

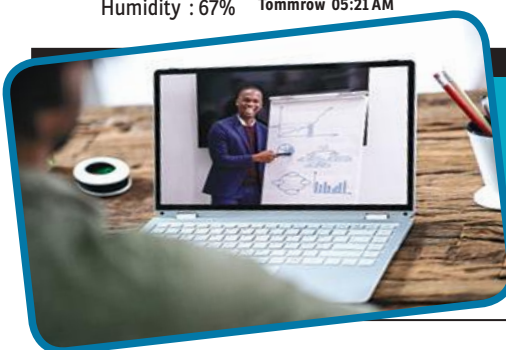


Maximum : 22°C
Minimum : 14°C
Humidity : 67%

SUNSET
Today 07:35 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:21 AM



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COVID-19 THE FUTURE OF COLLEGE IS ONLINE

Forty years ago, going to college was a reliable pathway for upward mobility. Today, it has become yet another 21st-century symbol of privilege for the wealthy – at least in the US. Through this period, tuition rates soared 260 per cent, double the rate of inflation. In 2019, the average cost of attending a four-year private college was over \$200,000. For a four-year public college, it was over \$100,000. To sustain these prices, more students are now admitted from the top 1 per cent of the income scale than the entire bottom 40 per cent at the top 80 colleges. Universities have also opened the floodgates to wealthy international students, willing to pay full tuition for the American brand.....

.....PANORAMA
P5

News Digest

Sopore Woman Delivers Baby, Tests Positive

Srinagar: A 35-year-old woman, who was discharged after giving birth to a baby in COVID dedicated hospital in Sopore was Thursday tested positive for coronavirus A lady (name withheld) from Chinkipora area of the town has been tested positive for Novel Coronavirus today, officials said. DrRudhina, in charge COVID-19 hospital Sopore said that they discharged the lady after she gave birth to a baby yesterday. "We took her samples, which came positive today. ● P-02

2 OGWs Held In North Kashmir: Police

Srinagar: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested two alleged militant associates in the frontier Kupwara district of north Kashmir. Acting on a credible input, police, army's 30RR and the personnel of CRPF 92 battalion arrested two militant associates of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit at a checkpoint in Kralgund area, a police spokesperson said. The accused, he said were involved in providing logistic support, shelter to active militants operating in the area besides assisting them financially and in transportation & travel. ● P-02

4 Gamblers Arrested In Awantipora

Srinagar: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested four gamblers in a raid in Khrew area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Shabir Ahmad Sheikh, MohdRafiqBhat, Arshid Ahmad Mir and Mohammad MaqboolNajar, all residents of Khrew were arrested after a raid was carried out at gambling site today, a police spokesperson said. He said that an amount of Rs 18,000 and playing cards were recovered from the spot. "Case FIR No. 26/2020 under relevant sections of law ● P-02

Teenage Girl Dies Of Electrocutation

Srinagar: A teenage girl died due to electrocution at her home in a village in Sumbal area of north Kashmir's Baniptora district. 17-year-old Bisma Jan was trying to repair a heating appliance at her home in Chewa village of Sumbal when she was electrocuted, reports said. She was rushed to nearby hospital where from she was referred to SMHS Hospital Srinagar, where doctors declared her brought dead. The body was handed over to the family members ● P-02

Police Arrests 10 Bovine 'Smugglers'

Jammu: Police foiled cattle smuggling bids by arresting 10 persons and rescuing over 120 animals at different places in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, a senior police officer said. A truck was intercepted by a police team in the Jakahani area and during its checking it was found that smugglers were illegally taking 18 bovines to Kashmir. ● P-02

MEA Downplays Ladakh Row, Says Engaged With China



File Pic: Anil Bhat

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday said it was engaged with China to resolve the border issue, in a carefully crafted reaction seen as virtual rejection of US President Donald Trump's offer to arbitrate between the two Asian giants in resolving their decades-old boundary dispute.

"We are engaged with the Chinese side to peacefully resolve it," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, replying to a volley of questions at an online media briefing.

The MEA spokesperson did not reply to questions like whether the US had approached India with the offer, whether New Delhi has communicated its response over it to Washington or whether the Trump administration has been briefed about the current standoff between Chinese and Indian soldiers in eastern Ladakh.

In the midst of this tense border standoff, Trump on Wednesday said he was "ready, willing and able to mediate" between the two countries.

"We have informed both India and China that the United States is ready, willing and able to mediate or arbitrate their now raging border dispute," Trump said in a tweet on Wednesday morning. Trump previously offered ● P-02

China Occupied 640 Sq Km Indian Territory: Report

NEW DELHI: China had occupied 640 sq km of territory in Eastern Ladakh during the second term of the UPA government under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Indian government has never admitted it, a media report said here on Thursday.

In 2013, former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, who was at the time Chairman of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) under the National Security Council of the Manmohan Singh government, after his visit to the region had informed the government that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) patrol had set a new Line of Actual

Control (LAC), thus occupying 640 sq km of Indian territory in Eastern Ladakh, IANS reported.

The un-demarcated LAC came into existence when China in 1962 occupied Aksai Chin area in erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and now part of the Union Territory of Ladakh. The state was bifurcated into two Union Territories in August last year.

"The land grab in 2013 by the PLA happened after India had signed nine agreements, including the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement (BDCA), the same year in March ahead of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India. Incidentally, ● P-02

UN Chief Calls For Restraint

With President Donald Trump tweeting that the US is ready to "arbitrate" between India and China to end their raging border dispute, a UN spokesperson said it is not for the Secretary General to opine who should mediate in the situation but urged that all parties involved should avoid any action that would increase tensions. In a surprise move, US President Trump on Wednesday offered to "mediate or arbitrate" the raging border dispute between India and China, saying he was "ready, willing ● P-02

Sharma Takes Oath As JKPSC Chairman

JAMMU- Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu today administered oath to the newly appointed Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, B.R. Sharma at the Raj Bhavan.

Sharma, a retired IAS Officer, has served as the Chairman, Staff Selection Commission (SSC) before the present appointment.

BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education; Shaleen Kabra, Principal Secretary to Government, Home Department; Bipul Pathak, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Achal Sethi, Secretary to Government, Department of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs and senior officers, besides family members of the newly appointed Chairman attended the swearing-in-ceremony.

One More Covid-19 Death In Kashmir, J&K Toll 27

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- A 55-year-old man from Khanpora area of Baramulla district has become the latest victim of novel coronavirus in Kashmir Valley, taking the death toll due to the deadly disease to 27 in Jammu and Kashmir, official said on Thursday.

Dr. Salim Khan, nodal officer for COVID-19 at the Government Medical College Srinagar said that the man was referred from GMC Hospital Baramulla with fever, respiratory distress to SMHS Hospital Srinagar on Wednesday.

Covid-19 Crosses 2000 Mark, 115 More Positive

Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir crossed two-thousand mark on Thursday after 115 more people tested positive for virus, officials said. "115 new COVID-19 cases were ● P-02

The patient died within hours of admission, he said.

His sample was taken for COVID-19 testing and the report came positive on Thursday, he added.

With this fatality, the death

Probe Ordered After 6 Discharged People Test Positive

District authorities here on Thursday ordered a time-bound inquiry regarding discharging six persons from a quarantine center in Tral without waiting for their test report which came ● P-02

toll due to the virus has gone upto 27 in J&K- 24 in Kashmir and 3 in Jammu.

So far Srinagar district has highest number of the fatalities—7 followed by ● P-02

Farooq Abdullah, 4 Others Named Delimitation Commission Members

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha Speaker has nominated Union Minister Jitendra Singh and four Parliament Members from J&K as "associate members" of the Delimitation Commission to assist the panel in redrawing parliamentary and assembly constituencies in the union territory.

The Delimitation Commission had recently written to Speaker of Lok Sabha Om Birla and presiding officers of the Assemblies of the four northeastern states to name associate members of the panel.

Jammu and Kashmir at present has no Legislative Assembly. It is a Union Territory with a provision of a legislature.

Members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies of states, for which the Delimitation Commission is set up, are drawn in as associate members to help the panel in its task.

According to a Lok Sabha bulletin of May 26, Farooq Abdullah, Mohammad Akbar Lone, Hasnain Masoodi, Jugal Kishore Sharma and union minister Jitendra Singh will be the panel's associate members from Jammu and Kashmir. The government had on March 6 constituted the Delimitation Commission, to be headed by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, to redraw Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the northeastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland. ● P-02

ELECTION COMMISSIONER SUSHIL Chandra and state election commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir and the four states will be its ex-officio members.

File Pic: Shah Junaid

Special Rules for Fast Track Recruitment Process Unveiled

- No domicile certificates needed at application stage
- Extra Weightage for Widows, Daily Wagers, those without any family member in Govt service
- 5 year age relaxation for Daily Wagers

Observer News Service

JAMMU- The Government has decided to approve the Jammu and Kashmir Appointment to Class-IV (Special Recruitment) Rules, 2020 to lay down the procedure as well as the criteria for selection to all Class IV posts.

The decision in this regard was taken in a meeting of the Administrative Council held under the Chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu. This was stated by Principal Secretary to the Government Power Development Department ● P-02



Govt spokesman Rohit Kansal flanked by Director Information SehrishAsghar addressing a presser in Jammu on Thursday.

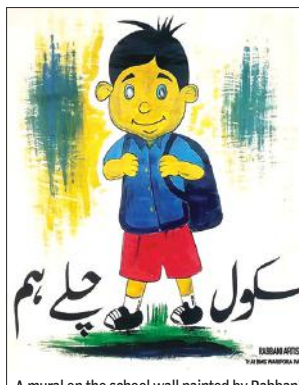
Mission Education: Two Teachers, And A Deprived Village

Tanveer Magrey

Barely two kilometres from Kreeri area of Baramulla, a new blacktop snakes through the Karewas, called 'Vudr' in Kashmir, and culminates at Tilgam. In between it fulfills an overdue demand of a village: brings the road connectivity to Waripora Payeen, a small quaint hamlet where pastoral life is too conspicuous to ignore.

Spread over 55 households, with three clans of Illahi, Yattoo and Thakur inhabiting it, the villagers eke out their living through manual labour.

One day, a decade back, when



A mural on the school wall painted by Rabbani

these struggle-hardened simpletons woke up to the news of the first government appointments in their vil-

lage, they rejoiced for days together. But the appointed teachers, Riyaz Rabbani and Fayaz Illahi, posted in their own and only village school, Government Middle School Waripora Payeen, knew they had a big task at their hands.

As infrastructural funds would come in spurts and children mostly engage with unnecessary errands to run for family, the duo wanted to stop both at the first priority.

Pooling in money from their own pockets, from teachers, and a shoestring budget from government would make enough to kickstart the renovation of the school.

"Beautiful setting always attracts the kids and with this aim

we started our journey to keep the drop-out and bunking at bay," teacher Rabbani says.

The revamped literary scene soon moved an eye or two in the village and whispers started growing in the nooks like sweet notions of lovers about this unprecedented change.

Fast forward to 2020, and the Government Middle School Waripora Payeen gives a semblance of a private school, until your gaze locks on the board nailed over the gate at the threshold of school premises.

Housed in three single-storey buildings—decked up with some Urdu couplets and murals done by Rabbani—the school caters ● P-02

MEA Downplays Ladakh

to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, a proposal which was rejected by New Delhi. Asked about the situation in Eastern Ladakh, Srivastava said India is committed to the objective of maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas with Chinese and Indian armed forces scrupulously follow the consensus reached by leaders of the two countries on the matter.

"At the same time, we remain firm in our resolve to ensuring India's sovereignty and national security," he said. The MEA spokesperson said the Indian troops take a very responsible approach towards border management and strictly follow the procedures laid out in various bilateral agreements and protocols with China to resolve any issue that may arise in the border areas.

"The two sides have established mechanisms both at military and diplomatic levels to resolve situations which may arise in border areas peacefully through dialogue and continue to remain engaged through these channels," he said.

Trump's unexpected offer came on a day when China took an apparently conciliatory tone by saying that the situation at the border with India is "overall stable and controllable."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Wednesday that both China and India have proper mechanisms and communication channels to resolve the issues through dialogue and consultations.

The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated after around 250 Chinese and Indian soldiers were engaged in a violent face-off on the evening of May 5 which spilled over to the next day before the two sides agreed to "disengage" following a meeting at the level of local commanders.

Over 100 Indian and Chinese soldiers were injured in the violence.

The incident in Pangong Tso was followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9.

It is learnt that both India and China are looking at a solution to the issue through talks.

