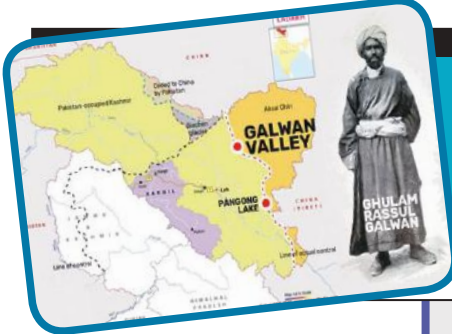




Maximum : 23°C
Minum : 12°C
Humidity : 69%

SUNSET
Today 07:38 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 05:20 AM



OBSERVER

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BACKSTORY OF LADAKH'S GALWAN VALLEY AND THE LEGEND OF RASSUL GALWAN

The world's two most populous countries which had fought a full-fledged war in 1962 — are now facing a stern test once again as their militaries are in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation at a few places along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh region. Alongside the main story of border tensions, skirmishes and alleged incursions, there lies a strategic importance of the Galwan Valley in the restive region. But how this valley was named Galwan? And what is its backstory? Several historians, scholars and experts of Ladakh affairs are of the view that Galwan Valley was named after Rasool Galwan. According to the book Forsaking Paradise: Stories from Ladakh, Ghulam Rasool Galwan or Ghulam Rassul Galwan had arrived in Leh in 1895. "In the year 1895, after a hazardous journey of one year and three months in Central Asia and Tibet, Rasool Galwan,.....

.....PANORAMA
P5

News Digest

HC To Consider Sagar's PSA Plea

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Monday said it will consider plea challenging detention under Public Safety Act of Ali Muhammad Sagar, General Secretary of National Conference, on June 10. A bench of Justice Sindhu Sharma passed the orders after Senior Additional Advocate General B. A. Dar undertook to produce the Sagar's detention record before the Court by June 10. Earlier, the Senior AAG submitted that he has filed

Youth Found Dead In Sopore

Srinagar: A youth on Monday was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Sopore area of Baramulla district. 30-year-old Muhammad Akbar was found dead at his home in Hardshiva village of Sopore by his family members, reports said. The deceased was a driver by profession. A police team reached the spot and took the body for post-mortem to determine the cause of death. Meanwhile, police have

Accidental Fire Kills Minor In Reasi

Jammu: A four-year-old boy was killed when he was hit by a bullet from a rifle inside a house in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Monday. Vansh, along with his elder brother Rohit (10), had come to his maternal home at Maslot village in Arnas on Sunday and started fiddling with .303 rifle of the grandfather who is a Village Defence Committee (VDC) member, a police official said. He said the gun went off accidentally and a bullet

Doda Woman Injured In Bear Attack

Jammu: A woman was injured after a bear attacked her near her house close to a forested area in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, officials said. Hajra Begum, a resident of Void Drubel in Chatroo, was attacked on Sunday evening. She was saved by locals and later hospitalised, they said. She has suffered critical injuries, the officials said.

Man Booked For Skipping Quarantine

Jammu: A man, who escaped from a quarantine centre in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, was brought back and an FIR slapped against him, officials said on Monday. On receiving information that one person escaped from the quarantine centre Calvary Mission School in Ghagwal, police team immediately swung into action and brought him back, they said. A case has been registered against the man at Ghagwal Police Station, the officials said. The administration has appealed to the district residents to cooperate and not to violate quarantine rules, they said.

People Living On Higher Altitudes Less Vulnerable To Covid-19: Report

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Researchers have found that populations living in higher altitudes, especially 3,000 meters (9,842 feet) above the sea level, significantly report lower levels of coronavirus infections than their lowland counterparts.

The Washington Post cited one peer-reviewed study, published in the journal Respiratory Physiology & Neurobiology, in which researchers from Australia, Bolivia, Canada and Switzerland looking at epidemiological data from Bolivia, Ecuador and Tibet found that Tibet's infection rate was "drastically" lower than that of lowland China, three times lower in the Bolivian Andes than in the rest of the country and four times lower in the Ecuadorian Andes.

Cusco in Peru, a picturesque Andean valley, the high-altitude city of 420,000 residents, had only recorded the death of three tourists from Mexico, China and Britain, between March 23 and April 3, at the start of Peru's strict national lockdown. Since then, there has not been another covid-19 fatality in the entire Cusco region, even as the disease has claimed more than 4,000 lives nationally. Infections have also remained low. Just 916 of Peru's 141,000 cases come from the Cusco region, meaning its contagion rate is more than 80 per cent below the national average.

The illness's link to high-elevation regions has prompted speculation from researchers that the coronavirus gets "soroche", the Quechua word for altitude sickness.

Similarly, Ecuador has

'Dragon Is Already On Our Doorsteps': Reporting Ladakh Amid Faceoff

Augib Javeed

DURBOK: Ladakh — Barring some clamorous military convoys rumbling on blacktops and snaking through the sand swatches while ferrying and feeding war-stores to hostile frontiers, this small and silent village defies the sense of seething showdown, some 100 kilometres away, even as the 'enemy' jets have reportedly infringed the airspace.

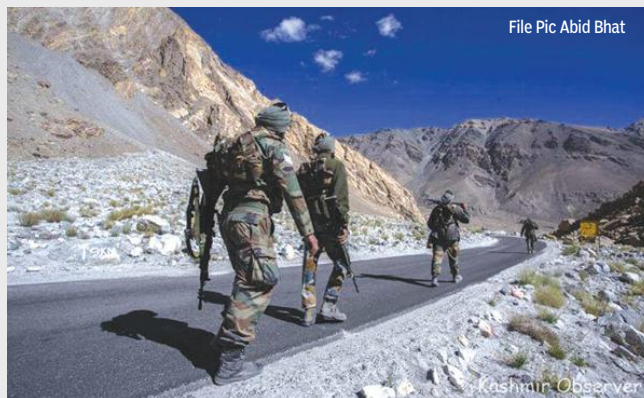
Living between Chang La mountain pass and Tangste on the way to Pangong Tso Lake, the villagers here, however, feel far from the official position: "All is Well" — the

phrase popularized by Aamir Khan, in his 3-Idiot movie, shot in Ladakh, 11 years ago.

"The problem is," a villager told Kashmir Observer, "government wants to stay silent for some mysterious reasons, even when the dragon is already on our doorsteps."

If it's the "usual incursions" at Line of Actual Control (LAC), he said, then why so much heavy artillery guns and aircrafts are being deployed here?

"So when the Indian side has already increased their troop strength here," the villager said, "the government and its stooge media need to tell the truth to the



File Pic Abid Bhat

nation. And the truth is, Chinese have come deep inside our territory and built bunkers."

Fresh faceoff

J&K Reports 3 Covid-19 Deaths In Single Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Coronavirus on Monday claimed three more lives across Jammu and Kashmir, raising the toll due to the deadly disease in the Union Territory to 31, officials said.

Dr Mir Mushtaq, Deputy Medical Superintendent District Hospital Pulwama said a 70-year-old-man was brought dead to the hospital this morning. "His swap sample was taken which came out to be positive now," he said.

The body was kept in hospital mortuary and would be handed over to the family as per covid-19 protocol.

"The man had comorbidities like COPD," he said.

Earlier, a 72-year-old man with comorbidities from Doda and a 45-year-old man from Shopian died at SKIMS Soura.

Professor Farooq Jan, Medical superintendent of the SKIMS Soura said that a 45-year-old man



A MUNICIPALITY worker disinfects a casket of a Covid-19 deceased at Srinagar hospital. KO File Photo: Abid Bhat

from Ramnagar area of Shopian was admitted to tertiary hospital's emergency at 9 P.M. on Sunday as a case of "CKD, ESRD with b/l Chest infiltrates".

"The patient had AGE like illness and was in shock. After initial stabilization, he was shifted

10 Pregnant Women, Medico Among 155 Test Positive

Coronavirus cases in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday crossed 2600 mark, as 155 more people, including a doctor and 10 expecting mothers tested positive for the virus, taking the number of infected

DGCA Asks Airlines To Keep Middle Seats Vacant

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday asked airlines to allot seats in flights in such a manner that middle seats are kept vacant to the extent possible.

However, if a flyer has been allotted the middle seat due to a high passenger load "then additional protective equipment like wrap-around gown of the Ministry of Textile approved standards" must be provided to that passenger in addition to three-layered face mask



and face shield, said the DGCA order.

India resumed its domestic passenger flights from May 25 after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. International commercial passenger flights continue to remain suspended in the country.



Image for Representation

3 Militants Killed Along LoC In Rajouri: Army

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Army on Monday claimed to have foiled an infiltration attempt by killing three unidentified militants along the Line of Control (LoC) in Naushera sector of Rajouri district.

The Pakistani militants made the abortive attempt to sneak into the Kalal area of Nowsheera from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK) on May 28

CASO Launched Along IB After 'Suspicious Movement'

State forces launched a search operation following "suspected movement" in the riverine areas along the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua-Samba sector, officials said on Monday.

6 Jaish OGWs Held In Budgam: Police

Police Monday claimed to have busted a narco-militant module in Budgam district of central Kashmir by

Pak Attacked Indian Posts With Guided Missiles: Army

Army on Monday accused Pakistan troops of attacking forward posts with

China Flies Fighter Jets 30-35 Kms From Eastern Ladakh: Report

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Amid rising tension and buildup by the two nuclear countries along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) on Monday flew fighter jets around 30-35 kms near the contested area fueling fears of border escalation.

According to Asian News International (ANI), the Chinese army have kept a fleet of around 10-12 fighter aircraft at Hotan and Gargunsa at the moment and they are also carrying out flying activity close to the Indian Territory. The two airbases of Hotan and Gargunsa are around

100-150 kms from the LAC.

"We are keeping a close eye on the movement of these J-11 and J-7 fighter aircraft," ANI quoted sources as saying.

"Their fighter aircraft have been carrying out sorties from air bases in Hotan and Gargunsa and fly 30-35 kms from our territory in Ladakh region, sources told the wire agency.

The tension along the LAC has heightened after the armies of the two countries moved in heavy equipment and weaponry, including artillery and combat vehicles to their rear bases close to the disputed areas in eastern Ladakh. The Chinese troops have also deployed J-7 and J-11 fighter aircraft

J&K Govt Exempts Central Forces From RTPCR Testing, Quarantine

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday exempted the defence and Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) personnel returning to join their duties from the compulsory 100 per cent RTPCR testing and administrative quarantine.

According to an official order, Chief Secretary and Chairperson State Executive Committee B V R

Subrahmanyam said these personnel would be allowed to proceed to the institutional quarantine of their respective units or formations for necessary quarantine as per their internal procedures.

"The personnel of defence and CAPF returning to duty are exempted from compulsory 100 percent RTPCR testing and administrative quarantine in any facility authorised by the government of Jammu and Kashmir," the order read.

Meanwhile, an official release said all returnees coming from outside to the Union Territory of J and K, whether by road, rail or air, would have to compulsorily undergo a COVID-19 test following which they will be under administrative quarantine for 14 days.

"If the test result is negative, they will be released for home quarantine and if the test result comes

THE PERSONNEL OF DEFENCE AND CAPF RETURNING TO DUTY are exempted from compulsory 100 percent RTPCR testing and administrative or institutional quarantine in any facility authorised by the government of Jammu and Kashmir,"

Meet The Man Who Arranges Burial For Kashmir's Covid Casualties

Saqib Aziz

SRINAGAR: It was already sun-down on May 27, 2020, when Sajad Khan, 37, got a call from a man introducing himself as a retired Superintendent of Police.

But even before the caller's cop introduction would make him imagine things, Khan was curtly told: "I saw your video on Facebook..."

Sometimes before, when Khan was passing through the lanes of his hometown Bemina, he saw some reluctant relatives standing at a 'safe' distance from a COVID victim, for the fear of the novel coronavirus.

"I couldn't take it and ran towards my departmental shop named

Houseful in Bemina and took 8 PPE [Personal Protective Equipment] gears from shelf," Khan, 37, recalls the day, that would motivate him to come up with an important community cause.

"I could see satisfaction on the faces of those eight PPE-clad men who participated in the funeral prayers of that late lady, and gloom on those who could only stand around as sorrowful spectators."

The case set him thinking.

If Khalsas can do it, Khan thought, why can't Kashmiris help each other during these trying times?

He would shortly contact his friends, and share his idea with them.



Sajad Khan

Khan wanted to rope in the like-minded for the burial of the COVID-19 victims being 'abandoned' for the fear of contagion in Kashmir Valley.

Once he raised a volunteer group of around 20 friends, he uploaded a video on his Facebook page, Athwaas, Handshake, where he would

share his message, "Anybody can call us anytime", and personal contact number.

"I only requested people that during these tough times, we need to support each other," Khan, the ex-banker, known for his community welfare works in his hometown, continues.

"Rather than presenting myself as some social worker, I wanted to motivate people to come forward, when this virus had disrupted our compassionate community ecosystem."

It was in this backdrop that he received that call from the retired police officer on May 27.

The ex-cop had introduced himself as an uncle of a 55-year-old Fateh Kadal man—who

Elections To 24 Rajyasabha Seats To Be Held On June 19: Ec

NEW DELHI: Elections for 24 Rajya Sabha seats spread across 10 states will be held on June 19, the Election Commission announced on Monday.

Elections for 18 of these 24 seats were deferred due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Of these 18 seats, four each are from Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, three each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, x'two from Jharkhand, and one each from Manipur and Meghalaya.

The EC also announced that Rajya Sabha polls for a total of six seats in Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Mizoram will also be held on June 19 along with the elections that were deferred from March.

