



Maximum : 29°C  
Minimum : 15°C  
Humidity : 42%

SUNSET  
Today 07:44 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 05:19 AM

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## In COVID-Cornered New York City, This Kashmiri Doctor Is SHOWING THE WAY

It was quite a scene when the officials from the New York Police Department recently lined up as cheerleaders to applaud Dr. Parvez Mir's efforts in saving the lives of his patients. The modest medic from mountains he calls home gracefully received the ovation and assured that the fight would continue. While Dr. Mir is saving hundreds of lives in a borough of New York City called Brooklyn through his grit and determination, he is leaving no stone unturned in helping the doctors back home. But the fight back is coming at a huge cost. "My family members are quarantined from me," Dr. Parvez Mir, Director of Intensive Care Unit at Wyckoff Heights Medical Centre (WHMC) in Brooklyn, told Kashmir Observer. Dr. Mir got to know about the first patient infected with COVID-19 on March 10, when an old woman was admitted to WHMC....

.....PANORAMA  
P5

## News Digest

### Covid-19 Nodal Officer Suspended

Pulwama- District Administration on Monday suspended a senior Animal Husbandry Officer Pulwama over alleged dereliction of duties and mismanagement of a COVID care centre situated in the district headquarters. The officer was designated as the Nodal Officer of the facility and already cautioned against any laxity on his part, said a senior officer of the administration. "The officer was found absconding and unauthorisedly absent from the district headquarters" P-02

### 3.2 Magnitude Quake Hits J&K

Srinagar- An earthquake of magnitude 3.2 hit Jammu and Kashmir in the early hours of Monday, but there were no reports of any damage, officials said. The quake occurred at 4.36 am at a depth of five km. There were no reports of any damage due to the tremors, the officials said.

### Mughal Road Re-opens Partially

Srinagar- The authorities in Kashmir Monday ordered the partial opening of Mughal Road - the alternate road connecting the valley with the rest of the country - for transportation of fruit produce to markets outside. "It is hereby notified for information of general public/fruit growers that the Mughal road is hereby declared open for downward vehicular traffic exclusively for transportation of fresh fruits viz-a-viz Cherry, Peach, Plum, Apricot to outside State w.e.f. 16.06.2020," P-02

### 2 Members Nominated for PSA Board

Srinagar- The Jammu & Kashmir government has appointed two members of an advisory board constituted to review cases under the Public Safety Act. The Home department has appointed former judges, Aijaz Ahmad Mir and Davinder Kapoor, as members of the Board. "Sanction is hereby accorded to the appointment of Aijaz Ahmad Mir (Retd. District and Sessions Judge) and Davinder Kumar Kapoor (Retd. District and Sessions Judge) as members of the Advisory Board. constituted" P-02

### 90% Indians Binge On Streaming

New Delhi: As data consumption touches over 11GB per user a month in India owing to the lockdown times, 90 per cent people are spending more time on content streaming, e-learning, infotainment and social media, a new survey said on Monday. Nearly 61 per cent consumers are streaming more content than they were before the lockdown, said the 'EY Digital Consumer Survey'. "Time spent on video streaming has surged 1.2 times to average 4.2 hours per user per week," the findings showed. P-PAGE 08

## Covid-19 Claims 3 More, J&K Death Toll Climbs To 63

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: An elderly man from South Kashmir's Shopian district, who was tested positive for COVID-19 a few days back, died at CD hospital on Monday, officials said.

According to Dr Saleem Tak, Medical Superintendent at CD hospital 80-year-old man who was admitted in the hospital on June 13, died on Monday evening.

He said the patient was suffering from Diabetes, Hypertension and had other underlying problems including COPD.

Earlier an 18-year-old youth succumbed to the virus becoming the youngest victim of the infection in J&K so far.

The youth hailing from Handwara area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district died at SMHS hospital here, the officials said.

He was admitted to the hospital on June 12 as a medico-legal



File Pic: Abid Bhat

case involving assault, the officials said.

They said his swab sample for the novel coronavirus was taken

the next day and later returned as positive.

Youth had serious head injuries besides bilateral pneumonia,

the officials said, adding that the patient passed away around 3 am.

In the second fatality of the day, a 62-year-old man P-PAGE 02

## 179 New Cases Test Positive, J&K Tally Rises to 5220

SRINAGAR: The number of COVID-19 cases in Jammu and Kashmir climbed to 5220 as 179 new cases including 97 paramilitary CRPF personnel tested positive for the pandemic on Monday.

