





# Former J&K DGP Vaid Favours VDC Creation In Valley

## Says Hindus, Vulnerable Muslims Must Be Armed, Trained

Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** Former Jammu and Kashmir police Chief Shesh Paul Vaid has advocated arming minority Hindus and vulnerable sections of the Muslim community besides creating Village Defence Committees (VDCs) in Kashmir

Valley to tackle militancy, India Today reported Saturday. The former DGP, the report said that that all options must be explored for instilling a sense of security among the minority community of Kashmiri Hindus in Valley. Vulnerable Muslim community members, he said

should also be given arms and training to protect themselves from the militant attacks. “There is no harm in giving arms training and providing weapons to the minority Hindu community as well as to the vulnerable section of the Muslims in the Kashmir valley,” the former DGP said.

Vaid recalled how he as the SSP of Udhampur in 1995 was instrumental in forming the first VDC in militancy infested Bagankote village which was part of Udhampur district at that time. The village is now part of Reasi district carved out of Udhampur in 2007.

“Later VDCs were formed through a formal J&K government order in Chenab valley region of Jammu division where Hindus are in minority,” he said. He alleged that after the migration of Kashmiri Pandits from Valley, militants started targeting the minority Hindus and carried their massacre in Chenab

region of Jammu province. “But soon VDCs were constituted and people were given arms training. Muslims were also made part of the VDCs as they also faced militant attacks. This formula proved to be very successful and the mass exodus of Hindus was prevented,” he

said, while advocating creation of VDCs in Kashmir as well. “Village Defence Committees (VDCs) can be constituted in the Valley. However, this formula requires detailed planning. Forming VDCs in the Kashmir Valley is difficult, but not impossible,” he added.

## Two Gurez Youth Held In Pak Kashmir For ‘Spying’

Press Trust Of India

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistani security forces have arrested two “Indian spies” from an area along the Line of Control in Gilgit-Baltistan and the duo has been handed over to the police, a media report said on Saturday. According to the report in the Dawn newspaper, Indian currency notes, identity cards, and other documents were seized from the alleged spies. They were handed over to police on Friday and Gilgit senior superintendent of police (SSP)

Raja Mirza Hassan produced the alleged spies before the media at a press conference, it said. Hassan said the two arrested persons belonged to Kashmir and had been forcibly sent to Pakistan for “spying”. They were arrested soon after they crossed the LoC in Gilgit-Baltistan. The detained “Indian spies” introduced themselves as Noor Mohammad Wani and Feroze Ahmed Lone, residents of Gurez’sAchora village in Bandipora district in Kashmir, the report said.

## No Covid-19 Case Reported From Forward Areas In J&K, Ladakh: Army

**JAMMU-** Asserting that no COVID-19 case has been reported from any forward areas in the twin Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the Army on Saturday said the northern command has advocated best practices to be followed by its personnel including quarantining the troops returning from leave and temporary duties. It said the northern command has also been working tirelessly in conjunction with civil administration and medical authorities to fight the pandemic as well as to bring the much-needed succour to the people during the present crisis as part of Operation Namaste .

No COVID-19 case has been reported from our forward areas including Leh, where our troops stand strong. The protocols adopted by Army have ensured that no other soldier has come in contact with COVID patients and they are being treated at Command Hospital, Northern Command, Udhampur-based Public Relations Officer (Defence) Lt Col AbhinavNavneet said. He said individuals are being screened and tested again meticulously to ensure a COVID-free environment in forward areas. The northern command is fully poised to carry out its operational tasks as well as

to aid civil administration in whatever manner required, the spokesperson said. Lt Col Navneet said the northern command has advocated best ‘anti-corona practices’ to be followed by army personnel including various sanitization drills, self-isolation measures, post-infection care and prescribed measures including quarantining the troops returning from leave and temporary duties. After medical screening, the troops are being quarantined for the stipulated period, tests are being carried out and thereafter the troops are dispatched to their locations, he said. Terming exemplary the effort

of the Army to combat the coronavirus in J&K and Ladakh, the PRO said the northern command is maintaining daily contact and liaison with civil administration to control the pandemic. It has opened a COVID-19 hospital facility at Old Air Field, Srinagar, testing facility at Command Hospital, Udhampur, number of Quick Reaction Medical Teams (QRMTs) to assist civil medical authorities in emergency situations and also stand-by columns for providing aid to civil administration in case of any deteriorating law and order situation as carried out by few anti-social elements in other parts of India, he said.

Lt Col Navneet said COVID Command Control Rooms have also been established in all headquarters and 24x7 helpline numbers shared with civil administration. Indian Army has a dual task during the pandemic – to assist the people as well to keep the troops physically and mentally fit for their primary role, he said. As part of ‘Op NAMASTE’, army units are organizing awareness drives on COVID-19, display and broadcast of advisories, telemedicine facility, online education initiatives, distribution of safety kits to include face masks, hand sanitisers, protective glove and disinfectant to the locals.

## Files Are Waiting,...

According to Justice (retd) Sunil Hali, the former SCDRC president, there were around 2,500 pending cases when the commission was closed last October. “Where are the people supposed to go now, when faced with issues?” Justice Hali told Kashmir Observer. Established at the State level, SCDRC was presided by a retired judge of the High Court, while two divisional consumer fora were set up in Jammu and Kashmir divisions, headed by in-service district and session Judges. After closing the SCDRC commission, the case files were handed to FCCD. The retired justice explained that for currency cases, the losing party had to give money to the winning party which was submitted to the court and after that, the fund was released by the court to the respective party. “Since eight months now,” Justice Hali said, “many people’s money is stuck as the commission got closed.” But soon after the implementation of J&K Reorganization Act, 2019, Consumer Protection Act (CPA) 1986 was made applicable in the former state on October 31, 2019. Under the CPA 1986, a new notification was required to be issued by the government to set up SCDRC, Justice Hali continued. “But the government has not issued any such notification yet,” the retired judge informed. However, a notification was issued by the Central government on October 31, 2019, stating that people who were holding appointments under the old Act were deemed to be constituted under the new Act, Hali said. “Though they’ve preserved the jobs, but the commission is yet to set up.” Ball in Court Now Today, the case to revive the SCDRC is being heard by the J&K High Court. As of January 2020, the High Court sought information about the draft rules made by the Government of India for the functioning and reconstitution of the SCDRC from the J&K Department of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution. “But nothing has happened till now,” advocate Sami Yaqoob, a chief litigator in a law firm, told Kashmir Observer. “The government is seeking more time.” Some draft rules have been framed by the central government but the commission cannot be set up until the government finalizes their rules, stressed Yaqoob. The proceedings under the CPA are time-bound and the matter is decided in three-six months, said the advocate. Already in J&K, he said, some cases are pending for the last 15-20 years. There’re many reasons for this delay, Yaqoob said, one being lack of infrastructure. “But many times the delay simply happened, as no one was there to preside over the cases,” the advocate said. “At times there was an acute shortage of staff, and sometimes there was no judge.” However, wounding up the commission which already has so many delayed cases would only add to the despair of people, he said. But not everything is lost, the advocate added. A positive change, he said, might occur if the commission is set up. “One good thing is that, unlike the Central Act where along with the President there would be four members, the J&K CPA only comprised of a President and two members,” Yaqoob said. “Another positive side of the Centre’s CPA is that amendments were made in the Act that allowed the State Commission and Forum to pass interim orders unlike the State Act,” explained the advocate. Still No Solution in Sight On being asked about the solution until the commission is set up, Yaqoob told Kashmir Observer that there’s no solution other than setting up a commission immediately. “Infrastructure in terms of hardware already exists,” he said, adding, “all they have to do is appoint a judge and members to start the commission.” The clients are in the lurch and they’re just waiting for the commission to set up, opined Yaqoob. He stressed that it would not take more than a month to set up the commission if the government is interested. But as the commission remains elusive till date, people like Mohammad Amin, the appellant from Rajbagh, are today feeling a big letdown. “All these years, I was on my toes fighting the case in the dissolved consumer commission with a hope to win it one day,” Amid said. “But it seems the abrogation has done more damage to us, than what we thought it would. The sense of disempowerment through deinstitutionalisation was never so obvious, as it is now.”

## Everything Under Control ...

disengage in a phased manner and the process has started from the north. “Both sides are disengaging in a phased manner. We have started from the north, from the area of the Galwan river where a lot of disengagement has taken place. It has been a very fruitful dialogue that we have had. And as I said it will go on and the situation will improve as we go on,” he said. Replying to a question on Nepal, which has revised its map showing Lipulekh as Nepalese territory, he said India has always had

strong ties with Nepal and they will remain strong in future. “We have a very strong relationship with Nepal. We have geographical, cultural, historical, religious linkages. We have very strong people-to-people connect. Our relation with them has always been strong and will remain strong in the future.”

## ‘People Fed Up With...

IMA’s passing out parade which he addressed as the reviewing officer. “All this has been because of the close cooperation and coordination between all the state forces operating in Jammu and Kashmir,” he said. He said a majority of the recent anti-militancy operations were based on information provided by locals which is an indication that they are fed up with militancy and want normalcy to return to the valley. “Most operations have been carried out on the basis of information provided by locals which goes to show they are also absolutely fed up with militancy and want that the situation should return to normal,” Naravane said.

## Nepal Parliament Approves

by 258 out of 275 members of parliament, exceeding the required two-thirds majority. There were no votes against. The map must also be passed by the National Assembly, the parliament’s upper chamber, and approved by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari before it becomes a part of the constitution. Prachanda, a former prime minister and chief of the ruling Nepal Communist Party, said Nepal did not want to complicate the matter and seeks a peaceful settlement. “We want to resolve the issue with India through peaceful talks at the political and diplomatic levels,” Prachanda, the former Maoist chief, who still goes by his war nom de guerre, said in parliament on Saturday.

## It's Untenable, Says India...

on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable. It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues,” MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said.