On May 5, the Indian and the Chinese army personnel clashed with iron rods, sticks, and even resorted to stone-pelting in the Pangong Tso lake area in which soldiers on both sides sustained injuries.

In a separate incident, nearly 150 Indian and Chinese military personnel were engaged in a face-off near Naku La Pass in the Sikkim sector on May 9. At least 10 soldiers from both sides sustained injuries.

The troops of India and China were engaged in a 73-day stand-off in Doklam tri-junction in 2017 which even triggered fears of a war between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long LAC. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it.

Both sides have been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it is necessary to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.

China Occupied 640 Sq Km

the proposal for BDCA was presented by China, which had been keen to get it signed before Li's visit", the report added. In fact, the BDCA, like all other previous bilateral agreements signed by the two sides in 1993, 1996, 2005 and 2012, has remained ineffective in checking Chinese incursions in Ladakh. On an average, PLA intrusions occur 250-300 times annually and usually during July and August when the weather is favorable. From 2010 to 2013, China made nearly 600 incursions into the Indian side.

Over time, China has only added newer and greater claims on areas in Ladakh, in addition to the known disputed areas over which India and China fought in 1962.

In the 1950s, China had surreptitiously built a 179 km road in the Indian territory of Aksai Chin, which eventually led to a dispute and talks, followed by the 1962 war. After seven decades, from the 4,056 km disputed border between the two countries, China has slowly reduced it to merely 2,000 km in its claims. Apart from the military build-up, China has slowly invested in infrastructure in the disputed areas of Ladakh.

UN Chief Calls For Restraint

and able" to ease the tensions, amid the continuing standoff between the armies of the two Asian giants at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"...That would be for the parties involved to decide who they would want to mediate this, not for us to opine. We're, obviously, looking at the situation, and we would urge all the parties involved to avoid any action that would make the situation even more tense, Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said at the daily press briefing on Wednesday. Dujarric was asked about the tensions on the border between India and China and how concerned is the UN and the Secretary General. He was also asked if the Secretary General thinks that Trump would make a good mediator in the situation.

The nearly 3,500-km-long LAC is the de-facto border between India and China. Several areas along the LAC in Ladakh and North Sikkim have witnessed major military build-up by both the Indian and Chinese armies recently, in a clear signal of escalating tension and hardening of respective positions by the two sides even two weeks after they were engaged in two separate face-offs.

India has said that the Chinese military was hindering normal patrolling by its troops along the LAC in Ladakh and Sikkim and has strongly refuted Beijing's contention that the escalating tension between the two armies was triggered by trespassing of Indian forces across the Chinese side.

"Any suggestion that Indian troops had undertaken activity across the LAC in the Western sector or the Sikkim sector is not accurate. Indian troops are fully familiar with the alignment of the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas and abide by it scrupulously," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said at an online media briefing last week.

Govt Announces CAT

The notifications come around ten days after J&K high court had sought "competent authority's" view on suggestion for having one CAT bench each at Jammu and Srinagar.

Hearing separate petitions, a division bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Sanjay Dhar had asked Vishal Sharma, Assistant Solicitor General of India, to seek instructions from the "competent authority" about the suggestion made by Abhinav Sharma, president Jammu Bar Association, about one bench each at Jammu and Srinagar.

Abhinav Sharma had submitted that considering that on an average 25-30 cases are filed daily before both the benches of the High Court pertaining to service matters, one bench in Jammu and Kashmir may not be sufficient. "There should be at least be one bench each at Jammu and Srinagar, to start with," he said.

Earlier, the ASGI Vishal Sharma, had submitted that immediate steps are being taken to constitute bench of CAT in J&K and it has been decided to station a bench "here". But, he said, for the purpose proper infrastructure will be required, such as court rooms and the residential accommodation for the members of the bench.

"Number of members of bench will be decided by the Chairman of CAT considering the requirement as per the cases filed and transferred from High Court," he had said.

He had submitted that the moment accommodation is provided to CAT, required staff shall be deputed to take charge of files of the pending cases from the High Court.

Advocate General D C Raina had suggested one complex for

using as court by CAT at Jammu—the building where earlier Accountability Commission was functional. He had submitted that some other suitable vacant government building can also be short listed. He had also apprised the court that one building was short listed at Srinagar also but the same having been declared as heritage building another one is being located. (GNS)

HC Upholds Mian Qayoom's

that the "FIRs and the grounds of detention depict and relate to the secessionist ideology of the detainee, entertained, developed, nourished and nurtured by him over decades."

The Court further observed that Advocate General has submitted "the ideology nourished and nurtured by the detainee cannot be confined or limited to time, qualify it to be called stale or fresh, unless of course, the person concerned declares and establishes by conduct and expression that he has shunned the ideology."

The bench in its order observed that in the light of the argument taken by the Advocate General, "we leave it to the detainee to decide whether he would wish to take advantage of the stand of the Advocate General and make a representation to the concerned authorities to abide by it."

"Simultaneously, we also leave it to the discretion of the government and the concerned competent authority to take a decision in terms of relevant provisions of JK PSA on any such representation, if made by the detainee." "It is made clear that an adverse order on any such application, if made, shall not entail any legal proceeding, whatsoever," the Court observed.

Farooq Abdullah, 4 Others

Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and state election commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir and the four states will be its ex-officio members.

The commission will delimit the constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, a Law Ministry notification had earlier said.

The Commission had met on Thursday to review the progress of work so far.

Vehicle-Borne IED Blast

HM and JeM militants were planning to launch a big suicidal strike against security forces using car bomb. When the input matured on Wednesday, we developed it and nakas were placed in Pulwama by the security forces, Kumar told reporters here.

He said in the evening, when the suspected car, about which the police already had inputs, reached a naka, the security forces fired some warning shots and the militant turned the car away and fled.

"At another naka, the forces again fired some warning shots and the militant fled from the spot, taking advantage of darkness, and left the car behind. The forces used lights to check the vehicle from a distance after finding something suspicious. We tightened the cordon and waited for the first light of the day.

"This morning, a bomb disposal squad reached the spot and saw the vehicle was laden with explosives. The IED was diffused in a technical way by the police, Army and paramilitary CRPF. The Pulwama police, with the help of security forces, have averted a major tragedy and I congratulate all of the forces," he said.

The IGP said the police had inputs that JeM was planning to launch such an attack on the anniversary of Jang-e-Badr day the 17th day of Muslim fasting month of Ramzan – but could not undertake it then because the forces had taken pre-emptive measures.

"However, the input got developed on Wednesday and we suspect Adil, who is a HM militant but also works with JeM, and Fauji bhai, a Pakistani militant and JeM commander in Pulwama are involved in the planning of the attack, he said. Kumar said the militants were planning to target the state forces vehicles using about 40-45 kgs of explosives in the same manner as the February 14, 2019 Awantipora attack. "We are calling an expert team from the outside to investigate it. Since the explosive debris went up about 50 metres in the air, it seems that the weight of the explosives would have been about 40-45 kgs," he said.

After Blast, A Cracked

lies in ruins today after a powerful IED explosion battered the house, breaking doors and windows and causing a crack in the plinth.

"I'm devastated," an inconsolable Mir told Kashmir Observer. "I spent my hard earned money to raise this house and today it lies in ruins."

A farmer by profession, Mir has a family of four. His eldest son Mudasir is a medical student and younger one Athar is in sixth standard. His only daughter is a class 12 student.

Narrating the horror he witnessed since Wednesday night, Mir said that he and his family were having dinner when gunshots rattled the area around 9:45pm. Presuming it to be an attack on nearby Rajpora police station, Mir asked his family to finish their dinner quickly.

"Around 20 minutes later, a posse of security men knocked the main gate of our house," Mir continued. "The cops told me that their officer wants to see me. My family pleaded before them not to take me away. They left and returned later with my brother Bilal Ahmad and neighbor Nisar Ahmad." He said all of them were escorted to meet a senior officer. The officer, he said, gave a torch to his brother and asked him to check the number plate of the car parked around 30 feet from his house.

"My brother went near the car, captured the video and gave it to the officer. Around 2am, cops released us and asked us to stay indoors saying that the car was carrying an IED," Mir added.

Kashmir Observer reached out to the district police for their comments on the incident. A top officer refused, saying IGP Kashmir would brief the press soon.

Complementing all the security agencies for the "successful operation", IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar in a presser on Thursday informed that a timely action averted a major tragedy. "A suicide attacker jumped two checkpoints before leaving the vehicle behind late night yesterday at Ayengund area of Rajpora, Pulwama," IGP Kumar said.

At least 40 to 45 kg of explosive material were fitted in the vehicle, he said, and a blast could've been similar to the 2019 Pulwama explosion in south Kashmir that killed 40 CRPF personnel.

"They [militants] were planning the suicide attack on 17th of Ramadhan [Jang-e-Badr]," IGP said, "but couldn't do it due to our intensified operations against militants."

Meanwhile, Mir termed the hours before the blast as a long horrifying night.

"We couldn't sleep at all," he said. "All of us were huddled in a room waiting for the sun to rise."

Around 7am, Mir said that security personnel asked him to leave the house with his family and cattle towards a safer place. Minutes later, he said he heard a deafening sound and a thick curls of smoke emerging near his house.

"When I visited my house again, the doors and windows were broken into pieces, glasses strewn in all the rooms. Everything lied shattered and scattered," he lamented.

Many locals who visited Mir in flocks to express their solidarity with him claimed that the damage to the houses, including Mir's could have been avoided, if the government forces had taken all the precautions and taken the car to a desolate place before diffusing the IED it carried.

"There's a huge chunk of barren land where the IED could have been diffused," Muzaffar Ahmad, a local said. "Why did they choose the village and caused damage to the house?"

One More Covid-19 Death

Anantnag and Baramulla with five deaths each, Kulgam has reported four while Budgam and Jammu have two each and one death each has been reported from Bandipora and Udhampur.

Covid-19 Crosses 2000

detected in J&K. While 101 of them are from Kashmir, 14 are from Jammu," the officials said.

Among fresh cases, 45 cases were reported from Kupwara, 16 from Baramulla, 11 each from Srinagar & Budgam, eight each from Jammu & Shopian, seven from Anantnag, three each from Kathua & Pulwama, one each from Udhampur, Poonch & Reasi, they said.

They said 93 persons who tested positive are travellers.

The number of confirmed cases has now reached 2,036, out of which 1,636 are in Kashmir, while 400 are in Jammu, the officials said.

There are 1150 active cases of the coronavirus disease in J&K – 849 in Kashmir and 301 in Jammu – and 859 (763 from Kashmir and 96 from Jammu) patients have recovered, according to officials.

The J&K has witnessed 27 COVID-19 (24 from Kashmir, 3 from Jammu) deaths so far, including the one that took place on Thursday.

Probe Ordered After 6

out to be positive later.

In this regard, officials said that a committee headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner has been constituted. Deputy CMO and BDO Tral are its members, they said.

The committee shall submit its report to the Authorities within a period of 3 days.

Pertinently, a few days ago a group of returnees having travel history from outside J&K were quarantined at Tral and were subsequently sampled for COVID-19.

CMO Pulwama said that sampling, quarantining and discharge of returnees is to be done as per the government order and is the domain of Block Medical Officer and his medical teams.

Upon preliminary verification it was surfaced that BMO Tral has "negligently" discharged 6 persons from the quarantine Centre without waiting for their test reports, he said.

While taking cognizance of the matter, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Raghav Langer ordered the probe into the matter. He said such "sheer negligence" on the part of BMO Tral has made hundreds of lives vulnerable with a looming potential to spike a new series of infections in the district. He said Special teams were deputed overnight to the respective areas for quarantining of potential contacts and subsequent sampling of the same. He said that preterm discharging has made the lives of their family members and other contacts vulnerable. (GNS)

Special Rules for Fast

and Information, Rohit Kansal, who is also the Government Spokesperson, at a press conference here on Wednesday. Kansal informed that the decision of laying a quick and simple procedure for filling up of Class IV vacancies follows the decision of the Government to notify over 10,000 posts for Accelerated Recruitment at all levels- Doctors, Vets, Panchayat Accounts Assistants and Class-IV employees.

Kansal said that the accelerated recruitment process shall be started with Class IV vacancies. The Accelerated Recruitments Committee has already identified 7052 Class-IV vacant posts at the UT, Divisional and District cadre levels in various departments of the Government. All these posts shall be filled up through a Special Recruitment Drive. The concerned departments shall place their indents to the Services Selection Board (SSB) through the General Administration Department. The SSB shall be sole agency for the Special Recruitment Drive. He said that in order to simplify the process and cut down all delays, the Administrative Council has also ordered that all concerned departments will make necessary amendments/modifications in their relevant Recruitment Rules based on this decision alone and that no separate approval shall be sought for this purpose.