Among new 179 new cases, 14 were tested positive at CD hospital, 6 at Army's Command Hospital Udhampur and rest at other hospitals.

Official sources said that while 126 cases were confirmed at viral diagnostic laboratory at SKIMS Soura, 53 cases were reported

from various other laboratories. Giving the district wise breakdown of the cases, officials said Anantnag district reported 79 followed by Shopian (19), Srinagar (15), Kupwara (10), Pulwama (8), Udhampur (7), six each in Baramulla, Budgam and Samba, Ramban (4), three each in Kulgam, Baniptora and Reasi besides Ganderbal (2) while one each from Kathua and Kishtwar. These sources said that among

the cases, 14 were confirmed at the CD hospital's diagnostic laboratory and included a soldier (31) from 42 Rashtriya Rifles stationed at

Tral, a 40-year-old policeman from Awantipora police station, two pregnant women—both

aged 32-year-old each, one from Wanpoh and Rahmoo—besides as many shopkeepers—45-year-old female from Duderhama Ganderbal P-PAGE 02

### 79 CRPF Jawans Test Covid-19 Positive

SRINAGAR: 79 CRPF personnel, an army soldier and a policeman were among 183 fresh cases of novel coronavirus reported in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday. The cases, which also include two pregnant women and as many shopkeepers, take the overall tally of the covid-19 patients in the J&K to 5224.

Official sources said that while 126 cases were confirmed at viral diagnostic laboratory at SKIMS Soura, 57 cases were reported from various other laboratories.

Among the 57 cases, 14 were reported from Srinagar P-PAGE 02

## High Tension: Pak Detains 2 Indian HC Staffers For Over 10 Hours

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD- Pakistani authorities on Monday detained two officials of the Indian high commission in Islamabad in a case of alleged "hit and run" and released them after over 10 hours following India's strong demarche.

The Pakistani action is seen as a retaliation for the expulsion of two Pakistani High Commission officials by India on charges of espionage two weeks back.

Pakistani media reported that the two Indian staffers were arrested by Pakistani agencies for their alleged involvement in a "hit and run" case, but there was no official word on it from Islamabad. The non-diplomat staffers



were back in the high commission after they were released by Pakistani authorities, government sources said, adding they left the mission in a vehicle at around 8 AM (Pakistan time) but did not reach their destination.

In the morning, the two staffers in Islamabad went missing following which India took up the matter with the Pakistan Foreign Office, sources said.

Within hours of the development, India summoned P-PAGE 02

### Swain Replaces Srinivas As J&K CID Head

JAMMU- The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday carried out changes in top police brass, replacing Dr B Srinivas as the head of CID with R R Swain, who returns to the cadre after 15 years, officials said here.

Srinivas, a 1990-batch IPS officer, who was brought back from his central deputation in 2018 to help the state police revive the intelligence apparatus, has been posted as Commandant General of Home Guard and Disaster Force.

He will also head the Fire and Emergency Services.

During his second tenure as the Additional Director General of CID, the state saw intelligence carried out operations leading to several kills in the erstwhile state and later the union territory. P-PAGE 02

### CBI Alerts States On Sale Of Methanol-Made Fake Hand Sanitiser

NEW DELHI: The CBI has alerted the state police departments and other law-enforcement agencies about a racket selling fake hand sanitiser, and another racket that poses as PPE and other COVID-19-related medical supplies, officials said on Monday.

After getting the input, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) immediately alerted the police authorities to remain vigilant about gangs using the modus operandi to make quick money, the officials said.

Agency sources said some criminals are approaching hospitals and health authorities posing as representatives of manufacturers of PPE kits and other COVID-19-related protective gear.

Exploiting the shortage of such



articles, they take online advance payments from authorities and hospitals but after the receipt of payments, no deliveries are made. Interpol has also given inputs about fake hand sanitiser being made using methanol, a highly-toxic substance, as the base, the officials said.

Instances have been reported from other countries of use of spurious hand sanitiser during P-PAGE 02

## LAC Standoff: In Conversation with 'Dragon on Our Doorstep' Co-Author

Auqib Javed

In his 2017 acclaimed book that he co-authored with his Force Magazine colleague, Ghazala Wahab, Pravin Sawhney writes that should New Delhi find itself involved in a border war with Beijing, it will lose.

Much of this, he argues, has to do with "China's superior military power, close coordination between the political leadership and the military, the ability to take quick decisions, the potent anti-satellite and cyber warfare capabilities".

