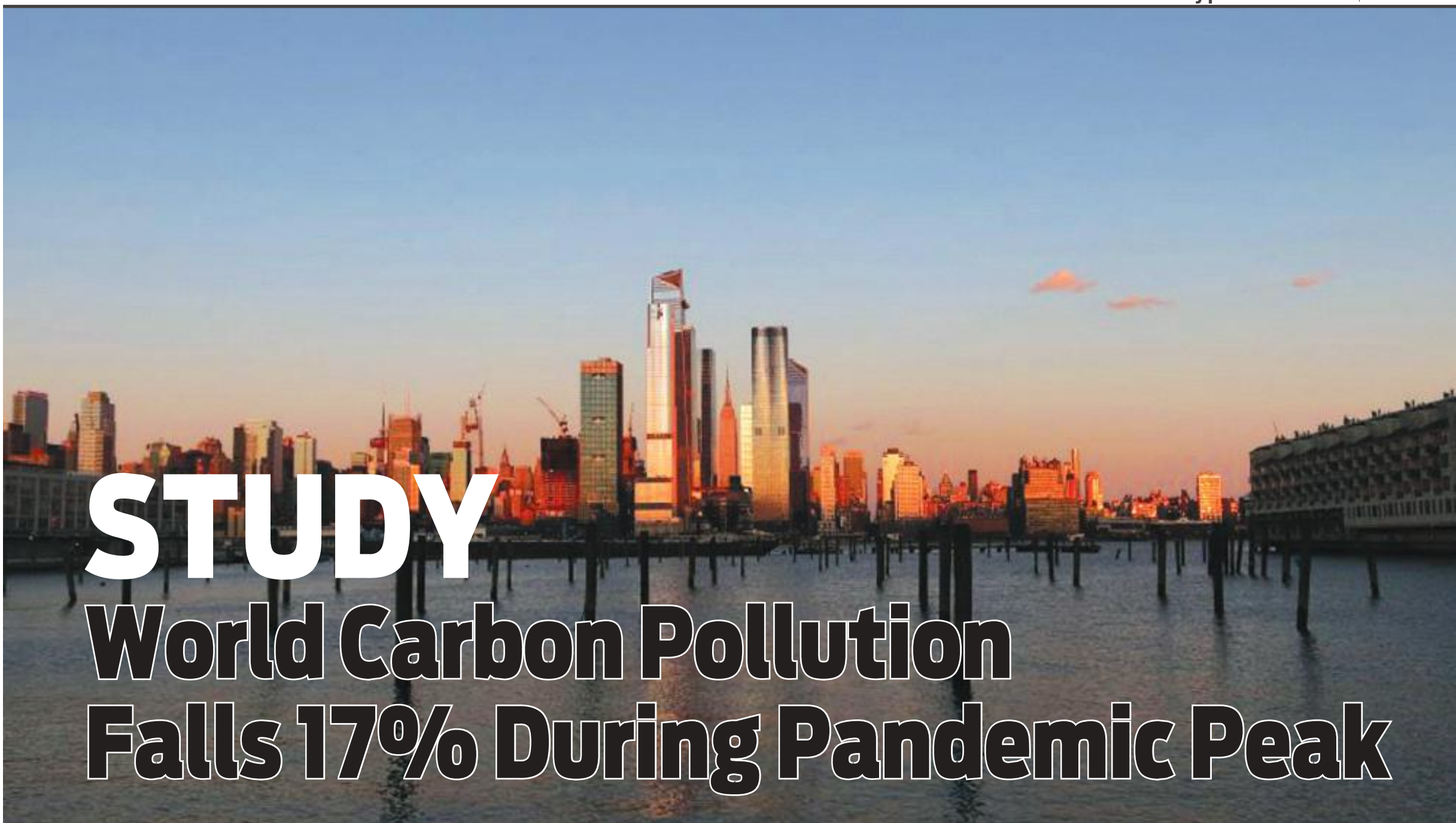
Tech's always-on, always-present workplaces and the offices filled with amenities may have appealed to the young and untethered. But the corporate norms — which discouraged part-time work and telecommuting — contributed to the attrition of women after becoming parents.