Speaking about the procedure and criterion laid down in the Jammu and Kashmir Appointment to Class-IV (Special Recruitment) Rules, 2020, the spokesperson said that these rules address many of the deficiencies of the earlier rules, adding that these Rules clearly define the procedure for referral of Class-IV vacancies, clubbing of the vacancies, preparation of wait lists, select lists etc. with the aim to fill all advertised vacancies within a period of one year, extendable by six months. Giving details of the selection process, Kansal said that the marks obtained in the written test of 100 marks will have primacy in the selection criteria. There will be no interview. He reiterated that no documents including domicile certificate will be required to be submitted at the time of filling the application form.

Explaining the significant features of the rules, the spokesperson added that the rules provide for additional weightage to various marginalized categories. He elaborated that that in order to give benefit to the marginalized sections comprising of widows, divorced/judicially separated women and orphan girls keeping into consideration the extreme compassion involved in their case, an additional weightage of five marks shall be given to such candidates. Similarly, an additional weightage of five marks shall be given to those candidates with no family member in government service. Daily Rated Workers and other similar candidates who have been engaged for at least five years shall be given an additional weightage of five marks. They shall also be given a 5 years age relaxation in the upper age limit.

Kansal reminded that the procedure and rules for domicile certificate had already been notified under The Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020. He added that these Rules prescribe a very simple and time bound procedure for issuance of Domicile Certificates. He said that PRC Holders will be eligible on the basis of their PRCs alone and no other document shall be required in their case. Kashmiri migrants too can get the Domicile certificate on production of either a PRC or Certificate of registration as a migrant. A special limited provision has also been made for bonafide migrants and bonafide displaced persons who may have not registered so far.

The certificates shall be issued expeditiously and there shall be a timeline of 15 days for issuance of the certificate after which the applicant shall be free to approach an Appellate Authority. There are provisions for penalties and revisional powers. The rules also have a provision that applications for grant of Domicile Certificate can be submitted either physically or electronically online. The Competent Authority can also issue domicile certificate(s) electronically. The procedure has an inbuilt mechanism to ensure speed and transparency and no one need to have any apprehensions on this count.

Mission Education: Two

to the 52 students from first to eighth grade. Each classroom has benches according to the strength of the students. A proper ironed uniform, tie, and a school identity card clipped with the lanyard, make students of this school look second to none. A well-maintained toilet has come up against the school wall. A small godown is sandwiched between office and other

building. Doubled up as kitchen, two ladies are spotted there – winnowing rice and cleaning other eatables meant for mid-day meal.

Apart from the campus overhaul, the duo's efforts have completely transformed the academic scene of the school. Conducted by District Institute of Education & Training (DIET), the result registers of Class 8 of last eight years that the writer himself went through reads the "pass" on every page.

"Being the first graduate from Waripora Payeen, Rabbani along with other teacher has improved the education graph in the village," says Gulam Mohammad Bhat, the school headmaster, calling the duo's posting as blessing for villagers.

Having seen the travails of poverty at first hand, Rabbani asserts that only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.

"I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth but have worked hard to make a cut in government sector," the affable teacher says, while laying bare the efforts he made in his career.

"I would bind books, paint the walls, made signboards to fund my education. My teachers would drop by, every now and then, with a helping hand to keep my education journey on the rails."

Rabbani, a journalism graduate from Degree College Baramulla, continues that his students have been doing really good at academic front, as well as in various co-curricular activities for a long time now, thus setting a kind of record in the zone. As students kept on passing with flying colours, the literal landscape of the village also witnessed an unprecedented change.

Naseer Yatoo, a son of a farmer, is one of the alumni of this school, embellishing the CV of the school, with his academic acumen.

Pursuing his graduation in Political Science from Dayal Singh College which is affiliated with Delhi University, Naseer reasons the lack of counseling, besides poverty, behind the educational backwardness in his village.

"While I was lucky enough to get a proper counselling at right time, which landed me in a Delhi campus, others continue to falter," informs Naseer who enrolled under the Prime Minister Scholarship Scheme at his college.

Though everyone has not the stars on their side but Naseer's journey to Delhi brought home the point that you can avail these schemes and let your children's education go unhindered despite financial hiccups.

"Now, a lot has changed in our village," continues Naseer, who ranked 11 in Arts stream in the entire Kashmir division, in his Class 12. "People take a mileage out of different schemes for the education of their kids which is a positive sign for the village."

While many credit the teacher duo for the change, some students still end up in quarries and in fields because the tentacles of poverty are too hard to snap off.

"Most village students drop out because of the hand-to-mouth income back home," complains Fateh Mohammad Ilahi, the elder Panch, sporting a trimmed beard and a skullcap. "They would've gone ahead in their lives and careers, but due to poverty, they're forced to start earning to supplement the family income."

The village, therefore, has half a dozen graduates—some of whom vainly continue to apply for different posts, while other disillusioned lots have given up and landed in the fields as sun-tanned workers.

Among them is Hafizullah Ilahi, who does many odd jobs, to keep the hearth going.

A Humanities graduate from Degree College Baramulla, Hafizullah's dreams hit the dead-end when he witnessed financial conditions at home in dire straits.

"Poverty doesn't allow you to sit home and prepare for exams, it takes away that luxury," says Hafizullah, with a wry smile. "They would've gone ahead in their lives and careers, but due to poverty, they're forced to start earning to supplement the family income."

Aware of these disadvantaged stories, the teacher duo, raised by hard times, tirelessly works to educate and empower their own people.

And while acknowledging their efforts, one of their students, Sahil Rasheed says the duo always goes out of their ways for students.

"They teach us in a friendly way which gives us freedom to pose questions whenever we've doubts regarding any subject," says Sahil, as his classmates nod in approval. "They make the school a much desired place for us."

Much of this compassionate connection with their students comes from their own deprived upbringings.

"In my student days," says Fayaz Ilahi, another teacher, "I would give a miss to classes on two days every week."

During those two days, he says, he along with other village boys would work as labourers to earn their school fee and finance their needs.

"That's how," he says, "I've grown up and studied."

The hard life used to make him melancholic, quite often, but Ilahi would pledge to change it someday.

In 2010, his moment came, when he was recruited as Rehbar-e-Taleem teacher, on his Class 12 qualification basis, and was posted in his own village. He got regularised in 2015.

"In all these years, I've seen many village boys ending up in fields and quarries," Ilahi continues. "We're trying to shore up their spirits, so that they could earn their livelihood in a much respectable way."

Sopore Woman Delivers

Our staff including a senior doctor and other Para medical staff who had come into her contact was put under quarantine," she said.

She added that the family members of the lady have also been kept under quarantine at her home—(KNO)

2 OGWs Held In North

"Incriminating materials including arms & ammunition were recovered from their possession. Case FIR number 68/2020 under relevant section of law has been registered at Police Station Kralgund and further investigation in the matter is in progress," the police spokesperson said.

He identified the accused as Asif Ahmad Dar of Tulwari Langate and Muzamil Ahmad Peer of Muqam Shahwali.

4 Gamblers Arrested

has been registered in Police Station Khrew," the spokesperson said.

Teenage Girl Dies

for last rites after completion of legal formalities, the officer said—(KNO)

Police Arrests 10 Bovine

Senior Superintendent of Police Rajiv Pandey said.

The animals were rescued and the accused arrested, he said. Similarly, 105 bovines were rescued from BattalBallian, Jakhani and Bharat Nagar areas. The animals taken on foot by the smugglers towards Kashmir without any permission, Pandey said.

A total of 10 smugglers -- Sameer Ahmed, Mohammad Rafi, Mohammad Sharif, Manzoor Ali, MohammadAsif, Showkat Ali, BhagHussain, Noor ilahi, Mohammad Din, and Shabir Ahmed -- were arrested, he said.

Cases were registered at Police Station Udhampur under relevant sections of law and further investigation is on, the official said.

6 Persons Discharged From Quarantine Center Test Positive, Probe Ordered

Pulwama- District authorities here on Thursday ordered a time-bound inquiry regarding discharging six persons from a quarantine center in Tral without waiting for their test report which came out to be positive later.

In this regard, officials said that a committee headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner has been constituted. Deputy CMO and BDO Tral are its members, they said. The committee shall submit its report to the Authorities within a period of 3 days.

Pertinently, a few days ago a group of returnees having travel history from outside J&K were quarantined at Tral and were subsequently sampled for COVID-19.

CMO Pulwama said that sampling, quarantining and discharge of returnees



is to be done as per the government order and is the domain of Block Medical Of-

ficer and his medical teams. Upon preliminary verification it was

surfaced that BMO Tral has “negligent-ly” discharged 6 persons from the quarantine Centre without waiting for their test reports, he said.

While taking cognizance of the matter, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Raghav Langer ordered the probe into the matter. He said such “sheer negligence” on the part of BMO Tral has made hundreds of lives vulnerable with a looming potential to spike a new series of infections in the district.

He said Special teams were deputed overnight to the respective areas for quarantining of potential contacts and subsequent sampling of the same. He said that preterm discharging has made the lives of their family members and other contacts vulnerable. (GNS)

Admission Process to Polytechnics in J&K Revamped



JAMMU- The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, G C Murmu, approved the proposal of the Technical Education Department bringing in key reforms in the department. The AC accorded sanction to the change in nomenclature, structural and procedural reforms and revamping of admission process to the polytechnics.

The decision to change in the nomenclature of the department from “Technical Education Department” to “Department of Skill Development” and accordingly “Directorate of Technical Education” to “Directorate of Skill Development” comes in the backdrop of the shift in focus from imparting technical education in Polytechnics and ITIs, to creation of a skilled manpower base, in tune with the contemporary demands of the market and industry. The change will make things more relatable to the renewed emphasis on skill for self employment, by the Government of India.

The Administrative Council also ap-

proved hiring of a consultancy to review the courses being offered at Polytechnics and ITIs, keeping in view the evolving market scenario and to make appropriate recommendations for future reforms in the trades/subjects being taught, new subjects to be offered, changes in syllabus and requirement of new labs/equipment to help revive these courses.

Further, the admission process to the Polytechnics has also been revamped. The mandate of the admission process to Polytechnics has been shifted from Board of Professional Entrance Examination (BOPEE) to Board of Technical Education (BOTE). The respective institutes shall also have the mandate to fill in vacant seats of diploma courses, if any, after BOTE counselling is over, at their own level. The admission to Polytechnics shall be done on the basis of academic merit in Class 10th by the Board of Technical Education as per AICTE norms, dispensing with the process of entrance examination for admission to the said institutes from 2021.

Major project for conservation of environment initiated in Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR : The Srinagar district administration has initiated a major environmental project around the Jhelum river.

The project comprises multiple components ranging from soil and moisture conservation to plantation to environmental education in schools to research-based planning and impact assessment.

This was informed in a meeting of convened here under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary.

Under the environmental education component of the project all schools up to one kilometre from the Jhelum river on both sides will be provided a grant of one lac rupees and environmental clubs of students will be created in them.

The aim is to utilise the services of schools and students and help protect environment and promote advancement of environmental conservation.

Under the soil and moisture conservation component of the project the district administration is providing 2 crore rupees to the Forest department for taking up activities aimed at care for environment.

It involves initiating various activities to protect the environment and promote a culture that cares for it and works towards advancement of environmental conservation of the environment.

The Forest department will involve all local stakeholders and seek their advice and assistance in this effort. Some of the stakeholders to be involved therein will be environmental bodies and

NGOs associated with efforts for environmental conservation in J&K in general and Srinagar in particular.

In order to ensure that this project and its aims as envisaged thereunder are taken to their logical conclusion the administration has collaborated with the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology to guide it.

The SKUAST will provide relevant guidance and will be involved in all relevant efforts — right from the planning to the impact assessment.

The meeting also approved provision of relevant requirements like boats to the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to facilitate taking up of works entrusted to them or agencies it might involve as part of this project.