## PM Reviews Covid-19 ...

Saturday morning, India’s COVID-19 tally breached the three-lakh mark with a record single-day spike of 11,458 infections, while the death toll rose to 8,884 with 386 new fatalities. “The present and emerging scenario of the COVID-19 disease in the capital” was also discussed and the projections for next two months was deliberated, the statement said. Modi suggested that the home minister and the health minister should convene an emergency meeting with the Lt Governor and the chief minister of Delhi, along with senior officials of the central and the NCT governments as also officials of municipal corporations of Delhi, to plan a “coordinated and comprehensive response” to the pandemic. The meets suggested by the prime minister are taking place on Sunday. The meeting was attended by Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Principal Secretary to PM P.K. Mishra, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba, the health secretary, the ICMR DG and representatives of various empowered groups. Member of NITI Aayog and convener of the empowered group of medical emergency management plan Vinod Paul made a detailed presentation on the current status and likely scenario of COVID-19 cases in the medium term. “It was observed that out of the total cases two-thirds are in five states with an overwhelming proportion of cases in big cities,” the statement said. The prime minister took cognisance of the recommendations of the empowered group on city and district-wise requirements of hospital beds and isolation beds. He instructed the health ministry officials to undertake emergency planning in consultation with various states and union territories. He also advised the ministry to ensure suitable preparations in view of the start of the monsoon season. It was noted and appreciated in the meeting that there have been many instances of outstanding work done by several states, districts and cities in containing and controlling the outbreak successfully. These success stories and best practices should be widely disseminated to provide inspiration and innovative ideas to others. On June 16 and 17, the prime minister will hold virtual meets with chief ministers and union territory representatives against the backdrop of rising number of coronavirus cases in the country. Under ‘Unlock 1.0’ several relaxations have been made for public and businesses to ensure that economic activities hit by the lockdown gather momentum. For the virtual meet, the states have been divided into two groups. Representatives of 21 states and union territories, including Punjab and some northeastern states, will hold interaction with the prime minister on June 16. The rest 15, including West Bengal, Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka, where the coronavirus cases are on a much higher side, will interact with Modi on June 17.

This would be the prime minister’s sixth round of consultation with the chief ministers, the last being on May 11. Home Minister Amit Shah spoke with all the chief ministers over telephone in the last week of May, just before lockdown-4 was to end.

## Two Militants Killed ...

is being ascertained,” the police spokesperson said. He said that incriminating material, including arms and ammunition were recovered from the site of encounter that was carried out ‘professionally with any collateral damage’. “All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes,” the police spokesperson said. “In this connection a case under relevant sections of law stands registered in Police Station Qazigund and investigation has been initiated,” he added. The police spokesperson also urged people not to venture around encounter spot till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any. Today’s encounter comes four days after state forces killed five militants, including Hizbul Mujahideen district commander in an encounter in Sugoo area of Shopian district on Wednesday.

## Militants Give Slip To Forces

gunfights in south Kashmir’s Shopian and Pulwama district. According to the reports, unknown militants opened fire upon a joint team of police, army and paramilitary CRPF when they were laying a cordon around Turkwangam village of the district on Saturday afternoon. The joint team returned the fire triggering off an encounter. Amid the exchange of fire, the militants, believed to be two, managed to flee from the village, reports said. After the guns fell silent, reports said state forces carried out door-to-door searches to nab the militants. Earlier, militants and government forces traded fire in Tral area of Pulwama district. In the brief gunfight that broke out in Gulab Bagh area of Tral, militants managed to escape from the state forces, local news agency KNT reported.

## IED Attack On Convoys ...

gas cylinder along the roadside at Lawdara crossing near Nadihal on Bandipora-Srinagar highway, a police spokesperson said. The area, he said was immediately sealed by joint forces and the traffic movement stopped. “Bomb disposal squads of Police, Army and CRPF were pressed into action to diffuse the IED, who successfully diffused and destroyed it on spot without any damage,” the police spokesperson said. He said that the preliminary investigation has revealed that the IED was planted to target the state forces convoys passing through the area, which was successfully thwarted by the joint efforts of government forces. “Case FIR No. 61/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Bandipora and investigation initiated,” the police spokesperson added.

## Srinagar Markets Reopen...

country-wide lockdown on the evening of March 24, the Union Territory administration on March 22 had declared a lockdown across Jammu and Kashmir till March 31. Restrictions were imposed in many parts of the valley on March 19 to contain the spread of the virus. The measures were taken after the first case of coronavirus was detected in the valley.

## Retired Doctor Among 4 Die

next day,” the officials said. “He had bilateral pneumonia and died today morning. Later, the result of the sample returned positive for the Covid-19,” they added. A 75-year-old man from north Kashmir’s Baramulla became the third fatality of the day. The man from Kanthbagh area died at the SKIMS hospital on Saturday afternoon. “He had underlying disease such as KCO, COPD, HTN andT2DM,” Professor Farooq Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS said. The fourth death due to Covid-19 was reported from SKIMS Bemina. The 60-year-old man from Nowgam Srinagar who was admitted as asymptomatic Covid-19 on June 5 having underlying Diabetes, Hypertension and CKD suddenly became breathless at 8.00 pm today and developed unconsciousness, Principal SKIMS Bemina, Dr Riyaz Untoo said. The elderly was shifted to ICU where he had hypotension, Dr Untoo said. “Resuscitation was tried as per protocol but the patient could not be revived and was declared dead.” He said that the patient was expected to be discharged on Sunday as his sample was taken today for testing prior to discharge. With the four fatalities, the death toll due to the pathogen has risen in Jammu and Kashmir to 57– 51 in Valley and 6 in Jammu division.

So far Srinagar district with 14 deaths has the highest fatalities, followed by Baramulla 11 , Kulgam eight, Anantnag six, five in Shopian, Kupwara and Jammu three each, two each in Pulwama and Budgam while one death each has been reported from Bandipora, Doda, Udhampur and Rajouri. (with GNS inputs)

## 22 CRPF Men Among 148...

These included at least 22 CRPF personnel from Kulgam district of south Kashmir and 35 people who had returned to the Union territory recently, they said. Kulgam district has the highest caseload at 45, followed by Shopian with 15 instances of the infection, the officials said, adding that only Reasi and Kishtwar reported no fresh case. Among the total cases, 3,743 are in Kashmir, while 1,135 are in Jammu region,” an official said. With 2,269 cured of the disease, the number of active cases stood at 2,554 of which 1,813 were in Kashmir and 741 in Jammu, officials said, adding the union territory has so far witnessed 55 coronavirus-related deaths.”

## Army Officer Slips To Death

rescued by his team, administered first aid and evacuated to 92 Base Hospital here. He succumbed to severe injuries at the hospital. Paneru, a native of Padampur village of Dhari tehsil in Uttarakhand’sNainital district, had joined the Army in 2002. He is survived by his wife, son, and daughter. Paneru was a mountaineer, the spokesperson said, adding that he had guided a unit expedition team to summit the revered “Om Parvat” in Uttarakhand’sPithoragarh district. The mortal remains of Paneru were sent to his native place, where he would be laid to rest with full military honours, the spokesperson said.

## Another Shopian Youth...

and apprehended, along with his truck bearing a J&K registration number, from Dhoabrbridge, Pathankot, on Amritsar-Jammu Highway by the Pathankot police, as he was trying to escape to the Valley on learning about the arrest of his accomplices, said Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta. Javed hails from the same village as the other two accused, and is their childhood friend. The trio had been doing transport business together for the past over two-three years, and had been making trips to Delhi, Amritsar and Jalandhar. Brother of a J&K Home Guard jawan, Arif Ahmed Bhat, Javed himself was selected by the unit in 2012 but he had left the job subsequently. Initial questioning of Javed revealed that he had come with other LeT operatives Aamir and Wasim from the Kashmir Valley to Amritsar to collect an “arms weapons consignment” on the pretext of bringing fruits and vegetables. They came in two trucks and, after picking up the consignment from near Vallah Road, on June 11, Aamir and Wasim, on directions of their handler Ishfaq Ahmed Dar alias Bashir Ahmed Khan of LeT, had asked Javed to stay behind in Amritsar to contact the arms supplier. Further investigation is on to identify further links and accomplices of the three men in Punjab and J&K, said the DGP in a statement here. He pointed out that these arrests indicated a widespread network backed by Pakistan-based militants. The Punjab police on Thursday had arrested Aamir and Wasim and claimed to have foiled a major attempt to smuggle weapons to the Valley for carrying out militant attacks. Ten hand grenades, along with one AK-47 rifle with two magazines and 60 live cartridges, were seized from them, police had said

## Mattu To Face Floor Test ...

motion to unseat Mattu from coveted position in the civic body. This is the second time in last six months that a no confidence motion has been submitted against Mattu. In December last year, he had survived a similar attempt by BJP to remove him from the position. Interestingly, National Conference and Congress have claimed that they are not part of no-confidence motion submitted against Mattu. While Congress has 16 elected corporators in the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, 11 corporators had joined NC in May 2019 after winning election as independent candidates in 2018—(KNO)

## Man Found Dead In ...

police have registered a case under the relevant act and started further investigations.

## Teacher Suspended For ...

suspending the teacher identified as Imtiyaz Ahmed Khan of Gondhipora, Budgam. Sub-Divisional Magistrate has been appointed inquiry officer and asked to submit his report for further action.







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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja  
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Editorial: (0194) 2502327  
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

### NO HOLDS BARRED



**The teaching community of the J&K has always been in the fore front for the betterment of the society in each and every possible manner. It has never shown any negative approach towards any assignment or hectic job for which it is often asked for.**

# Why Colonial Statues Are Going Down

MICK O'REILLY  
Gulf News

Some years ago, in a large open square in the eastern Ukraine city of Donetsk, I watched ageing Communists gather under the shadows of a very polished granite plinth where, some 30 metres above, Vladimir Lenin stood for decades.

As these geriatric Bolsheviks peddled dog-eared copies of Pravda along with their dogma, the ground around them had changed unrecognisably.