Tech leaders rightly worry about what will be lost when working remotely. "What does burnout look like?" the chief executive of Microsoft, Satya Nadella, mused last week. "What does mental health look like? What does that connectivity and the community building look like?"

Remote environments will demand different approaches to mentorship, teamwork and fostering a shared sense of purpose. But the Covid-19 experiment has shown that Silicon Valley can survive on the tools it created for itself and others.

Margaret O'Mara is an American historian and professor at the University of Washington

New York Times



STUDY World Carbon Pollution Falls 17% During Pandemic Peak

Agencies

KENSINGTON, Maryland — The world cut its daily carbon dioxide emissions by 17% at the peak of the pandemic shutdown last month, a new study found.

But with life and heat-trapping gas levels inching back toward normal, the brief pollution break will likely be “a drop in the ocean” when it comes to climate change, scientists said.

In their study of carbon dioxide emissions during the coronavirus pandemic, an international team of scientists calculated that pol-

lution levels are heading back up — and for the year will end up between 4% and 7% lower than 2019 levels. That’s still the biggest annual drop in carbon emissions since World War II.

It’ll be 7% if the strictest lockdown rules remain all year long across much of the globe, 4% if they are lifted soon.

For a week in April, the United States cut its carbon dioxide levels by about one-third. China, the world’s biggest emitter of heat-trapping gases, sliced its carbon pollution by nearly a quarter in February, according to a study

Tuesday in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. India and Europe cut emissions by 26% and 27% respectively.

The biggest global drop was from April 4 through 9 when the world was spewing 18.7 million tons (17 million metric tons) of carbon pollution a day less than it was doing on New Year’s Day.

Such low global emission levels haven’t been recorded since 2006. But if the world returns to its slowly increasing pollution levels next year, the temporary reduction amounts to “a drop in the ocean,” said study lead au-

thor Corinne LeQuere, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia.

“It’s like you have a bath filled with water and you’re turning off the tap for 10 seconds,” she said.

By April 30, the world carbon pollution levels had grown by 3.3 million tons (3 million metric tons) a day from its low point earlier in the month. Carbon dioxide stays in the air for about a century.

Outside experts praised the study as the most comprehensive yet, saying it shows how much effort is needed to prevent dangerous levels of further global

warming.

“That underscores a simple truth: Individual behavior alone ... won’t get us there,” Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann, who wasn’t part of the study, said in an email. “We need fundamental structural change.”

If the world could keep up annual emission cuts like this without a pandemic for a couple decades, there’s a decent chance Earth can avoid warming another 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming from now, study authors said. But getting the type of

yearly cuts to reach that international goal is unlikely, they said.

If next year returns to 2019 pollution levels, it means the world has only bought about a year’s delay in hitting the extra 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming that leaders are trying to avoid, LeQuere said. That level could still occur anywhere from 2050 to 2070, the authors said.

The study was carried out by Global Carbon Project, a consortium of international scientists that produces the authoritative annual estimate of carbon dioxide emissions. They looked at 450

databases showing daily energy use and introduced a measurement scale for pandemic-related societal “confinement” in its estimates.

Nearly half the emission reductions came from less transportation pollution, mostly involving cars and trucks, the authors said. By contrast, the study found that drastic reductions in air travel only accounted for 10% of the overall pollution drop.

In the U.S., the biggest pollution declines were seen in California and Washington with plunges of more than 40%.

Stay Calm And Positive With Less Clutter

Saahil Mehta / Khaleej Times

Are you facing greater levels of stress and anxiety? Are you stretched for time and find it hard to complete your tasks? Do you wish your relationships with loved ones was stronger? The Covid-19 has certainly left our lives unbalanced. Unfortunately, there’s not much we can do to control the coronavirus except to stay at home. That said, one thing we can do to make ourselves more comfortable and productive and sail through this pandemic smoothly, is use the decluttering methodology.