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
06 Shawwal 1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 40
ZUHR	12: 28
ASR	5:26
Magrib	7:38
ISHA	9:16

This Day In History

- 1988 - Pakistan President Zia ul-Haq dismisses government and disbands parliament
- 1989 - Student protesters in China construct a replica of Statue of Liberty
- 1990 - An earthquake hits Peru, killing over 200
- 1990 - Boris Yeltsin is elected President of the Russian Republic
- 1996 - Space Shuttle STS 77 Endeavour 11), lands
- 1997 - Span scientists announce new human species in 780,000 year old fossil
- 1999 - Space Shuttle Discovery completes the first docking with the International Space Station.
- 2001 - Natural gas futures plunge 6% to a 10-month low on speculation that growing US inventories will help power plants meet summer demand for air-conditioning
- 2004 - The World War II Memorial is dedicated in Washington, D.C.
- 2012 - Facebook's problematic public listing could cost those involved \$115 million from technical glitches
- 2012 - Indonesian police make the biggest drug bust in ten years after seizing over a million ecstasy pills valued at \$45 million
- 2014 - President Obama approves US military training of 'moderate' Syrian rebels to fight the regime of Bashar al-Assad and al Qaeda-linked groups
- 2015 - Heat wave in India centered in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states is reported to have killed 1800 people in a week

From KO Archives

Separatist leaders get travel forms

SRINAGAR - A day after the Centre gave clearance to the high-profile visit of the separatists to Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK), the moderate Hurriyat and JKLF leaders were today issued forms to travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June two.

The forms were issued to the separatist leaders by the Regional Passport office here this afternoon.

“We have collected five forms for our leaders to travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus on June two,” a spokesman of the Hurriyat moderate faction led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq told PTI here.

The DFP, led by Shabir Ahmad Shah took 15 forms for its slate-level delegation to PcK, a party spokesman said.

The JKLF-led by Mohammad Yaseen Malik, who yesterday announced his decision to undertake his trip, also collected the application forms for its 17-member delegation.

Regional Passport Officer S L Sreeramulu said the forms have been issued to the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders. “Once they submit the forms, the verification process will start,” he added. Sreeramulu also made it clear that the applications of the separatist leaders would be processed as per the established procedures.

“Our position is that the Government, as per existing practice, will consider applications by individuals to travel by bus from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad. This would be the basis on which the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders would apply for travel on the bus,” he added.

Union Home Secretary V K Duggal had also said in New Delhi yesterday that the Centre is not averse to the Hurriyat leaders visiting PcK, but asserted that they will have to go through the necessary verification procedures for travelling on the Srinagar- Muzaffarabad Bus.

Mr Sreeramulu said the Centre has given the clearance to Issue forms to the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders. “There is no problem in this regard now.” he added.

The Regional Passport Officer said one form had been given to each applicant as per the set procedure.

Asked ‘if the Hurriyat and other separatist leaders will be allowed to travel beyond PcK, Mr Sreeramulu said as per the agreed procedure between India and Pakistan, no person aboard the Srinagar- Muzaffarabad bus can travel beyond PcK.

“Talking to UNI senior Hurriyat leader Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat said the only formality left for them is to submit the travel forms now.

“We have to submit forms. Rest depends on Indian and the Pakistani governments...also the PcK administration,” he added..

(Kashmir Observer, 29 May, 2005)

Government of Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer Special Sub Division Gurez.
Tender Notice NO.(04)for the year 2020-21 Dtd:-20-05-2020

Tender are invited for and on behalf of the lieutenant Governor of the UT J&K, the Executive Engineer Special Sub Division Gurez hereby invites sealed tenders affixed with Rs.4/- revenue stamps from the registered PWD Contractors of UT J&K,, whose registration cards are valid for current financial year in terms of standing rules for the work.

The tenders should reach to the office of Executive Engineer Special Sub Division Gurez by or before 05-06-2020 up to 2.00 P.M .The tenders will be opened on the same date or any other date ,convenient to the opening authority in presence of the contractors who may like to be present. In case the last date of receipt of tenders is holiday, the tenders will be received on the next Working day up to 2.00 P.M. The contractors should not in any case quote more than one rate. Payment to the contractors will be made as and when funds are available to the department.

The tender document will be issued by Executive Engineer Special Sub Division Gurez on production of valid registration cards and GST No against cash payment as shown against each work up to 03-06-2020 during office hours.

The detailed terms and conditions forming annexure to the NIT shall be binding in to for all works advertised during 2020-21.

S.NO	Name of the work	Advst cost	Earnest Money	Class of contractor	Time for completion	Cost of T.D	Major of Account
1.	Restoration of Markoot Khul by way of Slit/Slip clearance from RD.0 to 125 Mtrs at spots.	Rs: 0.24 lacs.	Rs:480/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
2.	Restoration of Malik Khul Dawar by way of slit/slip clearance RD. 0 to 1650 Mtrs	Rs: 0.43 lacs.	Rs:860/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
3	Restoration of Panzoo Khul by way of slit clearance from Rd. o – 1500 Mtrs	Rs: 0.27 lacs.	Rs:540/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
4	Restoration of Haba Khatoon Khul by way of slit/ slip clearance.	Rs: 0.19 lacs.	Rs:380/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
5	Restoration of Achoora Power Channel by way of slit clearance.	Rs: 0.50 lacs.	Rs:500/-	SHG	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
6	Restoration of left branch Churwan Khul by way of slit/slif clearance	Rs: 0.23 lacs.	Rs:460/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
7	Restoration of Right Branch Churwan Khul by way of slit/ slip clearance	Rs: 0.17 lacs.	Rs:340/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
8	Restoration of Khakar Khul by way of slit clearance from Rd.0- 1500 mtrs at sport.	Rs: 0.27 lacs.	Rs:540/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
9	Restoration of Khandiyal Khul by way of slit clearance from Rd.0.1500 mtrs at sport.	Rs: 0.24 lacs.	Rs:480/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
10	Restoration of Avay Khul by way of slit clearance from Rd.0-800 Mtrs at spots.	Rs: 0.14 lacs.	Rs:280/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
11	Restoration of sukhyal khul Churwan by way of slit/slip clearance.	Rs: 0.28 lacs.	Rs:560/-	DEE	(05) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R

No:-EE/SSDG/ 103-112
Dt: 20-05-2020
DIPK-1073/20

Executive Engineer,
Special Sub Division Gurez

Head Draftman

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU KASHMIR
**Office Of The Executive Engineer
P.H.E Division Budgam H.Q: Budgam.**

No.-: PHED/Bud/404-38
Dated:-23.05.2020

CORRIGENDUM

Reference:- This Office e-NIT No. 02/PHEDB/Civil of 2019–20 issued under No. PHEDB/CS/151-74 Dated 04/05/2020.

There was technical error while formulating BoQ for all the three works advertised vide this office above referred e-NIT which have been rectified and stood uploaded afresh. As such the interested bidders are strictly advised to download a fresh copy of the BoQs.

All other terms and conditions of the NIT shall remain unchanged.

Sd/-
(Er. Gurmit Singh)
Executive Engineer,
PHE Division Budgam

DIPK-1062/20

**Office Of The Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla**

**Short term e-Tender
NIT No: E- 13 of 2020-21**

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, sealed e-tenders in two covers, affixed with 6.00 revenue stamps, are invited from experienced, reputed and registered firms/ genuine manufacturer/authorized distributors/dealers/workshop owners / SSI Unit holders with manufacturing authorization for the following work:

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of TD	Estimated Cost (in Lacs)	E/M	Validity of offer	Major Head	Tender ID
1	Design, supply, installation and commissioning of 200 KVA Voltage Stabilizer and allied works at Vighbal-I LIS of MISD Sopore.	200.00	4.00	8, 000	60 days	Capex Budget	2020_IFC_97273_1

The tenders consisting of qualifying/eligibility criteria, technical specifications, general and commercial terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the web-site <https://jktenders.gov.in> from 27-05-2020 (04:30pm).

The bids shall be submitted in electronic format on the website <https://jktenders.gov.in> from 27-05-2020(6:00 pm) to 02-06-2020 (11:00 am). The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on the time and date, in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case offices happen to be closed due to holiday, or any other reason, on the schedule date of opening, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the scheduled time and venue.

The complete bidding shall be online. The bidders must upload their active mobile No.'s & mail ID. Prequalification bids shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla on 03-06-2020 at (12:00 am) after which the financial bids of qualifying bidders shall be opened on the same day. The pre bid meeting regarding clarification shall be held in the office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla on 30-05-2020 (11:00 am).

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 180 days from the date of opening of bids.

No. MIDB/CC-02/558-567
Dated: 26-05-2020

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Baramulla

DIPK-1060/20

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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NC Rumblings

In an indication of some rift within the ranks of National Conference, the party's chief spokesperson Ruhullah Mehdi has shown his resentment over the prolonged silence of the top leaders about the revocation of Article 370. Mehdi didn't hide his anger over a piece his colleague Tanvir Sadiq wrote in a local daily. The piece has urged New Delhi to let the parties in the Valley resume their political activities. The piece has also given hints of reconciliation should centre review the domicile law and restore the 4G internet. Sadiq didn't bring up the Article 370 or seek its restoration, an omission that has apparently grated on Mehdi.

It is a fact that the NC has largely maintained silence over post August 5 developments. And this policy didn't change even after the release from detention of Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah. Both the leaders have, however, said that their silence was in deference to ongoing pandemic. They also want all other leaders to be released before they come out with a future course of action.

However, government has yet to make up its mind about the release of the PDP president Mehbooba Mufti and many other leaders and activists. Similarly, the IAS officer turned politician Shah Faesal also remains in detention. Government had earlier shifted the People's Conference leader Sajjad Gani Lone to his residence. It would be interesting to see how long more the government waits before it takes a call on their release.

The release of Abdullah and Omar reflected the growing confidence of New Delhi in the improvement of the situation in the erstwhile state. It sees the less likelihood of the situation tipping into turmoil now. More so, in the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19 that has plunged the world into a deep crisis. Most of the world has imposed lockdown to fight the spread of the disease. After his release, Omar has promised to play a role in the fight against the disease.

So far the leaders who have been released have maintained silence on Article 370, lending some credence to the reports that they have made good behaviour promises to get their freedom. However, it is only when the senior leaders including Mehbooba are released that we can expect to get some sense of how they will respond to the altered state of affairs. But considering all these leaders have invariably called for peace in the Valley, the government should release them and let them put their point of view before the people. Not doing so, will only prolong the current uncertainty, no matter how normal the Valley might appear on the outside. At the same time, the NC as a party cannot afford to wait endlessly for the release of other leaders before making its position on post August 5 developments clear and taking a stand on it.

OTHER OPINION

Virus Alert

Donald Trump has fallen victim to COVID-19 — not because of his failure to contain its spread in the US, which faces the figure of 1,00,000 deaths. The electorate will, or will not, address executive bungling during the pandemic in November. But unreliable medical advice during the public health emergency had goaded Twitter into alerting users to fake news and outlandish claims with a blue exclamation mark. Now, for the first time ever, that damning mark has appeared beneath a tweet from a president who won office partly by leveraging Twitter. In response to a poll which found that two out of three Americans would avoid polling booths in the elections later this year, he had tweeted that postal ballots would be “substantially fraudulent”. Since he offered no evidence to back this charge, his tweet was flagged by Twitter as “unsubstantiated”.

A querulous Trump has shot back that Twitter is stifling free speech, and that he, as president, “will not allow it to happen”. This face-off is unprecedented, because social media platforms and Trump enjoy a symbiotic relationship, like oaks and mistletoe, or mistletoe and Getafix. The commotion raised by Trump and trumpety drives traffic to the platforms, which pay back the favour by serving as power amplifiers. It is also a dilemma, because the internet business model is based on free speech, but fake news hurts the credibility of platforms. The cost-benefit analysis is fairly delicate and not completely logical. As a matter of business caution, the bombastopithecuses have been allowed to roam free.

But the coronavirus pandemic clarified the issue, because fake medical advice is lethal. Facebook committed to deleting misleading information on the pandemic, while Twitter played it intelligently — don't delete nothing, but flag weird claims and point readers to more reliable sources. This is the post-censorship route to information management.

The Indian Express

A Pandemic Tests India's Federal Credentials

BASIT AMIN MAKHDOOMI

THE ADVENT of Covid-19 has not only put to test the health apparatus of our country but has also inflicted a gruelling examination on our economy, polity and social well being as a nation. The two and a half month-long national lockdown has exposed fault lines in a system under stress from competing alternate visions of what India should be. It has also brought to fore the strain that the federal setup has had to bear in handling this life threatening pandemic.

Federalism has always been considered to be an essential principle of our constitution. Our Supreme court has in a catena of decisions, including the landmark case of Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala held it to be part of the sacred “basic structure” of our constitution which in turn makes it imperative to be followed in letter and spirit for a coordinated functioning of centre and states. However 2020 and Covid19 have brought along challenges that have exposed a tussle possibly sharpened between the BJP's push for a unitary structure at the Centre and the demand from regional parties for greater autonomy to the states to strengthen the spirit of federalism envisaged in the Constitution.