Even more shockingly, the book reveals, "regardless of popular opinion, India today is not even in a position to win a war against Pakistan".

This, the authors argue, has nothing to do with Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

"It's because while India has been focused on building military force (troops and materiel needed to wage war) Pakistan has built military power (learning how to optimally utilize its military force). In this lies the difference between losing and winning."

Over the years, Sawhney writes, despite the many treaties and agreements between the two nations, border clashes (including the disastrous 1962 war) and disagreements over Tibet and Jammu and Kashmir have complicated the Sino-India relationship. Since 2008, when it was recog-

nized as an economic power, China has become assertive after keeping a low profile for decades, he says.

"Today, this Himalayan balancing act of power is clearly tilted towards China, in whose view there is room for only one power in Asia."

In this rise, the authors of Dragon on our Doorstep argue, Pakistan has emerged as China's most trusted and crucial partner.

The partnership between China and Pakistan, whether in terms of military interoperability (ability to operate as one in combat), or geo-strategic design (which is unfolding through the wide-sweeping One Belt One Road project), has serious implications for India, he says. "The best that New Delhi can do is



try and manage the relationship so that the dragon's rise is not at the

cost of India." Three years after the book was

published, Sawhney's views on the current Sino-India standoff at Line of Actual Control (LAC) are being sought for their incisive defence insights.

In an exclusive chat with Kashmir Observer's Special Correspondent, the veteran military expert talks about the Dragon's Ladakh move and New Delhi's Kashmir management post-Article 370.

Security smokescreen created around Sino-India standoff is still making the picture hazy at LAC. As somebody who has a sharp defence eye, what do you see?

People's Liberation Army has reportedly made multiple incursions across a broad front of over 100km from north Sikkim to northeast La-

dakh. Three important incursions are in north Sikkim, Galwan valley (both not listed as disputed areas) and Pangong Tso.

With north Sikkim incursion, India's seemingly impregnable defence-line overlooking Chumbi valley has been bypassed from east and west with increased threat to the Siliguri corridor - India's sole land link to northeastern states.

In Galwan area, the PLA has reportedly intruded three kms inside India's perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and has built permanent defenses and concrete bunkers holding all heights overlooking the operationally critical 225km Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road leading P-PAGE 02

From Front page...

# PC, Congress Join Hands To Defeat No-Confidence Motion Against SMC Mayor

**SRINAGAR:** Peoples Conference and Congress on Monday joined hands to defeat a no-confidence motion against Srinagar Municipal Corporation Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu.

The incumbent mayor Junaid Mattu reached residence of Pradesh Congress Chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir Monday afternoon to seek his support for defeating a no-confidence motion supported by BJP to oust him from key position in the civic body.

"I called on JKPC President Jenab GA Mir Sahab at his residence this afternoon to discuss the current situation in SMC. The 22 Corporators of the @JKPC and the 17 Corporators of @INCIndia and some independents will abstain from the 'NO Confidence Motion' tomorrow," Mattu tweeted.

He said all future modalities including a future course of action between Congress and PC will be discussed and deliberated upon the leadership of both par-



File Pic

ties in the following days.

In a statement earlier the Congress said it has decided that its corporators shall not be part of the voting process in the Corporation.

"The INC corporators shall not be part of the voting process in the Corporation. The corporators have been issued whip and the same has been conveyed to concerned authorities in the Corpo-

ration," reads the statement.

According to the law, if any corporator violates, he/she will lose membership of the Corporation. It is worthwhile to mention that BJP is backing the no-confidence against Mattu. The BJP's Kashmir media-in charge, Manzoor Bhat had said that party is supporting the no-confidence motion against Mattu.

# Revocation of SRO 202 victory of stakeholders: NC

**JAMMU JUNE 15-** National Conference Provincial President Devender Singh Rana today described the revocation of SRO 202 as a triumph of those appointed under the provision in Jammu and Kashmir and those aspiring for employment in the government sector.

"Better late than never, the course correction was the only rightful option for the administration as the SRO 202 lacked logic and reason", Rana said in his reaction to the reported decision of the administration in dispensing with the rule in deference of the wishes of thousands of stakeholders, who were agitated over the period for this injustice.

