

Maximum : 23°C  
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Humidity : 64%SUNSET  
Today 07:38 PM  
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Tomorrow 05:20 AM23<sup>rd</sup> year OF PUBLICATION  
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FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS &  
YOUR COPY OF"ACTS OF DOMESTIC TERROR":  
TRUMP ORDERS MILITARY  
DEPLOYMENT IN  
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday said he was deploying thousands of "heavily armed" soldiers and police to prevent further protests in Washington, where buildings and monuments have been vandalized near the White House.

"What happened in the city last night was a total disgrace," he said during a nationwide address as tear gas went off and crowds protested in the streets nearby. "I am dispatching thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults and the wanton destruction of property."

He denounced "acts of domestic terror" after nationwide protests against the death of an unarmed African American George Floyd in police custody devolved into days of violent race riots across the country.....

.....PANORAMA  
P5

## News Digest

Pregnant Woman  
'Denied' Ambulance

Srinagar: A pregnant woman was allegedly denied ambulance by the health officials in north Kashmir's Kupwara district forcing her family to shift her to the hospital in a private vehicle, reports said Tuesday.

Muhammad Qasim, a resident of WokbalHafada village said that he shifted his wife to the Primary Health Centre Taharat-poraVilgam after she developed labour pain. The doctors there, he said advised him to shift his wife to the District ● P-02

6 Gamblers Held In  
Raid: Police

Srinagar: Police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested six gamblers in a raid in Nishat area of this capital city. Acting on an input over the gambling activities, a police team carried out a raid in Ishber Nishat and arrested six gamblers from the spot, a police spokesperson said. He said an amount of Rs 1, 44,200 besides playing cards were recovered from the spot. The accused, the police spokesperson said were shifted to ● P-02

Minor Drowns In  
Shopian Rivulet

Srinagar: A minor died of drowning on Tuesday after heavy rains triggered flash floods in Tongri rivulet in south Kashmir's Shopian district. Four-year-old Hazim Rafeeq Malikof Dangam slipped into a nallah Tongri after the area received heavy rains triggering flash floods this afternoon, reports said Soon after the incident, locals and police rushed to the spot and immediately launched rescue operation. After hectic efforts, the locals and police retrieved the ● P-02

Bear Kills Teen In  
Poonch

Srinagar: A teenager on Tuesday was attacked and killed by a bear in Surankote area of Poonch district. 14-year-old Tauseef Ahmed was quenching his thirst at a natural spring at Lassana Mohalla this afternoon when a bear appeared there and attacked him, reports said. The beast mauled the teen to death before police and wildlife officials could reach the spot. The police took the body into custody and later handed it over to the family for last rites (GNS)

LAWDA Seals Two  
Buildings At Dalgate

Srinagar: The Lakes & Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) on Tuesday sealed two structures at Dalgate here for violating construction norms. The two structures at Buchwara Dalgate were sealed in presence of Magistrate and Station House Officer RM Bagh for violation and deviation of the approved building permissions issued by BOCA, reports said. These two structures were sealed in compliance to the Housing and Urban Development Department's order. The structures belonged to Farooq Ahmed Bhat and Muhammad Saleem, both residents of Buchwara.

China Building Up Forces  
On Ladakh Border: Pompeo

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON- China has moved up its forces along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Monday, asserting that authoritarian regimes take these kinds of actions.

Several areas along the LAC in Ladakh and North Sikkim have witnessed major military build-up by both the Indian and Chinese armies recently, in a clear signal of escalating tension and hardening of respective positions by the two sides even two weeks after they were engaged in two separate face-offs.

"We see even today increasing forces of China moved up to the north of India on the Line of Actual Control there on the Indian border," Pompeo told Marc Thiessen and Danielle Pletka of AEI's 'What The Hell Is Going On' Podcast.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) continues to hide and obfuscate and delay the global response to the coronavirus pandemic that began in Wuhan. It has taken actions destroying the amazing freedoms of the people of Hong Kong, he said. ►PAGE 02

Defence Minister Downplays LAC Stand-Off  
'Sizeable Number Of Chinese Troops Moved Into Eastern Ladakh'

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A "sizeable number" of Chinese troops have moved into eastern Ladakh and India too has taken all necessary steps to deal with the situation, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday, referring to the nearly month-long high-altitude standoff between the two armies.

Singh said a meeting between senior Indian and Chinese military leaders has been scheduled for June 6 even as he asserted that India is not going



to back off from its position. Asked about the current situation in sensitive areas in eastern Ladakh, he said ►PAGE 02

2 Militants Killed  
In Tral Gunfight

State Forces In Action During A Gunfight In South Kashmir's Tral On Tuesday. Pic Shah Junaid

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militants on Tuesday were killed in a fierce gunfight with government forces in Tral area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said.

Acting in specific inputs suggesting presence of militants, special operations group (SOG) of police, army's 42 RR and CRPF laid a siege Saimoh village of Tral in the wee hours today and launched a search operation. When the joint team started advances, the militants hiding in a residential house opened indiscriminate fire upon them in a bid to break the cordon.

"In the ensuing encounter, two militants have been killed and their bodies have been retrieved from the site of encounter. The identification and affiliation of the killed militants is being ascertained," police said.

Police said that two AK Rifles, 5 magazines and 80 rounds, two pistols with 10 rounds and two hand grenades were recovered from the gunfight spot.

"All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes," a police spokesperson said, while describing it as a "clean operation" with no collateral damage. The police spokesperson said that a case under ►PAGE 02

PEOPLE ARE REQUESTED TO cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any,"

India's Credit Rating Cut Puts  
It One Step Away From Junk

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A day after India's sovereign rating downgraded, Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday cut ratings of eight non-financial companies, including Infosys, TCS, ONGC, and three banks SBI, HDFC Bank and EXIM.

It also downgraded seven Indian infrastructure issuers, including NTPC, NHAI, GAIL and Adani Green Energy Restricted Group, by one notch. Issuer ratings of IRFC and HUDCO have also been lowered.

Moody's said the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus

pandemic and the downgrade of the sovereign rating are the key drivers for Tuesday's rating actions. On Monday, Moody's had downgraded India's sovereign rating for the first time in 22 years by a notch to "Baa3", which is the lowest investment grade — just a notch above junk status.

Accordingly, the long-term issuer ratings of eight non-financial companies — Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Oil India Ltd, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Petronet LNG, Tata Consultancy ►PAGE 02

## Kashmir Reports 2 More Covid-19 Deaths, J&amp;K Toll Rises To 33

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Two more people succumbed to COVID-19 in Kashmir in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll in Jammu and Kashmir to 33, officials said here on Tuesday.

The fresh fatalities include a 27-year-old man from Lolab area of Kupwara and an 80-year-old woman from Khanpora area of Baramulla, they said.

The test report of the man, who had died at SMHS hospital here on Monday, came back positive for COVID-19 this afternoon, they said.

He was suffering from ►PAGE 02

J&K Records New 117  
Covid-19 Cases

Coronavirus cases show no sign of decline as 117 more people, including nine expecting mothers and over a dozen policemen on Tuesday tested Covid-19 positive in Jammu and Kashmir, raising the number of infected across the Union Territory to 2718. Of the 117 new cases, 40 are from Jammu ● P-02

Top Doctor Fighting  
Covid-19 Tests Positive

Srinagar- A top pulmonologist and Head of Department, Chest Disease Hospital Srinagar, one of the exclusive facilities for the management ● P-02

Covid-19 Patient Brought  
Back After Fleeing

Srinagar: A middle-aged man detected positive for coronavirus, escaped from an isolation facility in north Kashmir's Kupwara ● P-02

Ex- Minister Namgyal  
Tests Covid-19

## Positive After Death

Veteran Congress leader and former Union minister P Namgyal was tested positive for coronavirus hours after his death in Ladakh, making him the first person to die of the infection in the Union Territory, officials said on Tuesday. Namgyal, 83, who ● P-02

Rs 223 Crore Bank Fraud:  
Ex-Chairman Goes Into Hiding

Crime Branch Issues Lookout Notice, Announce Reward

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) probing the whopping Rs 230 crore fraud case, issued on Tuesday a lookout notice against the former chairman of the J&K State Cooperative Bank, accused in the case.

An ACB spokesperson told Kashmir Observer today that the former bank chairman Mohammad Shafi Dar has gone into hiding after the high court quashed his FIR



on May 27, last month. The Bureau, he said has issued a lookout notice for him to take the ongoing probe to its logical conclusion.

"When the case was filed against him, he was the chairman of the bank. Later, he was sacked," the spokesperson said.

In the lookout notice issued today, the ACB has said that if any person has information about the whereabouts of the accused Mohammad Shafi Dar, the same should be communicated to the probe agency through email, Whatsapp or toll free number.

"Any person giving the information shall be suitably ►PAGE 02

J&K Govt Frames Media Policy To  
Curb 'Misinformation, Fake News'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday approved media policy with an aim to thwart misinformation and fake news and keep a check on any attempt to use media to "vitiate public peace, sovereignty and integrity of the country", besides undertaking measures for the welfare of journalists in the Union Territory.

In a statement released to the media, a government spokesperson said that with the approval of the media policy- 2020, the government will be in a better position to carry the



message of welfare, development and progress to the people in an effective manner, besides enabling the Department of Information & Public Relations J&K to keep pace with the demands of the media and reposition itself as a professional organization. The spokesperson said that ►PAGE 02

Catch J&K  
Artists Live At  
'Qaraar' ConcertArtists Join Hands To Hold  
First Ever Virtual Music  
Concert Amid Covid Crisis

SRINAGAR: Some prominent musicians and instrumentalists across Jammu and Kashmir have joined hands to hold first ever virtual music concert—titled as 'Qaraar'. The artists including vocalist and composer, Waheed Jeelani, famous singer from Chenab valley, Rashid Jehangir ● P-02

## Despite 'Cherry On Top', Kashmiri Growers Frown Over 'Fruitless' Season

Swati Joshi

IN a bid to boost the battered business and unshackle it from the frequent market uncertainty, young orchardist, Ubair Shah, has been reaching out to his tribe for a fruitful pact for a long time now.

The consortium is aimed at handling the lockdown situation, currently impacting the cherry season in Kashmir Valley.

Shah is offering his platform to orchardists to sell their crop, either directly to customers, or through Business to Business (B2B) model.

"However," the young orchardist says, "our initiative isn't matching the surplus amount of cherry that Kashmir produces."

Founder of Efruitmandi, an initiative to build a farmer network for a better demand for the farm produce, Shah says the cherry growers of Kashmir mainly sell the fruit in local mandi or feed it to the Mandis of Maharashtra.

But due to restrictions in cargo shipment, the growers are incurring huge losses.

"As Mumbai Mandis are not fully functional due to pandemic," Shah

says, "the resultant distressed situation is badly impacting the supply chain and prices."