The art of decluttering has been buzzing around the world, but what does it mean? Let’s break it down: Decluttering is an action or a process to decide whether items, people, etc. are valuable or not. Decluttering is part of a minimalist lifestyle that has long been popular in Japan. Here’s how we can use decluttering to stay positive and calm during this pandemic:

Declutter the material world
Use this time to declutter your



home. Identify a room and select an area you wish to start. Your cupboard, for instance. Segregate everything into three piles:

Pile 1: Items that are frequently used and bring you joy. Put them back in an organised fashion.

Pile 2: Items that no longer serve a purpose in your life. Give them to someone less fortunate who can benefit and bring a smile to their face.

Pile 3: Items that you are not sure of. Keep them in a box for

three to six months and if the box remains unopened, give it away.

Declutter the body

If you want your body to work for you, you need to ensure you are treating it well so that it does not become a distraction.

In essence, eat well, sleep well, and ensure you have lots of movement throughout the day. A great way to get started is to start reading the ingredients of the packaged food you purchase and find healthier alternatives

if it contains any of the following: High-fructose corn syrup, artificial sweeteners, artificial colours, sodium nitrites and nitrates, monosodium glutamate (MSG), high levels of sugar.

Declutter people

Decluttering people is about bringing closer those who matters by removing the clutter between the two of you. Use this opportunity to better understand your loved ones, friends and colleagues to strengthen

the relationships that have either been strained or could do with some improving.

Decluttering the mind

How do you start your morning? Are you picking up your phone even though your eyes are barely open? How are you being affected by all the negative communication? Start each day with positivity enabling you to have higher impact!

Steps to take before anything else:

Movement: Any form of movement such as walking to get the blood flowing.

Breathing exercise: Deep breaths to oxygenate the body and come more alive.

Meditation: Do this to become more centred. There are many forms of meditation and it is suggested you try various forms to see what works best for you.

Gratitude journaling: Write down three things you are grateful for.

Now that you have the tools to remove the clutter from your life, start today and enjoy the journey to achieving greatness.

Coronavirus Infection May Lead To Mental Problems: Study



Press Trust Of India

LONDON- People taken ill by coronavirus infection may experience psychiatric problems such as delirium and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) while hospitalised and potentially even after they recover, according to a study.

The research, published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* journal, compiled results from short- and long-term studies of people hospitalised by coronaviruses that cause COVID-19, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The researchers from the University College London (UCL) in the UK found that one in four people hospitalised with COVID-19 may experience delirium during their illness, a known problem among hospital patients, which can increase risk of death or extend time in hospital.

The post-recovery effects of COVID-19 are not yet known, so long-term risks such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic fatigue, depression, and anxiety are based on SARS and MERS studies, which may or may not apply to COVID-19 as well.

“Most people with COVID-19 will not develop any mental health problems, even among those with severe cases requiring hospitalisation, but given the huge numbers of people getting

sick, the global impact on mental health could be considerable,” said study co-lead author Jonathan Rogers from UCL.

“Our analysis focuses on potential mental health risks of being hospitalised with a coronavirus infection, and how psychiatric conditions could worsen the prognosis or hold people back from returning to their normal lives after recovering,” Rogers said.

The research analysed 65 peer-reviewed studies and seven recent pre-prints that are awaiting peer review, which included data from over 3,500 people who have had one of the three related illnesses.

The review only included results from people who were hospitalised, and not people with more mild cases.

The findings cover both acute symptoms during the illness, and long-term outcomes from two months to 12 years.

Almost one in three people hospitalised with SARS or MERS went on to develop PTSD, at an average follow-up time of almost three years, especially if they had ongoing physical health problems, the researchers said.

Rates of depression and anxiety were also high, at roughly 15 per cent one year or longer after the illness, with a further 15 per cent also experiencing some symptoms of depression and anxiety without a clinical diagnosis, they said.

Study Reveals People More Satisfied After Changing Status Quo

Agencies

Anew paper finds that people who toss a coin to make a change and decide -- are more likely to follow through with that decision, are more satisfied with that decision, and report higher overall happiness after a six month period.

The paper was published in the journal *The Review of Economic Studies*, published by Oxford University Press.