Rana hoped that the administration will now release all the emoluments to the appointees under SRO 202 which would have accrued to them in accordance with the earlier rules. This will be the least to balm their miseries they and their families have undergone over



File Pic

the years. He said the administration should come up with a road map in this regard and not precipitate the situation to such

an extent that the affected employees are forced to press for their dues. The Provincial President com-

plimented the stakeholders for their resilience and single-mindedness with which they stood firm for their rights. He hoped the employees would reciprocate and redirect their gratitude by rededicating themselves to public service and contributing their bit in resolving the problems faced to the people.

Rana described the step as a big boon for the candidates who have, or are in the process of applying for various vacancies being notified by the recruitment agencies as the sword of SRO 202 would in no way hang over their zeal and zest. He also sought fast track recruitment to all the vacancies, which he believes run in thousands. This will be a major step towards addressing the burgeoning unemployment problem that has pushed the educated unemployed to the wall, more so due to lack of industrial and corporate sectors, which generate employment.

## Covid-19 Claims 3 More, J&K

from Chadoora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district passed away at SMHS hospital, the officials said. They said the man was admitted at the hospital on Sunday with sepsis and bilateral pneumonia (infection of both lungs). His sample for COVID-19 returned as positive and the patient passed away on Monday, the officials said. With these fatalities, the death toll due to the pathogen has risen in Jammu and Kashmir to 63- 55 in Valley and 7 in Jammu division.

So far Srinagar district with fourteen deaths due to the virus has the highest fatalities, followed by eleven in Baramulla, eight in Kulgam, six in Kupwara, five each in Anantnag and Shopian, four each in Budgam & Jammu, two in Pulwama while one death each has been reported in Bandipora, Doda, Rajouri & Udhampur.

## 179 New Cases Test Positive,

and 50-year-old male from Drabgam Pulwama. According to Dr. G H Yattoo, Nodal Officer Coronavirus Control Measures at SKIMS, out of the samples processed at the viral diagnostic lab today, 126 returned positive for the virus. Professor Ferooz Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura, said among them 79 are from CRPF Battalions, 19 from Shopian, 14 from Kupwara, six from Baramulla, three from Bandipora and one each from Ganderbal, Srinagar, Budgam, Kulgam and Kupwara. The CRPF cases are from 90 battalion Umhal Anantnag, 132 Battalion Santnagar Srinagar, 79 battalion Sonawar besides 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 105, 107, 108 battalions Anantnag. The Baramulla cases are from Delina and Gutyar while those from Kupwara include people from Tanghdar, Kiigan, Khurhama, Yamler, Daril Vilgam, Dardpora and Harie. The Shopian cases include are from Sedow, Matribugh, K-Ullar, Nehama Kul, Gadipora and Kadigam while out of the samples taken at SKIMS three tested positive and they include one male each from Khansahib Budgam, Pandach Ganderbal and Batamalo while Bandipora cases are from Ward 5 and Bamnoe.

Dr Riyaz Untoo, Principal SKIMS Bemina, said that out of 602 samples processed at the hospital's lab, 18 tested positive for COVID-19 and included 15 from Srinagar and three from Budgam-55-year-old man from Ichigam, 29-year-old man from Riayar and 68-year-old woman from Wadwan.

Regarding Srinagar cases, he said, they include one male (53) from Safakadal, 62-year-old man and 53-year-old woman from Batmaloo, 5 persons-3 male (aged 15, 23, and 24) and two female (aged 23 and 24 years)- from Bemina, three females (15, 18 & 43 years) from Alamgari Bazar, a 40-year-old man from Burzhama besides 46-year-old man (from DH pora), 28-year-old from Shopian and 42-year-old from Anantnag, all working as Employees in Srinagar. -With inputs from GNS

## 79 CRPF Jawans Test Covid-19

followed by Pulwama (8), Udhampur (7), Samba(6), Ramban (4), Reasi (3), two each in Kulgam, Budgam and Kupwara while one case each has been reported from Ganderbal, Kathua and Kishtwar.

Among the 57 cases, 14 were confirmed at the CD hospital's diagnostic laboratory and included a soldier (31) from 42 Rashtriya Rifles stationed at Tral, a 40-year-old policeman from Awantipora police station, two pregnant women-both aged 32-year-old each, one from Wamph and Rahmoo-besides as many shopkeepers-45-year-old female from Duderhama Ganderbal and a 50-year-old male from Drabgam Pulwama.