## Delicate Fruit

As a first seasonal fruit in Kashmir Valley, cherry is mainly produced in Ganderbal, Tangmarg, and Shopian areas.

The harvest season starts in the last week of May and ends by the first week of July.

Though the cherries have blossomed in North Kashmir but in South Kashmir, the cherries will be ready for consumption, in over a fortnight's time, says AG Deewan, a cherry grower in Shopian, hoping that by then the market



Ko Pic Abid Bhat

condition improves. "I'm selling the cherry boxes at

a meagre price of Rs 50," says Deewan. "As a grower who used to sell cherry boxes at Rs 150 till last year, I'm at a loss."

The journey of this delicate fruit from the farm to the Mandi cost a lot to the growers.

Bifurcating the cost of each cherry box, Deewan explains, a single piece carries a price tag of Rs 12, add it with the labor wage of around Rs 700, and transportation cost of Rs 40 per box.

"Last year I sold around 200-250 cherry boxes in the local Mandi and 400-450 boxes to other states,"

Deewan recalls.

But this year, continues the cherry grower, business is quite uncertain.

## Bumper Crop

As per the official figures maintained by Kashmir's Horticulture Department, 11,280 metric tonnes of cherries were produced in 2017, while the production surged to 11,789 metric tonnes in 2018.

The cherry production saw a drop with only 11,000 metric tonnes last year due to bad weather.

"The cherry production is good this year and we're receiving better varieties," says Zubair Ahmed ►PAGE 02



## China Building Up Forces...

"Those are just two pieces of the behaviour of this regime of the Chinese Communist Party. The nature and the activity that they're undertaking, the continued efforts to steal intellectual property, to advance in the South China Sea," he said. Pompeo said that these are the kinds of actions that authoritarian regimes take, and they have a real impact not only on the Chinese people there in China and Hong Kongers in Hong Kong, but a real impact on people all around the world. "The United States has a responsibility and the capability to push back against that, ensure that the American people are properly served by a foreign policy that recognises the threats that emanate from China today," he said. Responding to a question, Pompeo said that the recent Chinese actions be it on the India border, or Hong Kong or the South China Sea, have been part of the Chinese behaviour in the recent past. "It's not just over the past six months. We've seen over the past number of years continued Chinese build out of their military capabilities, and then continually more aggressive action. I mentioned India. You've mentioned the South China Sea. "We see these same kind of things with them attempting to build ports around the world as part of their Belt and Road Initiative, places where they can move the People's Liberation Army Navy. We've seen their continued efforts to expand militarily," Pompeo said. For the past 20 years, the US has not responded to these things in a real way, he said. "We've viewed the 1.5 billion people in the Chinese market as so important to the American economy, and the risk that the Chinese would respond by closing us out for the favour of some other nation I think people have just been too worried about that to actually take the responses that we take to every other country that behaves in the way that China has done," Pompeo said. President Donald Trump has not done that, he asserted. "Trump's made it very clear whether it's the signature issue on trade... reciprocal trade... and now beginning to move to all the other elements of power that the Chinese Communist Party is trying to expand," he added.

## Defence Minister Downplays

Chinese have come up to what they claim is their territory while Indians believed it is theirs. "There has been a disagreement over it. A sizeable number of Chinese people have come there. India has done what it needs to do, (Usko lekar ek matbhed hua hain. Aur acchi khasi sankhya mein Cheen ke log bhi aa gaye hain. Lekin Bharat ko bhi apni taraf se jo kuch bhi karna chahiye, Bharat ne bhi kiya hain," Singh told CNN-News 18. Singh's comments were seen as first official confirmation of presence of significant number of Chinese troops in the disputed areas which India maintains are on its side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the de-facto border between the two countries. According to reports, significant numbers of Chinese troops have been camping in the Indian side of the LAC in Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso. The defence minister said China should think about the issue seriously so that it can be resolved soon. Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a bitter standoff in several areas along the Line of Actual Control in mountainous eastern Ladakh for close to a month. Both the countries are holding talks at military and diplomatic levels to resolve the dispute. "The Doklam dispute was resolved through diplomatic and military talks. We have found solutions to similar situations in the past as well. Talks at the military and diplomatic levels were on to resolve the current issue," Singh said. "India does not hurt pride of any country and at the same time, it does not tolerate any attempt to hurt its own pride," he said, talking about India's long-held policy. The trigger for the face-off was China's stiff opposition to India laying a key road in the Finger area around the Pangong Tso Lake besides construction of another road connecting the Darbuk-Shayok-Daulat Beg Oldie road in Galwan Valley. China was also laying a road in the Finger area which is not acceptable to India. Government sources said military reinforcements including troops, vehicles and artillery guns were sent to eastern Ladakh by the Indian Army to shore up its presence in the areas where Chinese soldiers were resorting to aggressive posturing. The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated after around 250 Chinese and Indian soldiers were engaged in a violent face-off on the evening of May 5 which spilled over to the next day before the two sides agreed to "disengage". However, the standoff continued. The incident in Pangong Tso was followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9. The troops of India and China were engaged in a 73-day stand-off in Doklam tri-junction in 2017 which even triggered fears of a war between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long LAC. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it. Both sides have been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it is necessary to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

## 2 Militants Killed In Tral...

relevant sections of law stands registered in Police Station Tral and investigation has been initiated. "People are requested to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any," the spokesperson said. Meanwhile, the locals said the encounter continued for nearly six hours before the two Jaish-e-Muhammad militants were killed. The house where the militants were hiding suffered minor damages. The eyewitnesses identified the slain militants as Maqbool Chopan and Aqib Ramzan. While Chopan was said to have joined militant ranks in April this year, Ramzan was reportedly active for a year.

## India's Credit Rating Cut...

Services (TCS) and Infosys -- have been downgraded. The outlooks on all these ratings are negative. However, Moody's affirmed the issuer rating of Reliance Industries but revised the outlook to negative from stable. With regard to ratings of banks, Moody's has downgraded the long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings of HDFC Bank and SBI to Baa3 from Baa2, and the long-term issuer rating of EXIM India to Baa3 from Baa2, with negative outlook. The deposit ratings of these banks are at the same level as India's Baa3 sovereign rating. Consequently, Moody's has downgraded HDFC Bank's baseline credit assessment (BCA) to baa3 from baa2. Moody's has placed the Baa3 long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings of Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Canara Bank and Union Bank of India and their BCAs under review for downgrade. Moody's has downgraded IndusInd's long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings, with a negative outlook.

## Kashmir Reports 2 More...

bilateral pneumonia with acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). He is the youngest patient to die due to COVID-19 in

# COVID-19 Worriers: AirAsiaTo Give Doctors 50,000 Free Seats On Flights

**SRINAGAR:** AirAsia India announced a special initiative, the 'AirAsiaRedPass', acknowledging the contribution made by doctors in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctors have been at the forefront of the nation's fight against the pandemic, working tirelessly to save lives without fearing for their own. As part of this initiative to pay a tribute to doctors, AirAsia India will give away 50,000 free seats on flights across its domestic sectors to doctors as a gesture of gratitude for their commendable efforts in support

Jammu and Kashmir, they said. The officials said the elderly woman, who also died on Monday, has also tested positive for COVID-19. The said that she had many comorbidities like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and others. The woman was the mother-in-law of a 55-year-old man who died of the covid-19 last week. With these fatalities, the death toll due to the virus in J&K has gone upto 33- 29 in Kashmir and four in Jammu. So far Srinagar district has highest number of the fatalities—seven followed Baramulla with six deaths, Anantnag five, Kulgam four, two each from Shopian, Budgam and Jammu while one death each has been reported from Bandipora,Kupwara, Doda and Udhampur.

## J&K Records New 117 ...

and 77 from Kashmir, they said. The total number of cases in Jammu and Kashmir has now reached 2,718. "Of these, 2,076 are in Kashmir and 642 in the Jammu region," the officials added. Srinagar reported 15 cases, Pulwama 14, Jammu 13, Kulgam 11, Kupwara 10, Ramban and Poonch nine each, Budgam eight, Baramulla and Shopian seven each, Bandipora five, Rajouri 3, Kathua and Udhampur 2 each while one each were reported from Samba and Doda. Among the fresh cases, 36 include travelers while 81 are others. Srinagar's tally rose to 311 and joined two south Kashmir district in having more than 300 cases— Anantnag (349) and Kulgam (311). Out of the total cases, 1732 are active positive—503 in Jammu and 1229 in Valley— while 953 have recovered and include seven who were discharged today while 33 others have died. Among the fresh cases, 44 were confirmed at diagnostic laboratories at CD hospital, 22 at SKIMS Soura, 19 at army's command hospital, and six at SKIMS hospital Bemina. The Srinagar cases include 47-year-old from Lal Bazar, 46-year-old from Bota Kadal, seven from Safa Kadal— 13-year-old girl, three female, two of them 42-year-old and 52-year-old besides 2-year-old boy, 47-year-old and 52-year-old men, he said. The other cases from Srinagar include 47-year-old man from Mulfag Hazratbal, 72-year-old man from Baghwanpora, 29-year-old Alamgari Bazar, 76-year-old from Parraypora and 29-year-old woman from Bemina. The three cases from Shopian include 37-year-old, 22-year-old and 60-year-old women from Ramnagri. Dr Riyaz Untoo, Principal SKIMS Bemina said that out of the samples processed at the hospital's diagnostic laboratory till afternoon today, six came out to be positive. They include three men (aged 39, 40 & 25 years)—two from Magam and one from Chadoora. The three other cases, he said, include three females (aged 65, 23 and 32 years)—one from Hyderpora and two from Magam. Among the cases, 19 were confirmed at Army's Command Hospital Udhampur. Nine of them were from Ramban, eight from Poonch and two from Udhampur district, officials said. (With GNS inputs)

## Top Doctor Fighting Covid-19

of the novel coronavirus in the Valley, tested positive for the respiratory disease late on Monday night. "I'm overwhelmed and deeply humbled by the wishes of all my known and unknown well wishers praying for my recovery... tested positive. followed #protocol and got #admitted ... thank you everyone..remember in prayers," the doctor said in a tweet. He, however, expressed sadness over some reports that he had doctored his report to avoid duty. "But (I) am saddened by some reporting my report has been feigned to avoid duties ... I will be the last person to do that ... I'm in quarantine and working from here ... available for all possible deliverable services," he said.