Deviations from Federal Principles

In our fight against this pandemic the strategy adopted from the day one has been top down centric in nature with instructions being passed from the centre under the Disaster Management Act 2005 and the states have had a minimal or extraneous role. The states were directed or mandated only to increase the restrictions but powers for making dilutions wherever necessary were easily trampled upon by the centre.

From the very first lockdown announced by the PM, there are not ample evidences to suggest how far the states were drawn into consultation before announcing this first of its kind lockdown across the length and breadth of our country. The first straw of bad blood between the centre and the states came when Kerala tried to announce its own set of relaxations in Covid-19-free zones, hoping to sow the first seeds of economic revival. This was done keeping in view its best performance in terms of Covid response and its achievement with almost near perfect recovery rate. This didn't go down well with the centre and the Union home ministry reaction was immediate and sharp, forcing a chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan to beat a hasty retreat.

A similar situation was noticed during a consistent conflict of opinion between the Centre and West Bengal government in their respective strategies of tackling this virulent disease. This disagreement on managing things between the two has negatively impacted the effort of halting this disease effectively thereby leading to colossal loss of lives. Another instance of conflict arose when Centre without proper consultation with the states banned alcohol sales during the country's national lockdown to contain the virus thereby blocking a crucial source of direct tax income for states struggling to bolster their health infrastructure and provide food to millions left jobless. The loss of liquor tax revenues — an



estimated 7 billion rupees (\$92 million) a day prompted states like Punjab and Maharashtra to revoke the ban on liquor in order to meet its emergent needs.

Several states have also criticised centre for its plans to centralize the purchase of coronavirus medical and protective kits, as well as a special virus relief fund PM-CARES that falls outside the remit of the federal auditor. Unilaterally zoning of the districts into red, orange and green during Lockdown 1 & 2 by the centre also didn't logic out for states and they were aggrieved of not being taken into loop on this. The issue of transportation of migrant workers also generated tussle with regards to the varied opinions on the modes and means of such transport. This all has enormously lead to even more bitterness between the centre and states which had been already flared up with the passage of citizenship Amendment Act and there divergent opinions on it.

Federal Scheme and Disaster Management

The seventh schedule of the constitution has clearly demarked the areas for which the centre and state have exclusive domain to legislate, and then there are certain areas which have been placed in the concurrent list thereby empowering both centre and states to legislate upon. Areas which do not find a mention in any of the three aforementioned areas are considered to be residuary in nature and constitution bestows this residuary power upon the centre.

Even though this specific demarcation of subjects has led to an almost crystal clarity for legislating power centres but certain grey areas have always had a tendency to pit one legislative centre against the other thereby breeding bitterness and confusion. The term “Disaster Management” as a field of legislation does not find its place in any of the three lists and therefore bare a reading of Article 248 read with Entry 97 of List I makes it residuary in nature, conferring mastery of centre over it. The centre is therefore of the considerate view that since Disaster Management includes a pandemic, they are exclusive masters of devising rules and guidelines on it and states don't have much discretion in question-

ing their strategies.

A different view of the same subject indicates that since subjects of “Public health & sanitation” are prescribed under the Entry 6 of List II makes management and legislation on this issue and exclusive domain of the respective states. The states feel Covid-19 is a public health emergency and this entitles states their autonomy to legislate and strategise according to their respective needs. These two views/interpretations of this pandemic has many a times brought centre and states at loggerheads with each other with common masses bearing the brunt.

Practising Cooperative Federalism

The federal scheme of things laid down by the constitution leaves no doubt that although union has more powers in certain areas but that does not entitle them to demean the existence of states in our polity. It needs to be appreciated that it is this autonomy of powers conferred upon the states which differentiates them from the centrally administered territories which are relegated to the status of a pawn in this federal set up enjoying no autonomy in their functioning.

Pursal of Entry 29 of List III reveals that the centre and states have a concurrent jurisdiction to legislate on matters of inter-state spread of contagious diseases, thereby clearly spelling the technicalities to be adopted leaving no room for conflicts. Provision like these had been envisioned to keep a tab on the difference of opinions that might arise in testing times like these.

Similarly preamble to the Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 prescribes its objective is to provide for better prevention of the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases. The Epidemic Diseases Act equally empowers the state governments and the central government to take measures as may be warranted or necessary to control the further spread of disease. Thus, any state government, when satisfied that any part of its territory is threatened with an outbreak of a dangerous disease, may adopt or authorize all measures, including quarantine, to prevent the outbreak of the disease. Similarly, the central government, when satisfied that there is an imminent threat of an outbreak of an epidemic disease and that the provisions of the law at that time are insufficient to

prevent such an outbreak, may take measures and prescribe regulations allowing for the inspection of any ship or vessel leaving or arriving at any port and for the detention of any person arriving or intending to sail. This all leaves leaves no legroom for showcasing domination by the centre or the states.

It needs to be acknowledged that in changing times the traditional federal conundrum of choosing between a dominant centre or enhanced state autonomy has undergone a shift with the emergence of the doctrine of “cooperative federalism”. This doctrine requires the union and the states to work in harmony towards achieving larger goals of good governance and overall development. The Supreme Court recently in the case of Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India, has unequivocally held that the union and the states need to embrace a collaborative/cooperative federal architecture for achieving coordination. In collaborative federalism, the union and the state governments should express their readiness to achieve a common objective and work together to achieve it. Both the Centre and the states must work within their spheres and not think of any encroachment.

The federal system of governance was adopted by the forefathers of this nation to unite separate states into a Union without sacrificing their own fundamental political integrity. Separate states, therefore, united with an expectation to share equally in formulation of the basic policies applicable to all and participate in the execution of decisions made in pursuance of such basic policies. The approach of the Centre and the States on tackling certain issues may be different at times but this should not distract them from their ultimate goal and objective. This constitutional objective as enshrined in the Constitution should be the guiding star to them to move on the path of harmonious coexistence and interdependence. Treading this path of collaborative federalism will in a long way help us sustain the strength of constitutional functionalism in our welfare state.

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Mind Your Words

It takes not a second for tongue to transform into a snake. The snake can sting anyone it wishes, not bothering to know if the prey could bear with its venom. The problem lies not in the snake, but in mind. It will be fair to say that a tongue doesn't transform into some venomous entity unless brain allows it. Thus, the role of brain can't be denied. This brain can do wonders if used rightly. But, it has been misused since time immemorial, this tongue turning into a snake induced by dirty mind is no exception.

When a dirty mind sees a person who has different facial complexion, when it sees someone blush while talking, when it sees someone not physically stable, when it sees someone kind-hearted, and when it sees someone taciturn; it quickly sends a message to the tongue to perform in inhumane way - “You're black.” “You're dumb.” “You're a woman.” “You resemble a skelton.” It rips apart someone else's heart, thier dirty minds don't mind. It is as if they have this inner compulsion - perhaps to feed thier

egoistic mind - to sting others, the kindhearted, who choose to suffer than to resist.

Sometimes the snake emits so much venom out of its mouth that the victim is left with no choice but to commit suicide. Same was the case with a Canadian girl, Amanda Todd, who being bullied took her own life away. There are many people who are on the brink of doing something deleterious to thier lives, reason behind remains these nasty human beings who speak without thinking once, what effects thier words could

have on others.

As for perfection, nobody is. Every human being has flaws. Only God is perfect. We, humans, have this superb organ called brain. So not to be used in such a way as to break someone else's heart, to affect someone else's pshychological being. Instead of picking holes, sweet fragrance should come out of our mouths. Our approach should be loving in nature. That's what defines a human. True human.

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COVID-19: The future of college is online

Continuation of virtual classes may be beneficial even after the coronavirus is over

HANS TAPARIA

The mightiest of institutions are bracing for the worst. Harvard, home to the country's largest endowment, recently announced drastic steps to manage the fallout, including salary cuts for its leadership, hiring freezes and cuts in discretionary spending

Forty years ago, going to college was a reliable pathway for upward mobility. Today, it has become yet another 21st-century symbol of privilege for the wealthy -- at least in the US. Through this period, tuition rates soared 260 per cent, double the rate of inflation.

In 2019, the average cost of attending a four-year private college was over \$200,000. For a four-year public college, it was over \$100,000. To sustain these prices, more students are now admitted from the top 1 per cent of the income scale than the entire bottom 40 per cent at the top 80 colleges.

Universities have also opened the floodgates to wealthy international students, willing to pay full tuition for the American brand.

Covid-19 is about to ravage that business model. With America now the epicentre of the pandemic and bungling its response, many students are looking to defer enrolment.

The mightiest of institutions are bracing for the worst. Harvard, home to the country's largest endowment, recently announced drastic steps to manage the fallout, including salary cuts for its leadership, hiring freezes and cuts in discretionary spending

Foreign students are questioning whether to register at all, with greater uncertainty around visas and work prospects. The "Trump Effect" had already begun to cause declining foreign student enrolment over the past three years.

The mightiest of institutions are bracing for the worst. Harvard, home to the country's largest endowment, recently announced drastic steps to manage the fallout, including salary cuts for its leadership, hiring freezes and cuts in discretionary spending.

Partial remission of tuition

Most other universities have been forced to make similar decisions, and are nervous that if they continue with online teaching this fall, students will demand at least a partial remission of tuition.

Up until now, online education has been relegated to the equivalent of a hobby at most universities. With the pandemic, it has become a backup plan.

But if universities embrace this moment strategically, online education could expand access exponentially and drop its cost by magnitudes — all while shoring up revenues for universities in a way that is more recessionproof, policy-proof and pandemic-proof.

To be clear, the scramble to move online over just a few days this March did not go well. Faculty members were forced to revamp lesson plans overnight. "Zoom-bombers" took advantage of lax privacy protocols. Students fled home, with many in faraway time zones prolonging jet lag just to continue synchronous learning.

Quality learning experience

Not surprisingly, the experience for both students and faculty has left much to be desired. According to one survey, more than 75 per cent of students do not feel they received a quality learning experience after classrooms closed.

But what surveys miss are the numerous spirited efforts to break new ground, as only a crisis can be the impetus for.

One professor at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts taught a drama course that allows students to "act" with each other in virtual reality using Oculus Quest headsets. A music professor at Stanford trained his students on software that allows musicians in different locations to perform together using internet streaming.

Professors are pioneering new methods and ed-tech companies are developing platforms at a pace not



seen before, providing a glimpse into the untapped potential of online education. Not to be forgotten, of course, is the fact that just a few years ago, a transition to online learning at the current scale would have been unimaginable.

Before the pandemic, most universities never truly embraced online education, at least not strategically. For years, universities have allowed professors to offer some courses online, making them accessible through aggregators such as edX or Coursera.

But rarely do universities offer their most popular and prestigious degrees remotely. It is still not possible to get an M.B.A. at Stanford, a biology degree at M.I.T. or a computer science degree at Brown online.

On one hand, universities don't want to be seen as limiting access to education, so they have dabbled in the space. But to fully embrace it might render much of the faculty redundant, reduce the exclusivity of those degrees, and threaten the very existence of the physical campus, for which vast resources have been allocated over centuries.

For good reason, many educators have been sceptical of online learning. They have questioned how discussion-based courses, which require more intimate settings, would be coordinated.

They wonder how lab work might be administered. Of course, no one doubts that the student experience would not be as holistic. But universities don't need to abandon in-person teaching for students who see the value in it.

They simply need to create "parallel" online degrees for all their core degree programs. By doing so, universities could expand their reach by thousands, creating the economies of scale to drop their costs by tens of thousands.

Notably, the online degree has not cannibalised its on-campus revenue stream. Instead, it has opened up a prestigious degree program to a different population, mostly midcareer applicants looking for a meaningful skills upgrade.

Similarly, in 2015, the University of Illinois launched an online M.B.A. for \$22,000, a fraction of the cost of most business schools. In order to provide a forum for networking and experiential learning, critical to the business school experience, the university created micro-immersions, where students can connect with other students and work on live projects at companies at a regional level.

To do this would require a major reorientation of university resources and activities. Classrooms would need to be fitted with new technology so that lectures could be simultaneously delivered to students on campus as well as across the world.

Professors would need to undergo training on how to effectively teach to a blended classroom. Universities would also be well served to build competencies in content production. Today, almost all theory-based content, whether in chemistry, computer science or finance, can be produced in advance and effectively delivered asynchronously.

By tapping their best-rated professors to be the stars of those productions, universities could actually raise the pedagogical standard.

There are already strong examples of this. Most biology professors, for instance, would find themselves hard pressed to match the pedagogical quality, production values and inspirational nature of Eric Lander's online Introduction to Biology course at M.I.T. That free course currently has over 134,000 students enrolled this semester.