While Kupendra Reddy (JD-S), PrabhakarKore (BJP), M V Rajeev Gowda (Congress) and B K Hariprasad (Congress) from Karnata

taka are retiring on June 25, the term of MukutMithi (Congress) from Arunachal Pradesh ends on June 23.

The term of Mizoram MP Ronald SapaTlau (Congress) ends on July 18.

The notification for the polls on six seats will be issued on Tuesday, an EC statement said.

The counting of votes for all the 24 seats will be held on the evening of June 19 itself, the Commission said.

While deferring the Rajya Sabha elections for the the Upper House seats early March, the poll panel had made it clear that processes completed by then, including nominations filed by candidates, will remain valid.

"The only steps remaining were the actual poll and the counting. That would be completed now," an official explained.



The Commission had deferred the March 26 Rajya Sabha elections citing the threat of the novel coronavirus, saying a decision on conducting them will be taken after reviewing the situation.

12.

Originally the election were to take place on March 26 on 55 Upper House seats, but 37 candidates have already been elected without a contest.

The statement said the Commission has now reviewed the matter in detail after considering all factors, including the latest guidelines issued by the Union Home Secretary.

The Commission also decided that state chief secretaries will depute a senior officer from the state to ensure that the instructions regarding COVID-19 containment measures are complied with while making arrangements for conducting the elections.

The EC also appointed chief electoral officer of the concerned state as observer for these polls.

Earlier in the day, the "full commission" -- the chief election commissioner and two election commissioners -- met at Nirva

chanSadan here for the first time in nearly three months.

The poll panel had been holding virtual meets as Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, who was visiting the United States on leave in the first half of March, got stranded there due to the coronavirus lockdown.

Arora returned to India recently and underwent the mandatory quarantine before joining office on Monday.

A key decision taken in one such virtual meeting was to allow the legislative council election in Maharashtra to pave the way for Uddhav Thackeray becoming a member of the state legislature within the stipulated six months of becoming chief minister

‘Dragon Is Already On Our..

Local villagers are equally sulking over the government's 'inability' for not taking "enough measures" to protect their land. "People want that both the countries should talk and resolve this issue once for all," Councillor Korzok Gyurmet Dorje of Changthang area told Kashmir Observer.

"The Chinese Army has already occupied at least three grazing lands in January and February this year." The captured pasturelands, he said, are the only source of livelihood for the nomadic people of the area.

"The livestock is running short of food, as the nomads aren't being allowed to go for grazing," he said. "Where will the people go, and what will they do?"

The main concern among the locals remains whether the land captured by China will be taken back or not.

"Because these clashes will happen, and within the passage of time, everybody will be calm but the matter of concern is, will India re-take its land from the China, and if yes, then how," he said. "And if government fails to protect the land, we will fight with China ourselves."

Fight for Fingers

Chinese troops have entered at least 3 kilometres in Galwan Valley and captured many fingers of strategic Pangong Tso Lake, Namgial Durbuk, former councillor of Congress party, told Kashmir Observer.

Mountain folds around the lake are called "fingers".

"The Chinese troops have captured 6 fingers out of 8," Durbuk said. "India claims territorial rights up to Finger 8, but its de-facto holding extends only to Finger 4."

After India sent its troops, trucks and artillery guns to Eastern Ladakh to shore up its presence in the areas where Chinese soldiers resorted to aggressive posturing, the people are living in fear.

"It's for the first time," Durbuk said, "people are witnessing such a massive troop buildup near the LAC, where Chinese troops are already patrolling our lands, mounting on our horses."

Fear of losing Kashmir with Ladakh

Phunchok Stobdan, India's former Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, told Kashmir Observer that India should solve the issue immediately with diplomatic and military channels.

"In case China disagrees, then India should go for a war," Stobdan suggested. "If your sovereignty and land are under threat, then what's the option?"

Ladakh, he said, is equally important for Kashmir.

"If India loses Ladakh, then Kashmir will be defenceless," he said.

It was Chinese intrusion into Indian strategic points which triggered the fresh standoff, Stobdan, a national security expert, continued.

"Aksai Chin is a plateau and is useless," he said, "but the places like Galwan River, Shayok-Daulat Beg Oldie road are full with minerals and are strategically important and India doesn't want to lose it."

But the author of The Great Game in the Buddhist Himalayas: India and China's Quest for Strategic Dominance, Stobdan is facing anger over his recent remarks on Tibetan Buddhist leader Dalai Lama.

The former diplomat had raised questions about the Dalai Lama's silence on China's transgressions in Eastern Ladakh.

"Dalai Lama has to speak and cannot keep focussing on his prayers while China eats away the land [in Ladakh]. It doesn't work like that. Is he doing it in collaboration with China? What is it? There is some confusion in the strategy. We have let him create a government in Dharamsala. He should offer a clarification that this is not Tibet's land; it is India's," he had said.

After his comments created controversy, Stobdan told Kashmir Observer that his remarks were on Dalai Lama's politics not on his religion. "It's unfortunate that people took it otherwise."

As a geo-political person, he said, he can't be responsible for the ignorance of the people. "Fact is, Eastern Ladakh would border Tibet, not China," he said. "But as the China captured Tibet, and is now eating Ladakh, I want to ask Dalia Lama, does he accept that it belonged to Tibet or not?"

'Modi Will Resolve It'

But despite the increased troop movement in recent days, Mohammad Nasir, BJP's Councillor in Leh, is confident that government of India led by Narendra Modi will resolve the issue.

"Incursion of grazing land is not new," Nasir told Kashmir Observer. "It's just that we've faceoff at Galwan Nala and Pangong Tso Lake today."

However, he said, Indian army is on job.

"It's not necessary that they should share security-related matters with people. The issue will take some time, as the government is also tackling it diplomatically."

But anxiety is only growing among people in the absence of any official statement, Rigzin Spalbar, former Chairman of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council and a member of the Congress party, told Kashmir Observer.

"People want to know what's going on, where are the Chinese, and when they will be pushed back," Spalbar said.

"Since government has decided to remain silent, there's lot confusion and speculation in Ladakh. People have every-right to know."

Indian politicians and press, he said, always maintain a war posturing while saying that they won't give an inch of land to Pakistan.

"But here, in Leh," he questioned the statist silence, "China is taking your land in kilometres, why are you silent now?"

J&K Reports 3 Covid-19...

to Ward 2A as a suspect case of COVID-19 and his nasopharyngeal swab was taken," he said, adding, the patient expired during midnight.

"The body was kept in mortuary and all precautions were taken," he said. The swab sample for the COVID-19 came positive at 2 P.M today, he added.

The other is a 72-year-old man from Doda district who had

tested positive yesterday and died today at GMC Jammu, officials said.

"He had multiple problems like COPD and heart ailments," Medical Superintendent GMC Jammu, Dr. Dara Singh, said. He said that test for the covid-19 had returned positive yesterday. With these fatalities, the death toll due to the virus in J&K has gone upto 31.

So far Srinagar district has highest number of the fatalities--7 followed by Anantnag and Baramulla with five deaths each, Kulgam has reported four, three from Shopian, Budgam and Jammu have two each and one death each has been reported from Bandipora, Doda and Udhampur. (with GNS inputs)

10 Pregnant Women,...

people in the Union Territory to 2609.

"155 new COVID-19 cases were detected in J&K. While 99 of them are from Jammu, 56 are from Kashmir," the officials said. Among fresh cases, 53 cases were reported from Ramban, 21 from Doda, 12 from Anantnag, 11 from Kupwara, 10 from Srinagar, eight from Jammu, six each from Baramulla and Kulgam, five each from Shopian and Kathua, four each from Pulwama and Kistwar, three from Rajouri, two each from Ganderbal and Udhampur and one from Samba, the officials said. They added that 96 persons who tested positive are travellers. The number of confirmed cases has now reached 2,601, out of which 1,999 are in Kashmir, while 602 are in Jammu, they said. At the SKIMS virology lab, the reports of 13people returned positive for coronavirus. Among those, 10 are from north Kashmir's Kupwara, two from Srinagar and another from Shopian district.

However, most of the cases were reported from GMC Srinagar. According to officials, 33 out of 910 samples came out positive for Covid-19. Among those include a doctor at the Government Dental College, Srinagar and nine expecting mothers. Officials from JVC Bemina said that out of 430 samples tested at the hospital, 12 were tested positive among them 8 are from Budgam and 04 from Shopian. At army's command hospital in Udhampur, six people were confirmed to be infected by Covid-19. Among them, 5 are from Ramban and 1 from Doda.

There are 1,624 active cases of the coronavirus disease in J&K -- 1,157 in Kashmir and 467 in Jammu -- and 946 (815 from Kashmir and 131 from Jammu) patients have recovered, the officials added.

The J&K has witnessed 31 COVID-19 (27 from Kashmir, 4 from Jammu) deaths so far, including three deaths reported on Monday.

3 Militants Killed Along...

but were killed in the subsequent counter-infiltration operation, the officials said.

They said bodies of all the three infiltrators were found by the search parties Monday morning but could not be retrieved due to close proximity of the enemy posts and the lurking threat of firing during any attempt to recover them.

However, a large quantity of arms and ammunition, including two AK assault rifles with 13 filled magazines, a US-make M-16A2 rifle with six filled magazines, a 9-MM Chinese pistol, an Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) with six grenades, five hand grenades and two knives, was recovered during the operation, the officials said.

In addition, they said, a large quantity of food items, medicines and Rs 17,000 in Indian currency was recovered from the rucksacks which were found left abandoned by the militants while trying to flee back in the face of the heavy firing by the Indian Army.

The area is still under domination and operations are in progress, the officials said.

CASO Launched Along IB...

The Border Security Force (BSF) and police launched the operation in the Hiranagar area late Sunday night after receiving information about the use of torch lights and suspected movement along the border, they said.

The entire area was cordoned off and searches conducted till Monday morning, the officials said.

The operation is going on in Samba sector's riverine areas of Basantar and Eik Nalah areas, which are adjacent to Hiranagar, they said.

In the last few years, militants have infiltrated into India through Hiranagar and Samba and carried out attacks on army camps, police stations in Samba, Kathua, Jammu and Nagrota areas.

Checkpoints along the International Border and on the Jammu-Pathankot highway are on alert.

6 Jaish OGWs Held ...

arresting six associates of militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM). The militant associates were in close connection with Pakistan-based handlers and involved in drug trade, supply of weapons and assisted financially to active militants of JeM, a police official said.

Acting on a credible input, a joint team of police, army and CRPF apprehended them from Chadoora area of the district, the official said.

He said the arrested persons have been identified as Mudassir Fayaz, Shabir Ganaie, Sageer Ahmad Poswal, Issaq Bhat, Arshid Thoker and a minor whose identity has been withheld.

"Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition, including a Chinese pistol, a hand grenade, Rs 1,55,000 cash and one kilogram of narco heroine, were recovered from their possession," the official said.

He said the "recoveries have exposed the connection between drug dealers and militants".

Pak Attacked Indian Posts

guided missiles and mortar shells along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

The Pakistan army resorted to heavy shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district, prompting a befitting reply from the Indian side, officials said here.

The Pakistani troopers carried out attacks on forward posts with guided missiles, they added.

"At about 2030 hours today, the Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote sector of Poonch district," a defence spokesman said.

The Indian Army is retaliating befittingly, he added.

Pakistan on Sunday carried out heavy shelling in four sectors in Poonch and Rajouri districts, in which Mohammad Yasir, a resident of Gohlad, received splinter injuries when a mortar shell exploded near his house, the officials said.

They said over half a dozen villages in forward areas were hit by the overnight shelling, resulting in partial damage to two houses.

Due to the overnight shelling, panic-stricken people in border areas spent the whole night in bunkers and other safe places, the officials added.

Authorities Mulling ...

to cooperate and not to violate quarantine rules, they said.

of each school, according to a letter written by the director finance in the school education department.

The expenditure on this account shall be booked under the Samagra grants released to schools for day to day expenses, it added.

"As the government intends to re-open schools in mid of June, 2020, I am directed to convey to ensure safety measures in all government schools to arrest the spread of coronavirus," said the letter written to the director of school education in Kashmir.

Schools in Kashmir were closed on March 9 this year, two weeks ahead of the nation-wide lock down announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for curbing the spread of coronavirus.

J&K Govt Exempts Central

positive, they will be sent to a COVID hospital for recovery and treatment," it said.

However, the release said besides the defence and CAPF personnel certain categories of incoming passengers are also exempted from the mandatory administrative quarantine of 14 days.

"They would be sampled on arrival for RTPCR testing and sent to home quarantine for 14 days. If the test results are positive, they will be brought to a COVID hospital for recovery and treatment," it said.

These exempted categories include pregnant women in last trimester with doctor's certificate of pregnancy, cancer patients on chemotherapy, chronically ill patients discharged from a hospital after a surgical procedure, dialysis patients with doctor's certificate of being on dialysis, mothers with infants below one year, children below the age of 10 years travelling alone without a family member, government of India personnel on bonafide government duty and passengers travelling with an RTPCR test negative certificate from an ICMR approved laboratory or testing facility, not older than two days (48 hours) before the arrival date.

"Travellers from a red district to an orange district within the UT of Jammu and Kashmir will also have to compulsorily undergo a COVID-19 test following which they will be under administrative quarantine for 14 days. If tested negative, they will go to home quarantine and if tested positive, sent to a COVID hospital for recovery and treatment," it said.

The government has appealed to all the people travelling by road, rail and air to strictly observe the necessary preventive protocols for containing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

"Violation of the instructions will attract penalties under the Disaster Management Act-2005 and other provisions of law," the release said.

China Flies Fighter Jets...

at their airbases hinting at a long haul.

Meanwhile, Network 18 reported that army is rushing additional reinforcements to Galwan Valley to meet any security challenge. The report quotes sources as saying that the reinforcements being sent to Ladakh are from Kashmir.