## Covid-19 Patient Brought...

district last night, official sources said Tuesday. A labourer by profession, the 55-year-old quietly escaped from the Putushahi isolation centre on Monday night and was captured by the officials before he could enter his house, they said. The man was brought back to the facility. Nodal officer Lolab Aijaz Ahmad said that the man was placed under quarantine on May 16 and his swab sample returned positive for the disease on May 29 when he was shifted to the isolation facility. "He escaped last night and was apprehended from Wadipora. We are inquiring why and how he escaped," he said. Wadipora and Putushahi areas are almost 20 kilometres apart, local sources said. A resident of Yamlar area, around 4 kilometres from Wadipora, the place where was caught, the man had returned from Lakhampur. CMO Kupwara, Dr. Kounsar also confirmed the incident. "The patient who escaped the centre has been retrieved now. We are ascertaining details as to how he managed to come out of the (isolation) centre and other allied issues," the CMO said.(GNS)

## Ex- Minister Namgyal...

represented the Ladakh parliamentary constituency and the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council for three terms each, passed away after a brief illness at a hospital in Leh on Monday. From 1960-73 and then from 1974-80, he remained a member of the then Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council until he got elected to the seventh Lok Sabha. Four years later in 1984, he was re-elected to the Lok Sabha and served the Central government as Union minister between 1988 and 1989. He was elected to the Lok Sabha third time in 1996. The Congress leader's sample was taken for COVID-19 test which returned positive, the officials said. District Magistrate, Leh, Sachin Kumar Vaishya, constituted a three-member committee to inquire into alleged lapses in the

Speaking of the concept and inspiration behind the AirAsiaRedPass, Mr. Ankur-Garg, Chief Commercial Officer, AirAsia India said "As a mark of respect to our doctors and in recognition of the admirable values they have displayed through the last few months - grit, determination and strength, we at AirAsia India wanted to express our gratitude for their tireless efforts in keeping the nation safe and healthy. We understand that a lot of doctors have been away from their family and friends in the course of their com-

mitment to their duty. True to our essence of connecting people and destinations, we would be honoured to play a part in connecting them to their loved ones." AirAsia has been working closely with medical professionals and regulatory authorities to ensure the health and safety of its guests and cabin crew. In line with WHO guidelines to contain the spread of coronavirus, AirAsia India undertakes robust measures to upkeep the hygiene levels of its aircraft and minimise the risk of spread of any infectious diseases. protocol in handling of a COVID-19 case and alleged irregularities in handling the body of the deceased. The officials said efforts are on to identify all the persons who have come in contact with the deceased leader for sampling. All these persons have been advised to stay in home quarantine, they added. Four more persons tested positive for coronavirus in Ladakh on Tuesday, taking the number of such patients in the region to 81. "A total of 21 samples were tested at COVID-19 Laboratory at Chuchot Yokma in Leh, out of which four have come positive. One positive report is of Leh district and three are of Kargil district," an official bulletin said. It said the condition of all the 33 active cases of COVID-19 is stable. These include seven active cases in Leh and 26 in Kargil district. Forty-seven patients -- 34 in Leh and 13 in Kargil -- have been cured and discharged from hospitals so far.

## Catch J&K Artists Live ...

, singer and composer, Munir Ahmad Mir,percussionist (Nutt), Ab Rashid Shah, Journalist and Rabab player, Nazir Ganaie, vocalists including Ishfaq Kawa, Raja Bilal, Altaf Sahil and academician and vocalist, Dr Shaista Ahmad, will get together for virtual concerts to show solidarity to the people who are at the frontline in the battle against COVID 19 and also entertain people during tough times. The concert is organized and hosted by the Kashmir Music Club (KMC), Srinagar. The concert will be held between 6pm and 9pm on June 07, 2020, live on facebook. Young and prominent RJ, Vijdhan Saleem would be conducting the concert online. Talking about the initiative, Chairman, Kashmir Music Club, Srinagar, Waheed Jeelani, said: "This is not just a concert, it's a movement. We want to take this concert to screens across the globe." "We are happy to get some well-known and young artists together to take this concert ahead," he said. Jeelani said "Every person, a health worker, an essential services provider or citizen at home – is contributing in this battle. Especially mothers, home makers and sisters at home who are bearing the burden," he said. "As artists, we thought we could do something together to bring some positivity in times of crisis," he said. Veteran theater personality and Bollywood actor, MK Raina lauded the role of Kashmiri artists—saying that it was moment of pride for the Kashmiri diaspora—that they can connect to their music and language with this concert—Qaraar. In his video message to the organizers, Raina described Kashmiri artists "highly talented"—who according to him can do wonders if they were given right platform. "With this initiative by Waheed Jeelani and his team, people across the globe will be able to connect to Kashmiri and its music," he said. Bollywood actor and son of the soil, Mir Sarwar applauded the organizers for coming together. "I am happy that some of our well known artists will entertain the masses and try to lighten their stress, strain and depression in these tough times. My best wishes to the team," he said. Actor and cultural activist, Mushtaq Ali Ahmad Khan said "Music fills all emptiness of life." He wished that with this concert, hope it brings positivism among the lives of listeners, saying that he would be waiting for the concert Qaraar. He also urged people to get connected and appreciate the artists in their endeavors. Famous singer, known as Nightingale of Kashmir, Shameem Dev have come in support of the concert, wishing artists best for the event.

## J&K Govt Frames Media...

the Director Information and Public Relations has been designated as chairperson of the Empanelment Committee and Administrative head of Information Department will chair the Review Committee constituted under the Policy. "This graded mechanism would ensure that the issues of the media are resolved in a time bound manner and the entire process has been made time bound and transparent," the spokesperson said. "The Policy attempts to thwart misinformation, fake news and tries to develop a mechanism that will raise alarm against any attempt to use media to vitiate public peace, sovereignty and integrity of the country," he added. Highlighting the key features of the policy, the official spokesperson said that it lays down a solid foundation to use all forms of media to build public trust, pay attention to grievances of people projected by the media and strengthen the relationship between the various stakeholders. "For the first time, the media policy lays down the guidelines for empanelment of Audio-Visual and electronic media such as FM, radio, Satellite and cable TV channels so as to streamline their interface with DIPR," the official spokesperson said. "It addresses the ambiguities in the earlier Advertisement policy and ensures that different kinds of media are given due consideration to keep pace with the changing demands of present times," he added. The official spokesperson added that to address the issue of overall growth and development of media through capacity building and creating a citizen centric eco-system in J&K, the new policy includes institution of media awards to be given each year to two outstanding media or communication professionals. "It also includes establishment of Media academy/Institute/Chair in reputed national institutes in J&K e.g. IIMC, IIM etcetera to promote highest standard of journalism and coordinating study and research in the field of journalism. DIPR will come out with a detailed proposal and guidelines in this regard. The Policy also emphasizes on organizing field tours for media personnel to enable them to get firsthand information about various development activities on ground," the official spokesperson said. He adds that the policy aims to put in place a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for reaching out to the public in situations of crisis like health issues and natural disasters.

"It seeks to strengthen inter-departmental coordination to project a cohesive picture of the efforts of the Government. All departments would be asked to nominate a Nodal Officer well versed with the functions of the department to liaise with DIPR," the official spokesperson said. "It has laid thrust on professional communication, capacity building and training and development of professionalism in the Department. It underlines the use of media as a feedback mechanism by setting up a robust grievance monitoring and response mechanism in DIPR. To ensure healthy interaction with public on Online and Social media platform, the Policy lays down setting up a Social Media Cell in the Department," he added.

## Rs 223 Crore Bank Fraud...

rewarded and his identity will be kept secret," the notice read. It added that the former chairman was wanted in case FIR No. 04/2020 u/s 5(1) (d) r/w Section 5(2). PC Act, Sections 465,467,468,471,120-B/RPC Police Station, Anti-Corruption Bureau, Srinagar. The 223 crore scam was unearthed by the Bureau in March this year, involving many bank officials, including the ex-chairman Mohammad Shafi Dar and Hilal Ahmad Mir, the chairman of non-existent Cooperative Society named River Jhelum Cooperative house Colony at Shipora Srinagar, who was arrested on May 18. The ACB has already filed a case against Dar, Mir and other accused. "During probe, it was further revealed that the Chairman of the said Society has moved an application to Secretary Cooperatives, Administration Department of Co-operative Societies, where under he sought directions to the J&K Co-operative Bank Ltd for grant of financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 300.00 crores for taking over possession of 300 kanals of land located in the outskirts of Srinagar for construction of a Satellite Township," the ACB statement had said. It added that the application was endorsed to Registrar Cooperative Societies J&K for taking up the matter with Jammu and Kashmir State Cooperative Bank. "Accordingly, J&K Co-operative Bank Srinagar sanctioned a loan to the tune of Rs. 223 crores without adhering to any codal formalities, ie obtaining the details of the Society Viz. Balance Sheet, Profit and loss Account business, activities being done by the Society, PAN No., Income Tax return, details of Construction of the Board Resolutions, etc," the ACB handout had said. It had further added that during enquiry it also surfaced that River Jhelum Cooperative Housing Building Society has not been even registered with Registrar Co-operative Societies, J&K. The ACB spokesman had said that the Mir by acting in league with bank Chairman and others had prepared a fake and fictitious Registration Certificate in the name of Society and managed the sanction of loan to the amount of Rs. 223 Crores. "The above mentioned acts of omission and commission on the part of Mohammad Shafi Dar Chairman J&K State Cooperative Bank, Raj Bagh, Srinagar and others in conspiracy with Mir constitute and offences punishable u/s 5(1)(d) r/w section 5(2) P.C. Act and sections 465, 467, 468, 471, 120-B RPC, resulting in loss of Rs. 223 crores to the Bank. Accordingly, FIR No. 04/2020 P/S ACB was registered and investigation taken up," the Bureau statement had added. The statement had also claimed to have been successful in unearthing the siphoned funds and an amount to tune of Rs 187 crore has been frozen.

## Despite ‘Cherry On Top’...

, a member of the New Kashmir Food Association (NKFA), a unit acting as the bridge between the local mandi and the higher authorities. Earlier, Ahmed had to request the growers to feed least cherries to the Mandi given the least demand. "The cherry growers who used to send 200 cherry boxes are now sending only 100 boxes resulting in the loss of the growers," he says. Transportation Blues The restricted movement is equally playing a spoilsport. Even before reaching their destination, cherries, with a short shelf life, are rotting to chagrin of the growers. If a truckload of cherries is sent from Kashmir at night, it should reach Jammu by the morning otherwise it will perish, Ahmed says. The shelf life of Mishri and Makhmali varieties—making up 60 percent of total cherry produce—is seven and two days respectively. "On May 27," the NKFA member continues, "we sent a vehicle to Jammu but it remained on the highway for two days, resulting in loss of all the cherries." Fearing more losses, the NKFA sought Raj Bhavan's intervention. Among other things, it requested the LG GC Murmu 'not to stop fruit vehicles on the highway and operate special cargo flights and trains for the movement of cherries'. "But nothing has helped so far," Ahmed says. "Instead I was told by an airport agent that the cost of transportation of cherry boxes has suddenly surged to Rs 75 per kg, from Rs 30 per kg last year." The growers, he says, are already in loss, and the increase in the airfare "will only deepen our wounds". Factory Hindrance Presently, the cherry traders of Kashmir are facing another roadblock in the form of the closed canning factories. All cherries go to canning factories, but due to the unavailability of labour and raw materials, the factories are closed. "There're only two-three canning factories that have restarted working," says Vikas Khurana, owner of Hukam Chand Chander Mohan Khurana, a major supplier and procurement agent for the canners. "But only 10 per cent of the cherries go to the factories and the rest of it is haywire." All these factors are collectively creating a crisis situation for these cherry cultivators, seeking LG Murmu's intervention in opening the canning units. Getting Local But as the official help remains elusive, the NKFA has requested the locals to buy cherries from the local farmers and help them in these tough times. "Even as some attempts are being made in this regard," says Bashir Ahmad, a cherry grower from Ganderbal, "the current ruthless COVID curbs are only making it a tall order."