Once universities have developed a library of content, they can choose to draw from it for asynchronous delivery for years, both for their on-campus and online programs. Students may not mind. It would, after all, open up professor capacity for a larger number of live interactions. Three-hour lectures, which were never good for anyone, would become a thing of the past. Instead, a typical day might be broken up into one-hour sessions with a focus on problem-solving, Q. and A. or discussion.

Many universities are sounding bold about reopening in-person instruction this fall. The current business model requires them to, or face financial ruin. But a hasty decision driven by the financial imperative could prove lethal, and do little to help them weather a storm.

The pandemic provides universities an opportunity to reimagine education around the pillars of access and affordability with the myriad tools and techniques now at their disposal. It could make them true pathways of upward mobility again.

Hans Taparia is an entrepreneur. He cofounded and helped build America's leading health food brands

Every few months the same debate re-emerges: Should Twitter ban Donald Trump? Usually, it's because of something particularly egregious, conspiratorial, untrue or geopolitically reckless that the US president tweeted.

Many of these tweets would result in a take-down or a temporary suspension if they came from a normal user's account, but Twitter has made an exception for heads of state, citing a "newsworthiness" clause that allows the company to evade responsibility. The debate gained new relevance this week after Twitter added a link to two presidential tweets that made false claims about mail-in ballots. It was the first time that Twitter had taken a step like this.

Twitter is the platform of choice not because of reach, but because it provides a unique on-ramp to the mainstream media conversation

The link, labelled "Get the facts," directed users to a page with links to a CNN article about the president's unsubstantiated claims as well as additional debunking tweets for context.

Trump's behaviour

Twitter's move prompted Trump to claim that it was interfering in the 2020 election and to threaten to "strongly regulate, or close" the platform down. What should Twitter do about Trump's behaviour?

Promote health. Save lives. Serve the vulnerable. Visit who.int

I don't really think it's possible to "deplatform" the president of the United States — that is, ban him from social media sites to decrease his public reach.

If Twitter were to go nuclear it would set off a censorship debate so fierce that the issue would end up in Congress or the courts. It would also place the company in the role where it feels most uncomfortable: acting as an arbiter of truth.

All the same, I think a lot about what might happen if, hypothetically, Twitter's chief executive, Jack Dorsey, soberly assessed the risks and rewards and second-order effects of Trump's lies, trolling and division-sowing, and kicked him off Twitter.

Would taking away this particular avenue of communication meaningfully hurt the president? Or would he just get the same attention via Face-

What Would Happen If Twitter Banned Trump

Taking away the social media platform may meaningfully hurt the US president

CHARLIE WARZEL

book, which seems to be just fine with his slandering, and where he reaches far more people?

Early research and anecdotal evidence suggests deplatforming is effective in the long term. In recent years, pro-Trump media figures like Milo Yiannopoulos, Chuck Johnson and Alex Jones have been banned from numerous social media platforms for violating rules and their influence has waned.

Twitter's influence

But there's something special about Twitter's influence. Though the audience is larger on YouTube and Facebook, deplatformed pro-Trump figures seem most anguished about losing their 280-character missives.

Twitter is the platform of choice not because of reach, but because it provides a unique on-ramp to the mainstream media conversation.

It's where journalists hang out all day. Spats on Twitter are more visible to newsmakers and more likely to attract attention.

The savviest pro-Trump figures learnt long ago how to influence the conversation by baiting the press with outrageous commentary or by going up to the edge of violating the platform's rules. Without a Twitter account, they lose that power and influence.



That won't be the case for Trump. As his Covid news conference podium meltdowns have illustrated, he can make news and sow chaos quite well without a smartphone. The press will cover the president's musings regardless of where he airs them.

But it's hard to imagine the president wouldn't be at least a little bit kneecapped by a Twitter ban. Yes, he is

Facebook posts would likely be shared on Twitter all the same. It's unclear whether the impact would be meaningful and it doesn't seem likely to change our toxic political climate.

But losing access to Twitter would introduce at least some friction to the president's current strategy of using late-night tweetstorms to provoke journalists.

Good deal of amplification

This media dynamic is rarely mentioned in the larger debate about Twitter banning Trump, but it ought to be. And it seems a damning critique of the press that a primary reason a Twitter ban would hurt the president is that he'd lose a good deal of amplification by journalists.

Media outlets and reporters, not wanting to

be bullied or discredited, adopt an adversarial approach. This leads to some great, important journalism but also a fair amount of grandstanding, which then become ammunition for the president and his supporters.

This dynamic is largely facilitated by social media platforms. And it's been on full display this week: The president tweets falsehoods. Media outlets loudly debunk it.

Twitter appends a fact-check. The president falsely cries censorship. He threatens to close down Twitter. The press amplifies his claims to debunk them, which in turn rile up pro- and anti-Trump bases.

Which is to say that it's a cycle that requires participation from all parties: the president (who initiates it), Twitter (which tolerates it) and the media (which amplifies, frequently to the president's advantage).

Removing one participant gums up the cycle, but does not stop it outright. To do that would require a much larger reimagining of our larger media ecosystem, from the platforms' architecture to how journalists cover the president.

This is not to excuse platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, which prioritise engagement above all and have redefined what it means to be a good presidential candidate. They give a natural advantage to the loudest, most incendiary and shameless personalities who seek to divide.

They've elevated fringe political movements as well as leaders from the Philippines' president, Rodrigo Duterte, to Trump. The platforms alone didn't elect these leaders, but they did provide them with nearly unlimited attention, an invaluable in-kind campaign contribution.

The damage — at least for this generation of world leaders — is nearly impossible to reverse. Banning Trump from Twitter, just like fact-checking one or two of his misleading tweets, might make the platform feel less toxic for a while. But it's still just tinkering on the margins.

It won't fix the deeper structural problems that have created our information apocalypse. For that, we're going to need a far bigger reckoning — one that certainly includes but also goes well beyond the platforms.

New York Times

AIRLINES ARE GATHERING MOMENTUM FOR A SHORT HAUL

ACCORDING TO AIRLINES ASSOCIATION IATA, 55% of government aid made available to airlines due to Covid-19 crisis will create debt. Overall, airlines' debt is expected to surge from \$430 billion at end-2019 to \$550 billion at end-2020, a nearly 28% increase.



Bloomberg

One of the few sectors left behind in the sharp April rebound has finally taken off. European airlines have rallied hard in the past few days, spurred by bailouts and economies reopening. Full recovery may still be a long way down the line, but investors don't want to be left behind.

The Bloomberg EMEA Airlines Index has finally broken

out of a tight range that held for more than two months. The index is up 32% since May 15, but such was the extent of the sector's drop that it's still down 45% for the year.

There's been a string of positive news recently for the sector. Economies are slowly reopening across Europe, and tourists on the continent are likely to be able to travel this summer, even though Germany's decision on travel warning was postponed to June 3. At a corporate level,

there has been government support or bailouts for legacy airlines such as Air France-KLM and Deutsche Lufthansa AG.

Bailouts and state-guaranteed loans come at a price though. Airlines are likely to end up with high levels of debt and potentially less management flexibility in cases where states become shareholders. In Lufthansa's case, note that the EU already made some demands on airport slots, while Ryanair Holdings Plc said it

will appeal the aid. As for Air France-KLM, the carrier already started talks with unions to cut staff and capacity.

According to airlines association IATA, 55% of government aid made available to airlines due to Covid-19 crisis will create debt. Overall, airlines' debt is expected to surge from \$430 billion at end-2019 to \$550 billion at end-2020, a nearly 28% increase.

This wouldn't be a major problem if demand was expected to pick up fast, but that's

hardly the case. For example, British Airways already warned it doesn't see demand reaching pre-crisis levels before 2023.

Other changes prompted by the pandemic will also weigh on the sector. The U.K.'s decision to impose a fortnight's quarantine on travelers entering or coming back to the country is a blow to the industry, given Britain is by far the biggest European market by ticket revenue, according to IATA, and also the least "state-

sponsored," as shown in the chart below.

Profitability will likely continue to suffer, especially given that company travel isn't expected to recover rapidly either. Just a 1% impact on corporate volumes would erode airline profits by 10%, Citigroup Inc. analysts say. They also generate 40% of revenue, with only 15% of passengers. Looking at the chart below, the rout in earnings forecast is unprecedented, and some recovery on that

front may be needed to justify further gains.

Looking at single stocks, Ryanair and Wizz Air Holdings Plc are the only two "investable airlines," Citi analysts including Mark Manduca said on Monday. According to them, both IAG SA and EasyJet Plc are likely to raise more capital in the coming months, while there is very little equity left in Lufthansa, no matter how much money the German government provides the airline.

37% Indian Women Never Bought Gold Jewellery, But Want To: Report

Agencies

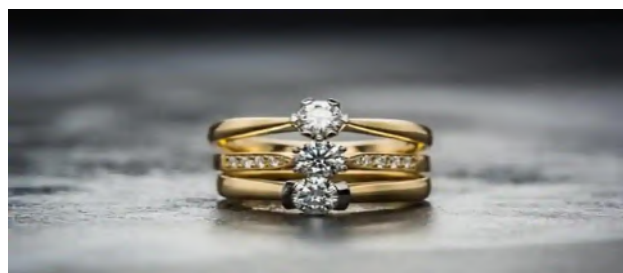
A World Gold Council (WGC) report on Wednesday said that there is an ample scope for retail demand of gold jewellery in the country as around 37 per cent of Indian women have never bought gold but would consider purchasing in the future.

The World Gold Council's 'Retail Gold Insights: India Jewellery' report also noted that 60 per cent of the Indian women already own gold jewellery and it is the second most popular item among 'fashion and lifestyle' shoppers, preceded only by designer clothes and silk sarees.

"Nevertheless, the gold industry has an opportunity to reach a significant new audience: 37 per cent of Indian women are potential buyers, representing a sizable new target audience for the gold jewellery industry. 44 per cent of rural respondents fell into this category, compared with 30 per cent of urban respondents, it said.

Further, 40 per cent respondents had bought gold jewellery in the preceding 12-month period, eclipsing purchases of diamond or platinum jewellery.

The survey found that urban women tend to focus on the sense of security that gold brings, highlighting its role as a display of wealth as well as a



store of value and rural Indian women place greater emphasis on gold's widespread acceptability and its aspirational qualities, viewing it as a means of commanding respect.

As per the report, although many young women are active gold jewellery consumers, 33 per cent of Indian women aged 18-24 years bought gold

jewellery in the 12 months preceding the survey their future purchase intent is low, particularly in urban areas.

Somasundaram P.R., Managing Director, India, World Gold Council, said: "India's jewellery market is world-leading in the skills of its artisans, who craft the most elaborate and decorative

pieces that adorn the nation's women."

"But the industry needs to be alert to the changing times. This research shows us that consumer tastes are evolving, and there is a risk of gold jewellery losing its connection with younger audiences as other brands vie for the attention of the millennial generation. Gold jewellery faces challenges from perceptions that it is a traditional necessity and not versatile enough for the modern Indian women," he said.

He noted that enhancing the purchase experience for consumers, incorporating a greater role for technology, should also be 'focus for the industry.

Remdesivir Improves Time To Recovery In Covid-19 Patients: Study

Press Trust Of India

Remdesivir, the antiviral under clinical trials for treatment against novel coronavirus infection, is superior to the standard of care given to COVID-19 patients, according to a new study. The analysis, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, is based on data from the Adaptive COVID-19 Treatment Trial (ACTT), sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in the US. In the randomised, controlled trial, clinicians enrolled adults hospitalised with COVID-19 who showed infection in the lower respiratory tract and suffered from moderate to severe disease. The researchers, including those from the New York University in the US, found that remdesivir was most beneficial for hospitalised patients with severe disease requiring supplemental oxygen. "Preliminary results of this trial suggest that a 10-day course of remdesivir was superior to placebo in the treatment of hospitalised patients with COVID-19," the scientists wrote in the study.

Findings about benefits in



other patient subgroups were less conclusive in this analysis, they said. The study began on February 21, 2020 and enrolled 1,063 participants in 10 countries, with patients providing informed consent to participate, the researchers said. They said the patients were randomly assigned to receive local standard care and a 10-day course of the antiviral remdesivir intravenously, or local standard care and a placebo. According to the study, the trial was double-blind, meaning neither investigators nor participants knew who was receiving remdesivir or placebo. The preliminary findings, based on an analysis of 1059 participants, noted that patients who received remdesivir had

a shorter time to recovery than those who received placebo. "We are awaiting final visits, data entry, monitoring, and data lock for the last of the 1063 patients enrolled, after which an update of the results will be provided," the researchers noted in the study. The study defined recovery as being discharged from the hospital or being medically stable enough to be discharged from the hospital. The median time for this, the researchers said, was 11 days for patients treated with remdesivir compared with 15 days for those who received placebo. According to the study, the clinicians tracked patients' health status daily using an eight-point ordinal scale ranging from fully recovered to death.