"The shifting of troops from LoC to LAC happens under dire circumstances, and these are dire circumstance," a senior officer told Network 18. He added that at the Command and Corps level, there are 'uncommitted reserves' that can be moved without impacting operations on the ground. In Kashmir's case, it would be counter-terrorism operations.

The report also quoted Durbuk villagers as saying that a convoy of 80 to 90 trucks, including civil vehicles carrying troops, ammunition and supplies pass through their area every night.

An article in Global Times, the official mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist party, lists Type 15 tanks, Z-20 helicopters and GJ-2 drones that have been added to Chinese arsenal for high-altitude conflicts against India, the report said.

Meanwhile, India and China both claim that 'military and diplomatic' level talks are on to resolve the issue amicably.

People Living On Higher...

suffered one of Latin America's worst outbreaks, with more than 38,000 reported cases and more than 3,300 deaths, according to official figures. But it has been centered on the Pacific port of Guayaquil. Bolivia's 8,387 cases have been concentrated in the department of Santa Cruz, just a few hundred feet above sea level. But the department of La Paz, home to the world's highest capital, has had just 410 cases.

The researchers hypothesise that populations living at high altitudes might be benefiting from a combination of an abil-

ity to cope with hypoxia (low levels of oxygen in the blood) and a natural environment hostile to the virus -- including dry mountain air, high levels of UV radiation and the possibility that lower barometric pressure reduces the virus's ability to linger in the air, the report further said.

Just three populations in the world have been found to have genetic adaptations to altitude: Himalayans, Ethiopian highlanders and Andeans. Yet Clayton Cowl, a pulmonologist at the Mayo Clinic and a former president of the American College of Chest Physicians, suspects the trend may be more closely related to acclimatization, the body's ability to adjust temporarily to altitude, than to DNA.

Cowl notes that prolonged exposure to altitude triggers a chain reaction in the lungs involving a protein known as ACE2 that might prevent pulmonary shunting, a problem common among COVID-19 patients.

Ordinarily, when a part of the lung is damaged, the body redirects the flow of blood toward healthier areas that are better able to absorb oxygen. Shunting stops that process of redirection, resulting in hypoxia. It is, according to Cowl, a common element among the roughly 30 per cent of COVID-19 patients who exhibit mild symptoms yet have unusually low levels of oxygen in their blood -- and who sometimes take a sudden turn for the worse.

But researchers are still looking for more evidence to establish the high-altitude populations' response to the coronavirus, including the possibility that when infected, they sicken less and are therefore less likely to seek medical treatment or testing.

"The virus likes people. It doesn't care about altitude," says Peter Chin-Hong, a researcher on infectious diseases from the University of California in San Francisco.

"But we're still learning so much about this disease, and this does provide us with some good clues to try and understand its progression," he added.

Meet The Man Who ...

had died at the Chest Disease hospital earlier that day. After his family members were quarantined, Khan got the call.

"Soon after that, I deputed my four volunteers, on a particular time frame, when the administration would ferry the body for burial," Khan, the team leader who protects the identity of his 'humanist and highly educated' volunteers, for fear of social stigma and boycott, says.

"Following the protocol, my team carried PPE gears for some family members of the deceased man at their ancestral graveyard, Malkah, Srinagar."

Soon as gravediggers walked away, the team began their farewell undertaking, as cops strictly enforced the protocol guidelines from distance.

"After offering funeral prayers, my team carried the body placed in a rectangular ply box, and lowered it into the 8-feet long pit, with the help of ropes."

Once done with their 'moral duty', the volunteers burnt their protective gears, and returned home, only to quarantine themselves for 14 days.

Meanwhile, anticipating another COVID call, Khan put four more members of his team on standby mode.

"Our motive is to serve humanity," the team leader continues.

"Be it anyone -- Hindu, Sikh, Muslim -- we remain ready for the proper burial of our departed brethren during these distressing times."

The only fear, however, is that Khan might run out of his team members, if the COVID cases continue to rise in the valley.

"And that's why," he says, "the idea is to inspire others, with our efforts, for this community welfare cause."

As someone who has fought many odds in his life to create his own chain of shops and played his role in mitigating the pandemic crisis by starting free-home-delivery service, Khan funds the cause from his own pocket.

But his selfless efforts are already motivating people to approach him with help. Among others, the police officer who called Khan for Fateh Kadal man's burial too wants to play his part.

"While people are offering monetary help, I tell them that I don't receive funds for this cause from anyone," Khan says.

"We're only trying to be helping hands during this crisis situation, when every one of us should come forward and be each other's support."

HC To Consider Sagar's ...

counter affidavit and copy of the same has also been provided to counsel representing Sagar-- Advocate Shuja-ul-Haq.

"List for consideration on 10.06.2020," the court said.

On May 20 last , the court granted "last and final opportunity" of ten days to the government for filing the counter-affidavit.

Previously, the court had directed the Government to consider the bail plea of Sagar having regard to health grounds and submit the report.

The court had also directed state counsel to keep available detention record. The application states that Sagar is an old aged person and is suffering from hypertension and orthopaedic complications.

"The applicant (Sagar) has developed a severe cardio vascular ailment during his detention since August 6," reads the application. (GNS)

Youth Found Dead In Sopore

registered a case and started investigations in this regard.

Accidental Fire Kills...

pierced the body of Vansh, resulting in his on the spot death. Preliminary investigation suggested that the elder brother pressed the trigger of the rifle when the two were alone in the room, the official said, adding police have registered a case and started investigation.

The weapon has been seized, the official said.

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
- BIJBERA: 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

10 Shawwal

1441

PRAYERS

FAJR

3: 38

ZUHR

12: 29

ASR

5:27

Magrib

7:40

ISHA

9:20

This Day In History

- 1763 - Pontiac's Rebellion: At what is now Mackinaw City, Michigan, Chipewas capture Fort Michilimackinac by diverting the garrison's attention with a game of lacrosse, then chasing a ball into the fort.
- 1774 - Intolerable Acts: Amendment to original Quartering Act enacted, allowed governor in colonial America to house British soldiers in uninhabited houses, outhouses, barns, or other buildings if suitable quarters not provided.
- 1858- Donati Comet 1st seen named after its discoverer
- 1875- Alexander Graham Bell makes first sound transmission
- 1896- Guglielmo Marconi applies to patent the radio, accepted 2 July 1897
- 1910- Pygmies discovered in Dutch New Guinea
- 1949- Transjordan renamed Jordan
- 1955- The USSR and Yugoslavia sign the Belgrade declaration and thus normalize relations between both countries, discontinued since 1948.
- 1964- Lal Bahadur Shastri elected premier of India.
- 1966- US Surveyor 1 lands in Oceanus Procellarum; 1st lunar softlanding
- 1969- Australian aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne slices US destroyer USS Frank E Evans in half, killing 74 (South Vietnam)
- 1976- East Timor People's Assembly accepts annexation by Indonesia
- 1979- John Paul II becomes 1st pope to visit a Communist country (Poland)
- 1979- NASA launches space vehicle S-198
- 1986 Regular TV coverage of US Senate sessions begins
- 1989- 10,000 Chinese soldiers are blocked by 100,000 citizens protecting students demonstrating for democracy in Tiananmen Square, Beijing
- 1996 9th Children's Miracle Network Telethon.
- 1998- The CIH computer virus is discovered in Taiwan.

From KO Archives

Historic Crossing Today

Grand Reception Awaits Kashmiri Leaders in PaK

Observer News Service

Srinagar - A delegation of Kashmiri leaders including those from the All Parties Hurriyat Conference - Is all set to begin an unprecedented trip to meet Pakistani and Kashmiri leaders on the other side of the Line of Control that divides the state.

Authorities here on Wednesday issued travel permits to eleven-member delegation of Hurriyat Conference.

Those crossing the LoC include 5 Jop Hurriyat leaders besides Shabbir Shah and Yasin Malik of Democratic Freedom Party and the JKLF respectively

"We have got the travel permits...We are all set to leave for Azad Kashmir tomorrow," chairman of the moderate Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq said. He is leading an 11 member delegation comprising of former chairman Maulana Abbas Ansari, chief spokesman Prof Abdul Ghani, executive members Bilal Ghani Lone and Fazal Haq Qureshi besides some general council members.

JKLF chief Yasin Malik who wanted to head a 17 member delegation decided to go alone after Pakistani authorities cleared only five of his nominees.

Meanwhile parties associated with Hurriyat are planning a grand farewell to their leaders.

Hurriyat leaders will be travelling upto Uri in their own vehicles instead of in the peace bus.

Leaders from the Mirwaiz led faction of the Hurriyat Conference will be conveyed in a cavalcade upto the Kaman Post in Uri. The cavalcade is scheduled to depart at 9 a.m.

Reports from Pakistan said Hurriyat leaders are being accorded a grand reception on their arrival in Pak controlled Kashmir.

But as D-Day approaches, reservations regarding what the historic event may achieve seem to be mounting on the Pakistan side.

Syed Ali Geelani now heading his own faction of the Hurriyat has refused to accompany the contingent.

Geelani says his faction of the Hurriyat look the decision to register their "resentment" at Pakistan's "deviation from its stand on Kashmir".

The Pakistan-based Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) has spent the past two days thinking whether or not they should meet the visiting leaders.

Former prime minister of Pakistan-administered Kashmir Sardar Abdul Qayyum said the visit was in "bad taste" because the Kashmiris "were not coming united".

Even Amanullah Khan, Chairman of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, who has remained consistently cynical of initiatives backed by India or Pakistan, agrees with Sardar Qayyum.

"If they are unable to speak with one voice, they will only confuse the situation further by visiting Pakistan," he said.

"Ultimately, the Kashmiri leadership will be held responsible for the perpetuation of the Kashmir issue."

(Kashmir Observer, 02 June, 2005)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SHOPIAN

Fax No/ Tell No: 01933-260226

E-mail:- rnbdivisionshopian@gmail.com

Riyaz Amad Shergojri

S/o Gh Qadir Shergojri

R/o Heriparigam Awantipora

NOTICE

FINAL REMINDER

Subject:	Yellow lining of road side parking area in Town Shopian
Reference	1. ULB's Allotment No: ULB/EEK/19-20/5652-55 Dated: 03-01-2019 2. This office letter No: 418-22 Dated: 01-05-2020

1. Whereas, the above cited work was allotted to you vide above referred allotment No.

2. Whereas, as per the allotment conditions , your were supposed to execute the work within 04 days.

3. Whereas you were directed vide this office letter No: 418-22 Dated: 01-05-2020 and No: 455-59 Dt: 01-05-2020 to start the work within two days

4. Whereas, despite lapse of more than 04-months from the issuance of Allotment , you neither started the work nor shown any indication to do so.

5. Whereas this office has to face an embarrassing harrasement before the higher ups, who have viwed the mater seriously.

6. Whereas, it seems that you are not interested in execution of the work and is un-necessarily wasting the precious time of the department , besides people are facing lot of problems.

Now you are hereby finally directed through the medium of this notice to start the work within two days positively , failing which the work will be put to fresh tenders at your risk and cost and the CDR Will be forfeited . Moreover your name will be recommended for blacklisting of your registration card

No: 840-45

Dated:- 28-05-2020

Sd/-

Executive Engineer

PW(R&B) Division Shopian

DIPK-1131/20

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION ANANTNAG

E-NIT NO.04 of 2020-21.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of J and K State , e-tenders on item rate basis are invited from approved and eligible contractors/ SHG registered with J and K State Govt. for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estd. Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Earnest Money	Time	Class	Cost of TD	Ma-jor Head	Tender Receiving Authority
1.	Supply of men and machinery during floods/Flash floods (if any) for the year 2020-2021 for Aripath Nallah (From Source upto confluence) including Town section	4.46	8920/-	06 Days	DEE	350/-	4/11	Ex. Engineer F.C. Division Anantnag
2	Supply of men and machinery during floods/Flash floods (if any) for the year 2020-2021 for Sandran nallah from D/s Shankerpora upto Vessu Bridge including Dungi Nallah.	4.46	4460/-	06 Days	SHG	350/-		

1. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information , eligibility criteria , specifications , bill of quantities (BOQ) set to terms and conditions of contract and other details cane be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from :-

1. Publishing date	01.06.2020	Upto 4.00 P.M
2. Download Date Starts	01.06.2020	Upto 4.00 P.M
3. BID Submission Date Starts	01.06.2020	Upto 4.00 P.M
4. BID Submission Date Ends	06.06.2020	Upto 4.00 P.M
5. Date of opening of tenders	08.06.2020	At 11.00 A.M

The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in


2. The bids uploaded on the web site up to date and time will be opened on 08.06.2020 at 11.00 P.M in the office of the Executive Engineer FC Division Anantnag in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case of holiday or office happening to be closed on the basis of opening of the bid, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

3. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in the shape of E-Chalan/Treasury Receipt under Major Head 0702 in favour of and earnest money / BID security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to tender Receiving Authority, the bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 (Ninety) days from the date of opening of bids.


Dated:- 01.06.2020

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Flood Control Division Anantnag

DIPK-1196/20



Government of India



Dear Farmers... India Stands By You

To mitigate the losses owing to the Corona pandemic

- Rs. 2 lakh crore have been allocated to provide additional concessional credit through Kisan Credit Card.
- Rs. 6000 is being given in three equal installments of Rs. 2000 each under PM-KISAN.
- 9.72 crore farmer families have been given Rs. 19,457 crore during the lockdown period.

Strengthening Farm-gate infrastructure, to increase farmers' income

- A scheme worth Rs. 1 lakh crore launched to strengthen cold storage chain and supply chain.