## Pregnant Woman ‘Denied’

Hospital Handwara for treatment. "When I requested the doctors to provide me an ambulance so that I could cover 22 kilometer distance without any delay, they refused to oblige. Even, the Block Medical Officer didn't pay heed to my repeated requests," Qasimalleged. The family members somehow managed to arrange a private Sumo and shifted the pregnant lady to District Hospital Handwara. Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Samir Matoo told news agency KNT that he can't help as he was undergoing quarantine.

## 6 Gamblers Held In Raid...

"Case FIR No. 68/2020 under relevant sections of law stands registered at Police Station Nishat and further investigation has been initiated," the police spokesperson added.

## Minor Drowns In Shopian

body of the deceased from the nallah, officials said. (KNO)



# Amid Covid 19 pandemic, Medicare Diagnostic Center 'loots' patients

**KNS**

Srinagar: Amid COVID 19 pandemic when government hospitals have limited patient services to prevent spread of the fatal virus, Medicare, at Kak Saria in Karan Nagar area of Srinagar is looting patients for different tests.

For a biopsy and other tests the Medicare Centre is overcharging as much as the doctors and its employees wish.

This week a patient took their sample for biopsy tests to the lab and the doctors and employees charged 5000 rupees.

On the second day, the patient's attend got a call from one of the employees and asked to deposit more ten thousand rupees for the tests.

"It was a shock for us



as the rates charged for the same tests in rest of the diagnostic centers ranges between Rs 800 to 1200. When we asked Medicare employees and one of the doctors present there about the rates, they gave different alibis," said the attendant.

A number of patients

tic center," Zahoor Ahmad, an attendant said.

He said that patients and attendents are always in distress during the treatment time and such centre takes disadvantage of the distressing situation by overcharging as much as it can.

President Private Diagnostic Centres Association, JK, Umar Iqbal Dhar said that the association has fixed rates as per the expert opinions for patient care and if any centre overcharges authorities concerned should take action.

Director Health Services Kashmir Dr Sameer Matoo said it will ask the concerned to look into the matter.

Chief medical officer Srinagar Dr Jahangir Bakshi said that he will take necessary action.(KNS)

## COVID-19 worriers AirAsia to give Doctors 50,000 free seats on flights

SRINAGAR: AirAsia India announced a special initiative, the 'AirAsiaRedPass', acknowledging the contribution made by doctors in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctors have been at the forefront of the nation's fight against the pandemic, working tirelessly to save lives without fearing for their own.

As part of this initiative to pay a tribute to doctors, AirAsia India will give away 50,000 free seats on flights across its domestic sectors to doctors as a gesture of gratitude for their commendable efforts in support of the nation.

Doctors can submit their contact details and desired sector and date of travel between 1 Jul 2020 to 30 Sep 2020 with their registration number or ID as proof on <https://air.asia/GCs2R>. Applications are open till 12 June 2020 with up to 50,000 AirAsia RedPasses available for doctors across the country who would also be given

special privileges like priority boarding at the airport. The RedPass would be valid for a one way flight for the successful applicant doctors on the AirAsia India domestic network.

Speaking of the concept and inspiration behind the AirAsia RedPass, Mr. Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial Officer, AirAsia India said "As a mark of respect to our doctors and in recognition of the admirable values they have displayed through the last few months - grit, determination and strength, we at AirAsia India wanted to express our gratitude for their tireless efforts in keeping the nation safe and healthy. We understand that a lot of doctors have been away from their family and friends in the course of their commitment to their duty. True to our essence of connecting people and destinations, we would be honoured to play a part in connecting them to their loved ones."

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
- BUJHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI  
CALENDAR

11 Shawwal  
1441

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 38
ZUHR	12: 28
ASR	5:27
Magrib	7:40
ISHA	9:19

This Day In History

- 1934- Dr Frederick Banting co-discoverer of insulin, is knighted
- 1935- French liner SS Normandie sets Atlantic crossing record of four days, three hours and 14 minutes on her maiden voyage
- 1940- Last British/French troop leave Dunkirk
- 1943- United Nations Relief & Rehabilitation Administration forms
- 1944-Nazis pull out of Rome
- 1946- International Military Tribunal opens in Tokyo against 28 Japanese war criminals
- 1947-British Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten visits Pakistan
- 1948- 200' Hale telescope dedicated at Palomar Observatory
- 1950- French expedition reaches top of Himalayan peak of Annapurna in Nepal
- 1959 - Singapore adopts constitution
- 1965 - Gemini 4 launched; 2nd US 2-man flight (McDivitt & White)
- 1966 - Gemini 9 launched; 7th US 2-man flight (Stafford & Cernan)
- Event of Interest
- 1971 - Test Cricket debut of Imran Khan, v England at Edgbaston (5, 0-36, 0-19)
- 1974 - Yitzhak Rabin forms a new Israeli government
- 1977 - Belgium government of Tindemans forms
- 1977 - US & Cuba talk about diplomatic relations
- 1980 - Crew of Soyuz 36 returns to Earth aboard Soyuz 35
- 1986 - Battles in Beirut; 53 killed
- 1989 - Beginning of the Tiananmen Square Massacre as Chinese troops open fire on pro-democracy supporters in Beijing
- 1992 - World's largest environmental summit opens in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2001- Iraq announces that it will halt crude oil exports in response to the UN's resolution that extends the oil-for-food program by only 1 month, instead of the normal 6-month period
- 2006 - The union of Serbia and Montenegro comes to an end with Montenegro's formal declaration of independence
- 2013- 20 people, including 10 children, are killed by a suicide bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan
- 2013 -US extends sanctions against Iran through its automotive industry and currency
- 2013- 119 people are killed in a poultry farm fire in Jilin Province, China
- 2014 - Hashim Amla becomes the first non-white captain of the South African national cricket team
- Event of Interest
- 2014 - President Obama announces his plan for a \$1 billion fund to increase deployment of US troops to Europe
- 2015 - 200 people are killed by an explosion at a gasoline station in Accra, Ghana

From KO Archives

Kashmir situation improving: Centre

NEW DELHI - The security situation in Jammu and Kashmir continued to improve during the last one year, while the northeast is still a "cause of concern" for the Centre.

In its annual report, the Home Ministry says "the levels of violence and tension in the state of Jammu and Kashmir have been perceptibly lower during 2004 and the trend continued in January and February 2005". This, the report says, is evident from the "exceptionally high" flow of more than 3.5 lakh tourists to the valley and nearly 4 lakh pilgrims, who undertook the Amarnath yatra.


Another indicator of return of "normalcy" in the state is the hectic political activities witnessed last year as also the slide in the killing of civilians and security personnel. While 70 civilians were killed in 2004 compared to 79 a year earlier, the number of security force personnel killed in the year was 281 as against 314 in the previous year.

This trend continued in January this year too with incidents of violence coming down from 213 to 144. compared to the same period last year. The annual report noted with a sense of satisfaction that operations in the last few months have "achieved notable success," to neutralise many... militants from all major outfits.

The cost of combating terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir to the central exchequer from 1989-90 to 2003-04 was a little over Rs. 3100 crore which included assistance to Kashmir migrants to the tune of Rs. 650 crore and another Rs. 513 crores for welfare works in the state.

(Kashmir Observer, 03 June, 2005)

**They charge as per their own rates. Directorate health does not bother to check the rates or keep an eye on them. There is no accountability on this diagnostic center**



Dear Migrant Labourers  
And Daily Wage Earners....  
The Country Stands with You!


The corona pandemic has brought many changes in the world. These tough times have made a massive impact on your livelihood. To help you recover, a package of **Rs. 1 lakh 1 thousand 5 hundred crore** has been allocated under MGNREGA.

- Daily wages under MGNREGA at national level has been **increased from Rs. 182 to Rs. 202.**
- Applicants can register on [nrega.nic.in/netnrega/HomeGP.aspx](http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/HomeGP.aspx) or contact the local Gram Panchayat for employment opportunities.

Labourer brothers and sisters, do you know?


- Any needy person even without ration card has the right to avail food grains for two months. During each month, 5 kg wheat/rice per person and per family 1 kg chickpeas/pulses can be availed.
- Labourers get forced to move to their villages as they are unable to afford high rent in urban areas. Now, under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) a scheme for 'Affordable Rental Housing Complexes' has been announced.

Avail these benefits.  
During these difficult times, the entire nation stands with you.



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

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



For more information, please visit – [transformingindia.mygov.in/aatmanirbharbharatm](http://transformingindia.mygov.in/aatmanirbharbharatm)

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## Galwan stand-off

**T**he situation along Line of Actual Control in Ladakh has assumed increasing gravity over the past month. There has been a stand-off between Indian Army and the Chinese military after the latter allegedly made an ingress at three points. The two countries have been engaged in dialogue at a diplomatic and military level but so far there has been no breakthrough. Meanwhile, the Indian Army and the Chinese military are moving in heavy equipment and weaponry including artillery and combat vehicles to their rear bases close to the contentious areas in Ladakh. The Indian Army is also moving in additional troops to match up to the Chinese build-up. Similarly the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been keeping a strict aerial surveillance along the LAC. India wants status quo restored in Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley and the other areas.

Though Indian Army has objected to the ingress by the Chinese troops and sought their immediate withdrawal for restoration of peace in the area, the PLA has stood its ground. The Chinese Army has strengthened their presence in Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie too, considered strategically important areas.

The stand-off at Ladakh between the two countries comes after crisis at Doklam in 2017. It started when the Chinese were trying to construct a road in the area, and Indian troops, on behalf of Bhutan, objected to it. Doklam is located close to the Siliguri Corridor, which connects mainland India with its north-eastern region and hence assumes a huge strategic value for India. However Doklam was resolved diplomatically through talks between the two countries.

There's hope that Ladakh deadlock may also come to an end like Doklam. There are some signals pointing to this end. The Chinese Foreign Ministry has said that the overall situation on its border with India was 'stable and controllable'. The spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Zhao Lijian said that the two sides can resolve the issue through dialogue and consultations. Speaking earlier, Defence minister Rajnath Singh said India will not allow India's pride to be hurt. He said India's effort was to ensure that the tension does not escalate.