Dr. G H Yattoo, Nodal Officer Coronavirus Control Measures at SKIMS said that out of the samples processed at the viral diagnostic lab today, 126 returned positive for the virus. Professor Ferooz Jan, Medical Superintendent SKIMS Soura said among them 79 are from CRPF Battalions, 19 from Shopian, 14 from Kupwara, six from Baramulla, three from Bandipora and one each from Ganderbal, Srinagar, Budgam, Kulgam and Kupwara. (GNS)

## SRO-202 Revoked, Probation

known as new job policy, was unveiled by the PDP-BJP government in 2015. Under the policy, a new recruit had to undergo five years' probation period before being entitled to pay applicable to the post against which he/she is appointed. Sources disclosed that nearly 13000 appointments were made under SRO-202 by different recruiting agencies since 2015. According to them, the government's decision to do away with SRO-202 will have financial implications worth Rs 54 Crore in the first year.

It is worthwhile to mention that J&K Law commission had last year recommended that the probation period of five years under the policy appears to be disproportionate, supernatural, plethora and limitless. "An employee cannot be asked to wend a tortuous journey tottering, or rather, doddering his/her way to register his/her claim for the completion of the period of his probation after a great deal and lull of five years," read the report.

## New Land Document ...

remarkable transition from a manual system of carrying out the Process of Registration to a Computerized System of Registration. Pertinently, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, in an order issued on 31st October 2019, created a separate Registration De-

partment which would function under the overall administrative control of the Revenue Department. Consequently, the Financial Commissioner Revenue has been designated as Inspector General of Registration. Further, Additional Inspectors General, Registration, Registrars and Sub Registrars have been notified for the entire Union Territory.

It was informed that the Government of J&K has decided to adopt NGDRS for roll out across the UT in 20 Registrar Officer (RO) and 77 Sub Registrar Officer (SRO) sites spread over 20 districts. The NGDRS is basically a web-enabled software application which has been deployed and hosted centrally as a state specific instance. The application is specially designed to be used by Sub Registrar, citizens and apex users from the Registration Department. The product works as a complete user interface for the Document Registration process.

Dr Pawan Kotwal informed the meeting that the department has to complete all components regarding the process of Jammu and Srinagar cities by 15th July 2020 and rest of the districts would be completed ending August, 2020.

Principal Secretary, Information Technical Department, Bipul Pathak; Joint Secretary (LR) DoLR, MoRD, H S Meena; Director General NIC New Delhi, Dr Neeta Verma; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Sanjeev Verma; Div Com Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole; Additional SIO NIC J&K, Saleem Khan and all Deputy Commissioners of J&K attended the meeting through video conferencing besides Commissioner S&LR J&K, Shahnavaz Bukhari; Additional Commissioner Central, N A Baba; Regional Director S&LR Jammu, Dr Mushnak Ahmed; Additional IGR Jammu, Rishpal Singh and Consultant JaKlaRMA, Tarsem Chand were also present in the meeting.

## Cbi Alerts States On Sale ...

the COVID-19 pandemic, it added. "Methanol can be highly toxic and dangerous for the human body," an official said.

## Swain Replaces Srinivas ...

Srinivas initially joined the CID department in 2010 during the height of stone pelting. However, after Mufti Mohammed Sayeed took over as chief minister in 2015 he was removed. He moved to central deputation in SSB before his services were sought again in Jammu and Kashmir when it was witnessing a breakdown of the law and order machinery. According to the official figures post-September 2018, when he took over, 85 local militants and 28 foreign terrorists were killed that year. In 2019, as many as 123 local and 31 foreign terrorists were killed. The figure stood at 81 local terrorists and four foreign terrorists in 2020.

As many as 160 militants were killed last year and the figure is already touching 100 this year. During his tenure as the Additional Director General of CID, Srinivas had successfully managed in running a campaign to prevent local boys from joining militant groups. It was the Jammu and Kashmir CID department which had first informed the Centre about the presence of a large number of volunteers inside-Tablighi Jama'at headquarters at Nizamuiddin after which a crackdown was carried out. He was succeeded by Rashmi Ranjan Swain, an IPS officer of 1991 batch. He had stayed in Jammu and Kashmir till 2005 and later shifted to central deputation. The administration also gave charge of Managing Director Police Housing Corporation to Deepak Kumar, a 1993-batch IPS officer, who is serving as Additional Director General of Railways.

## High Tension: Pak Detains 2

the Pakistan charge d'affaires Syed Haider Shah to the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi and served him a demarche, lodging its strong protest over the reported arrest of the two officials. In the demarche, it was made clear to Shah that there should be no interrogation or harassment of the Indian officials and the responsibility for their safety and security was squarely on the Pakistani authorities, sources said.