Creating better pricing structure for farmers

- In addition to the APMCs, several agriculture market reforms carried out to provide better market options. Farmers can now sell their crops anywhere and avail better prices.
- Amendments announced in Essential Commodities Act, APMC Act, Mandi Act to offer better price to Farmers.
- A scheme worth Rs. 10,000 crore is dedicated to over 2 lakh unorganized Micro Food Processing Enterprises. This will help in them establishing their own brand.


Standing by Fishermen

- A provision of Rs. 20,050 crore financial assistance has been made under PM Matsya Sampada Yojana to give an unprecedented boost to marine and inland fisheries.

For the Animal Husbandry Farmers







- A total of Rs. 15,000 crore have been allocated to revive the animal husbandry sector.

War Against Corona - Nation's Victory lies in your victory



The crisis the world is facing today teaches us that way forward is - Aatmanirbhar Bharat (A self-reliant India) ”

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



For more information, visit - transformingindia.mygov.in/aatmanirbharbharat

davp22112/13/0005/2021

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Lockdown 5.0

India has extended lockdown restrictions to June 30 in the “containment zones”. Government is, however, allowing restaurants, malls and religious buildings to reopen from June 8 onwards. The lockdown extension order has come as the country has reported a record number of daily new Covid-19 cases. With over 1.85 lakh Covid-19 cases, India has moved past Germany’s 1.83 lakh cases and climbed to eighth from the ninth spot in the list of 10 nations worst hit by the coronavirus pandemic. The number of total deaths linked to the highly contagious illness has crossed the 5,000-mark.

The US has so far reported the highest number of over 18 lakh Covid-19 cases. Brazil follows with over five lakh cases, and Russia with over four lakh cases.

But as the cases are registering a sharp spike, the union government has decided to reopen the hospitality and retail businesses, along with places of worship, but they must keep social distancing rules in place. Similarly, curbs have also been removed on movement of people and goods between states. Government has continued with the practice of night curfew, but timings have been changed to 9 pm-5am from the existing 7 pm-7am. The decision about reopening cinemas, schools and international flights will be taken after an assessment in the next few weeks.

The government is gradually moving towards re-opening the economy as it fears the economic fallout from stay-at-home measures will be worse than the virus. Indian economy like the economies elsewhere in the world has already gone into recession. In India, its impact has been devastating. Millions of people have lost jobs. Millions of migrant labourers have lost livelihood and shelter in the cities forcing them to go back to their homes in the villages. This has triggered a massive suffering in its wake. And it will only get worse if the economy is not reopened.

Government has thus done well to take steps towards resuming the economic activity. In the west too, the governments are similarly moving towards getting back to normal life. And this is happening even as the Covid-19 cases are spiking and the experts are warning of a second wave of infections. This is a serious apprehension. But the further damage to the economy will be a cure worse than the disease. More so in a country like India where a significant population lives below the poverty line. In the absence of jobs, people will die of hunger. Government is therefore doing well to unlock the economy. It should, however, make the businesses accountable for any laxity in implementing the norms of social distancing..

OTHER OPINON

Sobering signals

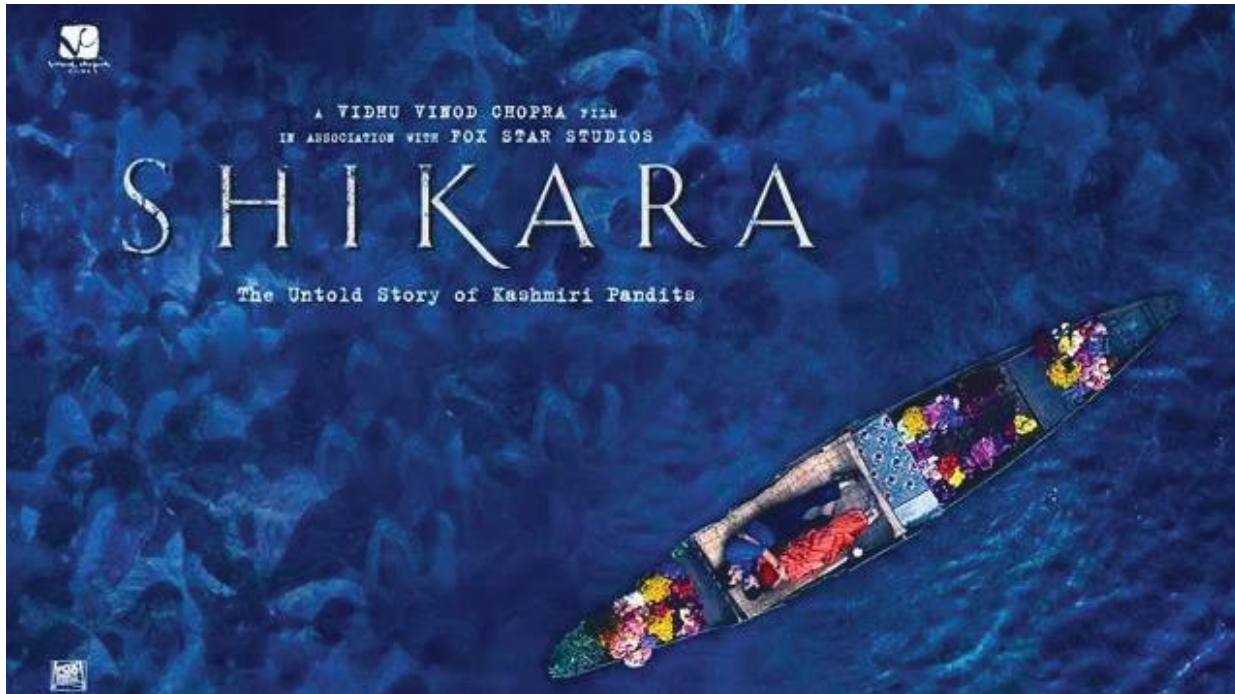
The GDP data released by the National Statistical Office on Friday affirms three disconcerting trends. First, the economy had slowed down considerably, even before the national lockdown was imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The revised data for the first three quarters of the previous financial year indicates that the slowdown was more pronounced than was previously believed. Second, the lockdown has made matters worse. And as the data on the eight core industries for April indicates, the economic distress is likely to be more severe than expected. Third, the headline growth number is being driven by only two sectors — agriculture and government.

At the aggregate level, growth in gross value added slumped to 3 per cent in the fourth quarter of the last financial year. While growth was above expectations, as it is based on a limited set of data on earnings — timelines for submitting financial returns have been extended — the numbers are likely to be subject to downward revision as and when more data is available. Agriculture and public administration and defence, which largely reflect government, continue to drive economic activity. Excluding them, gross value added by the remaining economy grew by a mere 1 per cent in the fourth quarter. The manufacturing sector has now contracted for three straight quarters, with the pace of contraction deepening. Similarly, the construction sector has also now contracted for two straight quarters. Trade, hotels and communication have slowed down considerably, as have finance, real estate and professional services. On the other hand, private consumption growth slumped to 2.7 per cent in the fourth quarter, down from 6.6 per cent the previous quarter. And with households cutting back on discretionary spending, private consumption is likely to moderate considerably this year. Investment activity continued to be moribund, contracting now for three consecutive quarters, notwithstanding government spending on infrastructure.

Leading economic indicators paint a grim picture. The index of eight core industries contracted by 38 per cent in April, with all sectors registering a contraction. Exports declined by 60 per cent in April, while non-oil non-gold imports fell by 52 per cent, indicating weak domestic demand. However, there are some signs of economic activity picking up, though marginally, in May. While electricity generation had contracted by 22.8 per cent in April, the pace of contraction eased to 14.9 per cent in May — indicating that the gradual lifting of restrictions has led to the resumption of some economic activities. In large part, how economic activity now shapes up will depend on the easing of the lockdown restrictions, and the success in containing the virus. While one will have to wait for the April-June quarter GDP data to gauge the full impact of the lockdown on economic activity, given the problems with data collection during this period — the NSO was unable to fully capture retail inflation data — it is possible that the paucity of data makes it difficult to accurately assess the damage to the economy during this period.

The Indian Express

In Reply to Vidhu Vinod Chopra’s Letter Pain of Muslims, KPs is Braided



Dear Vidhu Sir,

Khair Mubarak for the Eid greetings!

“We admired Shikara as a love story, not as a part of history. Because it shows only the half picture. Yet, we are happy for you that through Shikara you have been able to narrate the pain of our Pandit brethren. But it’s your Shikara. You choose who to take with you in it and who not.”

I ndeed, it’s an honour and a matter of great delight to receive your response on our critique of your movie ‘Shikara.’ We feel a need to offer gratitude for the precious time that you have surfed reading and writing back to us. It is certainly overwhelming and brings an achievement for us to be the recipients of your letter. Your expression of a wish for a propitious dialogue instead of a soliloquy is acknowledgeable. Such open-heartedness is substantial and impelling. We think, this is for the first time that the film industry has taken a constructive step of engaging us. We have been always here craving for a call from the Indian cinema.

As you have already mentioned that Shikara is something intimate to you and the suggested short video totally justifies your personal linkage with the subject. We keep on saying that the pain and sufferings of both the communities are braided. Thus, we feel that the miseries of the Muslim community should have at least acquired the background of the movie, if not the forefront. By doing that, the tribute could have been more aesthetic and may have sent a message of harmony and amalgamation to both the communities. Shikara had the potential of ending the existent cycle of hatred. Since, we have already mentioned that it lacks the support of its brethren. May be then, these lines from Shikara would have passed on an inclusive message:

*“Do lakeeray hain to alag hain
Ye ek lakeer hain to saath hain”*

After watching the short video, we could easily predict the mammoth love and care your mother, late Shanti Devi, still carried in her heart for her motherland. As we saw her in the video, she would have never liked the numb treatment given to Kashmiri Muslims in Shikara. She would have rather asked for a tribute equally sensitive to both the communities. A movie which could have taken both the communities together by trying to mend their torn hearts with the glue of love.

After watching the short video, we could easily predict the mammoth love and care your mother, late Shanti Devi, still carried in her heart for

her motherland. As we saw her in the video, she would have never liked the numb treatment given to Kashmiri Muslims in Shikara. She would have rather asked for a tribute equally sensitive to both the communities.

We all are aware of the role of some external forces behind the immigration of the Pandit community. One would expect the movie to reveal all the responsible elements to the masses. Benazir Bhutto may well have been one among them. But, what about others? How could the young generation not commit the same fault again when it isn’t properly enlightened about the historical mistakes? That’s why Shikara’s portrayal on the cinema looks somewhat driven by same anti-Kashmiri sentiment. Shikara may not be a by-product of hate and propaganda but we are sorry to inform you that it didn’t appear any different. It may be because of the fact that we both are Kashmiri Muslims, and that could well be the reason we got this impression from your movie.

We all are aware of the role of some external forces behind the immigration of the Pandit community. One would expect the movie to reveal all the responsible elements to the masses. Benazir Bhutto may well have been one among them. But, what about others? How could the young generation not commit the same fault again when it isn’t properly enlightened about the historical mistakes?

Gaw Kadal massacre was mentioned because the movie gives a feeling that Kashmiri Muslims were living comfortably post Pandit immigration. However, that was not the case. We were recipients of further oppression after Pandits left. Shikara portrays Kashmiri Muslims as apathetic, as if they didn’t have a voice of their own and were guided by some external forces. As you wrote in your letter ‘Violence is faceless’, but the emotional scenes around immigration are so powerful and stirring that they would easily develop a sense of animosity against the Muslim community of Kashmir and label them as culprits. The film, especially, in the kind of environment it was released would only add fuel to the already rising levels of Islamophobia. Though you have rationally justified the timing of its release but we think that a lot could still have been done. Because we expected bit more effort from your side because we all are connected to this film emotionally.

There was a lot of politics surrounding the incident of Pandit migration in Kashmir. Therefore, the camera is not expected to remain aloof from it. The way you have chosen to tell your side of the story will only build walls, where on one side we are seen as criminals and on the other side you as victims. The movie, thus, falls in the category of other such Bollywood movies culpable of myopic research, hence, misrepresentation of Kashmiri Muslims, which is surely not expected from you because of your roots in Kashmir.

You must have gone through our review multiple times as you have already mentioned. It’s because we had been successful in minimizing our bias with the subject which in reality set our review apart. We admired Shikara as a love story, not as a part of history. Because it shows only the half picture. Yet, we are happy for you that through Shikara you have been able to narrate the pain of our Pandit brethren. However, we would have liked to see both the communities travelling in Shikara. But it’s your Shikara. You choose who to take with you in it and who not. We couldn’t see any space in it for us. You could see even in this letter we have only questions to ask because Bollywood has never responded to us before like this. But you in no way are vulnerable to answer them. We would satisfy ourselves as your main protagonist in the film does, that is, by carving out a fake reply-like for his letters from the President. At least we were lucky enough to get an actual reply from you.

At last, we would again like to thank you for encouraging us by writing back. And, if you have any plans of again shooting in Kashmir, we would be happy hosting you at our respective places. Perhaps, you may agree to our wish of making a film on the Gaw Kadal massacre as a tribute to your Kashmiri Muslim community. We would love to assist you in that film even if you aren’t convinced with the idea of making a film on it. Our love and support would always be with your films no matter how they represent us. Because, we have been taught to give love regardless of the outcomes.

*Truly Yours,
Asif Khan and Arbeena
Srinagar
prolflickhan121@gmail.com
arbeena9@gmail.com*



OBSERVER
MAIL

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

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O.Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

Unrest Among Kashmir Youth

Youth is the most powerful resource on the earth. The quality and the strength of a nation lie in the hands of youth. Therefore empowerment of youth is must for the future of a nation. As has been experienced in the past the energetic youth can do the greatest of things if they are offered proper guidance and quality education. The present generation finds itself in very different atmosphere than the past and is confronted with more obstacles and challenges.