Every person faces difficult decisions with potentially life-changing consequences: whether to quit a job, seek more education, end a relationship, quit smoking, etc. While behavioural economics

offers several decision-making models, from “prospect theory” to “the sunk cost fallacy,” it has little to say about people’s overall happiness with their choices after they make important decisions.

To investigate this, University of Chicago economist Steven Levitt created a website (Freakonomics Experiments) where subjects answered a series of questions. Some examples of questions asked by Levitt, the co-author of *Freakonomics* and several other books, were: Should I quit my job? Should I move? Should I propose? Should I adopt? Users were also invited to create their own questions, including Should I get a tattoo? Should



I try online dating? Should I rent or buy?

One choice, either the affirmative or the negative, was then assigned to heads and the other assigned to tails. Prior to the coin flip, the subjects were encouraged to identify the third party to verify their outcomes. Both the initial coin-flipper and the third

parties received a follow-up survey after two-months and six-months.

The two-month survey found that participants favoured the status quo, making a change less frequently than they predicted they would before the coin toss. At the six-month survey, this bias toward the status quo was gone. Furthermore, those who were instructed by the coin toss to switch their current position were more likely to actually make the change, reported that they were substantially happier, and said that they were more likely to make the same decision if they were to choose again.

This was true for virtually

every question at both the two- and six-month surveys. These results are inconsistent with the conventional theory of choice. In such a theory, people who are on the margins should, on average, report equal happiness regardless of which decision they made.

“Society teaches us “quitters never win and winners never quit,” but in reality, the data from my experiment suggests we would all be better off if we did more quitting,” said author Steven Levitt. “A good rule of thumb in decision making is, whenever you cannot decide what you should do, choose the action that represents a change, rather than continuing the status quo.”

US Tells Vessels In Persian Gulf To Stay 100 Meters Away From Its Warships

Agencies

Tehran: The US Navy has warned vessels in the Persian Gulf to stay 100 meters away from American warships or risk "lawful defensive measures," in a move that appears to be aimed squarely at Iran.

"Armed vessels approaching within 100 meters of a US naval vessel may be interpreted as a threat," according to the text of the notice issued on Tuesday.

The Bahrain-based US Naval Forces Central Command claimed in a statement that its notice was "designed to enhance safety, minimize ambiguity and reduce the risk of miscalculation."

Meanwhile, an unnamed US official told Reuters the new notice was not a change in the US military's rules of conflict.

Issuing a specific distance is new for the US Navy. Defensive measures typically include sounding a horn, shooting off flares and firing warning shots to force vessels away.

Iran, in response to the notice, said Wednesday its Navy will continue its "regular missions" in the Persian Gulf.

"The naval units of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman will continue their regular missions in accordance with professional principles as in the past," the ISNA news

agency quoted an unnamed military official as saying.

The notice comes one month after President Donald Trump tweeted that he had directed the US Navy to "shoot down and destroy" Iranian gunboats that "harass" American ships, following a confrontation between US warships and Iranian military boats in the Persian Gulf.

Iranian military officials have warned the Islamic Republic will give a crushing answer to any aggressor when it comes to defending its national security.

"The Americans have certainly experienced this [in the past] that they will receive a harder slap than before upon perpetrating the slightest action or infringement against the Islamic Republic's territorial waters and our people's interests," senior spokesperson for Iran's Armed Forces, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi said in April.

Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of Iran's Expediency Discretion Council, also said in April that the Islamic Republic would firmly respond to any threat against its security.

The Pentagon claimed last month that 11 Iranian vessels came close to US Navy ships in the Persian Gulf, in what the US military called "dangerous and provocative" behavior.

According to the Islamic



WB Estimates 60 Million People May Fall Into Extreme Poverty Due To Covid19

Press Trust Of India

Washington: The coronavirus pandemic is expected to put over 60 million people into extreme poverty globally, the World Bank has said as it announced emergency operations worth USD 160 billion in 100 developing countries to fight the deadly virus.

"The pandemic and shut-down of advanced economies could push as many as 60 million people into extreme poverty -- erasing much of the recent progress made in poverty alleviation, World Bank President David Malpass told reporters during a conference call on Tuesday.