Brain Activity Of Children Reveals Their Memory Ability

Agencies

The unique brain activity of each child reveals how good their memories are, suggests a new study. The study has been published in the journal JNeurosci.

When you scramble to remember a phone number as you enter it into your phone, you rely on your working memory to keep the number at the front of your mind. Briefly holding and manipulating information relies on the activity of the frontoparietal network, a group of brain regions coined the "cognition core." Working memory performance changes throughout development. Rosenberg et al. analysed fMRI data from

the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) data set, a repository of scans and behavioural tests from over 11,000 children aged nine and ten. Children with better working memory performed better on a range of cognitive, language, and problem-solving tasks. Activity in the frontoparietal network during a memory task reflected the individual working memory capabilities of the children, with an activity pattern unique to working memory. The ABCD data set will reexamine the children for ten years, allowing future studies to explore how the neural signature of working memory evolves across development.



Social Distancing Norms Of 6 Ft Insufficient, Virus Can Travel Nearly 20 Ft

Press Trust Of India

Los Angeles Scientists have modelled the spread of infectious droplets from coughing, sneezing, and breathing under different atmospheric conditions, and found that the novel coronavirus can spread up to three times further in cold and humid weather.

According to the researchers, including those from the University of California (UC) Santa Barbara in the US, droplets carrying the virus can travel up to 20 feet, making the current social distancing norms of six feet insufficient to contain its spread.

Based on previous research, they said as many as 40,000 respiratory droplets can be generated by sneezing, coughing, and even normal talking, with initial speeds ranging from a few metres per second to more than a hundred metres per second.

From these past studies, the scientists said both the aerodynamics of the droplets, and their heat and mass exchange process with the environment can determine the effectiveness of virus propagation.

In the yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, published as a preprint in medRxiv, the scientists used a comprehensive mathematical model to explore the evaporation, heat transfer, and projectile motion of respiratory droplets under different temperature, humidity, and ventilation conditions.

They found that the transmission pathway of COVID-19 through respiratory droplets is divided into short-range droplet contacts and long-range aerosol exposure.

"While large droplets usually settle onto a surface within a limited distance due to gravity, smaller droplets evaporate rapidly to form aerosol particles that are able to carry the virus and float in the air for hours," the scientists wrote in the study.

According to their analysis, the effect of weather conditions on this pathway is not the same every time.

Low temperature and high humidity facilitate droplet contact



transmission, while high temperature and low humidity promotes small aerosol-particle formation, the researchers said.

"Our model suggests that the 6 feet of social distance recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may be insufficient in certain environmental conditions, as the droplet spreading distance can be as long as 6 metres (19.7 feet) in cold and humid weather," the scientists wrote in the study.

The researchers warned that the current pandemic may not stop in the summer of the northern hemisphere without proper intervention since there is an increasing chance of aerosol transmission in these parts of the world.

The study noted that in hot and dry weather, respiratory droplets more easily evaporate into aerosol particles capable of long-range transmission.

It said these small particles can infiltrate deep into the lungs, and have a longer suspension time in these conditions.

According to the researchers, many public spaces implement air-conditioning systems that can still operate at temperature and humidity setpoints that favour droplet transport, preventing long-range transmission.

While ventilation can effectively dilute the accumulation of infectious aerosol particles, improper design of these systems may void the effort of social distancing by enabling the aerosol-size particles to travel further, they said. However, wearing a face mask can effectively lower the chance of transmission via aerosol particles, the scientists said, adding that the risk of infection from large droplets can be mitigated by practising social distancing. The infection range of large droplets, they said, is limited to a relatively short distance, since they are more sensitive to gravity and can settle on a surface before drying.

Pakistan Jet Crashed Shortly After Bizarre Landing Attempt At 327 KPH

Agencies

Islamabad: A deadly plane crash in Pakistan is prompting questions about how the crew could touch down without landing gear when their sophisticated jetliner was bristling with equipment to prevent pilots from doing just that.

After an abrupt descent that had unnerved air-traffic controllers, the pilots of the Pakistan International Airlines jet on Friday briefly put the aircraft on the runway without the landing gear, grinding along on its two engines at a speed of more than 327 kilometers (203 miles per hour), according to preliminary data.

The pilots aborted the landing attempt, climbing back into the sky, but reported shortly afterward they'd lost power. The Airbus SE A320 apparently glided into a neighborhood as pilots were attempting to return to the same runway, killing 97 of 99 people aboard.

"It is unbelievable to me that an airline crew on a jet like an Airbus, with all the warning systems, would attempt to land the plane without the gear extended," said John Cox, an aviation safety

consultant who formerly flew the A320 as a U.S. airline pilot.

In addition to checklists designed to make sure pilots don't attempt to touch down without the landing gear, the jetliner has multiple warning systems designed to alert crews if they somehow forget or the gear aren't working.

"The airplane is not happy that you're this close to the ground without the gear extended," said Cox, who is president of consulting company Safety Operating Systems.

It's not yet clear why the two jet engines quit after functioning well enough for about two minutes to lift them about 3,000 feet (915 meters) above the runway. Engines have become so reliable that losing two at the same time is almost always because of some common factor, such as damage from hitting a runway or a problem with the fuel supply.

Regardless, the bizarre landing attempt -- which was carried out without any indication from the crew that they'd had an emergency during their initial descent -- either triggered the accident or was a catalyst that worsened the situation, according to Cox and others who have studied crashes.

China Parliament Passes Hong Kong Security Bill As Tensions Rise With US



Agencies

Beijing, China: China's parliament approved plans Thursday to impose a security law on Hong Kong that critics say will eradicate the city's promised freedoms.

The vote by the rubber-stamp National People's Congress came hours after the United States revoked the special status conferred on Hong Kong, paving the way for the territory to be stripped of trading and economic privileges.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the status had been withdrawn because China was no longer honouring its handover agreement with Britain to allow Hong Kong a high level of autonomy.

"No reasonable person can assert today that Hong Kong maintains a high degree of autonomy from China, given facts on the ground," Pompeo said.

China made the security law a top priority at its annual National People's Congress (NPC) session, after huge pro-democracy protests rocked the financial hub for seven months last year. The law would punish secession, subversion of state power, terrorism, and acts that endanger national security, as well as allow mainland security agencies to operate openly in Hong Kong.

On Thursday, the final day of the congress, delegates endorsed plans for the law, with a higher body now tasked with formulating the specific legislation.

"It's the end of Hong Kong. We know that they are cutting off our souls, taking away the values which we've always embraced, values like human rights, democracy, rule of law," pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo told AFP.

"From now on Hong Kong just becomes another Chinese city. It's demoralising."



'Coronavirus Pandemic May Push 86 Million Children Into Household Poverty By 2020-End'

Agencies

United Nations: The number of children living in poor households across low and middle-income countries could increase by 86 million to reach 672 million by the end of 2020 due to the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new study.

The deadly virus has so far infected 5,695,290 people and claimed 355,692 lives globally, according to a tally by the Johns Hopkins University.

"The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic could push up to 86 million more children into household poverty by the end of 2020, an increase of 15 per cent," said the study conducted jointly by the UNICEF and humanitarian organisation Save the Children.

The analysis highlighted that without urgent action to protect families from the financial hardships caused by the pandemic, the total number of children living below the national poverty line in low and middle-income countries could reach 672 million by year-end.

Nearly two-thirds of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and countries across Europe and Central Asia could see the most significant increase, up to 44 per cent across the region. Latin America and the Caribbean could see a 22

per cent increase.

"The coronavirus pandemic has triggered an unprecedented socio-economic crisis that is draining resources for families all over the world," UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said in a statement.

"The scale and depth of financial hardship among families threatens to roll back years of progress in reducing child poverty and to leave children deprived of essential services. Without concerted action, families barely getting by could be pushed into poverty, and the poorest families could face levels of deprivation that have not been seen for decades," Fore said.

The organisations warned that the impact of the global economic crisis caused by the pandemic and related containment policies is two-fold -- immediate loss of income meant families are less able to afford the basics, including food and water, less likely to access health care or education, and more at risk of child marriage, violence, exploitation and abuse.

Save the Children International CEO Inger Ashing said the "shocking poverty impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will hit children hard."

"Children are highly vulnerable to even short periods of hunger and malnutrition - potentially affecting them for their whole life. If we

act now and decisively, we can prevent and contain the pandemic threat facing the poorest countries and some of the most vulnerable children. This report should be a wake-up call for the world. Poverty is not inevitable for children," Inger Ashing said.

The agencies said hundreds of millions of children remain multi-dimensionally poor -- meaning they lack access to health care, education, proper nutrition, or adequate housing -- often a reflection of inequitable investments by governments in social services.

In order to address and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on children in poor households, Save the Children and the UNICEF call for rapid and large-scale expansion of social protection systems and programmes including cash transfers, school feeding, and child benefits - all critical investments that address immediate financial needs and lay the foundation for countries to prepare for future shocks.

"Governments must also invest in other forms of social protection, fiscal policies, employment, and labour market interventions to support families. This includes expanding universal access to quality healthcare and other services; and investing in family-friendly policies, such as paid leave and childcare," they said.

Google knows where you are even if you opt not to share location info, says lawsuit

Agencies

San Francisco: The US state of Arizona filed a lawsuit Wednesday accusing Google of committing fraud by being deceptive about gathering location data.

Arizona attorney general Mark Brnovich said the suit resulted from an investigation launched two years ago after a media report that Google had ways of knowing where users were even if they opted not to share location information with the internet firm.

"While Google users are

led to believe they can opt-out of location tracking, the company exploits other avenues to invade personal privacy," Brnovich said in a release.

"It's nearly impossible to stop Google from tracking your movements without your knowledge or consent."

The suit charges Google with violating Arizona fraud law and calls for the company to hand over money it made from its activities in that state.

"The attorney general and the contingency fee lawyers filing this lawsuit appear to have mischaracterized our ser-

vices," Google spokesman Jose Castaneda said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"We have always built privacy features into our products and provided robust controls for location data."

He added that Google looks forward to "setting the record straight." While Google provides users the option of declining to share location information while using its services or smartphones powered by Google-made Android software, it can glean from app or online activity where users are to target ads, the suit argued.

Aussie papers go digital, downsize amid double whammy of Google-Facebook and COVID

Agencies

Canberra: Australia's largest newspaper publisher, News Corp., announced on Thursday that most of its suburban and regional mastheads across the country will become digital-only next month due to the pandemic.

News Corp. Australasia executive chairman Michael Miller described the shift that will take effect on June 29 as significant and said jobs will be lost. He did not say how many.

"COVID-19 has impacted the sustainability of community and regional publishing. Despite the audiences of News Corp.'s digital mastheads growing more than 60% as Australians turned to trusted media sources during the peak of the recent COVID-19 lockdowns, the decline of print advertising spending which contributes the majority of our revenues, has accelerated," Miller said in a statement.

Many News Corp. print mastheads were challenged

and the double impact of the coronavirus lockdown plus tech platforms such as Google and Facebook not remunerating local publishers for content made the mastheads unsustainable, Miller said.

These initiatives are significant. They will involve fundamental changes to how we operate our business but they are necessary, Miller said.

Some mastheads, or newspaper titles, would disappear, but their news would be published in regional sections of other mastheads, he said.

News Corp. suspended printing operations for 60 local papers in Australia in early April as advertising revenue vanished due to the pandemic.

The government has announced that Google and Facebook will be forced to pay for news content in Australia.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the trade watchdog, will release in July draft rules for the platforms to pay fair compensation for the journalistic content siphoned from news media.

US Congress Passes Bill To Pressure China Over Uighurs Rights



Agencies

Washington: The US Congress on Wednesday authorized sanctions against Chinese officials over the mass incarceration of Muslim Uighurs, ramping up pressure on another front in the troubled relationship between the Pacific powers.

The House of Representatives voted with just one dissent in favor of the Uighur Human Rights Act, hours of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo took a major step to press China on another major issue -- the autonomy of Hong Kong.

Rights groups say at least one million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China's northwestern Xinjiang region have been incarcerated in camps in a massive brainwashing campaign with few modern parallels.

"If America does not speak out against human rights (violations) in China because of some commercial interest, then we lose all moral authority to speak out on human rights violations any place in the world," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

The message was bipartisan with Michael McCaul, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, accusing China of "state-sponsored cultural genocide."

Beijing is out to "com-

pletely eradicate an entire culture simply because it doesn't fit within what the Chinese Communist Party deems 'Chinese,'" McCaul said.