The power of youth can never be harnessed. It is like a gushing stream or a mighty river which follows its course no matter how big are the obstacles. The power of youth if properly channelized and controlled could bring transformation in humanity for its progress. In the words of James Matthew Barrie youth is the joy, the little birds that have broken out of the eggs and is eagerly waiting to spread out its wings in the open sky of freedom ad hope. Today the power of youth has totally disrupted the entire world and the happiness

of one class has been snatched by the other. Power of youth has been used for creating war hysteria in different parts of the world and consequently their dreams have been shattered. The life of present generation of youth is full of challenges as discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, language, and gender continues to haunt them.

Though Kashmir has all the natural resources to bloom the talent of her youth but they are wasted for want of compassionate and creative leadership. Sadly boys are pursuing the paths of violence only because of the wrong policies of our governments. Everyone has a dream here and wants to rise but the perpetual conflict is stopping them from realising their dreams. According to the global peace index South Asia is the most violent region in the world which is marked by internal conflicts. Kashmir has demographically never been as young as spirited as today. Kashmiri youth are the children of conflict. There is no one to listen to their concerns and provide a healing balm to their frustra-

tions and anger.

The present generation is vocal and more argumentative than their parents yet it seems no one out there is to listen let alone understand them. The youth of valley become angry when they notice the widening chasm between what the so called leaders preach and what they practise. Education has made them less susceptible to manipulation and exploitation by mainstream politicians and the separatists who claim to represent them. The youth of Kashmir, despite facing unemployment and poverty never let the state down at any point. The issue of grave public concern is increasing frustration among the jobless youth of Kashmir. The frustration is genuine but unfortunately the present government is oblivious to the reality. Let not aspirations of six lakh jobless youth go unanswered.

*Tariq Mantoo
mantootariq@gmail.com>*

Backstory of Ladakh's Galwan Valley and the legend of Rassul Galwan

GOWHAR GEELANI

The river Galwan originates from the Aksai Chin region and joins the Shyok River inside the territory claimed by India to form upstream tributary of the Indus River. What is lesser known is the fact that the river valley is named after a native explorer of Kashmiri descent Ghulam Rassul Galwan, whose forefathers belonged to the famed Galwan (the Galawan) tribe of Kashmir

CHINA AND INDIA — the world's two most populous countries which had fought a full-fledged war in 1962 — are now facing a stern test once again as their militaries are in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation at a few places along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh region. Alongside the main story of border tensions, skirmishes and alleged incursions, there lies a strategic importance of the Galwan Valley in the restive region. But how this valley was named Galwan? And what is its backstory?

Several historians, scholars and experts of Ladakh affairs are of the view that Galwan Valley was named after Rasool Galwan. According to the book *Forsaking Paradise: Stories from Ladakh*, Ghulam Rasool Galwan or Ghulam Rassul Galwan had arrived in Leh in 1895.

"In the year 1895, after a hazardous journey of one year and three months in Central Asia and Tibet, Rasool Galwan, and his companions arrived in the village Thiksey. Another day's journey and they would reach Leh and be reunited with their family members," the book reads.

"The river Galwan originates from the Aksai Chin region and joins the Shyok River inside the territory claimed by India to form upstream tributary of the Indus River. What is lesser known is the fact that the river valley is named after a native explorer of Kashmiri descent Ghulam Rassul Galwan, whose forefathers belonged to the famed Galwan (the Galawan) tribe of Kashmir," writes Waris Ul Anwar, a PhD scholar at the department of history, Aligarh Muslim University, in a Kashmir-based news portal.

Ghulam Rassul Galwan earned fame as well as notoriety for various reasons. He also penned down a book titled *Servant of Sahibs: A Book To Be Read Aloud*.

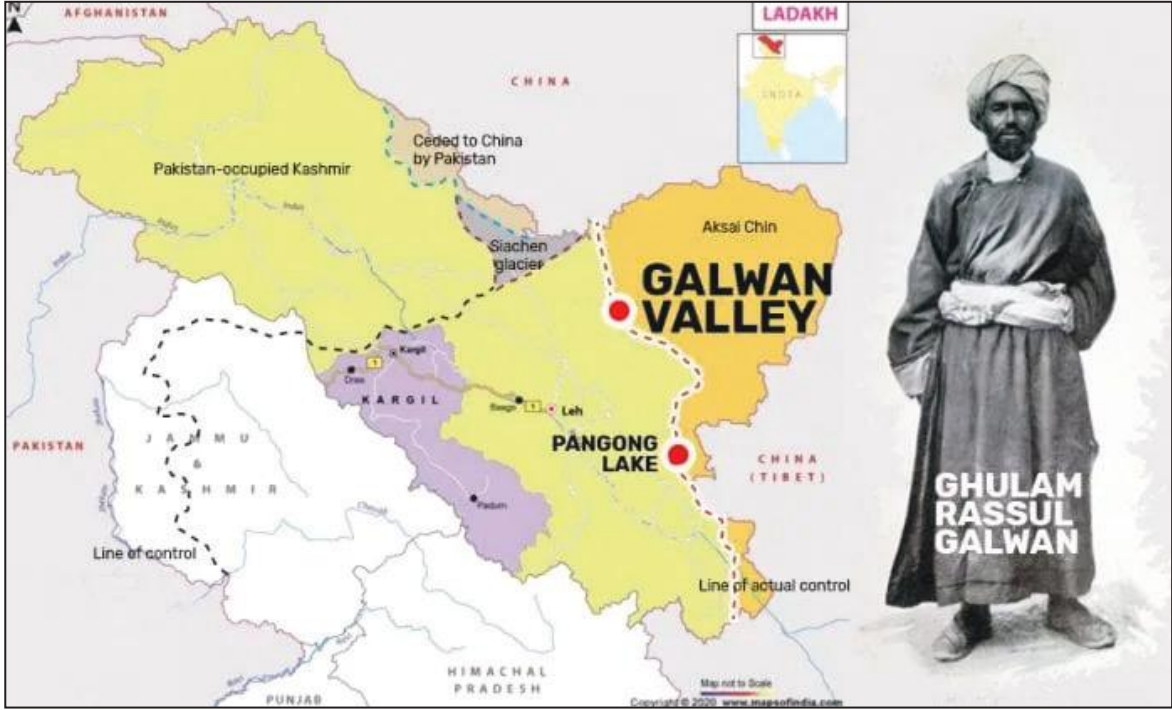
As the Galwan Valley is in the news for all the wrong reasons, Jammu and Kashmir's social media space is abuzz with the legend of Rassul Galwan and his book. Reports suggest that some are looking forward to reading *Servant of Sahibs* during the lockdown period.

Social media enthusiasts are even uploading cover picture of the book which also includes an introduction by British explorer Sir Francis E Younghusband. Some in Kashmir are revisiting history by debating the life and adventures of Rassul Galwan. They say this has resulted in enhancing people's interest in reading more about Ladakh's past to understand the present.

"Today I post the cover of book no: 2 (out of 10) I could lay my hands on. This is in response to what my friend Jaspreet Kaur asked me to do. I request my friends to do the same to excite the curiosity/attention/interest of people in book reading," wrote Dr Ahad Abdul on Facebook. Dr Ahad is known for his interest in Kashmir's history.

According to Dr Ahad's claim, *Servant of Sahibs* "is an important book on the life and times of early twentieth century Ladakh and some parts of Central Asia authored by an illiterate Galwan whose ancestry is rooted in the Kashmiri community historically known for their banditry. The illustrious author Rassul Galwan became a trusted assistant to various nineteenth century European explorers."

He says that the book "is the first and perhaps the last of its kind to have found its due space in the most prestigious publications of the famous Cambridge University." "Setting off at a young age, Galwan was soon to be found in the company of adventure travellers like Sir Francis Younghusband, who explored the Tibetan plateau, the Pamir mountains and the deserts of Central Asia. Quietly bringing up the rear of these now-famous caravans was Rassul Galwan. Having taught himself how to run the expedition, the intelligent mountaineer was soon turning his talents to acquiring languages, picking up a working knowledge of Chinese



and English, among others. It was with this rudimentary English vocabulary that Rassul Galwan authored *Servants of Sahibs*, the only account of its kind."

Rassul Galwan is said to have written about his life of journeying and adventures in his book. The foreword of the book is written by British explorer and a leading figure in *The Great Game* between the British and Russia, Francis Younghusband.

In his foreword, Younghusband writes: "Why Himalayan peoples should be ready as they are to undergo hardships, and run risks of the most serious nature, in the service of stray traveller who appears among them is not easy to understand. The payment they receive is small. They have to work for much more than eight hours a day... Yet they readily work through long and arduous days and willingly risk their lives. And, most wonderful of all, they are full of gratitude to their employer when they leave his service. In this book we get an answer to the puzzle."

Rassul Galwan begins his book in flawed and broken English. "This told my mother: Long years before, in Kashmir hills, were herds of ponies belonging to Maharaja, and were very many people to watch to them, on those mountain pastures. One those people, after, become a robber. His name was Karra Galwan. Karra was his name (means: black). Galwan means robber."

The author describes Karra as a strong and clever Galwan (robber), who robbed houses of the rich. "Karra gave much money poor men. Rich men in Kashmir very hard men, never gave money to poor men."

He says that after the arrest of Karra, many of his family (members) moved out of the Valley fearing the Maharaja's forces. He says that one of his great grandfathers had even moved to Baltistan (part of the Gilgit-Baltistan region) and from there to Leh.

Many Galawans moved to Yarkand in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Later, Rassul travelled to Yarkand with, whom he calls, "Captain Younghusband."

There are varied views on popular Ladakhi explorer and adventurer Ghulam Rassul Galwan, and his tribe, the Galawans.

The word 'Galawan' means horse-keeper in Kashmiri language.

"The Galawans, or horse-keepers, of Kashmir are by some considered to be descendants of the Dums, and

their dark complexion suggests that they are not of the same race as the Kashmiri peasants. Others think that the Galawans are the descendants of the Tsak tribe. But as far as I know there is no evidence to support the latter theory." Jammu and Kashmir's first-ever Settlement Commissioner, Sir Walter R Lawrence, writes in *The Valley of Kashmir*.

According to Lawrence, "Originally, they (Galawans) earned their livelihood by grazing ponies, but as time went on they found it more remunerative to steal them, and they eventually developed into an established criminal tribe." The Galawans, according to Lawrence's account, "earned notoriety in the days of Pathan rule, and when the Sikhs took over Kashmir the Galawans were a terror to the country." (*The Valley of Kashmir* by Walter Lawrence, p. 311).

He also claims that the Galawans would frequently attack wedding-parties and even carry off the bride. They were also known for their bravery and daring attitude. Lawrence says that Dogra Maharaja Ranbir Singh had "finally sent them as colonists to Bunj. Many of the Galawans have, however, returned to Kashmir, and pony-lifting frequently occurs. The ponies are carried off to Poonch, where they are disposed of with ease and safety."

The term 'Galawan', according to him, is also "used to describe a man of violent and predatory habits, and it is said by the villagers that the Galawans in their capacity of horse-keepers, often kill a young foal and eat it, returning the skin to the unfortunate owner."

A Kashmiri proverb "Galawans karun gur hawale" roughly means to hand over the horse to the 'horse-keeper' (read horse stealer).

Meanwhile, the confrontation between the armies of India and China has been reported at Hot Springs in Chang Chenmo River valley, and at Demchok, according to a recent article by Lt Gen (retired) HS Panag in *The Print*. Media reports have alluded to intrusions and face-offs in the Galwan River on the northern bank of Pangong Tso.

Apparently, China aims to have control over the Galwan Valley for strategic purposes.

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Why Is Black America So Angry Right Now?

Crisis deepens in the US as violence erupts in cities across the country

LINDA S. HEARD

As if US authorities didn't have enough to worry about in this age of Covid-19 which has led to economic devastation and massive unemployment, justifiable fury over the murder of yet another unarmed African American at the hands of police has erupted into widespread civil unrest not seen since the 1960s.

Night after night the downtown areas of almost every major city, including the capital, have been besieged by looters and arsonists causing governors to call out the National Guard.

Clearly black Americans have had enough. The killing of George Floyd, arrested over his possession of an allegedly forged \$20 note, was hard to watch. Struggling to breathe with a knee pressing down on his throat he called for his mother. He was held on the ground by three uniformed officers for nine minutes.

African Americans along with decent people of all ethnicities are appalled by the culture of police brutality towards certain communities, a culture that has been tolerated as the norm since the Jim Crow apartheid era that established different laws for blacks and whites.

In spite of several videos to the contrary, those responsible falsely claimed he was resisting arrest. To date, only one, Derek Chauvin, has been arrested and charged.

The killing echoed that of another black man, Eric Garner, by New York City police officers who sat on his head

ignoring his pleas "I can't breathe".

The list of Black Americans whose lives were cut short by police or white vigilantes, like the father and son who shot and killed Ahmaud Arbery while he was jogging through a white neighbourhood in Georgia, is too long to reproduce here but suffice to say that the perpetrators are often given a mere smack on the wrist.

For sure, African Americans along with decent people of all ethnicities are appalled by the culture of police brutality towards certain communities, a culture that has been tolerated as the norm since the Jim Crow apartheid era that established different laws for blacks and whites.

Equal rights legislation — only on paper

The 1950s civil rights movement was successful in bringing about equal rights legislation at least on paper. But the facts tell a different story. Institutional racism is alive and well not only deep within the structure of policing but also the judicial system whereby black Americans receive longer custodial sentences than their white counterparts who commit the same crime.

Data shows that the Los Angeles police search four times as many black and Latino drivers than white. The New York Civil Liberties Union reports that stop-and-frisk measures have overwhelmingly targeted African Americans and Latinos.