"The World Bank Group has moved quickly and decisively to establish emergency response operations in 100 countries, with mechanisms that allow other donors to rapidly expand the programmes," he said.

Of the 100 countries, home to 70 per cent of the world's population, 39 are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly one-third of the total projects are in fragile and conflict-affected situations, such as Afghanistan, Chad, Haiti, and Niger.

"To return to growth, our

goal must be rapid, flexible responses to tackle the health emergency, provide cash and other expandable support to protect the poor, maintain the private sector, and strengthen economic resilience and recovery, Malpass said.

"This represents a significant milestone in the World Bank Group's effort to deploy USD 160 billion over a 15-month period. So this is a milestone in the USD 160 billion that we have committed to, he said.

Malpass said the programmes are tailored to the countries to effectively respond to the health, economic and social shocks that each of them are facing.

The programmes will reinforce healthcare systems and also help procure vital life-saving medical equipment and supplies. And these programmes contain mechanisms that allow other donors to rapidly expand the programme, he added.

"We invite that. There can be co-financing, there can be additional donors parallel with these programmes, so it is important that we note that the programmes are expandable. And because of the

breadth that means the interested donors and other multilateral banks can reach countries around the world, the World Bank President said.

The Bank Group's support through grants, loans and equity investments will be supplemented by the suspension of bilateral debt service, as endorsed by the Bank's governors.

IDA-eligible countries that request forbearance on their official bilateral debt payments will have more financial resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and fund critical, lifesaving emergency responses.

The International Development Association (IDA) is the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest countries.

"The bilateral debt-service suspension being offered will free up crucial resources for IDA countries to fund emergency responses to COVID-19," Malpass said.

"Nations should move quickly to substantially increase the transparency of all their governments' financial commitments. This will increase the confidence in the investment climate and encourage more beneficial debt and investment in the future," he added

Recession risk? Foreign investors pulled out \$16 billion from India

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Amidst the global economic recession due to coronavirus, foreign investors have pulled out an estimated \$26 billion from developing Asian economies and over \$16 billion out of India, a latest Congressional report has said.

"Foreign investors have pulled an estimated \$26 billion out of developing Asian economies and more than \$16 billion out of India, increasing concerns of a major economic recession in Asia," the independent Congressional Research Center said in its latest report on global economic effects of COVID-19.

In Europe, over 30 million people in Germany, France, the UK, Spain, and Italy have applied for state support, while first-quarter 2020 data indicates that the Eurozone

economy contracted by 3.8 per cent, the largest quarterly de-



cline since the series started in 1995, it said.

In the US, preliminary data indicated that the GDP fell by 4.8 per cent in the first quarter of 2020, the largest quarterly decline since the fourth quarter of 2008 during the global financial crisis, the CRS said.

According to CRS, the pandemic crisis is challenging governments to implement monetary and fiscal policies that support credit markets and sustain economic activity,

while they are implementing policies to develop vaccines and safeguard their citizens.

In doing so, however, differences in policy approaches are straining relations between countries that promote nationalism and those that argue for a coordinated international response.

Differences in policies are also straining relations between developed and developing economies and between northern and southern members of the Eurozone, challenging alliances and raising questions about the future of global leadership, the report said.

While almost all major economies are shrinking as a result of coronavirus, only three countries—China, India, and Indonesia—are projected to experience small, but positive, rates of economic growth in 2020, it said.

With record jump of 5,611 in single day, coronavirus cases now stand at 1,06,750

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The death toll due to Covid-19 rose to 3,303 and the number of cases climbed to 1,06,750 in the country on Wednesday, registering an increase of 140 deaths and a record spike of 5,611 cases in the last 24 hours, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The number of active Covid-19 cases stood at 61,149, while 42,297 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said. "Thus, around

Of the 3,303 fatalities, Maharashtra tops the tally with 1,325 deaths. Gujarat comes second with 719 deaths, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 258, West Bengal at 250, Delhi at 168, Rajasthan at 143, Uttar Pradesh at 123, Tamil Nadu at 84 and Andhra Pradesh at 52.