However, it is far from certain that the two countries will be able to address the current crisis. And this can only happen should China withdraw to its pre-stand-off LAC. There are efforts at diplomatic level to urge China to go back. So far China has been unwilling to do so. But there's too much at stake for both the countries to let the situation escalate. Here's hoping that like Doklam China will eventually step back and agree to a negotiated solution.

### OTHER OPINION

## Unlock with care

**A** new phase in the country's tryst with the novel coronavirus is beginning. On May 30, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs issued "Unlock 1" guidelines, allowing a phased resumption of social and economic activities across the country. Though a calibrated relaxation of restrictions had begun in early May, the new guidelines are significant in that they speak a different language from the notifications issued by the MHA since the lockdown was announced on March 24 — the thrust is on "re-opening" now. Activities can resume in malls, hotels, restaurants, and places of worship in non-containment zones and "unfettered movement" of goods and persons within and between states has been allowed. Given the toll on people's livelihoods, and the stress on the economy in general, easing the stringent lockdown had become necessary. At the same time, the coronavirus continues to rage in large parts of the country — there have been record spikes in the national caseload in the last three days. Therefore, in the coming weeks, as commuters get back on the roads, shopping centres reopen and people give in to the temptation of eating out, the Centre and the states need to keep talking to them about the pathogen that doesn't have an antidote yet — they should not lose sight of the importance of conveying the message of caution and safety.

The loosening of the restrictions has come amidst a few positive developments. The recovery rate in Maharashtra — the worst affected state in the country — is now at par with the national average. It's also a matter of some assurance that the doubling rate of the infection in Gujarat — the state with the third-highest caseload — is much slower than the national rate. But there have also been several worrying developments since last week. Delhi has been adding more than 1,000 cases daily for four days, Kerala has seen a fresh spurt of infections, and returning migrants are adding to the caseload of several states — the number of COVID cases in Assam, for instance, doubled in three days last week. This surge in infections will test the already overstretched healthcare infrastructure of the states and they will have to find creative ways to deal with the burden on hospitals — framing norms for home quarantine, for example.

The new guidelines continue the trend that began two weeks ago, with Lockdown 4, of giving states the freedom to prohibit activities to contain the pandemic. But the authorities will need to do more than putting curbs in place. Post-lockdown India will require a milieu in which people visit markets, places of worship, restaurants and socialise without letting down their guard against the coronavirus. The Centre and state governments must work towards creating such an environment by constantly communicating and engaging with civil society.

*The Indian Express*

# There Are No Fewer Challenges In Online Education

DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

**Such students are now barred from entering these countries. If the situation persists for a long time, there will be a huge drop in the demand for international higher education. However, the major cause of concern in everyone's mind at this time is employment. Due to the current situation in India, corporates are afraid of withdrawing the job offer. Monitoring of the estimates of the Indian economy on unemployment in mid-March saw an increase from 8.4% to 23% in early April and an urban unemployment rate of 30.9%.**

**S**chool, college, and university education are being adversely affected due to the lockdown implemented to curb the growing impact of the Covid-19 epidemic. The coronavirus epidemic has shut down educational institutions around the world. The closure of schools, colleges, and universities, the regular lives of students and teachers, the disruption of education has created an unexpected situation and posed many unexpected challenges for administrators, teachers, teachers, parents, and students. As a result, education is increasingly moving towards e-education.

Prolonged school and university closures have not only had a short-term impact on the continuity of learning for over 285 million young learners in India, which will also have far-reaching economic and social consequences. The epidemic has also disrupted the higher education sector, which is an important determinant of the country's economic future. A large number of Indian students enroll in universities abroad, especially in countries affected by the epidemic-hit US, UK, Australia, and China.

Such students are now barred from entering these countries. If the situation persists for a long time, there will be a huge drop in the demand for international higher education. However, the major cause of concern in everyone's mind at this time is employment. Due to the current situation in India, corporates are afraid of withdrawing the job offer. Monitoring of the estimates of the Indian economy on unemployment in mid-March saw an increase from 8.4% to 23% in early April and an urban unemployment rate of 30.9%.

India is lagging behind some developing countries where digital education is being taken care of. The democratization of technology is now an important issue, including Internet connectivity, telecom infrastructure, online system capability, laptop/desktop availability, software, educational tools, online assessment tools, and more. According to data from the 2017-18 National Sample Survey, only 42 percent of urban and 15 percent of rural households had Internet access, and only 34 percent of urban and 11 percent of rural individuals used the Internet in the past 30 years.

It is true that many traditional educational institutions have poor infrastructure both in public and private. But these data suggest that most students are nearly two-thirds more likely to be spoiled at home than on any campus. There is also a need to examine the impact of smartphone capabilities and net connectivity in teaching.

But the college or university campus plays an important role in teaching. We have long seen that public educational institutions are exemplary of social inclusion and relative equality. In Indian conditions, this role is more important than the role of scholars. Public educational institutions are still the only place where people of all genders, classes, castes, and communities are alike. Female students, in particular, would be very bad if confined to their homes. Poor people are isolated and disinterested from backgrounds, how will their children take classes online when they are losing out on lunch.

Digital education can serve as a supplement in Mazaburi. But not forever, it can use materials and methods that are difficult to incorporate into the normal curriculum. It can be a support for lazy or incompetent teachers, and it can, of course, be a powerful aid for affluent students who are able to afford expensive education. But it is fraudulent to suggest that these can replace public education or are the only way that the majority can reach.

Without self-discipline or lack of good organizational skills, students can fall behind in studies in e-education mode. Students can feel lonely without any teachers and classmates. They may suffer from depression as a result. Poor Internet connections or outdated computers can make course access content frustrating. Lack of better internet connectivity and low speed of internet is the biggest challenge in the path of e-education in India. Practical or lab work is difficult in a virtual classroom. Rural areas of India lack power systems like urban areas, which can be a hindrance to e-education.

E-education is one of the major areas identified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for imparting education using educational tools and communication mediums. In fact, e-education in India is still

in its infancy. The government has supported various e-learning programs to promote e-education. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is actively emphasizing on developing equipment and technology to promote it. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is promoting research and research projects focused on e-education in various educational institutions. These include curriculum development, research and research initiatives, human resource development projects and faculty training initiatives to improve literacy through distance education.

A large number of new users are accessing e-education through the Internet and other communication tools. The prevalence of the audio-visual system in education continues to grow. However, education should be continued. Students should keep learning. The learning period of the lockdown must be completed. Teachers should think creatively and introduce new ways of learning. In a country where access to the Internet and high-speed connectivity is a problem, and the digital divide is an issue, it is important to address the challenges. Those who are involved in education planning and administration should give serious thought to reduce the digital divide in the country and popularize traditional education as well as digital education.

However, the question still stands there that online education can be a future teaching, which should be a substitute for face-to-face education of the guru-disciple? Not yet seen this. The people of the government and academia are trying to make it better, but to overcome the hurdles faced in online education in a big country like India is still far away. The question of whether to conduct the experimental examination of examinations and technical subjects online still stands. Recently, the UGC guideline has also advocated pen-copy work. There is potential in the direction of online education but the challenges are not less. Better results cannot come unless challenges are better assessed.

*Author is a Research Scholar in Political Science at the University of Delhi.*

## Covid-19 Is Affecting Our Collective Mental Health

We are affected by fears of infection, losing our freedom, financial loss, among others

JONATHAN SHERIN

**R**ecently, I received a call from a close family friend who was experiencing a psychotic episode in the context of her fears related to COVID-19. She had developed delusions about how certain public figures were using physical distancing and technology to steal physical body parts from the masses. Though new or heightened delusions are known to crop up under stress, my friend had not experienced this type of psychiatric issue in the past and it struck a chord with me. Our collective psyche is under unprecedented siege and will be for some time.

It is completely normal to be afraid in a pandemic, but fear and the disruption of our life structure is exacting a price on our mental health, especially as we recognise that "reopening" will provoke issues anew. All around us, people in our personal and professional lives are experiencing various types of emotional disturbance in response to COVID-19, so it is little wonder that calls to help lines continue to surge.

We are sad, frustrated and irritable because we are isolated. We grieve the lost lives we know about and those we don't. We fear the consequences of our own exposure to the virus. We fear the risks we potentially pose to others. We worry about our finances in our collapsing economy, about our ability to be employed with dignity and grieve over losing what must be left behind as a result

of the unknown future of COVID-19.

Researchers have documented the psychological impact of prolonged quarantine, finding negative effects that are commonly associated with exposure to trauma, according to a recent review of 24 quarantine studies in the journal the Lancet. These effects include confusion and anger that are exacerbated by fears of becoming infected, loss of freedom, separation from loved ones and financial loss, among others.

Some combination of these intensifying experiences defines the lives of most every Los Angeles County resident today.

For some, the painful emotions provoked by this collective trauma will recede as the coronavirus crisis ebbs, but haunting memories, negative thoughts and uneasy feelings won't fade so easily for others. They need to be comfortable asking for help.

In response to the pandemic, Los Angeles County's Department of Mental Health, which I oversee, is trying to make it easier to access that help.

### Delivering emotional support to residents

We are leveraging technology to deliver free mental health assistance to all county residents. Through a partnership with Head Space, every resident can get a free subscription to the company's guided meditation app. Scientific studies have demonstrated that guided meditation is an effective tool for increasing compassion; improving sleep, health and relationships; and reducing anxiety.

We have also expanded and re-engineered the Department of



**Every single person may eventually witness the effects of COVID-19 first-hand. Perhaps then our greater society might finally understand and admit that healthy and unhealthy mental functioning affects us all and that a full human experience requires good mental health.**

Mental Health help line. Thanks to volunteers and redeployment of select staff who are now working from home, it is now set up to deliver emotional support around the clock to all LA County residents, instead of just focusing on crisis responses.

To help manage the trauma that health care workers are experiencing, we dedicated a portion of the help line staffed by volunteers from the Luskin School at UCLA to meet their needs. The volunteers

receive specialised training that allows them to support callers facing harrowing dilemmas with no good choices and no good outcomes, putting them at risk of moral stress and moral injury.

Long before the pandemic, the Department of Mental Health started trying to improve access to care by providing education and staffing to public venues, including at schools, libraries and houses of worship, and linking them to resources.

As part of our response to COVID-19 and to help the county pivot toward reopening and recovery we are attempting to set up a network of grassroots mental health "ambassadors." Trained to function as a lay mental health workforce, they will reach out across public venues in their communities. This effort could begin as early as August, pending the Board of Supervisors' approval.

The message of our outreach is simple: Wherever people convene they can connect, and through connection they can heal.

Every single person may eventually witness the effects of COVID-19 first-hand. Perhaps then our greater society might finally understand and admit that healthy and unhealthy mental functioning affects us all and that a full human experience requires good mental health. It shouldn't have taken a global pandemic to showcase this reality.