Last year out of 13,459 stops in New York 59 per cent were black, 29 per cent Latino and just nine per cent were white. It is not surprising that black parents who fear for their sons warn them to avoid the police who more often than not act first and ask questions later.



Peaceful protesters and militants are chanting George Floyd's name while regurgitating the mantra 'Black Lives Matter' but what they want besides justice and recompense for Floyd's family is an overhaul of the system that relegates minorities to second class citizens.

It is no accident of fate that three times as many African Americans have fallen victim to Covid-19 than white people. The US Health Secretary says the black community has "greater risk profiles" in terms of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, with no mention of those

factors — joblessness, poor housing, lack of health insurance and high levels of poverty — that contribute to ill health.

Right of African Americans

The right of African Americans to be hurt and angry is incontestable but how the federal government and the governors of states stricken by violence channels that rage is paramount to obtaining a peaceful outcome.

Will the grievances suffered by black communities be listened to and addressed or will there be crackdowns akin

to throwing petrol on the flames?

The violence which has destroyed the livelihoods of small business owners, incinerated buildings and destroyed private vehicles cannot be allowed to continue and that requires the kind of leadership geared towards bringing people together.

Where are the influential voices capable of speaking up on behalf of black youth? CNN anchor Don Lemon literally pleaded with African American politicians and celebrities to lend their voices to the cause instead of worrying about the effects emotion could have on their "brand". He called upon Oprah, Barack Obama, Beyonce and others to take to their airwaves to show their support.

Can President Trump be the glue that brings peace to his nation? Given his statements thus far, I am not hopeful. His unfortunate tweet "When the looting starts, the shooting starts" flagged by Twitter as glorifying violence was indicative of his mindset.

He has called protesters "thugs" and said if those gathered outside the White House had breached the fence, "they would have been greeted with the most vicious dogs and most ominous weapons I have ever seen". A 'them-and-us' scenario must be avoided at all costs to prevent a race war brewing.

— Linda S. Heard is an award-winning British political columnist and guest television commentator with a focus on the Middle East.

Gulf News

First Commercial Space Taxi A Pit Stop On Musk's Mars Quest

Agencies

It all started with the dream of growing a rose on Mars.

That vision, Elon Musk's vision, morphed into a shake-up of the old space industry, and a fleet of new private rockets. Now, those rockets will launch Nasa astronauts from Florida to the International Space Station — the first time a for-profit company will carry astronauts into the cosmos.

It's a milestone in the effort to commercialise space. But for Musk's company, SpaceX, it's also the latest milestone in a wild ride that began with epic failures and the threat of bankruptcy.

If the company's eccentric founder and CEO has his way, this is just the beginning: He's planning to build a city on the red planet, and live there.

"What I really want to achieve here is to make Mars seem possible, make it seem as though it's something that we can do in our lifetimes and that you can go," Musk told a cheering congress of space professionals in Mexico in 2016.

Musk "is a revolutionary change" in the space world, says Harvard University astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell, whose Jonathan's Space Report has tracked launches and failures for decades.

Ex-astronaut and former Commercial Spaceflight Federation chief Michael Lopez-Alegria says, "I think history will look back at him like a da Vinci figure."

Musk has become best known for Tesla, his audacious effort to build an electric vehicle company. But SpaceX predates it.

At 30, Musk was already wildly rich from selling his internet financial company PayPal and its predecessor Zip2. He arranged a series of lunches in Silicon Valley in 2001 with G. Scott Hubbard, who had been Nasa's Mars czar and was then running the agency's Ames Research Center.

Musk wanted to somehow grow a rose on the red planet, show it to the world and inspire school children, recalls Hubbard.

"His real focus was having life on Mars," says Hubbard, a Stanford University professor who now chairs SpaceX's crew safety advisory panel.

The big problem, Hubbard told him, was building a rocket affordable enough to go to Mars. Less than a year later Space Exploration Technologies, called SpaceX, was born.

There are many space compa-



nies and like all of them, SpaceX is designed for profit. But what's different is that behind that profit motive is a goal, which is simply to "get Elon to Mars", McDowell says. "By having that longer-term vision, that's pushed them to be more ambitious and really changed things."

Everyone at SpaceX, from senior vice presidents to the barista who offers its in-house cappuccinos and FroYo, "will tell you they are working to make humans multi-planetary", says former SpaceX Director of Space Operations Garrett Reisman, an ex-astronaut now at the University of Southern California.

Musk founded the company just before Nasa ramped up the notion of commercial space.

Traditionally, private firms built things or provided services for Nasa, which remained the boss and owned the equipment. The idea of bigger roles for private companies has been around for more than 50 years, but the market and technology weren't yet right.

Nasa's two deadly space shuttle accidents — Challenger in 1986 and Columbia in 2003 — were pivotal, says W. Henry Lambright, a professor of public policy at Syracuse University.

When Columbia disintegrated, Nasa had to contemplate a post-space shuttle world. That's where private companies came in, Lambright says.

After Columbia, the agency focused on returning astronauts to the moon, but still had to get cargo and astronauts to the space station,

says Sean O'Keefe, who was Nasa's administrator at the time. A 2005 pilot project helped private companies develop ships to bring cargo to the station.

SpaceX got some of that initial funding. The company's first three launches failed. The company could have just as easily failed too, but Nasa stuck by SpaceX and it started to pay off, Lambright says. "You can't explain SpaceX without really understanding how Nasa really kind of nurtured it in the early days," Lambright says. "In a way, SpaceX is kind of a child of Nasa."

Since 2010, Nasa has spent \$6 billion to help private companies get people into orbit, with SpaceX and Boeing the biggest recipients, says Phil McAlister, Nasa's commercial spaceflight director.

Nasa plans to spend another \$2.5bn to purchase 48 astronaut seats to the space station in 12 different flights, he says. At a little more than \$50 million a ride, it's much cheaper than what Nasa has paid Russia for flights to the station. Starting from scratch has given SpaceX an advantage over older firms and Nasa that are stuck using legacy technology and infrastructure, O'Keefe says.

And SpaceX tries to build everything itself, giving the firm more control, Reisman says. The company saves money by reusing rockets, and it says customers aside from Nasa.

The California company now has 6,000 employees. Its workers are young, highly caffeinated and put in 60- to 90-hour weeks, Hubbard and Reisman say. They also em-

brace risk more than their Nasa counterparts.

Decisions that can take a year at Nasa can be made in one or two meetings at SpaceX, says Reisman, who still advises the firm.

In 2010, a Falcon 9 rocket on the launch pad had a cracked nozzle extension on an engine. Normally that would mean rolling the rocket off the pad and a fix that would delay launch more than a month.

But with Nasa's permission, SpaceX engineer Florence Li was hoisted into the rocket nozzle with a crane and harness. Then, using what were essentially garden shears, she "cut the thing, we launched the next day and it worked", Reisman says.

Musk is SpaceX's public and unconventional face — smoking marijuana on a popular podcast, feuding with local officials about opening his Tesla plant during the pandemic, naming his newborn child "X Æ A-12". But insiders say aerospace industry veteran Gwynne Shotwell, the president and chief operating officer, is also key to the company's success. "The SpaceX way is actually a combination of Musk's imagination and creativity and drive and Shotwell's sound management and responsible engineering," McDowell says.

But it all comes back to Musk's dream. Former Nasa chief O'Keefe says Musk has his eccentricities, huge doses of self-confidence and persistence, and that last part is key: "You have the capacity to get through a setback and look ... toward where you're trying to go."

For Musk, it's Mars.

Drink Coffee To Cut Risk Of Digestive Disorders Like Gallstone

Agencies

LONDON: Drinking coffee may help reduce the risk of certain digestive disorders, including gallstone disease and pancreatitis, a new study has suggested.

The study from the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC) also highlighted other beneficial effects that coffee consumption may have on the process of digestion, including supporting gut microflora and promoting gut motility.

"Data indicates benefits against common digestive complaints such as constipation, as well as a potential reduction in the risk of more serious conditions like chronic liver diseases," said study author Carlo La Vecchia from the University of Milan in Italy.

Gallstone disease is a common digestive disorder, caused by the accumulation of gallstones in the gallbladder or bile duct, which affects approximately 10-15 per cent of the adult population.

While the mechanism by which coffee may protect against gallstone disease is not yet known, it has been



observed that the risk for the condition declines with increasing daily consumption of coffee, the researchers said. Caffeine is thought to play a role in these associations, as the same effect is not observed with decaffeinated coffee.

A common question among consumers and focus area for research is whether coffee is associated with heartburn or gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD).

While a small number of studies have suggested an association between coffee drinking and GORD, the majority of studies reviewed suggest that coffee is not a major trigger of these conditions.

The report also reviewed a growing area of health and nutrition research, namely:

the effect of coffee on the gut microflora (microorganism populations).

Recent studies suggest that populations of the beneficial gut bacteria Bifidobacterium spp. increase after drinking coffee.

The findings showed the dietary fibre and polyphenols found in coffee, support the healthy growth of microflora populations.

Additional research findings highlighted that coffee consumption is thought to stimulate digestion by encouraging the release of gastric acid, bile and pancreatic secretions.

Coffee is one of the most widely researched components of the diet, and its effect on digestion remains a growing area of research, the researchers noted.

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.

com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: ICAI Doctoral Scholarship Scheme 2020

Description: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India invites applications for ICAI Doctoral Scholarship Scheme 2020 from ICAI members with minimum 75% marks in Class 10 or 12. The scholarship will be awarded to registered PhD scholars from UGC recognized Indian Universities/ Deemed Universities/ Colleges, IIMs having University/IIMs approved PhD programme to pursue and complete their Doctoral Research in Auditing, Taxation, Commerce, Management and Accounting Discipline.

Eligibility: The scholarship is open for candidates who hold the membership of the ICAI with minimum 75% marks/grade in 10th and 12th standard. They must be a PhD scholar from a recognised university/institution pursuing doctoral research in Auditing, Taxation, Commerce, Management and Accounting discipline. They must not be more than 40 years of age. Also, they must not be availing benefits under any other government scholarship/fellowship.

Prizes & Rewards: INR 50,000 per annum

Last Date to Apply: 31-07-2020

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/ICAI7



Scholarship Name 2: Department of Civil Engineering Junior Research Fellowship 2020

Description: The Department of Civil Engineering at Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee invites applications for Department of Civil Engineering Junior Research Fellowship 2020 from ME/ MTech students.

Eligibility: The fellowship is open for students who hold an ME/MTech degree in Structural Engineering/ Computational Mechanics/ Mechanical Engineering. They must be GATE qualified.

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 35,000 per month

Last Date to Apply: 15-06-2020

Application mode: Online only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/DEJ3

Scholarship Name 3: Nurturing Clinical Scientists (NCS) Scheme 2020

Description: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) invites applications for Nurturing Clinical Scientists (NCS) Scheme 2020 from MBBS/ BDS candidates who have completed their degrees within two years. The scheme fosters high-quality research opportunities for eligible students.

Eligibility: The scheme is open for MBBS/BDS candidates who have completed their degree within two years from MCI/DCI recognized medical/dental colleges. They must have passed all MBBS/BDS exams in the first attempt with 60% or more aggregate marks. The maximum age of the candidate should be less than 32 years as on the date of application.

Prizes & Rewards: INR 1 lakh per month and research contingency

Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2020

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NCS1

Scholarship Name 4: IISER Tirupati Post Doctoral Research Fellowship Program (PDRF) 2020

Description: Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Tirupati invites experienced PhD degree holders to avail fellowship for conducting user research in the field of Science and Technology. The fellowship also offers post research financial aid via its DST-SERB programme.

Eligibility: Candidates with a valid PhD degree with 0 to 2 years of experience may apply for this scholarship if they are interested in pursuing post-doctoral research in Science and Technology.

Prizes & Rewards: A monthly stipend of up to 47,000 and housing rent allowance (HRA) benefits based on their level of education (PhD degree awaited or awarded).

Last Date to Apply: 10-06-2020

Application mode: Apply online

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/IIS3

People With Intellectual Disabilities At High Covid-19 Death Risk: Study

Agencies

NEW YORK: In first-of-its-kind study, researchers have claimed that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are more likely to die from Covid-19 than those without such condition.

An intellectual or developmental disability, also called IDD, includes many severe, chronic conditions that are due to mental and physical impairments.

For the findings, published in the journal Disability and Health Journal, the researchers from Syracuse University and SUNY Upstate Medical University in the US, recently analysed more than



30,000 people who tested positive for Covid-19.

According to the researchers, the disparity is likely related to a higher prevalence of comorbid diseases among those with IDD, or a higher percentage of people with IDD are living in congregate residential settings.

"More attention is needed to this vulnerable health population in order to ensure their safety and well-being during this pandemic," said researcher Scott Landes from Syracuse University.

Every individual in this study had Covid-19, so rates are case-fatality rates that gave the researchers an idea of the severity of the disease among both groups.

Among ages 0-17, for every 100 individuals with Covid-19, 1.6 with IDD died and less than one without IDD died.

The findings showed that among ages 18-74, for every 100 individuals with Covid-19, 4.5 with IDD died compared to 2.7 without IDD.

Rates were similar for those 75 and over - for every 100 individuals with COVID-19, 21.1 with IDD died and 20.7 without IDD died.

"Based upon the case fatality

rates we report among those ages 18-74 if 100,000 individuals with IDD contract COVID-19 - which is entirely possible in light of the estimates of the size of this population and the cumulative incidence rates we are seeing in our research - we would expect 4,500 to die," Landes said.

"Comparatively, among 100,000 individuals without IDD, we would expect 2,700 to die. That would be an excess of 1,800 IDD deaths and in my mind that is unacceptable," Landes added.