The death toll reached 40 in Karnataka, 38 each in Punjab and Telangana. Jammu and Kashmir has reported 17 fatalities due to the disease and Haryana 14. Bihar has registered nine deaths and Odisha five.



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

Of the 140 deaths reported since Monday morning, 76 were from Maharashtra, 25 from Gujarat, six each from West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, five each from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, three each from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana, two each from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and one each from Odisha and Punjab.

Kerala and Assam have reported four deaths each. Jharkhand, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh each have recorded three COVID-19 fatalities, while Meghalaya, Uttarakhand and Puducherry have reported one fatality each, according to the data shared by the health 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.

Pending CBSE class 10 and 12 exams to be held in own schools, not external centres

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Students will appear for pending class 10 and 12 board exams at the schools where they are enrolled instead of an external test centre, according to the HRD Ministry.

The Ministry is also planning to declare the board exam results by July-end and evaluation process has already begun for exams which were conducted before the lockdown was announced.

According to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) officials, students will appear at their individual schools for the exams and not external test centres.

"Students will appear for the exams in their own schools and not external test centres to ensure minimum travel for them. Schools will be responsible for ensuring social distancing norms are followed and students will be required to carry their own sanitiser bottles and cover their face with mask," a board official said.

The information was also shared by HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' in a live interaction with students aired on DD News on Tuesday night.

Usually, board examinations are held at designated

test centres for students. This is to ensure minimum bias from schools for their students and to enable independent external invigilators to monitor the examination process.

The board on Monday announced the date sheet for the pending class 10 and 12 board exams, which will now be held from July 1-15 with strict distancing norms in place.

The exams were postponed due to the nationwide lockdown imposed on March 25 to contain the spread of Covid-19.

While class 12 exams will be conducted across the country, the class 10 exams are only pending in North East Delhi, where they could not be held due to the law and order situation in the wake of protests against the amended citizenship act.

The HRD minister said that efforts are being made to ensure that the result is declared by July-end.

"Efforts are being made to declare the result by July-end itself. Evaluation process has already begun for the board exams and will continue to be held simultaneously with pending exams. Teachers who are involved in the evaluation process will be exempted from delivering academic and administrative work for the tenure," he said in the interaction.

Cyclone Amphan Bangladesh moves Rohingya refugees to island shelters



Agencies

Dhaka: Authorities in Bangladesh have moved hundreds of Rohingya refugees living on a flood-prone island in the Bay of Bengal to storm shelters as super cyclone Amphan, the strongest recorded in the region, barrels down, they said on Wednesday.

The eastern edge of the storm headed for Bangladesh and neighbouring India is expected to batter Bhasan Char island, where 306 Rohingya, members of a persecuted minority from Myanmar, were sent this month after being rescued from boats.

"Each block has a cyclone centre and they have been moved to the centre," said Bimal Chakma, a senior official of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission.

The United Nations has called for the refugees to be moved to the mainland to join more than a million more who live in sprawling camps outside the town of Cox's Bazar.

Although that settlement, the world's largest refugee camp, is expected to escape the worst of the storm, the danger level has been raised to nine from six, signifying a severe threat. Heavy rain and high winds lashed the flimsy shelters, built on hills prone to landslides, and red flags were raised to warn refugees to stay inside.

Aid workers say the cyclone could hamper efforts to control a coronavirus outbreak in the camps, which reported their first infections last week.

"It is already a huge challenge to contain the spread of coronavirus amongst the Rohingya refugees living in overcrowded camps, sharing water and toilet facilities," said Dipankar Datta, the country director of charity Oxfam in Bangladesh.

15-year-old girl brings father from Gurugram to Bihar on bicycle

Cycling almost 1,200 km with a debilitated person riding pillion could be a daunting task even for professional athletes, leave alone an ordinary teenager and that too amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, the heavily-stacked odds against Bihar girl Jyoti Kumari were no match for her grit.

Kumari, a lion-hearted 15-year-old, cycled all the way from Gurugram in Haryana to Bihar's Darbhanga district with her incapacitated father Mohan Paswan seated on the carrier.

Now the father-daughter duo is at a quarantine centre near their village Sirhuli under Singhwara block of the



district.