The Soviet Union was gone, the Cold War lost, Communism discredited and their region of Ukraine itself then as now divided between those looking to the Kremlin or Kiev.

I mused then, under the bronze-fixed gaze of Lenin, those ageing apparatchiks were some days the statue, some days the pigeon.

Some of these statues now going have stood for centuries, yet it has taken just eight minutes and 46 seconds — the length of time an unemployed black man lay dying under the knee of a police officer in Minnesota — for time to change. George Floyd is not just making history, the movement in his name is changing history.

History might be written by the victors, it is rightly by the vanquished. And that is what is happening now, as from the United States to the United Kingdom, from Belgium to Bristol, statues standing to figures from our history are being toppled by forces shaped by our politics.

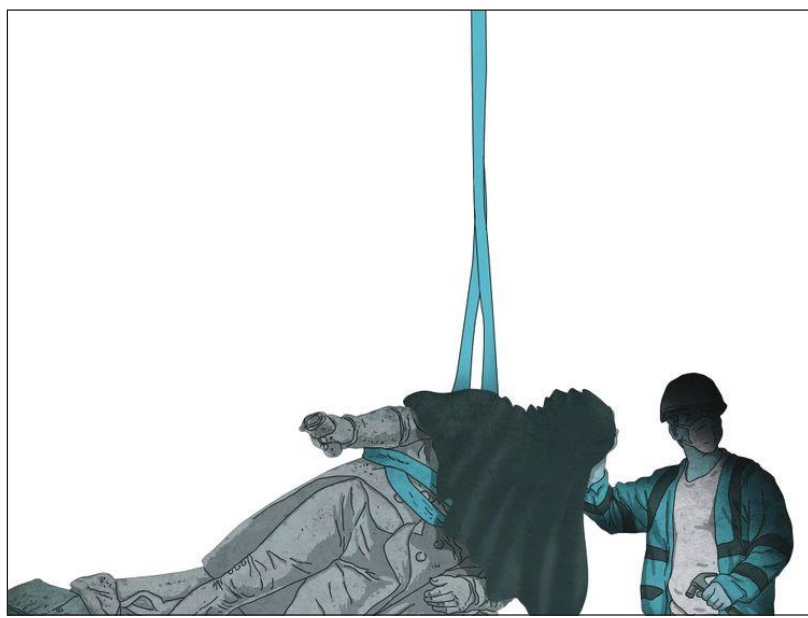
Our ideals topple idols; revisionism trumps racism, social equality can never accept slavery. The price of colonialism, with all its imperial trappings, mercantile profits and gold-laden galleons is paid in the quill-penned ledgers of misery, slavery, bigotry and — yes, in racism that still permeates the present day.

#### Divisive not decorative

That's why statues are going: Not venerable but vain, not civic not uncivil, divisive not decorative.

Some of these statues now going have stood for centuries, yet it has taken just eight minutes and 46 seconds — the length of time an unemployed black man lay dying under the knee of a police officer in Minnesota — for time to change. George Floyd is not just making history, the movement in his name is changing history.

In Bristol in west England last Sunday, it took a crowd protesting for social justice and equality and gath-



**Some of these statues now going have stood for centuries, yet it has taken just eight minutes and 46 seconds — the length of time an unemployed black man lay dying under the knee of a police officer in Minnesota — for time to change. George Floyd is not just making history, the movement in his name is changing history**

ered in Floyd's memory, just four good tugs on some ties to topple a statue of slave trader Edward Colston. It is a city built on the profits from plantations, the sugars of slavery, the chains of colonialism.

For decades some had wanted Colston gone; within minutes of determined anger and action he was, dunked into the River Avon by the currents of today's tides.

In Antwerp, a statue to Belgian king Leopold II was removed by city officials. It was more than time for Leopold to be helped on his way, a monarch who oversaw the macheting off of hands when rubber quotas were not filled in his African colonies in the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, where talon-tipped whips flayed the flesh off those who broke backs bending to Belgium.

A statue of Robert Milligan, an 18th century slave trader, was removed from its plinth outside a London museum on Tuesday after officials decided it was no longer acceptable to the local community, and London council is to look at others now.

#### Legacy of colonialism

In Oxford that same day protesters converged on Oriel College in the spired

city's High Street, chanting "take it down" and "shame on you" to demand the removal of a statue of 19th century British colonialist Cecil Rhodes.

He is a man then ardent in his views of British Imperialism and white supremacy, now tainted by excessive abuses and tinged with the reality of racism; his legacy alive in endowments to scholars who eschew his views.

"Rhodes represents such a violent legacy of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, particularly in southern Africa," said protester Morategi Kale, a South African graduate student at Oxford. "The beginning is to take down a statue that celebrates that."

In the US, the statues of Christopher Columbus, a controversial figure, are also being taken down. There have been multiple reports of Columbus statues being tampered with — one thrown into a lake, one beheaded, and another pulled to the ground.

#### Opposition by academics

Many academics and public figures oppose the removal of such monuments, arguing they merely reflect history and should be used as points of discussion.

That's why General Robert E. Lee, the brilliant military leader of the slaving United States of the Confederacy still stands in places of honour in southern cities in a nation wrestling with the fallout from that Civil War and clashes unleashed now by Floyd's slow asphyxiation.

In a tree-lined square in London, across the road from mother of all parliaments, stand statues to figures past and present.

Nelson Mandela, a champion of racial equality; nearby a statue of Field Marshal Jan Christian Smuts, a seminal figure in the founding of the South African state that jailed Mandela.

Mahatma Gandhi in his dhoti robes, nearby a statue to David Lloyd George, the most powerful figure in the British Empire when Brigadier general Reginald Dyer ordered his troops to open fire on April 13 in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

A statue to the 14th Lord Derby who brought about the great Reform Act of 1867 extending the vote to many men of some possessions; and one to Millicent Fawcett, the suffragette who campaigned for the vote for all women.

#### They belong in museums

Do they all belong together there, shoulder to shoulder? For sure, they do in history books, the tomes of our times past, the pages that allow us to turn a new leaf with each day.

And yes, they belong in museums, a preservation of our bygones. But do they all still warrant space together in public squares?

Statues rise and statues fall as sure as day follows night, night follows day. That is the very nature of such idolatry. Idealism too ebbs and rises.

Lenin and Communism, Hitler and fascism; Saddam Hussain and absolutism. Those images from Fidos Square in April 2003, Saddam toppled in Baghdad to signal the liberation of the Iraqi people — yet we all know only too well how that turned out.

I am reminded of the words of Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley and penned two centuries ago. They hold so true today:

And on the pedestal, these words appear:

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Some days you are the statue, some days the pigeon.

Today Is World Blood Donor Day

## One Unit Blood Saves 4 Lives

DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated on June 14 to express gratitude to blood donors, raising awareness about the need for safe blood and blood products that can save the lives of millions of people each year. This day celebrates the birthday of Carl Landsteiner who discovered the main blood groups and helped develop a system for classifying blood groups. The theme for this year's World Blood Donor Day campaigns is 'Safe Blood Saves Lives', while the slogan is 'Give Blood and Make the World Healthy'.

Blood donation is a life-giving activity. Every drop of your blood can inject new life into a fellow human being. No one's life is lost due to lack of blood and by donating one unit of blood we can save the lives of four people. With the slogan 'Give Blood and Make the World Healthy', the campaign raises awareness in achieving the universal need for safe blood and achieving the goal of universal health coverage in healthcare delivery. The event serves to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood.

Blood and blood products save millions of lives every year. Blood and blood products are essential components in the proper management of women suffering from bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth; Children with severe anaemia due to malaria and malnutrition; Patients with blood and bone marrow disorders, disorders of haemoglobin and immune deficiency conditions; Victims of trauma, emergencies, disasters and accidents; At the same time patients have to undergo blood donation in advanced medical and surgical procedures.

In India, 70% of blood donation is done by a voluntary donor and the rest comes from a replacement donor. The replacement donor includes friends, relatives, family members etc. Replacement donors are not free from danger. Many hospitals do not check their medical history. The donor goes to meet the immediate demand for blood donation. But in a hurry many hospitals donate blood to others without following the whole procedure related to blood donation which is sometimes life threatening, hence raising awareness among the people about voluntary donation, increasing facilities for donation and donation. The donor needs improvement.

Another disease associated with blood is blood pressure i.e. it is also called silent killer. This is a problem that gradually brings with it many deadly diseases. According to the World Health Organisation, there are 7 million deaths due to high blood pressure every year worldwide. High blood pressure reduces the light of the eyes and makes it appear blurred. High blood pressure can cause the blood vessels in the kidneys to become narrow or thick. This prevents the kidneys from doing their job properly and contaminants start accumulating in the blood.

High blood pressure poses the greatest risk to the heart. When the heart does not get enough oxygen due to narrow or hardened blood vessels, chest pain can occur and if the blood flow stops, heart attack can also occur. High blood pressure can affect a patient's memory, which is called dementia. On the other hand, low blood pressure causes serious heart disease, heart disease weakens the heart muscles, as a result of which the heart cannot pump enough blood and our BP becomes low. Heart patients and victims of anaemia should protect themselves from BP.

There are some facts about blood donation that are very important for awareness among the people. Around 112.5 million units of donated blood are collected every year in the world, although many patients with blood transfusions need safe blood and blood products. Access is not available on time. Voluntary, unpaid blood donors are the basis of safe, sustainable and one hundred percent blood supply in sixty two countries. The life span of donated blood is thirty five to forty two days; Hence there is a constant need to replenish stocks in blood banks. Healthy blood donors range in age from 18 to 65 years. One unit of blood can benefit many patients by separating into its various components. HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis should always be checked in the blood before blood transfusion.

There is a need to provide awareness in India today to increase blood collection through voluntary donations. People also need to donate blood, and provide suitable facilities for a better donor. Providing safe and adequate blood should be an integral part of every country. Therefore more blood banks need to be opened in rural areas to provide immediate assistance. Also government hospitals, private hospitals should be encouraged to conduct blood donation camps.