Augmented Reality In Retail And E-Commerce Can Improve Online Shopping Experience



Agencies

Augmented reality (AR) has moved to the retail and e-commerce industry where it is a great tool for attracting new customers, say researchers, suggesting that AR can improve online shopping.

The survey, published in the 'Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management', found that online shoppers return 70 per cent of the clothing they order, more than any other category of purchase.

This has an indirect but real impact on the environment. Online shoppers tend to order multiple sizes and colours, with the intent of sending back the items that don't fit or aren't the right colour, a practice known as "bracket shopping".

"An AR tool allowing shoppers to see an image of themselves in the garment, however, made them more likely to want to buy it," said study researcher Fatma Baytar from the Cornell University in the US.

While not as effective as physically trying it on, the researchers found that AR boosted the participants' attitudes toward the garment, potentially improving the experience and efficiency of online shopping.

"Bracket purchases increase shelving and shipping costs. We're hoping

these technologies can reduce those costs, while also decreasing the carbon footprint associated with return shipping," Baytar said.

Current virtual try-on technologies offer two methods of improving online shopping. One involves creating an avatar by inputting key body measurements and then trying clothes on the avatar. The other method is AR -- using a computer, phone or tablet screen as a mirror reflecting a shopper and background while overlaying the chosen garments on the shopper's image.

For the findings, the research team focused on the latter technology, asking participants to virtually try on a dress, select a size to "order" and then physically try on the dress in that size.

Participants evaluated the AR dress for size, fit and performance, then did the same following the physical try-on. Results for the AR technology were mixed.

According to Baytar, the study participants were able to find the right size with AR try-on, but had trouble evaluating the fit, particularly at the bust, waist and hips.

One explanation, Baytar said, was that although the image of the dress was taken when the dress was on a dress form, rather than hanging flat, it was still a 2D image.

Anger Against Police Murders Hits Trump's Doorstep, President Takes Shelter In Bunker

Agencies

Washington: Secret Service agents rushed president Donald Trump to a White House bunker on Friday night as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the executive mansion, some of them throwing rocks and tugging at police barricades.

Trump spent nearly an hour in the bunker, which was designed for use in emergencies like terrorist attacks, according to a Republican close to the White House who was not authorized to publicly discuss private matters and spoke on condition of anonymity. The account was confirmed by an administration official who also on condition of anonymity.

The abrupt decision by the agents underscored the rattled mood inside the White House, where the chants from protesters in Lafayette Park could be heard all weekend and Secret Service agents and law enforcement officers struggled to contain the crowds.

Friday's protests were triggered by the death of George Floyd, a black man who died after he was pinned at the neck by a white Minneapolis police officer. The demonstrations in Washington turned violent and appeared to catch officers by surprise. They sparked one of the highest alerts on the White House complex since the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001.

"The White House does not comment on security protocols and decisions," said White House spokesman Judd Deere. The Secret Service said it does not discuss the means and methods of its protective operations. The president's move to the bunker was first reported by The New York Times.

The president and his family have been shaken by the size and venom of the crowds, according to the Republican. It was not immediately clear if first lady Melania Trump and the couple's 14-year-old son, Barron, joined the president in the bunker. Secret Service protocol would have called for all those under the agency's protection to be in the underground shelter.



Trump has told advisers he worries about his safety, while both privately and publicly praising the work of the Secret Service.

Trump traveled to Florida on Saturday to view the first manned space launch from the U.S. in nearly a decade. He returned to a White House under virtual siege, with protesters — some violent — gathered just a few hundred yards away through much of the night.

Demonstrators returned Sunday afternoon, facing off against police at Lafayette Park into the evening.

Trump continued his effort to project strength, using a series of inflammatory tweets and delivering partisan attacks during

a time of national crisis.

As cities burned night after night and images of violence dominated television coverage, Trump's advisers discussed the prospect of an Oval Office address in an attempt to ease tensions. The notion was quickly scrapped for lack of policy proposals and the president's own seeming disinterest in delivering a message of unity.

Trump did not appear in public on Sunday. Instead, a White House official who was not authorized to discuss the plans ahead of time said Trump was expected in the coming days to draw distinctions between the legitimate anger of peaceful protesters and the unacceptable actions of violent agitators.

Most museums in world closed, some may never reopen



Amin Ahmad/Dawn.com

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) says that 90 per cent of the world's museums have closed their doors due to the Covid-19 pandemic and more than 10pc of them may never reopen.

It is clear that these temporary closures have had serious economic and social consequences that may affect museums in the long term, says a report released by Unesco on Thursday on "Museums around the world in the face of Covid-19".

In its conclusion, the report says the shutdown of cultural tourism endangers the financial stability of a great many institutions; since it constitutes one of the main resources on which museums rely on to ensure their operation and economic survival.

Pakistan has 46 museums, out of which 37 have been closed due to coronavirus, representing over 84pc closure.

Western Europe has 61,634 museums, out of which almost 95pc have been closed. This is followed by the Asia and the Pacific region which has 12,195 museums and almost 60pc of them have been closed.

Out of Pakistan's 46 museums, 37 have been shut, representing over 84pc closure.

Almost all the museums in Eastern Europe (11,465) and Latin America and the Caribbean (7,810) have been closed. In Arab states all the 473 museums are completely closed, whereas in Africa, 738 museums out of 841 are open.

The main players affected by this loss are museum professionals, especially the self-employed, three out of five of whom have lost their jobs and are in urgent need of support. Consequently, reflections on strategies to revive tourism must not forget that museums are at the centre of the cultural experience that visitors have of the country, city or site that they are discovering, the report says.

"Saudi Game Of Thrones": Pressure Grows To Release Jailed Prince

Agencies

London, United Kingdom: A \$2 million US lobbying effort and petitions from European lawmakers are piling pressure on Saudi Arabia to release a philanthropist prince jailed for two years without charge amid an intensifying royal crackdown.

The detention of Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz and his father since January 2018 is part of a clampdown under de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that has ensnared not just potential rivals but also figures posing no visible challenge to his hold on power.

The dangerous power plays have also swept up family members of Saad Aljabri, a former aide to another detained prince



and top intelligence official, who fled to Canada and holds key state secrets.

The most unlikely target is Prince Salman, a multilingual 37-year-old educated at Paris's Sorbonne University, who apparently espoused no political ambitions and earned a reputation of being a "walking blank check" for funding development projects in poor countries.

"This is not just an unlawful arrest," an associate of the prince told AFP. "This is daylight kidnapping. This is a forced disappearance."

'Russia To Start Using First Approved COVID-19 Drug From Next Week

Agencies

Moscow: Russia will start giving its first drug approved to treat COVID-19 to patients next week, its state financial backer told Reuters, a move it hopes will ease strains on the health system and speed a return to normal economic life.

Russian hospitals can begin giving the antiviral drug, which is registered under the name Avifavir, to patients from June 11, the head of Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund told Reuters in an interview. He said the company behind the drug would manufacture enough to treat around 60,000 people a month.

There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, and human trials of several existing antiviral drugs have yet to show efficacy.

A new antiviral drug from Gilad called remdesivir has shown some promise in small efficacy trials against COVID-19 and is being given to patients by some countries under compassionate or emergency use rules.

Avifavir, known generically as favipiravir, was first developed in the late 1990s by a Japanese company later bought by Fujifilm as it moved into healthcare. RDIF head Kirill Dmitriev said Russian scientists had modified the drug to enhance it, and said Moscow would be ready to share the details of those modifications within two weeks.

Japan has been trialling the same drug, known there as Avigan. It has won plaudits from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and \$128 million in government funding, but has yet to be approved for use. Avifavir appeared on a Russian government list of approved drugs on Saturday.

Protests may be last straw for US global stature

Hong Kong: Protests roiling US cities may do irreparable damage to America's global standing. Its sway has been waning under President Donald Trump, but this civil unrest will make it harder to reclaim the moral high ground. Losing it comes at a high cost.

The fear of US democracy decaying into the same tyranny against which the colonies originally revolted has been predicted at least since French political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville visited in 1831. The Economist Intelligence Unit demoted the country to a "flawed democracy" in 2017. The accumulation of policy errors, which precede Trump, have created a litany of problems including income inequality and a flawed healthcare system.

After a botched federal response to the pandemic, which has already killed more than 100,000 people in the United States, the country is now tearing itself apart over police brutality and racial in-

justice. It reveals the deep-rooted nature of the country's problems even as it pushes away its friends.

Trump just cut America's ties with the World Health Organization, continuing an inward agenda that includes abandoning the Trans-Pacific Partnership that would have eliminated some 18,000 foreign taxes on US exports. His tariffs have failed to erase a trade deficit with China and could ultimately cost American consumers as much as \$1,000 a year according to some estimates.

Ideological hypocrisy compounds the corrosion. Even as US politicians lambast China for censorship and suppressing human rights in Hong Kong, similar behaviour is flaring up at home. The latest demonstrations were set off by a white Minneapolis policeman choking an arrested African American man to death. Police have since detained and shot rubber bullets at journalists covering the ensuing demonstrations.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Muffasil R&B Division, Budgam

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No:06/MDB/439-59 of 2020-21 DATED: 29.05.2020

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

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	E/M (In Rs.)	Time Class	MH of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Improvements of Narbal Wadwan road by way of P/L of WBM G-II and 2 cm thick OGPC in patches/ stretches from KM 3 rd to 12 th	5.70 Lacs	300/-	11400/-	15 days	DEE/ 3054-M&R CEE
2	Improvements of Bon Makhama to Lawipora road by way of P/L of WBM G-II in patches/stretches	2.30 Lacs	200/-	4600/-	10 days	DEE 3054-M&R
3	Improvements of riding surface of Bamurada Gund Dalwash road by way of P/L of WBM G-III and 2 cm thick OGPC in patches/ stretches in KM 1 st and 2 nd	2.90 Lacs	200/-	5800/-	15 days	DEE 3054-M&R
4	Improvements of riding surface of Khag Malpora road by way of P/L of WBM G-III and 2 cm thick OGPC in patches/ stretches in KM 1 st and 4 th	2.90 Lacs	200/-	5800/-	15 days	DEE 3054-M&R

(i) Position of AAA: - U/S (ii) Position of funds: Demand

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	29.05.2020 4.00 PM
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	29.05.2020 from 4.00 PM.
3	Bid submission Start Date	29.05.2020 from 4.00 PM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	10.06.2020 upto 4.00 P.M.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	11.06.2020 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Executive Engineer Muffasil R&B Division Budgam

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/Demand Draft in favour of Executive Engineer Muffasil R&B Division Budgam (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer Muffasil R&B Division Budgam (tender receiving authority).

- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer Muffasil R&B Division Budgam (tender receiving authority).
- The earnest money in favour of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of Treasury Challan
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-
 - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

No: 439-59
Date: 29.5.2020

DIPK-1138/20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Muffasil (R&B) Division, Budgam.

CANCER SOCIETY OF KASHMIR

4-Bagh-i-Islam Colony Lal Nagar, Chanapora Srinagar 190 015 Tele/Fax 0194-2441899/2430899
Website: www.cancersocietykashmir.org E-mail: cancersocietyofkashmir@gmail.com

تمباکو مخالف یوم

۳۱ مئی

تمباکو۔ صحت دشمن۔ انسانیت دشمن اور ہلاکت خیز نشہ

تمباکو سے پیدا شدہ امراض کی وجہ سے ہر سال پچاس لاکھ افراد موت کا شکار ہو جاتے ہیں۔ جبکہ ناگاساکی اور ہیروشیما پر جو ایٹم بم گرائے گئے تھے اُسے صرف ڈھائی لاکھ افراد لقمہ اجل بنے تھے۔

سگریٹ اور تمباکو نوشی سے ان اعضاء کا کینسر ہوتا ہے

منہ۔ حلق۔ خوراک کی نالی۔ معدہ۔ لبلبہ۔ گردے۔ مثانہ۔

بیمیزے۔ خون۔ رگم۔ اندام نہانی۔ پستان۔

سگریٹ نوشی سے دل پر یہ اثرات پڑتے ہیں۔

ہائے بلڈ پریشر۔ دل کا درد۔ ہارٹ ایٹک۔ اچانک دل کے ٹھیکڑوں سے مرنا۔ کولسٹراول یعنی خون میں چربی کی زیادتی۔ خون کے خلیے (Platelets) جم جاتے ہیں۔

سگریٹ پینے والوں سے بچوں پر یہ اثرات پڑتے ہیں۔

چھائی اکثر خراب رہتی ہے۔ بار بار آنکھیں ہوتا ہے۔ دائمی کھانسی پیدا ہوتی ہے۔ دماغی اعصاب ہوتا ہے۔ دل کی دھڑکن تیز ہوتی ہے۔ بلڈ پریشر چڑھتا ہے۔ بچے کا وزن کم ہوتا ہے۔ بچے اچانک مر جی سکتے ہیں۔

نہ پینے والوں پر یا غیر ارادی تمباکو نوشی سے یہ اثرات پڑتے ہیں۔

آنکھیں دھکتی ہیں۔ چھائی اکثر خراب رہتی ہے۔ بار بار آنکھیں کا خطرہ ہوتا ہے۔ بچوں کو کان سے پیپ نکلتا ہے۔ دائمی کھانسی اور دمہ پیدا ہوتا ہے۔ دل کی آجیٹک بیماریوں کا خطرہ لاحق ہوتا ہے۔

بیمیزوں اور دیگر اعضاء کا کینسر ہوتا ہے۔

آئیے۔ آپ کی ہمارے ساتھ اپنا دم بچ سہا کر سگریٹ نوشی اور تمباکو نوشی کے ختم ہونے کے لیے ہر سو خود کو ملجائیے اور مردوں کو بھی اسے نہ جانتے دیں۔

کینسر سوسائٹی آف کشمیر

KAR'S BEREAVED



With profound grief and sorrow we inform the demise of our mother JANA BEGUM wife of late GHULAM MOHAMMAD KAR who left for heavenly abode on Sunday 31-MAY-2020, Congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on Wednesday 10.am 03- JUNE-2020 at their ancestral graveyard Danger pora, Narwara opposite old dispensary, Address House No, 441 M.I.G Colony

Bemina Srinagar near Masjid Hyder.