"We can't sit idly by and allow this to continue," he said. "Our silence will be complicit, and our inaction will be our appeasement."

The legislation requires the US administration to determine which Chinese officials are responsible for the "arbitrary detention, torture and harassment" of Uighurs and other minorities.

The United States would then freeze any assets the officials hold in the world's largest economy and ban their entry into the country.

The law specifically mentions Chen Quanguo, the Communist Party chief in Xinjiang. Previously posted in Tibet, Chen has built a reputation for clamping down on restive minorities.

China denounces 'smears' China initially denied the mass incarceration but has since described the camps as vocational training centers aimed at discouraging Islamic radicalism.

After an earlier version of the law passed in December, the Chinese foreign ministry accused the United States of hypocrisy in its own "counter-terrorism" efforts.

2 New Zealand Hikers Rescued After 19 Days, Drank Puddle Water To Survive

Two New Zealand hikers survived 19 days in a rugged national park home to the shooting location for the "Mines of Moria" in the Lord of the Rings films, drinking puddle water to stay alive, they said Thursday.

Dion Reynolds and Jessica O'Connor, both 23, set off on a five-day camping trip in Kahurangi National Park on the South Island on May 8 but became disorientated in heavy fog.

A military helicopter rescued them on Wednesday after a huge search operation in the area, which was the shooting location for Frodo and the Fellowship's escape from the grim Mines of Moria in Peter Jackson's blockbuster Lord of the Rings films.

The pair had only minor injuries suffered during falls as



they desperately searched for water, with Reynolds twisting his ankle and O'Connor wrenching her back.

Reynolds said they became lost in fog that lasted three days, and boiled water from "a little

rocky puddle" to drink as their food supplies dwindled.

"We were very lost at this point," he told Radio New Zealand, saying they eventually decided to make camp and "wait out our injuries".

"Leave Our Employees Out Of It": Twitter CEO Hits Back At Trump

New Delhi: Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey today reinforced his stance on pointing out "incorrect or disputed information about elections globally", a day after US President Donald Trump threatened to shutter social media over Twitter's actions on his posts.

Mr Dorsey appealed to "leave our employees out of this" as the face-off with Mr Trump is likely to escalate.

"Fact check: there is someone ultimately accountable for our actions as a company, and that's me. Please leave our employees out of this. We'll continue to point



out incorrect or disputed information about elections globally. And we will admit to and own any mistakes we make," Mr Dorsey tweeted.

"This does not make us an 'arbiter of truth.' Our intention is to con-

nect the dots of conflicting statements and show the information in dispute so people can judge for themselves. More transparency from us is critical so folks can clearly see the why behind our actions," said the Twitter CEO.

"Per our Civic Integrity policy (<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/election-integrity-policy>), the tweets yesterday may mislead people into thinking they don't need to register to get a ballot (only registered voters receive ballots). We're updating the link on

@realDonaldTrump tweet to make this more

India's Coronavirus Recovery Rate At 42.75 Per Cent: Health Ministry



NEW DELHI: The Health Ministry said today that the recovery rate of COVID-19 patients in India has gone up to 42.75 per cent after 3,266 patients were cured in the last 24 hours.

"The number of cases under active medical supervision is 86,110. So far, a total of 67,691 people have been cured. In the last 24 hours, 3,266 patients were found

cured. This takes our total recovery rate to 42.75 per cent," a ministry release said.

It said the centre is taking several steps along with the states and Union Territories for prevention, containment and management of COVID-19. "These are being regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level," the release said.

5 Coronavirus Patients Die In Bangladesh Hospital Fire



DHAKA: Five coronavirus patients died in a hospital fire in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka on Wednesday, a fire service official said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire, said Zillur Rahman, a fire service director. Firefighters extinguished the flames in about an hour, Rahman said.

Five bodies were recovered from the makeshift isolation unit of the United Hospital treating COVID-19 patients, Rahman said. The dead included four men and a woman aged between 45 and 75, he said.

Hospitals are struggling to deal with a spike in coronavirus infections in recent weeks in Bangladesh, which has reported 38,292 cases

and 544 deaths.

Some health experts are concerned that the real number of cases could be higher in a country of more than 160 million people where many have only limited access to healthcare.

Lax regulations and poor enforcement have often been blamed for large fires in the South Asian nation that have killed hundreds of people in recent years.

At least 25 people were killed in March last year when a fire broke out in a 22-storey commercial building in Dhaka's upscale area of Banani.

In February last year, an inferno in a centuries-old neighbourhood of Dhaka killed 71 people and injured dozens.



As Flying Returns, Airlines Seek To Quell Fears Over Cabin Air

PARIS: Jet manufacturers and airlines are launching an urgent initiative to convince nervous travellers that the air they breathe on planes is safe, believing this is critical to rebuilding a travel industry floored by the novel coronavirus.

Boeing has appointed former engineering and development chief Mike Delaney to head wider efforts to build confidence, and Airbus leaders say the industry is moving from an initial crisis phase to securing public trust.

That has triggered, among other things, a concerted effort to explain how cabin air filtration works in a bid to scotch the myth that the pressurised fuselage contains only static or recycled air.

Health officials are still quantifying various sources of transmission for COVID-19 disease caused by the virus, but attention focuses on the risk of catching it from airborne droplets from coughing or sneezing passengers as well as from touching infected surfaces.

The air-travel industry historically talks more about seat pitch than air quality. That's had to change as a result of the pandemic.

"It's about explaining what we do for the safety of passengers in the large sense: aircraft safety but also sanitary safety," Airbus engineering

head Jean-Brice Dumont said.

In an office building, air is exchanged about four times every hour. On a modern jet aircraft, that rises to 20 to 30 times.

"The air system on an airplane is as good as anything you will be exposed to," Delaney said.

Air circulation is only one of several techniques for reducing potential for the virus to spread on board including rigorous cleaning of the plane and screening passengers for signs of illness, he added.

In most cases compressed air is fed from the clean part of an engine - untainted by fuel which is added later - to air conditioning packs and from there to fans in the cabin ceiling.

Both planemakers say cabin air pours downwards not lengthways through the fuselage, reducing risks of infection.

Half that air is then recycled through hospital-grade HEPA filters designed to remove some 99.97% of contaminants including viruses. The other half is flushed outside through valves.

Planemakers say cabin air is renewed every two to three minutes, though scientists caution that in reality, the air is always a blend. But the quicker the rate, the faster old air is diluted.

"The air turns over very, very quickly in the aircraft in terms of

air-exchange rate. From that point of view the aircraft systems are very good," said Professor Byron Jones of Kansas State University, who has helped recommend air standards.

HIGH OCCUPANCY

But airflow isn't the only part of a complex equation.

"The biggest challenge you have on an aircraft is the extremely high occupant density. You have got a lot of people crammed into a small space, and you have to get a lot of air in there to ventilate that space to maintain the air quality," Jones said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say the virus is thought to spread between people in close contact or less than 6 feet apart, around half the width of many cabins. Air currents over such short distances are said to be hardest to predict. Passengers have some control through the individual air outlets nicknamed "gaspsers" above each seat.

On average, twisting them on makes things "a little bit better, but there is no guarantee," Jones said. Although filtered, the pinpoint blasts of air could in a worst case push nearby virus particles across a passenger's face. On the other hand, the air shower could have the positive effect of limiting sideways movements of air.

UNESCO's New Task Forces To Help 2.7 Million Teachers In India Hit By COVID-19 Lockdown

LONDON: An estimated 2.7 million teachers in India, who have been impacted by the COVID-induced lockdown, are untrained to deal with the altered situation, new research from the UNESCO revealed on Thursday, as it unveiled new task forces to tackle the teachers' training across the world.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation data, launched at the Teachers of the World Unite virtual summit this week, highlighted that 9.1 million teachers across the world, who have been impacted by the pandemic-related school closures, of the total 63 million affected teachers, are untrained in coping with the challenge.

At the summit, UK-based

all, and finding solutions to keep children learning where there is no internet," she said.

The nine task forces will lend governments and international bodies the expertise and varied perspectives of teachers from every continent on key policies such as providing reliable internet access for all, solutions to keep children learning where there is no internet, and a safe environment for teachers and students to return to when schools reopen.

"In examining these key issues, it is vital that we are able to hear from teachers in India who can provide their unique perspectives from the frontlines in these unprecedented times," added Giannini.

The nine areas to be cov-



Varkey Foundation announced the nine new teacher task forces on coronavirus and the future of education, which will be coordinated in collaboration with UNESCO's Teacher Task Force.

"New data from the UNESCO's teacher task force show 2.7 million teachers in India who have been impacted by coronavirus school closures are untrained. The data reveal the scale of the challenge as teachers are forced to adapt to remote learning when many lack the training needed," said Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education.

"I, therefore, welcome these nine new teacher task forces launched by the Varkey Foundation as a member of UNESCO's Global Education Coalition. These task forces will examine a number of crucial issues in India, not least training for teachers to teach online, providing reliable internet access for

ered include reliable internet access for all; solutions to keep children learning where there is no internet; no education cuts; a safe environment for teachers and pupils; lost school days should not turn into a lost generation; training to teach online; training to safeguard children online; nutritious free meals; and fast-track ed-tech strategies.

The virtual summit to unveil these was opened by Sunny Varkey, the Indian-origin Founder of the Varkey Foundation and the Global Teacher Prize.

During the session, the UNESCO's Teacher Task Force also presented teachers with a draft toolkit of practical tips and checklists for school leaders to ensure they are supported and protected as schools begin to re-open.

Participants were able to provide feedback to help improve this toolkit before a wider release. PTI

Heatwave Continues In North India, Mercury Nears 50-Degree In Rajasthan

NEW DELHI: Parts of northern and western India reeled under scorching heat on Wednesday, with temperatures hovering near the 50 degree-mark in Rajasthan, while the IMD said no immediate respite is likely from the ongoing heatwave conditions.

In the national capital, the mercury settled six notches above normal in most areas. Palam remained the hottest with a maximum temperature of 47.2 degrees Celsius, marginally less than Tuesday's 47.6 degrees Celsius.

In large areas, a heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature is 45 degrees Celsius for two consecutive days and a severe heatwave is when the mercury touches 47 degrees Celsius for two days on the trot.



In small areas, like the national capital, a heatwave is declared if the temperature soars to 45 degrees Celsius even for a day, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for Delhi, recorded a maximum temperature of 45.9 degrees Celsius.

The last time the mercury touched the 46-degree mark at the Safdarjung weather station was on May 19, 2002, said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The all-time record for Safdarjung in May is 47.2 degrees Celsius. It was recorded on May 29, 1944.

The IMD said the weather stations at Lodhi Road and Ayanagar recorded maximum temperatures of 45.1 degrees Celsius and 46.7 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Severe heatwave conditions prevailed in Rajasthan. Churu was the hottest place in the state with a maximum temperature of 49.6 degrees Celsius, according to the meteorological (MeT) department.

On Tuesday, Churu had recorded a high of 50 degrees Celsius -- the district's second-highest maximum temperature in the month of May in the last 10 years.

Ganganagar, Bikaner and Kota recorded maximum temperatures of 48.9 degrees Celsius, 48 degrees Celsius and 47.2 degrees Celsius, respectively, on Wednesday.

NEWS MAKER

Liquor Baron Hires 180-Seater Plane To Ferry Three Family Members, Help

BHOPAL: A Bhopal-based high net worth individual hired a 180-seater A320 plane of a private carrier to ferry four family members to New Delhi, in a bid to avoid crowd at the airport and in flight amid the COVID-19 outbreak, officials said on Thursday.

The person, who is a liquor baron, chartered the aircraft to send to Delhi his daughter, her two children and their maid, who were stuck in Bhopal since the last two months due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown,

sources said.

The plane arrived here from Delhi on Monday with crew only and flew back with just four passengers for whom it was specially hired, they said.

"The A320 180-seater plane arrived here on May 25 to carry four members of a family, probably due to the coronavirus scare. It was chartered by someone and there was no medical emergency, an airline official said, refusing to divulge any further details.

Bhopal's Rajabhoj Airport



Director Anil Vikram could not be contacted for comments. According to aviation experts, the cost of hiring an Airbus-320 is about Rs 20 lakh.

Domestic commercial flight services resumed from Monday, after a nearly two-month break due to the coronavirus-enforced lockdown. PTI

FOR MILLIONS, THIS IS WHAT
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#BAKECORONA LOOKS LIKE.

Millions in West Bengal and Odisha are battling the devastation of a cyclone and the threat of COVID-19. Please donate. Help them overcome this double disaster.

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