The central body needs to do more to promote voluntary blood donation, ensure safe blood transfusion, provide infrastructure to blood centres, develop human resources and formulate and implement blood policy. The e-blood fund should try to reach out to as many people as possible to connect, digitise and streamline the work of blood banks across the country and every person should keep in mind that every second, someone, anywhere is needed. So donate blood to give life to someone.

-- Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, Research Scholar in Political Science, Delhi University.



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

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## Community Schooling Amid COVID-19

The worthy Commissioner Secretary Education, Dr Asgar Hassan Samoon tweeted on 11th of June that the local teachers/ lecturers may volunteer themselves for the community schooling in their Mohallas/ Villages with parental support and strict adherence to the SOPs and precautions.

The teaching community mostly in the valley showed the tremendous response to the tweet and immediately made themselves available to the student community for the said initiative. It is a sign of dedication, responsibility and community belonging which has been shown by the teachers both from the government as well as the private sector. The quick positive response made me proud of my profession and the people around me in the

department of human resource.

The teaching community of the J&K has always been in the fore front for the betterment of the society in each and every possible manner. It has never shown any negative approach towards any assignment or hectic job for which it is often asked for.

But, this time, there is a sound perception that the teacher should wait a while and follow a thought process before starting the given job like:

a) The government is yet to have a clear cut official order in this regard (Community Schooling) and the mechanism how to start the process. Let there be some official order.

b) The fraternity must think collectively and should prefer a community hall or well demarcated open area instead of the private residences in

order to have the process effective and purposeful.

c) The fundamental identity, individuality, self-respect and the secrecy of the student must be the top priority for every tutor.

d) There should be a fixed time table and the proper management of the process otherwise it will be like every body's responsibility is no body's responsibility.

e) The department must make public the general precautions which the teachers and the students must follow while going for a class.

f) The different age groups and class wise students must have separate timings if not separate locations for the classes.

g) Let the fraternity have full ground work and good preparation

before starting the actual classes like mode of physical distance, useful TLMs and the awareness among the general public about the necessary precautions.

h) The unplanned process may lead to fall and spoil the whole noble idea hence the plan must be there and the better plan is always formulated in a collective manner.

i) There should be some sort of memorandum between the different stakeholders so that the education as well as health and other sectors may take due care of their respective aspects

Hope the teaching fraternity will start the auspicious work of serving the community in these tough times in a proper way and make no haste or mistake.

Masood Ali Mir  
masoodalimir@yahoo.co.in



# Travellers' Torment Raises 'Time for Home Quarantine' Pitch in Kashmir

SANIKA ATHAVALE

**F**OUZIA and her husband Basheer Ahmad lived the life of nomadic merchants in West Bengal, where her husband would sell shawls and clothing embroidered with Kashmiri artistry to earn a few rupees for sustenance. Their travels in the land of the roshogolla was the sole means of their daily bread but the announcement of the Covid-19 lockdown on March 24 brought their livelihood to an abrupt halt.

Such was the fate of many Kashmiris who had departed from their homeland in search of a 'better something' but were now increasingly anxious to figure their way back to their families.

After several weeks of hardships and agony – some of which was well documented by the news media, the Indian state decided to allow the interstate travel of migrant workers on April 29 by running special 'Shramik' trains.

As the voices of dissent grew louder and angrier, on May 15, this provision was also extended to privileged professionals, who then began to jubilantly book their flight/train tickets back home.

The merchant couple was also elated when the news of the commencement of interstate travel reached their ears. They set themselves for their journey to Srinagar on May 27 in hope of meeting their loved ones in the backdrop of the contagion.

However, even after two months since their enforced grounding, on reaching Srinagar the couple was unwillingly exacted to be in the company of an alien called 'quarantine', which seemed more nightmarish than the period they had survived without income and answers.

A term unbeknown to many, 'quarantine' was seldom used pre-Covid times but the weight of its implementation in the valley has shaken the foundation of the skewed Kashmiri 'normal'. The burden of its enactment has descended upon the population like an avalanche of unpleasantness while it was already reeling under the boots of a tight political clampdown.

To the natives of the juxtaposed valley – famed for its natural cosmetics and historic human tragedies, the double lockdown is stupefying. But ready to bear the horror, Fouzia and Basheer had taken the Rajdhani Express to Jammu.

## Before Quarantine

Upon reaching the terminal station, Fouzia and her husband were tested for the virus and fortunately for them, both of their results were negative. "Soon after, we (travellers) were packed in a passenger cab by the authorities and taken to Srinagar," she said while speaking to the Kashmir Observer.

"That was the worst journey of my life," Malik Nisar said. "As if the fear of the virus wasn't already enough, the appointed driver drove like a madman scaring everyone to death," he added.

Malik Nisar, a Kashmiri journalist who had been previously stranded in Bengaluru, had to grapple with the administrative incompetencies when he was making frantic efforts to reach his home in Baramulla.

On May 14, the journo was summoned by the authorities at the Baiyappanahalli Police Station after he had registered himself on an official link that was collecting data from Kashmiris who were stranded in the silicon city of India.

"We have a WhatsApp group called Kashmiris in Bengaluru and my friend sent the official link on the chat for people like me to register. After submitting my details through the link, the officials told me that I would be leaving for Kashmir on the 12th of May but their inefficiencies led to us leaving the city on May 14," he detailed.

The Kashmiris registered with the station were taken to the railway centre in a state transportation bus at noon, but owing to miscommunication within government departments, the hopeful travellers were left waiting till 7 pm. "Additionally, since all of us were fasting for Ramzan, the wait was torturous," he informed.

His train was packed with the natives of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. There were families, labourers, students, and professionals in the train taking the total headcount to 1200.

According to Nisar, water was the only essential regularly provided as meals were unfulfilling and scarce.

"Throughout our three-day journey, starting May 14 at 10 pm, we were provided with two meals of dal-chawal, a meal of potato chips and a banana, a meal of two rotis with jam as an accompaniment, and nothing more," he said.

His train's terminal point was at Udhampur, where all the passengers were asked to deboard with a packet of dal-chawal at 12 am. "We were screened for Covid-19 at Udhampur and made to go to the booths that were set up at the station for every district within the regions Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh."

Social distancing was very strictly implemented when the passengers lined up in front of their booths but what perplexed them was the sheer brazenness with which they were later packed up as cattle in buses and sent to their respective districts.

Furqan Khurshid, a professional photographer who boarded a flight from New Delhi to Srinagar on June 1, also complained about the lack of awareness on the part of the authorities who were mixing international travellers amongst his class of travellers in the buses that were taking them to their districts.

"From the airport we were taken to the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC). We were made to sit in an old state transportation bus and mixed up entirely. Sitting on the seat next to me, was a woman from Iran and we all know how badly hit Iran was," he said.

Furqan's flight was delayed by five hours whereas he was asked to report to the airport four hours prior to the flight's time by the airline.

"There was no social distancing at the airport either. Even while we were being given masks and sanitisers on boarding our flight, the seats were completely occupied and even the three-seater rows were full," he added.

Similar to the process followed at the train stations, the airport authorities had also placed booths for every district.

"My Aadhar card details were asked when we were on the runway, after which I was given a slip with a unique number. At the exit gate, I had to submit my slip where a healthcare worker took my (nasal) test. As I proceeded further, I was asked to go to my district's booth and register with all of my personal details. I remember that there were eight categories for people's quarantine preferences – pregnant women was one of them," Furqan recollected.

## The Quarantine

Simpletons like Fouzia and Basheer didn't know at first what the authorities meant by 'quarantine'.

From Jammu, they were taken to an orphanage in Srinagar that had been converted into a quarantine centre on an ad-hoc basis.

On their first day at the centre, after consuming an ice cream scoop, Fouzia let out a sneeze, sending shockwaves throughout the facility. She was hurriedly tested again with the husband and the result appeared to be positive for her and negative for him.

They were immediately separated and she was taken to Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial (JLNM) Hospital in Rainawari, Srinagar.

"The ward at the hospital looked like a dungeon. No one came to see me for three days. I was just isolated in a room that looked haunted. On the fourth day, a doctor came in and just handed over a prescription and left," Fouzia bitterly remembered.



**As the world is gradually reopening after left paralytic by the pandemic, many stranded Kashmiris are finally heading home after braving the traveller's nightmare only to land in the 'horror houses' back home. While authorities are admitting lapses, many are now throwing their weight behind home quarantine for the fear of administrative 'breeding grounds'.**

Her husband was tested for the third time after their separation. "His results were again negative but in spite of that, he was taken to the S P College's hostel and kept there," she added.

However, every traveller did not have to deal with administration-induced anxiety.

Furqan Khurshid opted for a 'paid quarantine facility' for Rs 600 per night at the Hotel New Suriya when he was given the choice between the former and the J&K administration's facility.

His Covid-19 report came within a day's time. "Thankfully, I had tested negative for the virus and I was allowed to leave the hotel immediately," he said. As per him, his day-long stay was comfortable and effortless.

But his co-traveller, Waris-ul-Anwar had another story to tell.

A PhD scholar, Waris opted for the administrative quarantine. From the district counters at the airport, he was taken to St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School in Baramulla, in a state-owned bus. The school had been converted into a quarantine facility and was free of cost for those who chose it over the paid facilities.

"The rooms we were given to share amongst ourselves didn't look sanitised. When we complained to the ones in-charge there, they sent two men into our rooms to sprinkle some water," he said.

He mentioned that the quarantine facility was crowded and he was desperate to leave it as soon as possible. The fear shared by all the inmates was of ironically contracting the virus in the facility.

"Even if we came in without the virus in our bodies, the conditions of the facility was such that we were very scared of catching the disease there," Waris remarked.

The washrooms were not clean, the food was badly prepared. Despite knowing that the temperature in the area was at a chilling low, the authorities had made no provision for proper bedding. The inmates were asked to call their homes for blankets if they needed them at night.