Bereaved

MOHAMMAD SHAFI KAR (SON)
Cell: 9419017422, 9797042142

(Please Wear Mask And Maintain Social Distancing)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla

In respect of eNIT No. 07 of 2020-21 issued under No. MIDB/CC/442-451 dated: 15-05-2020, kindly read Rs. 30.00 lacs and Rs. 50.00 lacs respectively instead of Rs. 50.00 lacs and Rs. 70.00 lac-sat S.No. d) and e) respectively under Section II: (Techno-Commercial Details) at page 9 of SBD.

No:MIDB/CC/571-580
Dated: 29-05-2020

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Baramulla

DIPK-1151/20

Nepal Tables Bill To Alter Map Amid Row

KATHMANDU: The Nepal Government on Sunday tabled a Constitution amendment Bill in parliament aimed at altering the country's map amid a border dispute with India.

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Shivamaya Tumbahangphe, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, tabled the Bill, a day after main opposition party Nepali Congress also backed the legislation. It will be the second amendment to the Constitution.

Nepal recently released the revised political and

in Schedule 3 of the Constitution. After endorsement by both Houses of parliament, the President will order issuance of the Bill. The central committee of the Nepali Congress on Saturday decided to back the Bill.

Last week, the proposed Bill was removed from the business schedule of parliament at the last minute at the request of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

The discussion on the Constitution amendment Bill was delayed as the Nepali Congress asked for more time to discuss the matter.



administrative map of the country laying claim over the strategically key areas of Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura.

India reacted angrily to the move saying such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims would not be acceptable and asked the neighbouring country to refrain from such "unjustified cartographic assertion". The Bill seeks to amend the political map of Nepal included

The ties between India and Nepal came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on May 8.

Nepal reacted sharply to the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through Nepalese territory. India rejected the claim, asserting that the road lay completely within its territory. — PTI

Madhya Pradesh Farmer Waits In Queue For 2 Days To Sell Crop, Dies Of Heart Attack



DEWAS (MADHYA PRADESH): A farmer, who was waiting for his turn at a wheat procurement centre in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh for the last two days to sell his crop died after suffering a heart attack, officials said on Monday.

According to officials, the farmer identified as Jairam Mandloi suffered a fatal heart attack while he was waiting for his turn outside the procurement centre on Sunday.

"A farmer has died here. According to the doctor, a preliminary medical examination suggests that he had suffered a heart attack. It is very unfortunate. An enquiry is being conducted," sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Pradeep Solanki told reporters.

When asked about the long wait at procurement centres, Mr Solanki said that maintaining social distancing norms amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown has caused some technical difficulties in the procurement process.

He said that all possible help is being extended to the family of the man and

arrangements for compensation are being made by the district administration.

"This time the wheat for procurement is four to five times more than what it was last time. Last year, around 60,000 metric tonnes of wheat was procured. However, we have already procured more than three lakh MTs. Resources are limited. There is also lockdown and social distancing has to be maintained," Mr Solanki said.

Sachin Mandloi, the son of the farmer, said that his father had left the house on May 29 to sell the crop at the procurement centre and had been waiting for his turn at the centre for the past two days.

"I was informed that my father was sick and was taken to the district hospital. I rushed and came to know that he had passed away. He had left the house on May 29, and had been waiting at the center to sell the wheat. There is a long line at the procurement center," Mr Mandloi said.

Another relative of the man said that their harvest is yet to be procured.



Many Factors To Be Addressed Before International Flights Begin: Minister

NEW DELHI: Several factors like the lockdown in metro cities and the ban imposed by various countries on the entry of foreigners need to be addressed before resuming international passenger flights in India, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said today.

Domestic services were suspended in India due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown and resumed after a gap of two months on May 25. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in the country.

"Numerous citizens have been approaching us to restart international flights. Several factors need to be addressed. Many international destinations are not allowing incoming passenger traffic, except for their own

citizens or diplomats," Mr Puri said on Twitter.

Within India, most international flights operate from the metro cities where travellers arrive from the neighbouring cities and states, he said.

"Our metro cities were under various degrees of lockdown which are beginning to be lifted. Some of them are still allowing only limited flights to operate," the minister added.

Airports in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Tamil Nadu have been allowed to handle a restricted number of daily flights as these states do not want a huge influx of flyers amid the rising number of COVID-19 cases.

The minister said: "MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) guidelines for lockdown 5.0 have further opened up

inter and intra-state travel, and will facilitate calibrated reopening of the sector. As we move towards the critical mass of 50-60% operation of domestic flights, our ability to resume international operations will also improve."

Indian carriers operated a total of 3,370 domestic passenger flights till May 31 -- 428 on May 25, 445 on May 26, 460 on May 27, 494 on May 28, 513 on May 29 and 529 on May 30.

During the pre-lockdown period, Indian airports handled around 3,000 daily domestic flights, aviation industry sources said.

In February, around 4.12 lakh passengers travelled daily through domestic flights in India, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data.

Cabinet Approves Stimulus Package, New Definition For MSMEs

The Union Cabinet on Monday formally approved all announcements relating to MSMEs as part of the Rs. 20-lakh Covid stimulus package.

The Cabinet also approved changes in the definition of MSMEs which was further fine-tuned after being announced by Sitharaman on May 13.

"The Cabinet's decisions will aid MSMEs to attract investments and create jobs," said the Union Minister Nitin Gadkari at a joint press conference with his Cabinet colleagues Prakash Javadekar and Narendra Singh Tomar.

The Cabinet approved a Rs. 50,000 crore Distressed Assets' Fund, with the Government's share at Rs. 10,000 crore, in order to help two lakh MSMEs that have the potential but need a little hand-holding due to the Covid disruption. The government will backstop 85 per cent for loans up to Rs 5 lakh and 75 per cent for loans beyond Rs 5 lakh from financial institutions.

The Cabinet also approved government's equity of Rs 4,000 crore in another fund of Rs. 20,000 crore to assist stressed or NPA-categorised MSMEs. The central government will put up Rs. 4,000 crore in a special trust and banks will make up the rest to help about two lakhs MSMEs in a trust called "fund of fund".

The third and largest component of the Rs. 3.70 lakh crore MSME stimulus package---Rs 3 lakh crore collateral-free loans---has already been launched. It is targeted at



45 lakh units that were shut and hard-pressed to pay for wages and raw materials. The eligibility is for companies with up to Rs. 25 crore in outstanding loan or turnover of Rs 100 crore.

These loans will have a four-year tenure and moratorium of one year with 100 per cent credit guarantee cover on principal and interest. The loan will be available till October 31 without charging guarantee fees or seeking fresh collateral.

It also approved a credit scheme for street vendors.

Under the new definition, micro, medium and small units will separately enjoy higher limits on turnover and capital without the fear of outgrowing their category. The

Cabinet also decided not to count exports while calculating the turnover and scrapped the distinction between manufacturing and service based MSMEs.

The central government has already absolved MSMEs from fresh insolvency proceedings for a year, up from the present six months and announced plans for a MSME-specific special insolvency framework. The central government also plans to issue an Ordinance to raise the MSME insolvency limit from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1 crore. Another Ordinance will decriminalise technical and procedural defaults under the Companies Act. Seven compoundable offences will be dropped and five will be dealt by an alternative framework.

India Expels Two Pakistani Officials For Espionage, Pak Says Allegations Baseless

New Delhi: India on Sunday declared two officials of the Pakistan High Commission as 'persona non grata' on charges of espionage and ordered them to leave the country within 24 hours, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

The two officials, Abid Hussain and Muhammad Tahir, were caught by Delhi Police while they were obtaining sensitive documents relating to India's security installations from an Indian national in exchange of money, official sources said.

"The government has declared both these officials persona non grata for indulging in activities incompatible with their status as members of a diplomatic mission and asked them to leave the country within 24

vention on Diplomatic Relations as well as the norms of diplomatic conduct especially in an already vitiated atmosphere," it said.

The punitive action against the two officials came in the midst of frayed ties between the two countries over reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir by India.

Pakistan had downgraded diplomatic ties by expelling the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad following India's decision to withdraw special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcate the state into two union territories in August last year.

The MEA said a strong protest was lodged with the Charge de Affairs of the Pakistan High Commission over the activities of its two offi-



four hours," the MEA said in a statement.

The sources said the officials were working at the visa section of the Pakistan High Commission and confessed during the interrogation that they worked for Pakistani spy agency ISI.

In a statement in Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Office condemned India's action against the two officials, calling the allegations baseless.

It said the action is "clearly aimed" at shrinking diplomatic space for the working of Pakistan High Commission in Delhi.

"Pakistan strongly rejects the baseless Indian allegations and deplores the Indian action which is in clear violation of the Vienna Con-

ditions against India's national security.

"Pakistan's Charge de Affairs was asked to ensure that no member of its diplomatic mission should indulge in activities inimical to India or behave in a manner incompatible with their diplomatic status," it said.

The sources said the two officials, working at the visa section of the Pakistan High Commission, were handing over Indian money and an iPhone for providing them the documents.

The officials initially claimed that they were Indian nationals and even produced fake Aadhaar cards, the sources said.

A similar case had taken place in October 2006.

Deadly Thunderstorm Damages Taj Mahal

AGRA: A deadly thunderstorm that rolled across parts of northern India damaged sections of the Taj Mahal complex, including the main gate and a railing running below its five lofty domes, officials said on Sunday.

One of the New Seven Wonders of the World, India's top tourist attraction has been shut since mid-March as part of measures to try and combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Images showed workers assessing the railing of the main mausoleum, after the storm on Friday night battered Agra city in northern Uttar Pradesh state.

"One sandstone railing which was a part of the original structure has been damaged," Superintendent Archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Vasant Kumar Swarnkar, said.

"One marble railing which was a later addition, a false ceiling in the tourist holding area and the base stone of the main gate have also been damaged."

He added there was no damage to the main structure of the monument to love -- built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan as a tomb for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died while giving birth in 1631.

"The ASI team assessed the damage today. We found that there was no damage to the main structure. On the backside of the Taj mausoleum, a part of the railing broke and some marble tiles also gave way. Besides that, the main door on the western side tilted due to the impact. The tourist section that is outside the Taj Mahal complex was also damaged," said an official.

According to the officials, most of the damage has been limited to the modern structure, which includes the tourist holding area, and frisking and checking area.

NEWS MAKER

Yoga, Music, Holy Books: How Frontline Workers Keeping Calm Amid Covid-19 Storm

From doing yoga routines to listening to music and reading literature to holy books--this is how many doctors and nurses working in the frontline of the war against COVID-19 are coping with the tremendous stress and anxiety that comes with their critical jobs.

Senior doctor V.K. Verma, who works at Delhi government-run Babu Jagjivan Ram Hospital, begins his day by performing 'pranayams' and a few other 'asanas' before heading to work everyday.

For Dolly Massey, a senior nurse at a Max hospital in New Delhi, the Bible is her constant companion at the facility that

she says keeps her "calm amid this storm". "I keep a pocket Bible in my bag all the time and even an e-Bible on my mobile phone," Massey said. "I read Psalms and texts from the holy book during breaks, and before and after finishing work. It keeps me anchored, mentally and physically."

The 27-year-old said she never felt afraid even in the beginning when coronavirus had just come up or during the lockdown when the cases kept rising, and deaths were happening.

"But, now, I'm a little bit afraid that I might get infected too," she told PTL. Delhi-born Massey, who hails from Dehradun, said she had been working



with the Max Smart Hospital for the past four years. "I'm a very God-fearing person and so, believe this pandemic is also a sign from Him for us humans to introspect, and repent for the mistakes that we have committed, whether it's damaging of our nature or not being sensitive to

fellow human beings," she said.

From government hospitals to private facilities, doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers are at the forefront of the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic, and nearly 500 of them have tested positive for the disease in Delhi.

Amid Lockdown, 70-Seater Kerala Govt Boat Ferries Lone Girl Passenger To Enable Her To Take Exam

ALAPPUZHA: In a heart-warming gesture, a 70-seater boat of the Kerala State Water Transport department was sent to ferry a lone passenger, a 17-year-old student, to enable her to appear for the Class 11 examination on two days last month in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sandra Babu, who stays in a remote backwater island in Kuttanad in Alappuzha district, had to appear for the examination on Friday and Saturday at Kanjiram in Kottayam district.

Boats are the only means of transport in this region and due to the COVID-19 lockdown

the services had stopped plying when the dates of the examination, postponed earlier, were announced.

The Kuttanad region has the lowest altitude in India and is one of the few places in the world where farming is carried on around 1.2 metre to 3.0 metres below sea level (average level of the surface of one or more of earth's bodies of water from which heights such as elevation may be measured).

Sandra's parents, who are daily wagers, were wondering how to get her to the examination hall, when she approached the department.

On hearing about her plight,



child's future, Nair told PTL.

Transport minister A K Sasendran also supported the move, he said. Normally, the student has to take another boat to reach the embarkation point of the KSWTD.

A five-member crew, which was entrusted the task of transporting the girl, took the boat to the nearest point from her home, and she walked about five km to reach this point, another official said.

The boat dropped her, waited for the examination to be over and dropped her back home on both days, Nair, whose daughter also appeared for the plus one examination, said.