*Los Angeles Times*

*Dr Jonathan Sherin is the director of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.*



# Rising Cases Of Online Bullying Amid Lockdown

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**Amid social distancing, social networking is acting like a safety valve to pour our repressed thoughts, anger and frustration online, but in doing so we often tend to cross the line by getting into someone's nerves to frustrate him or her too. It is no secret that fake accounts on social networking sites outnumber genuine ones. Male disguises as female, old disguises as young, married as unmarried or in nutshell one can't differentiate chalk from cheese on SNS.**

**L**ockdown is nothing new in this part of the universe as we have been facing this misery of lockdown from times immemorial. What makes this Covid19 lockdown dissimilar from rest of the lockdowns we experienced before is that for the first time in history we have technology called internet by our side amid restrictions. In absence of internet, how caged residents of Kashmir dealt with daily life post August 05 is a long story that needs to be reserved for another day.

Coming to current state of affairs when we have been accorded with so called privilege of 2G internet that too after much pleading I will discuss how we are using this as tool for good and wicked purposes here.

Internet has broad contours, but due to global outreach of social networking, internet's definition has remained confined mainly to Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Thus, one can conclude internet is synonymous to social networking sites. Current era is considered as the age of social networking. Cell phone has become the natural extension of our hand. We are surrounded by small and big blinking screens and we often feel nomophobia if we keep our mobile aside just for few minutes. Thus it has become essential part of our existence.

Covid19 is setting standards of new normal everything is going online from education to shopping to work from home. In this rat race of online business invisible criminals are not far behind. They too have resorted to online crimes to make our life more miserable.

Amid social distancing, social networking is acting like a safety valve to pour our repressed thoughts, anger and frustration online, but in doing so we often tend to cross the line by getting into someone's nerves to frustrate them too. It is no secret that fake accounts on social networking sites outnumber genuine ones. Male disguises as female, old disguises as young, married as unmarried or in nutshell one can't differentiate chalk from cheese on SNS. What is alarming in these stressful times is the sudden spike in the cases of online bullying and victims who are facing the brunt of it are the youth especially girls in the age group of 16 to 25. In layman's definition online bullying can be any online communication which is aimed at making feel person at the receiving end uncomfortable. It can be in the form of life threats, inappropriate pictures, sexual abuses or emotion-

al blackmailing. Often cybercrime remain unnoticed as victims tend to hide them under the carpet due to societal and parental pressure. Few weeks back my protégé narrated me her ordeal of suffering online bullying silently. How she has developed suicidal tendencies to end her miseries once for all, I will try to narrate her torment verbatim here.

She re-counts: "Two years back when I got selected on scholarship for master's program in one the leading university located in New Delhi, I couldn't resist the temptation of sharing the news of my selection with my friends on Facebook as it was no less than a Eureka moment for me. The notification, I had shared casually carried not only my name but to my bad luck it also carried my contact details. I hadn't thought in my wildest of dreams that

tance I had to do as the Romans do so as to feel safe and secure among strangers. I had reserved my company to select lot and kept my contacts secret so as not to suffer previous ordeal again. Then one day, administration issued a notification to submit our WhatsApp numbers for creation of batch WhatsApp group. I hesitated as nightmares of previous ordeal were still haunting me. It was like once bitten twice shy moment for me. I hesitated but I couldn't reject. Everything was going hunky dory till we were made to vacate our hostels due to Covid19. Back home, I began to notice something contrary from routine in group chatting. Informal language, derogatory and abusive language had taken over. So I exited the group in protest. Hardly a day had passed I began to receive messages on my

**In layman's definition of online bullying can be any online communication which is aimed at making feel person at the receiving end uncomfortable. It can be in the form of life threats, inappropriate pictures, sexual abuses or emotional blackmailing. Often cybercrimes remain unnoticed as victims tend to hide them under the carpet due to societal and parental pressure.**

my casual upload on Facebook will return to me in the form of untamed monster to rob me of long awaited short lived joy. Hardly an hour had passed I began to receive calls and obscene messages from unknown numbers. First I thought it was normal but I was wrong as it didn't stop, there. My cell phone kept on beeping with caller tune and abusive text messages, even after switching off my phone for hours. Calls kept on coming and registering complaint with cyber police was not an option as it wasn't one number but hundreds of anonymous numbers. Finally, I had to sacrifice my contact number for safety, but traffic of obscenity then shifted to emails and this too had to suffer a same fate as my phone number. Year later one of my all-weather friends told me that he had noticed my number being shared and advertised on adult content pages. Who did that remains mystery till now?"

She continues, "two months later, when I landed in capital to start my master's programme, first time I had to share bench with students of different faiths. Just for accep-

personal number all the abusive content had got diverted from group to my inbox. One of the guys, who till yesterday was calling me as sister began to ask me for my hand. My eyes couldn't believe what I was seeing. How quickly man can turn into monster. I rejected his offer and blocked him everywhere, but he still didn't stop. Few days ago I saw his message on my Dad's number. Where from he got his number remains mystery".

While I am writing this piece, I can see her frustration reflected in her WhatsApp status which reads, "death, come quickly I'm waiting". This is just one case. I am sure thousands of girls are suffering due to online bullying silently. Menace of online bullying needs to be countered, for this our institutions should have privacy rules to prevent open access of the privacy contacts of students. Also universities should avoid uploading personal information on websites or creating unnecessary WhatsApp groups which may allow such bullying.

## Thej Kaad - A Unique Festivity

MUSHTAQ A HURRA

**V**illages are the factories which provide the rest of the country with cereals, pulses, vegetables and fruits. Villages are always the hub of agricultural and horticultural activities. They produce our favourite foods, fruits and vegetables. Thus, they play an important role in the progress and prosperity of our country. And paddy cultivation is an important agricultural activity in our country as well as in our valley. Interestingly, rice is the staple food of our country and the valley. These days, Kashmir valley is abuzz with paddy transplantation season. Our Villages are exhibiting a lot of hustle and bustle of men, women and children, in and around the paddy fields. And it must be so, because Haakh Te Batte ( Greens and Grains ) is synonymous to our self-reliance and affluence.

Local and non-local labourers are seen working in the paddy fields, in full swing. Power Tillers and tractors are producing high decibel sounds in the open fields, tilling the land for paddy sapling transplantation. Farmers are busy in preparing the land for sapling transplantation. Unlike yesteryears, farmers are seen leveling the land with hoes, spades and wooden rakes. The season is not lesser than a festivity in our part of globe. It is believed to be the season of blessings and auspiciousness. Thej Kaad( A group of people pulling out the saplings from the seedbed and transplanting it into the open prepared fields ) is organised to transplant the paddy saplings into the open prepared fields on a single day. The sight of Kaad mesmerizes the onlookers. It is an example of unity and togetherness. It would instill the spirit of brotherhood, mutual help and compassion in the villagers. It may be one of the reasons that villagers are comparatively kind and generous.

Some ten to fifteen years earlier, preparation of paddy land would start with the sowing of paddy seeds in seedbeds. There were no tractors and power tillers, then. Ox driven ploughs were used by farmers and agriculturists. The



ploughs were mostly made up of wood, but, some progressive agriculturalists had bought steel ploughs. Oxen were well fed before the onset of the season, to make them work properly. Bran, linseed oil-cakes and green fodder was served to the oxen. The oxen were trained and tamed by the agriculturists. They were commanded with some typical cautions by the men incharge of these ploughs and oxen. A long but thin and rigid stick, preferably from a mulberry tree was used by the ploughmen to command the oxen. Paddy fields would often resonate with the cautions of ploughmen during the whole day. At noon, the ploughmen would take meals. Two or three bundles of hay were served to the oxen. The land was tilled multiple times, leaving it soft and gel-like. Before any kind of tilling, cowdung and other manures were added to the soil in abundance, to increase its fertility. Chemical fertilizers were rarely used. The season would almost last for two and half months which included weeding ( Nende ). It would preferably start after the one month of transplanta-

tion.

After preparing the land fully, neighbors and relatives were invited to Kaad ( A special gathering of men and women to transplant the saplings, knotted in small bundles ). They would report early in the morning at the paddy farms. These men and women would never work silently. Special chorus songs were sung by these transplanters. A naat or dua was sung in the beginning of the day. Special supplications were recited for the safety and better yield of the crop. Sometimes, the owner of the farm land was ridiculed for being harsh to the workers or for inadequate or substandard cuisines. Tasty cuisines, preferably non-veg, were prepared at homes, and served at the fields and farms to these transplanters. Women would take the meals on their heads, in big wicker baskets. The meals served at the farms, were no less than a treat. It was almost a picnic like scenario. In the evening, songs of gratitude or complaints were sung by the transplanters.

It was followed by weeding, with a break of almost one month. Weeding was

done manually. Unlike today, there used to be no chemical weedicides then. Agriculturists and farmers would start their first weeding after 25 to 30 days of transplantation. It was followed by a second round of weeding, and in some cases, the third round of weeding was also carried out to help the paddy plants grow healthier. In August, when the crop would reach to panicle stage, the farmer would prepare a special meal called Baale Batte. Fish cuisine with rice was served to children at the paddy farms. A share of it was left for the rats, with the hope to get a bumper crop. And now, the tradition is no more in practice.

Now, we have progressed and prospered. Industrial revolution has vanished our ox driven ploughs. I vividly remember that my father would look for a strong wooden plank, preferably from a mulberry tree, for the base of the plough, in which the sharp iron blade was fitted. Some men from Kupwara district would sell the shaft poles and handles of the plough prior to the start of the spring, in our area. Beams which were mounted

on the oxen, were designed by the local carpenters. Now, even those oxen are nowhere seen in our villages though we still rare cows. Chemical fertilizers are added in abundance to our paddy lands which have degraded the quality of our soil. If the excessive usage of chemical fertilizers is not checked or at least minimised, the mother earth will refuse to produce the yield for us. Scientists believe that immoderate chemical fertilizers will leave the soil barren. No doubt, chemical weedicides check the growth of obnoxious weeds to a greater extent but these chemicals have invited other woes to us. The usage of chemical fertilizers and weedicides have drastically reduced the production of fish and other useful flora in our wetlands.

Leaving everything to machines and chemicals, we have become susceptible to different life style diseases and ailments. Our fathers and forefathers would spend most of their time in farming related activities. Thus, they were healthy, joyous and contented. They would hardly visit a hospital because their life styles were active. Now, we have become dependent on non-local labourers for our every necessity. It has become a double edged sword for us. It drains us economically, and makes us vulnerable to deadly diseases. Our young men and women are suffering from diabetes, hypertension, cardiac ailments, obesity and other lifestyle diseases. Here, I don't want my fellow people to abandon the technology but we should at least take part in our farming. It is not a matter of humiliation rather a matter of pride to be called farmers. It is our culture and heritage as well. Those nations and societies which neglect and ignore their culture and heritage, end up with no identification and existence. Thej Kaad and other related activities are part of our ancestral legacy, so, we should take every necessary step to preserve and safeguard it for our coming generations. Let us protect Kashmir and Kashmiriyat.