"But it was already late and it was not feasible to trouble our families at that hour. After consistent complaints, the officials gave us a thin excuse for a blanket and we couldn't sleep due to the cold. We were exhausted from the trip, but it was impossible to sleep," Waris said.

Even though the couple had to struggle with apathetic red tapism for knowing their own fate, Waris-ul-Anwar managed his way out of the dreadful centre through some 'pull'.

"We had finished spending a day there but there was no sign of our reports. Luckily, someone quarantined at the facility had some pull with the airport officials and managed to procure our results through a PDF file from the sampling centre. The report said that we had tested negative. We showed the same to the officials and were given our release orders," he added.

Unfortunately, Nisar did not have the luck of Waris. He spent five 'awful' days in the quarantine facility erected inside Delhi Public School in Delina. He told the Kashmir Observer that the washrooms were dirty and the food was scanty with a foul smell.

"I called the Nodal Officer and expressed our grievances over the bad quality of food. We asked him to help us out but he sounded callous. When I told him that we will protest over his inaction, he threatened to have me imprisoned there for 21 days," Nisar said.

Later that night, the inmates enjoyed a meal of chicken and Nisar believes that his call to the officer helped. He spent his time in the quarantine centre with little food for iftar.

**Throughout our three-day journey, starting May 14 at 10 pm, we were provided with two meals of dal-chawal, a meal of potato chips and a banana, a meal of two rotis with jam as an accompaniment, and nothing more**

Apart from that one night of chicken curry, they were served dal-chawal everyday for the five days that he spent there. The only solace was that the food did not smell anymore.

With his eye for suspicious events by the virtue of his profession, Nisar noticed that while he and his inmates hadn't been provided any masks or sanitisers in Delina, the administration was publicly claiming that it is incurring the cost of Rs 1500 per head in quarantining them.

"Where is the money going? We received no item of protection. Our food was terrible and the washrooms were dirty. How can the cost per head be Rs 1500 when even the basics are not being provided?" he asked assertively.

## The Helm Of Affairs

Dr Imtiyaz Banday, the Nodal Officer at Beerwah's quarantine centre told the Kashmir Observer that the health infrastructure is dealing with a demand it has never prepared for.

"We are being told that 10 people are coming to our facility when 200 arrive. That is the state of affairs. It is utter chaos," he said in a tired tone.

The Nodal Officer told us that on June 8, around 38 people tested positive for Covid-19 but the Beerwah authorities had no place for them.

When asked about the grievances at the quarantine centres he was quick to inform us that these were not the undertaking of the healthcare workers and were the problems of the administration.

"We are responsible for providing healthcare, conducting samples, and preparing reports for the people. The issues of the food, washrooms, cleanliness, is not our call to take and don't come under our purview," the doctor maintained.

Even hotelier, Irfan Khan, who runs the Hotel New Suriya told Kashmir Observer that his staff had left no stone unturned in making the stay of the travellers comfortable.

However, he has been in the wait of answers from the administration over his hotel's use as a quarantine facility.

"From May 15, the administration has been sending people over to our hotel for social isolation. The entire period from May 15 to June 1, our hotel worked without charging the guests as the authorities had assured us payment. Since June 2, we set up a counter at the TRC and have been collecting the service fees over the counter but the period preceding that remains unpaid for," he rued.

Noting that the hotel industry is under severe stress due to the pandemic, Irfan Khan and his contemporaries are waiting for some clarity over the payment of the dues from the J&K administration.

When these issues were listed to Kashmir Divisional Commissioner PK Pole, he said that his officials were aware of the conditions in the quarantine centre but were trying their best.

"The facilities are not going to have the comforts of their homes," DivCom Pole told Kashmir Observer. "That must be understood by the people. We have never dealt with a situation like this before and we are doing our very best."

He said that the administration was working to build a 'Covid-19 Care Centre' with a capacity of 8000 beds. "Even if the situation gets 5 times worse, we will be able to cope as Kashmir's total bed capacity will be 10,000," he stated.

"We must understand that the testing rates in Kashmir are the highest. Out of the 65 lakh population, 98,900 residents have been tested in addition to 36,000 returnees. So, our testing rate is almost 20,000 per million people – the highest in India. Hence, the numbers here are increasing," he said.

## Problems Remain Unsolved

Waris remembers how he had to unplug the overhead fan to charge his phone at the quarantine centre, at the expense of angering his roommates. There was apparently no source to charge their mobile phones which made it impossible for some to connect with their families to pick them up after receiving their release orders.

"The process followed throughout our journey from our previous settlement to our home seemed as though the authorities were trying to get us to catch the illness," Waris said.

The rest agreed stating that the facility, its maintenance, and their treatment was so abominable, that they had to prepare themselves in case they contracted the virus at the very centre meant to protect them.

Apart from these woes, Fouzia and Basheer's experience compelled them to believe that the harassment they had to face under the garb of 'quarantining' them was nothing but a 'subtle manifestation of the PSA.'



# WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT?

## Don'T Eat Dinner Right Before Bed



### Agencies

**NEW YORK-** Aiming to lose some extra weight around your waist? Read on. According to the researchers, eating dinner late at night can lead to high blood sugar levels and put people at increased risk of being overweight.

According to the study, published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, over 2.1 billion adults are estimated to be overweight or obese which makes health complications like diabetes and high blood pressure more likely.

Some studies suggest that consuming calories late in the day is associated with obesity and metabolic syndrome.

"This study sheds new light on how eating a late dinner worsens glucose tolerance and reduces the

amount of fat burned. The effect of late eating varies greatly between people and depends on their usual bedtime," said study author Jonathan C. Jun from the Johns Hopkins University in the US.

"This shows that some people might be more vulnerable to late eating than others. If the metabolic effects we observed with a single meal keep occurring chronically, then late eating could lead to consequences such as diabetes or obesity," Jun added.

For the results, the research team studied 20 healthy volunteers (10 men and 10 women) to see how they metabolized dinner eaten at 10 p.m. compared to 6 p.m. The volunteers all went to bed at 11 p.m.

The researchers found that blood sugar levels were higher, and the amount of ingested fat burned was

lower with the later diners, even when the same meal was provided at the two different times.

On average, the peak glucose level after late dinner was about 18 per cent higher, and the amount of fat burned overnight decreased by about 10 per cent compared to eating an earlier dinner, the findings showed.

"The effects we have seen in healthy volunteers might be more pronounced in people with obesity or diabetes, who already have a compromised metabolism," said study first author Chenjuan Gu.

"We still need to do more experiments to see if these effects continue over time, and if they are caused more by behaviour (such as sleeping soon after a meal) or by the body's circadian rhythms," the authors wrote.

**THE EFFECTS WE HAVE SEEN IN HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS** might be more pronounced in people with obesity or diabetes, who already have a compromised metabolism,"

## People With Diabetes Are At Greater Risk Of Bone Fractures?: Study

Press Trust Of India

**LONDON-** People living with diabetes are at greater risk of bone fractures, according to a new study.

The research noted that people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes have an increased risk of suffering hip and non-vertebral fractures.

A non-vertebral fracture is a fracture not occurring in the spine and excluding fractures of the skull.

The findings, revealed during the Diabetes Awareness Week being observed from June 8-14, show that people with type 1 diabetes are at greater risk than people with type 2 diabetes.

Insulin use and length of time someone has lived with the condition further increased the risk for people with type 2 diabetes.

People with type 1 diabetes don't produce insulin, while those with type 2 don't respond to insulin as well as they should and later in the disease often don't make enough insulin. Both the types can lead to chronically high blood sugar levels.

Diabetes has a number of widely-known complications, however the study highlights the impact of the condition on bone health -- specifically fractures.



cally fractures.

The study, published online in the Bone journal, was conducted by the University of Sheffield in the UK in collaboration with the Sutter Health, a US-based not-for-profit integrated health delivery system, and the University of California.

Lead researcher Dr Tatiane Vilaca, from the University of Sheffield's Mellanby Centre for Bone Research, said: "Diabetes can cause a number of well-known complications,

including kidney problems, loss of eyesight, problems with your feet and nerve damage. However, until now many people with diabetes and their doctors are unaware that they are also at greater risk of bone fractures.

"We need to raise awareness about the greater risk people with diabetes face to help them to prevent fractures. For example, preventing falls can reduce their risk of fracture. Fractures can be very serious, especially in older people. Hip fractures are the most severe as they cause such high disability," Vilaca noted that around 76,000 people in the UK suffer a hip fracture every year and it is thought as many as 20 per cent of people will die within a year of the fracture. Many others don't fully regain mobility, and for many people it can cause a loss of independence.

One in 15 people in the UK have diabetes.

Richard Eastell, Professor of Bone Metabolism and Director of the University of Sheffield's Mellanby Centre for Bone Research, said: "This important research highlights the urgent need for doctors to evaluate the risk of fracture for patients with diabetes and also to look at potential treatments which may help to reduce that risk."

According to Steven Cummings from Sutter Health, patients with diabetes and the doctors who care for them should be aware of the increased risk of fractures.

"Patients are encouraged to ask their doctors what to do about that risk, and doctors should assess the risk and consider treatment to reduce that risk," he said. PTI

## Here's How Sleep, Or Lack Of It, During Covid-19 Pandemic Is Being Affected



Agencies

**A**n international group of neuroscientists will examine how the world is sleeping, or failing to, during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has upended work, social and family life for countless people.

Sleep is known to be critical to physical and mental health - essential for tissue repair, cell regeneration, immune function, memory, and for regulating mood and emotions.

With many people anecdotally reporting sleep problems due to the new coronavirus - including difficulty falling asleep, trouble staying asleep and vivid dreams - the project co-led by neuroscientists at Britain's Oxford University will investigate

their impact on people's health and daily rhythms.

The International COVID-19 Sleep Study (ICOSS), will combine research from Austria, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Norway and the United States. "Sufficient good quality sleep helps us cope, so it's worrying to see trends of poor sleep during this pandemic. We are hoping to study this... in more detail," said Colin Espie, an Oxford professor of sleep medicine.