Pakistan was also asked to return the two officials along with the official car of the high commission immediately. The two staffers are believed to be CISF personnel and working as drivers at the mission.

According to Pakistani media, they were charged with rash driving, hitting a pedestrian and for carrying fake currency. The two were arrested after a BMW car hit a pedestrian who was walking on the city's Embassy Road at around 8am, Geo News reported, quoting some eyewitnesses. Police later discovered that the two persons were from the Indian high commission.

The incident comes two weeks after India expelled two Pakistan High Commission officials here on charges of espionage. India had declared Abid Hussain and Muhammad Tahir as "persona non grata" after they were found obtaining sensitive documents relating to movement of Indian Army troops from an Indian national, according to authorities here. Following their expulsion, Pakistani agencies started harassing a number of mission officials in Islamabad including charge d'affaires Gaurav Ahluwalia. Ahluwalia's car was aggressively tailed by Pakistani agencies on at least two occasions following which India lodged a strong protest with the Pakistan Foreign Office. After the expulsion of the two Pakistani officials, it was expected that Pakistan would also resort to a tit-for-tat response, going by

similar episodes in the past.

The expulsion of the two Pakistani officials by India and subsequent harassment of Indian High Commission staffers in Islamabad by Pakistani agencies came in the midst of frayed ties between the two countries over reorganisation of the status of Jammu and Kashmir by the Indian government. Pakistan had downgraded diplomatic ties by expelling the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad following India's decision to withdraw special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August last year.

## LAC Standoff: In Conversation

to the vulnerable Sub Sector North (SSN). To the west and adjacent SSN lies the Siachen glacier. The Karakoram Pass is about 10km north of it. By doing this, the PLA has achieved two purposes. One, it has changed the LAC alignment permanently. And it has checkmated Indian Army reinforcements from reaching SSN where the threat of a two-front war is real. Pangong Tso does not have any tactical importance. Its importance lies in dictating the border alignment - this, of course, is more of perception since border would eventually be mutually settled by the two sides. Here, India claims till finger eight (fingers refer to mountain spurs overlooking the lake). The PLA claims till finger one. The PLA now has moved till finger five and has made an eight-km-long road.

### But why is Galwan Valley important to China?

Galwan valley is important for China for two reasons. One, by overlooking the DSDBO road, Indian Army's sole round the year, shortest and easy approach for reinforcements to SSN at an average height of 18,000 feet will not be available. Sources told me that Chinese had twice objected to India building the Colonel Chewang Rinchen bridge on the Shyok river to facilitate fast movement on the DSDBO road. India ignored China's objections and the bridge was inaugurated by defence minister Rajnath Singh on 21 October 2019.

Two, by changing the LAC alignment, China has reached close to its 7 November 1959 claim line suggested by Premier Zhou Enlai to Prime Minister Nehru. What this means is that China will no longer respect the agreements signed between India and China since 1993 agreement of peace and tranquility which created the LAC. In other words, the LAC that Indian soldiers have been holding round the year is no longer sacrosanct. This has serious strategic, geopolitical and military implications for India.

### Do you also see a link between Chinese intrusion and revocation of Article 370, as some Beijing-based think tanks make one believe?

PLA intrusions have more to do besides revocation of Article 370. It is true that China has not hidden its displeasure at India changing the constitutional and legal status of Jammu and Kashmir unilaterally. This is the reason why the PLA is demanding status quo ante on ground; that India go back to Chinese claim line of 7 November 1959. However, the reality is that Tibet never had a boundary with Ladakh. It had a frontier where people from both sides could interact and trade freely. Even in India's official map published in 1950 when the country became a Republic, the western sector (Ladakh) was marked 'undefined boundary'.

According to China, by creating the map showing Ladakh as India's Union Territory, India had unilaterally altered the status quo. This made China renege on all agreements signed over years by both sides. Since revocation of Ladakh UT status is not possible without removal of J&K UT status, the present situation is extremely complex.

### What about CPEC, has it anything to do with Chinese intrusion in Ladakh?

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has strategic and military implications. Being the flagship of President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), interoperability (ability of the two militaries to fight together against a common enemy) and strategic interaction at political level between China and Pakistan is inbuilt into it.