Kumari is determined not to let her father return to Gurugram where he was driven to penury following an accident a few months ago that rendered him unfit to make

a living as an e-rickshaw driver.

Paswan said his landlord gave him an ultimatum to either pay the rent that was due for a few months, or leave.

"I succeeded in buying

time on a couple of occasions. I promised him that I would take up whatever job I could land once the lockdown was lifted, earn money and pay all his dues. We were so hard pressed that I had to discontinue my medicines so that we could afford one square meal a day. How could we have arranged money for rent?" he recounted.

But the lockdown kept getting extended and the threats of the landlord kept getting more severe, he said.

At that time Jyoti was looking after her father in Gurugram while her mother was taking care of her four younger siblings back in the village while working as an Aanganwadi worker.

Japan to light up night skies with fireworks at secret time to cheer citizens

Tokyo: On a night not too far in the future but still being kept secret, skies across Japan will light up with simultaneous fireworks displays from north to south in a plan by fireworks makers to cheer a nation weary of battling the coronavirus.

Fireworks have a centuries-old tradition in Japan, where massive, colourful displays are an iconic symbol of summer and draw hordes of people, many wearing bright summer kimono. They began as a way of warding off bad luck and epidemics.

This year, with many festivals, including one of the most famous, on Tokyo's

Sumida River, cancelled over the virus, fireworks makers facing tough times because of lack of work started talks that led to the "Cheer Up!



Fireworks Project".

"Everyone's lost their energy due to the coronavirus and these dark times, so we wanted to cheer them up," said Hiroshi Oguchi, the third generation of his family to work at the San-en Fireworks Co in Shizuoka in central Japan.

"Also, Japanese fireworks started out mainly as a way of throwing off bad fortune, and so these are our two goals."

About 130 companies from the northernmost island of Hokkaido to the southernmost ones of Okinawa will participate, setting off fireworks at exactly the same time, Oguchi said.

"We are also keeping where it will happen a secret," he added, though the group is considering a social media blast to let people know just before it happens.

Last week, Japan freed 39 of its 47 prefectures from a blanket state of emergency that had lasted most of April, and several more could emerge this week.



REMEMBERING THE QUAID AND OUR BRAVEHEARTS

On the 30th anniversary of achieving Shahadat by Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Moulvi Muhammad Farooq (Alai Rehma) and other Shuhadaei Kiraam: M Maqbool Shah, Ms Shameema Akhter, Ali M Khan, M Rafiq Mir, Aashiq Hussain Dar, M Shafi Shakhsaz, Ms Jala Begum, Ghulam Nabi Bhat, Jan M Raja, Showkat Ahmad Rather, Nazir Ahmad Baba, Ms Baby Jan, Mushtaq Hussain, M Lala Sheikh, Rafiq Ahmad Khan, Nazir Ahmad Hajam, Ghulam Rasool Rather, Ms Fatima Begum, Nisar Hussain Khan, Javed Ahmad Beigh, Latief Ahmad Sheikh, Bilal Ahmad Mir, Jan M Misger, Ms Sakeena Akhter, Me'raj-ud-Din, M Amin Mahajan, M Sultan Shah, Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Nazir Ahmad, M Yousuf Rather, Abdul Hameed, Aijaz Ahmad Rather, M Maqbool Kakroo, Shameem Ahmad Khan, Ms Shakeela Begum, Ali M Bhat, Farooq Ahmad Beigh, Ali M Kakroo, M Arif Qureshi, Nazir Ahmad Nowshehri, Ms Dilshada, Ishfaq Ahmad Rather, Hilal Ahmad Rather, M Shafi Mir, Rafiq Ahmad, Ghulam Nabi Magray, Hilal Ahmad Mir, Ghulam Rasool Beigh, Ghulam Qadir Bandari, Bilal Ahmad Beigh, who came under fire by the forces, at Hawal while participating in Mirwaiz's funeral procession, on May 21st, 1990, and in remembrance of all other martyrs, known and unknown, let's pledge today to carry forward their sacred mission of realizing the will and aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, and turn our collective dream into reality. In Sha Allah!

Awami Action Committee