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# WEARING MASKS AT HOME

## May Reduce Covid-19 Spread By 79%: STUDY



**THIS PRACTICE WAS EFFECTIVE** at curbing transmission before symptoms emerged in the first person infected, but it wasn't protective once symptoms had developed, the study, published in the BMJ Global Health shows.

### Agencies

Chinese researchers have suggested that wearing face masks at home is 79 per cent effective at preventing COVID-19 spread among family members in the same household.

This practice was effective at curbing transmission before symptoms emerged in the first person infected, but it wasn't

protective once symptoms had developed, the study, published in the BMJ Global Health shows.

To explore whether face masks might make a difference, the researchers questioned 460 people from 124 families in Beijing, China, on their household hygiene and behaviours during the pandemic.

Each family had at least one laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 infection between late

February and late March 2020. Average family size was four but ranged from two to 9, and usually comprised three generations. Family members were defined as those who had lived with the infected person for four days before and more than 24 hours after that person's symptoms first appeared.

The researchers wanted to know what factors might heighten or lessen the risk of subsequently catching the virus within

the incubation period--14 days from the start of that person's symptoms. During this time, secondary transmission--spread from the first infected person to other family members--occurred in 41 out of the 124 families. A total of 77 adults and children were infected in this way, giving an 'attack rate' of 23 per cent or around one in four.

Around a third of the study, children caught the virus (36

per cent) compared with more than two-thirds of the adults (just over 69.5 per cent). Twelve of the children had mild symptoms; one had none. Most (83 per cent) of the adults had mild symptoms; in around one in 10, symptoms were severe, and one person became critically ill.

Daily use of disinfectants, window opening, and keeping at least one metre apart were associated with a lower risk of

passing on the virus, even in more crowded households. But daily contact and the number of family members wearing a face mask after the start of symptoms in the first person to develop them were associated with a heightened risk.

The findings showed that a face mask worn before symptoms started was 79 per cent effective, and disinfection 77 per cent effective, at stopping the virus from

being passed on.

The findings back universal face mask use, not just in public spaces, but also at home.

"This study confirms the highest risk of household transmission being prior to symptom onset, but that precautionary, such as mask use, disinfection and social distancing in households can prevent COVID-19 transmission during the pandemic," the authors wrote.

## 'Neurological Symptoms Of Coronavirus Infection Decoded'



### Press Trust Of India

The most common neurological complaints in COVID-19 are headache, loss of sense of smell and taste, stroke, impairment of consciousness, and seizure, according to a review of studies that may lead to improved clinical outcomes and better treatment protocol for coronavirus infection.

According to researchers from the Yale School of Medicine in the US, while the respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 are described, the neurological complications of infection with the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, is not well known.

The review research, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, noted the possible mechanism by which SARS-CoV-2 caused neurological symptoms by comparing it with similar coronaviruses MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV-1, which are known

to affect the central nervous system (CNS).

In the study, the scientists summarised available information regarding novel coronavirus infection of the nervous system, and identified the potential tissue targets and routes of entry of SARS-CoV-2 into the CNS.

Citing an earlier research, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, they said neurologic symptoms reported in 49 of the study's 58 patients, included confusion and brain damage or encephalopathy. Based on studies of MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV-1, the scientists said the novel coronavirus may enter the nervous system by several routes, including via transfer across the junctions of infected neurons, and via the olfactory nerves connecting the nose and the brain, involved in producing the sense of smell. The researchers believe the virus may also infect the CNS by spreading across the inner walls

of blood vessels throughout the body. They postulated that the virus may also reach parts of the brain by infecting immune cells called leukocyte which can cross the protective filter membrane called the blood-brain barrier. This "Trojan horse" mechanism of infecting the brain is seen in HIV, the scientists said.

According to the study, the most common neurologic complaints in COVID-19 are the loss of sense of smell and taste (anosmia and ageusia), headache, stroke, impairment of consciousness, seizure, and brain damage.

However, the scientists said further studies involving brain scans and testing of CNS tissue will be crucial to understanding the biological process of the disease in the nervous system.

"Early detection of neurological deficits may lead to improved clinical outcomes and better treatment algorithms," the scientists wrote in the study.

## Light Physical Activities Can Help Improve Mental Health

### Agencies

WASHINGTON D.C.- Given the negative health effects of prolonged sedentary time, the findings of a recent study may encourage people to make small changes that are sustainable for mental health. The study has pointed out a link between light physical activities and lower stress, better mood, and lower body mass index (BMI).

The new research was published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Jacob Meyer, lead author and assistant professor of kinesiology at Iowa State University, said light activity can include walking around your home office while talking on the phone or standing while preparing dinner.

"People may not even think

about some of these activities as physical activity. Light activity is much lower intensity than going to the gym or walking to work, but taking these steps to break up long periods of sitting may have an impact," Meyer said.

Meyer and colleagues used data collected as part of the Energy Balance Study at the University of South Carolina.

For 10 days, study participants, ranging in age from 21 to 35, wore an armband that tracked their energy expenditure. Meyer, director of the Wellbeing and Exercise Lab at Iowa State, said the data allowed researchers to objectively measure sleep, physical activity and sedentary time, rather than relying on self-reports.

In addition to the benefits of sleep and light physical activity,



the researchers found moderate to vigorous activity was associated with lower body fat and BMI. Given the negative health effects of prolonged sedentary time, Meyer says the findings may

encourage people to make small changes that are sustainable.

"It may be easier for people to change their behaviour if they feel it's doable and doesn't require a major change. Replacing sedentary time with housework or other light activities is something they may be able to do more consistently than going for an hour-long run," Meyer said.

Getting more sleep is another relatively simple change to make. Instead of staying up late watching TV, going to bed earlier and getting up at a consistent time provides multiple benefits and allows your body to recover, Meyer said. Sleeping is also unique in that it is time you're not engaging in other potentially problematic behaviours, such as eating junk food while sitting in front of a screen.

## 40 Million Children Aged 13 To 15 Years Using Tobacco Products Globally: WHO

### Press Trust Of India

United Nations- The tobacco industry invests \$9 billion every year to advertise its products targeting youngsters, with over 40 million children aged 13 to 15 years presently using nicotine items globally, the World Health Organization has warned.

"More than 40 million young people today aged 13-15, have already started to use tobacco," the WHO said, as it launched a kit for school students aged 13-17 to alert them about the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. "Every year the tobacco industry invests more than \$9 billion to advertise its products. Increasingly, it is targeting young people with nicotine and tobacco products in a bid to replace the 8 million people that its products kill every year," the agency said.

Even during a global pandemic, the tobacco and nicotine industry is pushing its products, the WHO said, adding that these addictive substances limit peo-

ple's ability to fight coronavirus.

"Educating the youth is vital because nearly nine out of 10 smokers start before 18 years. We want to provide young people with the knowledge to speak out against tobacco industry manipulation," said Director for Health Promotion at WHO Ruediger Krech.

Among 13 to 17-year-olds, the agency has highlighted commonly used tactics to watch out for.

It points out that smoking e-cigarettes and hookah pipes -- marketed as "safer" alternatives to conventional cigarettes -- is harmful, addictive, and increasing the risk of developing heart and lung disease.

The WHO also noted that the 15,000-odd flavours of tobacco items which are sold -- such as bubble-gum and candy -- are introduced in the market to attract youngsters who are likely to become serious nicotine-users later in life.

## 'Laughing Gas', Nitrous Oxide Is Useful, Safe Option For Women In Labour, Newborns

### Agencies

The use of nitrous oxide (N2O) as a pain relief option for individuals in labour is safe for newborn children and the individual, according to a recent study.

The research led by the University of Colorado College of Nursing and the School of Medicine Department of Anesthesiology at the Anschutz Medical Campus was published in the Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health.

The study surveyed 463 women, who used nitrous oxide during labour. The study is the largest and first of its kind in the United States to report rates of side effects from N2O use during labour, as well as reasons for women in labour after caesarean to convert to other forms of pain relief.

Of the women, who began using N2O as an initial pain relief



technique, 31 per cent used only N2O throughout labour and 69 per cent transitioned to another pain relief method such as epidural and/or opioids.

"Nitrous oxide is a useful, safe option for labour analgesia in the United States. And for some labouring mothers, that's all the pain relief they need. Understanding predictors of conversion from inhaled nitrous oxide to other forms of analgesia may assist providers in their discussions with women about pain relief options during labour," said lead author and Associate Professor with the University of Colorado College of Nursing Priscilla M. Nodine, PhD, CNM.



## Imran Defends Lifting Lockdown, Urges Pak To "Live With The Virus"

### Agencies

Islamabad: Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday cited economic losses to justify his government's decision to lift a coronavirus lockdown despite rising infections and deaths, urging people to



**Our conditions don't allow that we keep feeding money to them, how long we can give them money**

"Live with the virus."

Pakistan has rolled back almost all shutdown measures, primarily to avert an economic meltdown. The country would open to tourism but cinemas, theatres and schools remain closed.

The nation of 220 million has reported 72,160 novel coronavirus cases and 1,543 deaths, which jumped lately to as high

as 80 a day.

Its economic losses included a decline in exports, a 30% shortfall in revenues and remittances were expected to fall in coming months, Mr Khan said. With the fiscal deficit likely to rise as high as 9.4% and the revenue shortfall, Pakistan is facing a balance of payment crisis.

The country couldn't afford to match the losses incurred during the lockdown as many other countries had done, Mr Khan said in a televised address.

He cited 50 million people who live below the poverty line and 25 million daily wagers.

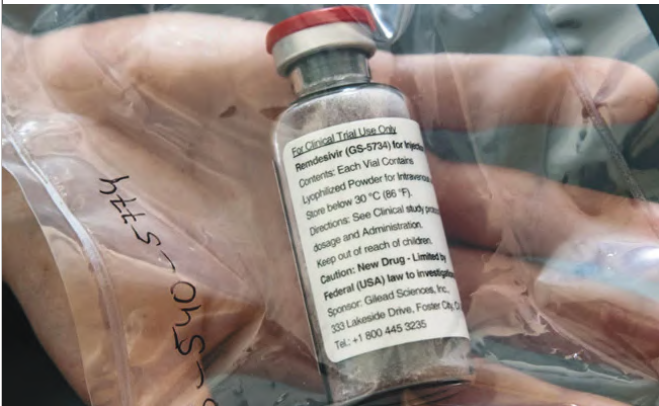
Imran Khan said his government gave cash handouts to the poor, which wasn't possible to continue on such a large scale, adding around 130 million to 150 million people were adversely affected by the shutdowns.

"Our conditions don't allow that we keep feeding money to them, how long we can give them money," Imran Khan said.

He urged people to act responsibly but more infections and deaths were inevitable.