Revocation of Article 370 has strengthened this unique relationship, which although not being a military alliance is much more than it. Moreover, it has brought the relationship into the open. Given this, security of the CPEC against the Indian threat of taking back Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan is undoubtedly one of the reasons for PLA intrusions. This is evident from the fact that China has put talks on the Galwan valley off the diplomatic table. Threat to north Ladakh has shot up. A PLA-Pakistan military assault to provide depth to the CPEC cannot be ruled out.

### So what are India's options under these circumstances?

Notwithstanding the fact that China has changed the LAC alignment and is unwilling to honor all past agreements, India has little choice but to talk for mutual adjustment and peace on Chinese terms. Once talks show results, we will see mutual withdrawal of troops and equipment (tanks, guns and aircraft) from both sides. This will get wide publicity in the media creating the perception of victory over China.

However, PLA will not demolish the new defense infrastructures made by it, nor will the Indian Army be able to demolish them once the PLA has gone. This is called successful military coercion without firing shot. Little understood by politicians, this would amount to Indian Army facing psychological defeat at the hands of the PLA. It is precisely for this reason why the LAC is more demanding and enervating than the Line of Control with Pakistan where both sides fire at one another with impunity.

### But what if talks fail? Can India afford a war with China?

It's in India's interest that talks do not fail since the stakes are high. It was the foremost task of Chief of Defense Staff, General Bipin Rawat to explain the strategic, geopolitical, political and military

implications of revoking Article 370 to the government. He failed to do so because having been a Counter Terror Operations (CT ops) specialist he could not see the big picture.

Regarding war, China will not start one for two reasons: Its military coercion has worked well, and according to PLA doctrine, it fights only in self-defense. This is its way of winning without fighting by breaking the opponents' will to fight.

India cannot start a war for many reasons. With total focus on Pakistan, it does not know the PLA's capabilities and war doctrines. Then, it is woefully unprepared in terms of capability, capacity, training, wherewithal, mindset and leadership.

### What is the way forward for India now?

The immediate solution lies in talks and hoping for a good bargain which is possible since China wants India's cooperation as enshrined in the Wuhan Consensus.

When Prime Minister Modi had met President Xi in 2018 in Wuhan the two leaders had agreed that they would cooperate and not be rivals. This came to be known as the Wuhan Consensus.

In the near term, India should take two actions. One, the political leadership should review its role in the US-led Indo-Pacific strategy which China considers to be directed against its interests. And two, the army should progressively give up CT ops and go back to its primary role of war fighting. It is certain that both actions would not be taken.

### Talking about Kashmir, how do you see New Delhi's current treatment towards the Valley?

I do not see the situation returning to normal in Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh. In the Valley, defiance and alienation have peaked. In my assessment, no amount of developmental work and economic incentives would bring back the trust or sense of oneness of Kashmiri people with India.

The army would remain in internal stability operations indefinitely. This, at the time when PLA war-fighting capabilities and its interoperability with Pakistan military is growing at quick pace, will be detrimental to India's national security.

### But New Delhi seems unrelenting and has reiterated its intent to attack Pakistan administered Kashmir?

Indian military does not have capability to accomplish it now; or in the future since it is unaware of the Algorithm War that PLA is preparing for. Such expressions of intent should not be seen as anything more than political posturing.

## Covid-19 Nodal Officer...

yesterday during the visit of the District Magistrate when some of the primary contacts lodged in the CCC tested positive for COVID-19," the officer said, adding, "The delinquent Officer has been attached with immediate effect with the office of ADM Pulwama and FIR has been directed to be lodged u/s 188 IPC and 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005."

## Mughal Road Re-opens...

an order issued by divisional commissioner Kashmir, K Pandurang Pole said.

However, the order stated there would be no passenger vehicular movement on the road and the timing of the movement of trucks would be from 11 am to 4 pm only. "It shall be ensured that vehicles should be preferably 4x4 or mechanically sound and vehicles should not be overloaded and should carry load as per permissible tonnage.

Drivers driving the vehicles shall be experienced and familiar with the said hilly road. Each vehicle shall have one driver and a conductor only," the order said.

The divisional commissioner Kashmir also ordered the district administration Shopian to establish a health checkup centre on the road. The order said the district authorities would also consider weather advisory on a daily-basis before allowing the traffic movement, while all advisories regarding mitigation of COVID-19 would also be adhered to in letter and spirit.

The Mughal Road - the 84-km mountainous road, connecting the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region with south Kashmir's Shopian -- remains closed for traffic for four-five months every year due to accumulation of snow. The work on the construction of the historic road, which was used by Mughal kings to reach Kashmir and is thus named after them, started in 2005 and was completed in December 2008.