The study will look at the impact of social confinement such as lockdowns or self-isolation on sleep. It will also examine how risks of exposure to the virus and how psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress can affect, or be affected by, sleep.

## Aspirin Use Linked To Lower Bowel Cancer Risk: Study

Agencies

**LONDON-** Researchers have found that effects of a regular dose of aspirin taken to reduce the risk of inherited bowel cancer lasts at least 10 years after stopping treatment.

The international trial - known as CAPP2 - involved patients with Lynch syndrome from around the world and revealed that two aspirins a day, for an average of two-and-a-half years, reduced the rate of bowel cancer by half.

The study, led by experts at the Universities of Newcastle and Leeds in the UK, published in the journal The Lancet, is a planned double-blind 10-year follow-up, supplemented in more than half of recruits with comprehensive national cancer registry data for up to 20 years.

"I had an idea 30 years ago that people with a genetic predisposition to colon cancer could help us to test whether aspirin really could reduce the risk of cancer," said study researcher Sir John Burn from Newcastle University.

"Patients with Lynch syndrome are high risk and this offered statistical power to use cancer as an endpoint - they are like the canaries in the mine who warned the miners that there was gas," Burn added.

The study further strengthens the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommendation on taking daily aspirin for those at high risk and supports wider use of aspirin



to prevent cancer. Based on the preliminary five-year data from the CAPP2 trial, NICE recommended that aspirin should be offered for the prevention of bowel cancer in adults with Lynch syndrome.

According to the researchers, it took a long time to start the trial and to recruit enough people in 16 countries, but this study has finally given us an answer. The study involved 861 patients with Lynch syndrome, which affects about one in 200 people in the population. These people have a genetic problem with DNA repair, making them at much higher risk of cancers like those of bowel and womb.

A group of 427 patients were randomised to aspirin continuously for two years and 434 were allocated to placebo group and then they were all followed for 10 years. Out of those given two aspirins each day (600mg) there were 18 fewer colon cancers, representing a drop of 42.6 per cent. When all 163 Lynch syndrome cancers are included in the analysis - such as cancer of the endometrium or womb - there was an overall reduced risk of cancer of 24 per cent in those taking aspirin or 37 per cent in those who took aspirin for the full two years.

## Scholarships This Week

**Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study. com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir**

**Scholarship Name 1: Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for ST Students, Jammu and Kashmir 2020-21**

**DESCRIPTION:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of Jammu and Kashmir has announced this scholarship for ST community students of Class 11 to postdoctoral level in Jammu and Kashmir. The selected students will get variable financial awards.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Citizens of Jammu and Kashmir who belong to ST category, studying in Class 11 to postdoctoral level and belong to a family whose income does not exceed INR 2.00 lakhs per annum from all sources, can apply for this scholarship.

**Prizes & Rewards:** The selected students will get maintenance allowance up to INR 1,200 with other benefits.

Last Date to Apply: 30-06-2020  
Application mode: Apply online  
Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/JKP1](http://www.b4s.in/observer/JKP1)



**Scholarship Name 2: CSIR Bhatnagar Fellowship 2020**

**DESCRIPTION:** Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi is announcing this fellowship for the outstanding technologists and scientists working for innovative technology development. The aim of the fellowship is to enhance the technological competitiveness of the nation by mentoring young scientists within the system.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Indian Scientist/Technologist working as an associate with a mission or thrust area program of CSIR or an area of interest to CSIR, below the age of 67 years, can apply for this fellowship.

**PRIZES & REWARDS:** The selected fellows will be awarded monthly fellowship of INR 50,000 and multiple other benefits.

Last Date to Apply: Round The Year  
Application mode: Apply Online  
Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/CRB4](http://www.b4s.in/observer/CRB4)

**Scholarship Name 3: CSIR Nehru Science Postdoctoral Research Fellowship 2020**

**DESCRIPTION:** Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) New Delhi is presenting this fellowship for the Indian PhD holders and young researchers with innovative ideas and provide them with training and research opportunities in science, engineering, agriculture and medicine.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Indian researchers below the age of 32 years with a PhD degree can apply for this fellowship.

**PRIZES & REWARDS:** The selected fellows will get a consolidated fellowship of INR 65,000 per month, House Rent Allowance (HRA) as admissible and a contingency grant of INR 3 lakh per annum.

Last Date to Apply: Round The Year  
Application mode: Apply Online  
Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/NPE3](http://www.b4s.in/observer/NPE3)

**Scholarship Name 4: SERB Ramanujan Fellowship 2020**

**DESCRIPTION:** Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), India is offering this fellowship for outstanding engineers and scientists across the world, below the age of 40 years who want to take up scientific research positions in India and especially, for those engineers or scientists who want to return to India.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Scientist or engineers below the age of 40 years who holds a higher degree or equivalent, such as PhD in Science/Engineering, Masters in Engineering or Technology/MD in Medicine, etc. and have adequate professional experience can apply for this fellowship.

**PRIZES & REWARDS:** Selected fellows will get fellowship of INR 1,35,000 per month, a research grant of INR 7 lakh per annum, INR 60,000 per annum as overhead charges and various other benefits.

Last Date to Apply: Round The Year  
Application mode: Dr. Monika Agarwal, Science and Engineering Research Board 5 & 5A, Lower Ground Floor, Vasant Square Mall, Plot No. A, Community Centre, Sector-5, Pocket-5, Vasant Kunj New Delhi-110070  
Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/RFA7](http://www.b4s.in/observer/RFA7)



## COVID-19 hitting the Americas hardest: WHO

### Agencies

ZURICH/GENEVA: The Americas are bearing the brunt of the global coronavirus pandemic at present, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday (Jun 12), with North and South America currently having four of the 10 worst hit



countries in the world.

The disease was "highly active" in Central and South America, the WHO's top emergency expert Mike Ryan said, highlighting problems in Brazil and Mexico. The current situation in Brazil, now one of the global hot-spots for the virus, was of increasing concern especially in heavily-populated cities, he told a press conference.

The country's health system was "still coping", although some intensive care units were at a critical stage and under heavy pressure with more than 90% bed occupancy rates, Ryan said.

Mexico meanwhile has nearly 130,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and more than 15,000 deaths, the WHO said.

Brazil is the second worst

hit country in the world, with more than 800,000 cases and 41,000 deaths, according to a Reuters tally.

Both countries lag behind the United States, the worst hit country, which has had more than 2 million cases and nearly 114,000 deaths.

"We are very much in the upswing of this pandemic, particularly in the global South," Ryan said. "Some countries are having trouble exiting of the so-called lockdowns as they are seeing an increase in cases."

It was possible the disease was spreading again as societies reopened and people began meeting again, especially when there was inadequate testing and social distancing was insufficient.

Still, he acknowledged the pressures on countries to get back to normal especially to reduce the economic damage the crisis has wrought.

"There is a careful balance between keeping people at home... and the untoward effect of that on economic and society. That is not an easy balance. There are no correct answers," Ryan said.

Ryan said that although some countries appeared to be over the worst of the virus, clusters of the disease were still occurring.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that vigilance was required worldwide against the "very dangerous virus" even in regions where it appeared to be on the wane.



## World Economy Could Suffer "Significant Scarring" Amid Coronavirus: IMF

### Agencies

Washington: The economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic could inflict "significant scarring" worldwide and the outlook for recovery remains highly uncertain, IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath said Friday.

The fund in April projected a global economic contraction of 3.0 percent, but Gopinath said the updated forecasts due out June 24 "will

be very likely worse."

"There is profound uncertainty of recovery," she said in a virtual address to the 7th Asian Monetary Policy Forum.

Noting the damage done in particular sectors like transportation, as well as the growing risk of bankruptcies and persistent job losses, coupled with expected changes in consumer behavior "one has to be concerned about the path of recovery."

"Many of these variables

point to significant scarring effects," she said, which would leave lasting damage on the global economy.

In its World Economic Outlook in April, the Washington-based crisis lender warned that the downturn could be worse if the pandemic was prolonged or saw a resurgence.

The World Bank last week said it expects the global economy to contract by 5.2 percent, in the most widespread crisis in 150 years.

## Trump imposes sanction on ICC as probe into US, Israel war crimes nears

### Agencies

Washington: US President Donald Trump has escalated hostilities against the International Criminal Court (ICC) by authorising new sanctions

"I think that the ICC and the world will see that we are determined to prevent having Americans and our friends and allies in Israel and elsewhere hauled in by this corrupt ICC," he told a podcast hosted by the

state will be investigated for war crimes committed in Gaza and the West Bank, a prospect that has been met with threats and intimidation from Tel Aviv. The Israelis also resorted to the usual tactic of trying to discredit people who shed light on its criminal behaviour by accusing the ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda of being an anti-Semite.

President Trump is reported in the New York Times has having ordered the new penalties on the ICC on Wednesday and dispatching four of his most senior advisers to announce them yesterday as a rebuke to what the administration described as an affront to American sovereignty.

The ICC responded to the sanctions in a statement saying that it was "an escalation and an unacceptable attempt to interfere with the rule of law and the court's judicial proceedings." The statement described the move as an attempt to undermine the courts impartiality arguing that "an attack on the I.C.C. also represents an attack against the interests of victims of atrocity crimes, for many of whom the court represents the last hope for justice."

Last year, Pompeo revoked the visa of Bensouda after the chief prosecutor signalled her intent to pursue the courts probe into US war crimes. He also vowed to revoke visas for other officials at the court involved in investigating American citizens.

right-wing American Enterprise Institute think tank.

Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has also been scathing in his condemnation of the ICC denouncing the court of fabricating "outlandish charges" against his country, and praised the US for standing up for what he called truth and justice.

The probe into allegations of crimes against humanity committed by American service members and intelligence officers, include torture and rape by US forces in Afghanistan and at CIA interrogation facilities abroad, during the near two-decade campaign against the Taliban.

As for Israel, the Zionist



against prosecutors and officials of the intergovernmental organisation.

Trump signed an executive order to block ICC officials directly involved in investigating American troops and intelligence officials and those of allied nations.