"This virus will spread more. I have to say it with regret that there will be more deaths," Mr Khan said. "If people do take care they can live with the virus."

## India Approves Emergency Use Of Remdesivir To Treat COVID-19 Patients



### Agencies

Bengaluru: The government said on Tuesday it has approved Gilead Sciences Inc's antiviral drug remdesivir for emergency use in treating COVID-19 patients.

Remdesivir is the first drug to show improvement in COVID-19 patients in formal clinical trials. It was granted emergency use authorization by the US Food and Drug Administration last month and has received approval by Japanese health regulators.

"(Remdesivir) approved on June 1 under emergency use with condition for five dose administration," the Drugs Controller General said in an email statement.

The drugmaker did not immediately respond to an email seeking further details.

As of Tuesday, India has 198,706 cases of coronavirus and has recorded 5,598 deaths, health ministry data showed <https://www.mohfw.gov.in>.

Gilead Sciences had on Monday reported that remdesivir showed modest benefit in patients with moderate COVID-19 given a five-day course, while those who received it for 10 days in the study did not fare as well.

European and South Korean authorities are also looking at remdesivir, with South Korean health authorities last Friday saying they would request imports of the drug. Gilead is yet to gain regulatory approval in either market.



## "Acts Of Domestic Terror" Trump Orders Military Deployment In Washington

### Agencies

Washington, United States: US President Donald Trump on Monday said he was deploying thousands of "heavily armed" soldiers and police to prevent further protests in Washington, where buildings and monuments have been vandalized near the White House.

"What happened in the city last night was a total disgrace," he said during a nationwide address as tear gas went off and crowds protested in the streets nearby.

"I am dispatching thousands and thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel and law enforcement officers to stop the rioting, looting, vandalism, assaults and the wanton destruction of property."

He denounced "acts of domestic terror" after nationwide protests against the death

of an unarmed African American George Floyd in police custody devolved into days of violent race riots across the country.

"I want the organizers of this terror to be on notice that you will face severe criminal penalties and a lengthy sentences in jail," Trump said as police could be heard using tear gas and stun grenades to clear protestors just outside the White House.

Law enforcement personnel dressed in riot gear used tear gas to disperse protestors near the White House as a curfew neared in the nation's capital.

He also called on state governors to "deploy the National Guard in sufficient numbers that we dominate the streets" before heading on foot for a photo op at the riot-damaged St. John's, the two-century-old "church of the presidents"

across from the White House.

One week after Floyd died in Minneapolis, an autopsy blamed his videotaped death squarely on a white police officer who pinned him down by the neck with his knee for nearly nine minutes as Floyd pleaded, "I can't breathe!"

"The evidence is consistent with mechanical asphyxia as the cause of death, and homicide as the manner of death," Alecia Wilson, a University of Michigan expert who examined his body at the family's request, told a news conference.

The unrest has been the most widespread in the United States since 1968, when cities went up in flames over the slaying of civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr., and rekindled memories of 1992 riots in Los Angeles after police were acquitted in the brutal beating of black motorist Rodney King.

## New York Under Curfew As Looters Hit Luxury Stores

### Agencies

New York: New York was under a curfew that would last until early Tuesday morning, officials said, after looters raided stores in central Manhattan, targeting some of the city's top retailers.

Upmarket fashion store Michael Kors on Fifth Avenue was among the luxury outlets hit, along with Nike, Lego and electronics shops across Midtown, before the 11:00 pm to 5:00 am curfew came into effect, AFP journalists said.

Groups of young people moved from block to block around the district, usually bustling with tourists but deserted due to the coronavirus, with entire streets blocked by police.

Images from local NY1 television showed some young people running out of a Best

Buy electronics store before being arrested by the police.

Stores in the south of Manhattan suffered a similar fate, according to an AFP photographer.

The New York Times reported that the flagship Macy's department store had also been targeted by looters.

Police did not immediately confirm this, simply saying that "numerous stores were hit" and arrests made "in the hundreds" across the city.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said a lot of stores around Madison Avenue had been hit and the situation was "really not acceptable."

As a result he said the curfew would start from 8:00 pm on Tuesday instead of 11:00 pm.

"The city is fully under control, and overwhelmingly calm and peaceful," he nevertheless insisted on NY1.

### "Time to go home"

The imposition of the curfew had been announced a few hours earlier by the mayor and New York state governor Andrew Cuomo after protests and looting during the weekend -- notably in the trendy SoHo district.

The mayor tweeted late Monday that "protesters were overwhelmingly peaceful today" but that some people were out to damage property and steal.

"We support peaceful protest in this city. But right now it's time to go home," de Blasio said.

"Some people are out tonight not to protest but to destroy property and hurt others -- and those people are being arrested. Their actions are unacceptable and we won't allow them in our city."

## 'Saudi, Israel in secret talks through US mediation over al-Aqsa Mosque'

### Agencies

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and the Israeli regime have reportedly been conducting clandestine talks over the past few months through American mediation about the inclusion of the kingdom's representatives in the Islamic Waqf (Endowment) Council -- a religious body that oversees the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of Jerusalem al-Quds.

Top anonymous Saudi diplomats told Hebrew-language daily Israel Hayom that Riyadh and Tel Aviv have been engaged in the discussions since last December, and a lim-

The so-called peace plan envisions Jerusalem al-Quds as "Israel's undivided capital" and allows the Tel Aviv regime to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank and the Jordan Valley. The plan also denies Palestinian refugees the right of return to their homeland, among other controversial terms.

Trump's plan has triggered waves of protest rallies around the globe.

According to a senior Saudi diplomat, Jordanians -- who have a special and exclusive status in managing the Islamic Waqf Council -- first adamantly objected to any change



ited negotiating team of senior diplomats and security officials from Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United States has been involved in the matter.

The diplomats further noted that the talks are part of the contacts to advance the controversial plan laid out by US President Donald Trump on the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, dubbed 'the deal of century.'

in the council's composition, but later softened their position to allow Saudi presence.

The report came only a day after dozens of extremist Israeli settlers stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound under the protection of regime forces, only a few hours after the sacred site was reopened following more than two months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Football Pitch Of Rainforest Destroyed Every Six Seconds, Says Study

### Agencies

Paris: Vast tracts of pristine rainforest on three continents went up in smoke last year, with an area roughly the size of Switzerland cut down or burned to make way for cattle and commercial crops, researchers said Tuesday.

Brazil accounted for more than a third of the loss, with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia a distant second and third, Global Forest Watch said in its annual report, based on satellite data.

The 38,000 square kilometres destroyed in 2019 -- equivalent to a football pitch of old-growth trees every six seconds -- made it the third most devastating year for primary forests since the scientists began tracking their decline two decades ago.

"We are concerned that the rate of loss is so high despite all the efforts of different countries and companies to reduce deforestation," lead researcher Mikaela Weisse, Global Forest Watch project manager at the World Resources Institute (WRI), told AFP.

The total area of tropi-

cal forest levelled by fire and bulldozers worldwide last year was in fact three times higher -- but virgin rainforests, as they were once known, are especially precious.

Undisturbed by modern development, they harbour the richest diversity of wildlife on Earth, and keep huge stores of carbon locked in their woody mass. When set ablaze, that carbon escapes into the atmosphere as planet-warming CO2.

"It will take decades or even centuries for these forests to get back to their original state" -- assuming, of course, that the land they once covered is left undisturbed, Weisse said.

The forest fires that engulfed parts of Brazil last year made front-page news as the climate crisis loomed large in the public eye.

But they were not the main cause of Brazil's loss of primary forest, the data showed.

Satellite images revealed many new "hot spots" of forest destruction. In the state of Para, for example, these fire-ravaged zones corresponded to reports of illegal land-grabs inside the Trincheira/Bacaja indigenous reserve.

## New Female Billionaire Emerges From Expensive Divorce In Asia

A new female billionaire has emerged from one of Asia's most-expensive breakups.

Du Weimin, the chairman of Shenzhen Kangtai Biological Products Co., transferred 161.3 million shares of the vaccine maker to his ex-wife, Yuan Liping, according to a May 29 filing, immediately catapulting her into the ranks of the world's richest.

The stock was worth \$3.2 billion as of Monday's close.

Yuan, 49 this year, owns the shares directly, but signed an agreement delegating the voting rights to her ex-husband, the filing shows. The Canadian citizen, who resides in Shenzhen, served as a director of Kangtai between May 2011



and August 2018. She's now the vice general manager of subsidiary Beijing Minhai Biotechnology Co. Yuan holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Beijing's University of International Business and Economics.

Kangtai shares have more than doubled in the past year and have continued their ascent since February, when the company announced a plan to develop a vaccine to fight the coronavirus. They slipped for a second day Tuesday follow-

ing news of the divorce terms, losing 3.1% as of 9:43 a.m. in Hong Kong and bringing the company's market value to \$12.9 billion.

Du's net worth has now dropped to about \$3.1 billion from \$6.5 billion before the split, excluding his pledged shares.

The 56-year-old was born into a farming family in China's Jiangxi province. After studying chemistry in college, he began working in a clinic in 1987 and became a sales manager for a biotech company in 1995, according to the prospectus of Kangtai's 2017 initial public offering. In 2009, Kangtai acquired Minhai, the company Du founded in 2004, and he became the chairman of the combined entity.

## Romanian Cobbler Keeps People Apart With Size 75 Shoes

CLUJ, Romania/BUCHAREST: Soon after a two-month lockdown to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus eased in Romania in mid-May, Grigore Lup, a Romanian shoemaker from the Transylvanian city of Cluj, noticed people were not respecting the rules of social distancing.

So Lup came up with the idea of long-nosed leather shoes to help keep people apart. They come in a European size 75.

"You can see it on the street, people are not respecting social distancing rules," said Lup, who has been making leather shoes for 39 years.

"I went to the market to buy seedlings for my garden. There weren't many people there but they kept getting closer and closer."

"If two people wearing these shoes were facing each other, there would be almost one-and-a-half metres between them."



While he also sells ready-made shoes, Lup's shop, which he opened in 2001, relies heavily on custom orders from theatres and opera houses across the country, as well as traditional folk dance ensembles.

His business ground to a virtual standstill as live events were cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, but he was cautiously optimistic that sales would recover over time.

## Woman steals baby, gets caught after distributing cake

Lucknow: After the doctors informed Seema Shukla that she would not be able to conceive a child, the woman stole a newborn from the Queen Mary's Hospital here and has now landed in jail with her husband.

It was a cake that she had distributed among her neighbours to celebrate the baby's arrival that led to her arrest.

The incident took place on May 24 when Seema stole a 12-day-old child from the hospital.

Her husband, who sells snacks near the Queen Mary's Hospital had informed his wife about the child.

The child's father Jagdish Pihani had lodged an FIR at the Chowk police station of his baby going missing from the hospital. Jagdish's wife Mamta had given birth to a child through C-section on May 13 but had to undergo another surgical procedure on May 24.



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