In addition to the investigation of possible war crimes in Afghanistan involving US troops, the ICC, based in the Hague, Netherlands, has also launched a probe into Israeli war crimes, including crimes against humanity.

Earlier this month, US Secretary Mike Pompeo doubled down on a previous promise to counter the ICC probe against Washington and Tel Aviv.

## Mothers infected with COVID-19 should continue breastfeeding their babies: WHO

### Agencies

ZURICH: New mothers infected with COVID-19 should generally continue breastfeeding and should not be separated from their babies, the World Health Organization said Friday (Jun 12), stressing that the benefits outweighed the risks.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that it had carefully investigated the risks of women transmitting COVID-19 to their babies during breastfeeding.

"We know that children are at relatively low risk of COVID-19, but are at high risk of numerous other diseases and conditions that breastfeeding prevents," Tedros told a news conference.

"Based on the available evidence, WHO's advice is that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of COVID-19.

"Mothers with suspected

or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged to initiate and continue breastfeeding and not be separated from their infants, unless the mother is too unwell," Tedros said.

Anshu Banerjee, a senior advisor in WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research, said that only "fragments" of the virus had been



detected in breast milk, not live virus.

"So far we have not been able to detect live virus in breast milk," he said. "So the risk of transmission from mother to child so far has not been established."

## Ex-White House Advisor Has Book Which "Trump Doesn't Want You To Read"

### Agencies

Washington: Former White House national security adviser John Bolton has written

"I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my tenure that wasn't driven by re-election calculations," Bolton writes in the



a book that provides an insider account of President Donald Trump's "inconsistent, scatter-shot decision-making process," his publisher said on Friday.

Bolton's "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir," is to be published on June 23 over the objections of the White House, which has been dickering with Bolton's representatives over whether some parts of his account reveal classified information.

Bolton was fired by Trump last September amid simmering differences on a wide array of foreign policy challenges.

The publisher, Simon and Schuster, said in a news release that Bolton's book details Trump's dealings with China, Russia, Ukraine, North Korea, Iran, the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

"This is the book Donald Trump doesn't want you to read," the publisher said.

"What Bolton saw astonished him: a president for whom getting re-elected was the only thing that mattered, even if it meant endangering or weakening the nation," it added.

**What Bolton saw astonished him: a president for whom getting re-elected was the only thing that mattered, even if it meant endangering or weakening the nation**

book, according to the publisher.

Bolton served as Trump's third national security adviser for a total of 519 days. A meticulous notetaker, Bolton was in the room for a number of key foreign policy meetings.

Bolton argues that the Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives should have expanded its impeachment probe against Trump last year to beyond questions over whether Trump invited foreign interference from Ukraine.

His book says "Trump's Ukraine-like transgressions existed across the full range of his foreign policy - and Bolton documents exactly what those were, and attempts by him and others in the administration to raise alarms about them," the publisher said.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

## Wearing Masks May Have Prevented Thousands Of COVID-19 Cases: Study

### Agencies

Washington: Requiring the wearing of masks to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus in areas at the epicenter of the global pandemic may have prevented tens of thousands of infections, a new study suggests.

Mask-wearing is even more important for preventing the virus' spread and the sometimes deadly COVID-19 illness it causes than social distancing and stay-at-home orders, researchers said, in the study published in PNAS: The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA.

Infection trends shifted dramatically when mask-wearing rules were implemented on April 6 in northern Italy and April 17 in New York City - at the time among the hardest hit areas of the world by the health crisis - the study found.



A San Diego woman has created face masks with a clear window over the mouth to help lip readers communicate with others during the pandemic.

"This protective measure alone significantly reduced the number of infections, that is, by over 78,000 in Italy from April 6 to May 9 and over 66,000 in New York City from April 17 to May 9," researchers calculated. When mask-wearing went into effect in New York, the daily new infection rate fell by about 3% per day, researchers said. In the rest of the country, daily new infections continued to increase.

Direct contact precautions - social distancing, quarantine and isolation, and hand sanitizing - were all in place before mask-wearing rules went into effect in Italy and New York City. But they only help minimize virus transmission by direct contact, while face covering helps prevent airborne transmission, the researchers say.

"The unique function of face covering to block atomization and inhalation of virus-bearing aerosols accounts for the significantly reduced infections," they said. That would indicate "that airborne transmission of COVID-19 represents the dominant route for infection."

### NEW SMAKERS

## Protesters dislodge artwork from Paris museum to return it to Africa

### Agencies

Paris: Activists dislodged a 19th century African funeral pole from its perch in a Paris museum Friday and tried to walk away with it, saying they wanted to return it to Africa in a protest against colonial-era abuses.

The five protesters were stopped before they could leave the Quai Branly Museum with the artwork. They were detained for questioning, and the Paris prosecutor's office opened an investigation into group theft of objects of cultural heritage.

The incident came amid growing anger at symbols of colonialism and slavery in the United States and Europe in the wake of George Floyd's death and ensuing global pro-

tests against racial injustice.

France has put some statues to colonial-era figures under police protection in recent days, and Paris police have banned a new round of protests scheduled for Saturday against racism and police brutality stemming from Floyd's death.

The culture minister said the 19th century artwork did not suffer significant damage and the museum would ensure necessary restoration. The museum would not comment, other than to say that it had filed a police complaint.

The activists posted live video of the protest online, in which Congo-born Mwazulu Diyabanza lists works in the museum from former French or Belgian colonies in Africa. He accused European museums of

making millions from artworks taken from now-impooverished countries like Congo.

"It's wealth that belongs to us, and deserves to be brought back," he said. "I will bring to Africa what was taken."

Culture Minister Franck Riester said he "condemns with the utmost firmness these acts which damage heritage."

"While the debate on the restitution of works from the African continent is perfectly legitimate, it can in no way justify this type of action," he said.

The Quai Branly museum was built under former French President Jacques Chirac to showcase and celebrate non-European art, and has a large collection of works from former French colonies.

## Former Pak PM Yusuf Raza Gilani Tests Positive For COVID-19

Islamabad: Pakistan's former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani tested positive for the coronavirus on Saturday, becoming the latest top political figure to contract COVID-19 that has claimed 2,551 lives and infected 132,405 people in the country.

Gilani, 67, tested positive after attending a hearing of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a corruption case.

On Thursday, Shehbaz Sharif, chief of the Opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), tested positive for the coronavirus after he appeared before the NAB in a money laundering case.

Gilani's son Kasim Gilani announced on Twitter that the former premier had tested positive for the coronavirus.

"Thank you Imran Khan's govt and National Accountability Bureau! You have successfully put my father's life in danger. His COVID-19 result came positive," Kasim said.

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Af-



ridi also tested positive for the coronavirus on Saturday.

Pakistan's COVID-19 cases reached 132,405 after a record 6,472 new infections were detected, while 88 more people have succumbed to the coronavirus, pushing the number of deaths to 2,551, the health ministry said on Saturday.

The Ministry of National Health Services said a record 29,850 tests were done in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of COVID-19 tests conducted in the country to 839,019.

## New Spider Named After Greta

Paris: Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg can add to her list of personal accolades, including TIME magazine's Person of the Year, a group of spiders named after her.

Thunberg's gen. nov. is a new genus of huntsman spiders from Madagascar, described by German arachnologist Peter Jager, and named after the wunderkind in honour of her commitment to tackling climate change. "The rising temperatures affect all areas of nature - including the endemic diversity and spider fauna of Madagascar," said Jager, who has participated in several protests inspired by Thunberg's School Strike for Climate.

In a study printed in the scientific journal Zootaxa, Jager explained that the new genus differed from other huntsmans in their eye arrangement and unique dotted patterns on their backs.

Jager, who has discovered several new spider species in a career spanning 20 years, said he hoped that by naming the creepy crawlies after Thunberg he could draw attention to the issue of biodiversity loss in Madagascar.



# Coronavirus In India Is Now In Community Transmission Stage, Claim Experts

**NEW DELHI:** Amid a massive spurt in coronavirus cases in India, experts on Saturday came down hard on the ICMR for its sero-survey findings to assert that there was no community transmission of COVID-19, saying it was not reflective of the current situation and the government was showing "obstinacy" in accepting the truth.

Emphasising that community transmission was on in many parts of the country, the experts asked the government to admit it so that people don't get complacent.

The assertion by experts from the field of virology, public health and medicine came after Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Balram Bhargava at a media briefing on Thursday said that India is definitely not in the community transmission stage of COVID-19 spread while releasing the findings of the survey.

India's first sero-survey to monitor the trend of coronavirus infection transmission found that 0.73 per cent of the 26,400 people surveyed from about 65 districts were exposed to coronavirus.

AIIMS former director Dr MC Mishra said there is no doubt that there has been community transmission in several parts of the country.

"With the mass exodus and the country unlocking, it has become more rapid and the disease has reached areas where there were no cases. It is high time the government comes to fore and acknowledges it so that people become more alert and do not become complacent,"



Mishra told PTI.

Talking about the ICMR sero-survey, he said the sample size of around 26,400 people is quite inadequate to capture the scale of the spread of the infection, especially keeping in mind the large population and the diversity of the country.

Leading virologist Shahid Jameel said India reached the community transmission stage a long time ago.

"It's just that the health authorities are not admitting it. Even ICMR's own study of SARI (severe acute respiratory illness) showed that about 40 per cent of those who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 did not have any history of overseas travel or contact to a known case. If this is not community transmission, what is," said Jameel.

CEO of Wellcome Trust/Department of Biotechnology's India Alliance and best known for his extensive research in Hepatitis E virus and HIV, Jameel said an important point to consider is the sensitivity and specificity of the test that ICMR has not revealed, and even a one percent change would make a big difference in the results in areas of low prevalence.

Noted lung surgeon Dr Arvind Kumar said that even if the ICMR argument is accepted, it cannot be denied that community transmission is happening in places like Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

"India is a vast country and every state is experiencing the virus differently and peaking at different times," said Kumar, who works at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here.

## Health Ministry Okays Anti-Malarial Drug HCQ For Early Course Of COVID-19

**NEW DELHI:** The Union Health Ministry has recommended use of anti-viral drug remdesivir under emergency use authorization, off-label application of immunomodulator tocilizumab and convalescent plasma therapy for treating COVID-19 patients in moderate stage of criticality.

Backtracking from its earlier stance, the ministry in its revised "Clinical Management Protocols for COVID-19", released on Saturday, said anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) should be used in the early course of the disease to achieve any meaningful effect and should be avoided in severe cases.

In the new set of protocols, the ministry has removed its earlier recommendation of using hydroxychloroquine in combination with azithromycin in severe cases and requiring ICU management.

Hydroxychloroquine has demonstrated in-vitro activity against SARS-CoV2 and was shown to be clinically beneficial in several small single-centre studies though with significant limitations, it stated.

"Nonetheless, several large



observational studies with severe methodologic limitations have shown no effect on mortality or other clinically meaningful outcomes.

"As such, the evidence base behind its use remains limited as with other drugs and should only be used after shared decision making with the patients while awaiting the results of ongoing studies," the revised document stated.

As is the case with other anti-virals, this drug should be used as early in the disease course as possible to achieve any meaningful effects and should be avoided in patients with severe disease," it read.

An ECG should ideally be done before prescribing the drug to measure QTc interval, to assess some of the electrical properties of the heart, and avoid hydroxychloroquine if QTc is greater than 500 ms, it said.



# What Online Education When 56 Per Cent Of Children Have No Access?

**NEW DELHI:** About 56 per cent of children were found to have no access to smartphones which have emerged as essential tools for online learning during the coronavirus-induced lockdown, according to a new study that surveyed 42,831 students at various school levels.

The study 'Scenario amidst COVID 19 - Onground Situations and Possible Solutions' was conducted by child rights NGO Smile Foundation with an aim of analysing the access to technology.

The findings of the study showed that 43.99 per cent of surveyed children have access to smartphones and another 43.99 per cent of students have access to basic phones while 12.02 per cent do not have access to either smartphones or basic phones.

A total of 56.01 per cent children were found to have no access to smartphones, the study said.

"Concerning television, it was noted that while 68.99 per cent have access to TV, a major chunk of 31.01 per cent does not. Hence suggesting that using smartphone interventions for enhancing learning outcomes is

not the only solution," it said.

At the primary level of education (class 1 to 5) 19,576 children were surveyed while at upper primary level (class 6 to 8) 12,277 children were surveyed. At secondary level of education (class 9 to 10) 5,537 children were surveyed and at higher secondary level (class 11 to 12) 3,216 children were surveyed.

The survey based on which the study was conducted used two approaches - over the telephone wherein the NGO reached out to the children whose database it already had—students enrolled in various education centres of the NGO—and second was through community mobilization wherein community workers went door to door to get answers.

The survey was conducted in 23 states, including Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, over a period of 12 days from April 16 to April 28.

The lockdown induced by the COVID-19 pandemic in March prompted schools and colleges to move to

the virtual world for teaching and learning activities. However, many experts say the digital divide in the country may turn online classes into an operational nightmare.

As per official statistics, there are over 35 crore students in the country. However, it is not clear as to how many of them have access to digital devices and Internet.

Santanu Mishra, co-founder and executive trustee, Smile Foundation, said the findings clearly show that the digital divide is a real challenge, and multiple approaches need to be implemented to cater to all across the nation.

"As an exercise before we start any programme, we do a baseline study to understand the on-ground challenges so that our programmes can bring in real work and real change. With the onset of the pandemic, following indefinite school closures, it is more important than ever to understand the situation and how can we ensure that children are given quality education. Through this, we understand that customized modules need to be built in accordance with the channel of communication," he said.

## Petrol Price Rise By 59 Paise Per Litre, Diesel By 58 Paise; Seventh Hike In A Row

**NEW DELHI:** Petrol price on Saturday was hiked by 59 paise per litre and diesel by 58 paise as oil companies for the seventh day in a row adjusted retail rates in line with costs since ending an 82-day hiatus in rate revision.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to Rs 75.16 per litre from Rs 74.57, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 73.39 a litre from Rs 72.81, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

This is the seventh daily increase in rates in a row since oil companies on Sunday restarted revising prices in line with costs, after ending an 82-day hiatus.

In seven hikes, petrol price has gone



up by Rs 3.9 per litre and diesel by Rs 4. The freeze in rates was imposed in mid-March soon after the government hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel to shore up additional finances.

Oil PSUs Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL), instead of passing on the excise duty hikes to customers, adjusted them against the fall in the retail rates that was warranted because of a decline in international oil prices.

# SC To Hear Plea For Quashing Fir Against Journalist Vinod Dua In Himachal

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court will hear on Sunday a plea by journalist Vinod Dua seeking quashing of a sedition case filed against him following a complaint by a local BJP leader in Shimla over his YouTube show.

In a special hearing, a bench of justices U U Lalit, M M Shantanagoudar and Vineet Saran will hold the proceedings at 11 AM tomorrow.

The Delhi High Court had earlier stayed an investigation into a case against Dua in connection with his show on YouTube.

The police in Shimla had summoned him for questioning over a sedition complaint by a local BJP leader.

Like the complaint lodged in the national capital, the FIR registered against the senior journalist in Shimla is also over his YouTube show on communal riots in Delhi earlier this year.



According to the complaint, he accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using "deaths and terror attacks" to get votes.

Dua has been charged under sections 124A (sedition), 268 (public nuisance), 501 (printing matter known to be de-

On Wednesday, the Delhi High Court had stayed till June 23 an investigation into a similar case filed by a BJP spokesperson, Naveen Kumar.

The court had said there was an unexplained delay of nearly three months in filing the complaint. PTI

## Bengal Prepares White Paper On Cities In Post-Coronavirus World



**KOLKATA:** The West Bengal government has prepared a white paper on the future of cities in the post-COVID-19 world, as urban spaces are changing "drastically and rapidly", an official said.

Speaking at a webinar on real estate sector, organized by CII, West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation chairman and managing director Debashis Sen said his department has come out with the document on "Reconfiguring Cities in the New Normal".

"Changes are now rapid and a lot of things are changing drastically in terms of cities, work, home, business and social spaces," a statement quoted him as saying.

Mr Sen cited examples of the Haj House, which has been converted to an international quarantine centre, the Central Forensics Building and part of the Netaji Subhas International Airport, which have been transformed to isolation centres, while describing how the "adaptive use of buildings" taking place rapidly.

According to him, the shopping malls will become "warehouses of e-commerce" with home delivery of everything becoming the new normal in the post-COVID era.

Cinema halls, multiplexes are very likely to become "data centres" as per the study, he said on Friday.

As far as residences and houses are concerned, he said that home spaces would need to expand as families will work or learn from there.

"Cities will dissolve into small, coherent, hyper-local townships like the IIT campuses, industrial townships in Durgapur and Jamshedpur, which are, in a sense, self-sufficient and gated with their own schools, colleges, shops, workspaces, parks and hospitals," he added.

## Shahid Afridi Tests Positive For Covid-19

**KARACHI-** Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi on Saturday said he has tested positive for COVID-19, becoming the first high-profile cricketer to be infected with the deadly virus.

"I've been feeling unwell since Thursday; my body had been aching badly. I've been tested and unfortunately I'm covid positive. Need prayers for a speedy recovery. InshaAllah," Afridi announced on Twitter.

Afridi played for Pakistan between 1996 and 2018, featuring in 27 Tests (1716 runs and 48 wickets), 398 ODIs (8064 runs and 395 wickets) and 99 T20 Internationals (1416 runs and 98 wickets).

He remains involved in the game and was last seen on the field in the Pakistan Super League in March.

Afridi is also actively involved in



his charity work as the head of a foundation named after him. Following the coronavirus outbreak, he was seen outdoors on many oc-

casions, mainly for his charity work.

Wishes of a speedy recovery started pouring on social media soon after Afridi made the announcement. He might have retired from international cricket his popularity in the sub-continent has not dipped.

Another former Pakistan international Taufeeq Umar, had also tested positive for coronavirus but he recovered earlier this month.

At least two Pakistani first-class players have died from the infection with leg-spinner Riaz Sheikh passing away in Karachi earlier this month.

Sheikh, a leg-spinner who took 116 wickets in 43 matches, died in his home.

Another Pakistani first-class player, Zafar Sarfaraz, 50, died due to the virus in April in Peshawar.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Nidhi Razdan Quits NDTV, To Teach Journalism At Harvard University

**NEW DELHI-** Television journalist and news anchor Nidhi Razdan has decided to quit NDTV, where she worked for 21 years. She will be heading to teach journalism at Harvard University later in the year.

In a tweet, Razdan said she would be taking up a teaching role at Harvard University's Faculty of Arts & Sciences as associate professor later this year.

"NDTV has taught me everything," she said. "It has been my home. I am proud of the work we do, the stories we cover, the values



we stand for, especially at a time when the much of the media has surrendered its objectivity."

Razdan had become a leading name in English television journalism over

the past two decades. She recently won the International Press Institute India award for excellence in journalism for her reporting of the Kathua rape and murder case in Jammu and Kashmir.

## Mahindra's off-road vehicle infringes upon Fiat Chrysler's Jeep: US regulator

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) said a US regulator has upheld an earlier ruling which stated that its off-road utility vehicle Roxor infringed upon the intellectual property rights of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' Jeep brand.

The International Trade Commission (ITC) has upheld the administrative law judge's determination which held that the Roxor violated FCA's trade dress, M&M said in a late-night regulatory filing on Friday.

The ITC recommended an exclusion of the order prohibiting the importation of Roxor parts and a cease-and-desist order prohibiting the sale of any already imported Roxor parts, it added.

Trade dress is a form of intellectual property that identifies the look of a product and distinguishes it from its competitors.

M&M, however, stated that the Roxor does not violate Jeep's trade dress.