## 2 Members Nominated ...

under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety, 1978, for a period of three years with immediate effect," reads an order issued by Principal Secretary Home, Shaleen Kabra.

The chairman and other members of the Board are appointed by the government on the recommendation of the search-cum-selection committee headed by Chief Secretary (Chairman) and comprising administrative Secretary, Home Department (Member) and Administrative Secretary, Department of Law and Justice and Parliament (Member).

The Board is headed by former J&K HC judge Janak Raj Kotwal. Kotwal was appointed to the post on January 30 last year after the State Administrative Council (SAC) got the sanction for his appointment from Governor Satya Pal Malik. The post had until then remained vacant since March 2018.

Under the law, the Board is supposed to review these PSA detention orders to confirm or reject them within six weeks. According to data obtained by Venkatesh Nayak of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), the Board confirmed 99.4% sent to it by the government

# Give us citizenship rights or deport us back to Muzafarabad: PaK 'brides' petition PM yet again

Agencies

**Srinagar: Scores of brides from Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) Monday staged a protest in Srinagar and urged the Government of India to repatriate them back along with their husbands and children or to give them citizenship rights so that they can live with dignity.**

In 1990, hundreds of youth went across the LoC for arms training but changed their mind there and ended up in various jobs both private and government. Majority of the Kashmiri youth who deserted their families and went across LoC didn't pick up arms and soon after getting jobs, they married to PaK women there, majority of whom belonged to Muzaffarabad.

In 2010, the then Chief Minister of J&K, Omar Abdullah announced surrender-cum-rehabilitation policy for the youth willing to return from other side of LoC along with their families and children. Taking advantage of the policy, some 450 youth along with their wives and children returned to their homes.

However, all the youth who came back under the policy remained under the radar of security agencies, while their wives and children faced immense issues especially citizenship rights. Ten years on, these ill-fated women continue to protest to seek the citizenship rights for them and their children stating that "Government of India should repatriate them or else given them citizenship rights so that they can live with dignity."

Today, they staged a protest at press colony Srinagar to press again for their demands. "My father passed away and I could see him for the one last time. I have no travel documents, my passports has expired a long back. We aren't even given the citizenship rights, tell us where would we go," Mishbah, who originally hails from Muzaffarabad area of PaK, told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)

Another woman protester, who identified herself as Safiya, a resident of Muzafarabad, PaK said that she married a Kashmiri man in PaK and came to Valley along with her three children. "Today situation has reached a point where I feel

suffocated to an extent that at times I want to go for self-immolation," she said. "My sister got married in Muzaffarabad and I wasn't able to participate in her marriage. Earlier, my relatives died there and I couldn't even visit them and see them for the last time."

Toiba, another PaK bride, is married to a Kashmiri man in Baramulla district. "First, we found it very difficult to gel with the Kashmiri families (in-laws) as we couldn't speak Kashmiri language. Somehow, we managed to settle down but then our husbands were denied jobs both in private and government sectors and our children were denied admissions in schools on the pretext that they were born in other side of LoC and had birth certificates from Pakistan administration."

She termed the 2010 surrender-cum rehabilitation policy a trap. "We didn't get even a single benefit mentioned in the policy. Majority of PaK brides are suffering from depression and many have tried to commit suicide," she said, adding that the policy had promised incentives to their husbands but to date, not a single

penny has been provided by the government.

The protesting women made a fervent appeal to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan to issue them the travel permit so that they can return to PaK. "We don't feel safe here and we don't want to live in the hell anymore. We urge PM Modi and PM Khan to get us out of this living hell as soon as possible," they told KNO, adding that "If this isn't possible, we should be given citizenship rights at least and travel permits so that we could visit our parents in Muzaffarabad at least once a month or twice in six months."

Many protesting women also complained that some of them have been divorced by their husbands and are now living in rented accommodations. "We are homeless at present and somehow we are managing our room rent. We will keep on protesting till our main demand of facilitating our safe return to PaK is agreed upon by both the countries," they said—(KNO)

## Airtel Payments Bank launches Suraksha Salary Account solution

New Delhi, June 15, 2020: As India begins to open up following the COVID-19 lockdown, Airtel Payments Bank today announced the launch of 'Suraksha Salary Account' - an innovative salary account for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

India's MSME sector has over 60 Mn units and accounts for 29% of India's GDP. These units employ large number of informal labour force who are not eligible for social and healthcare benefits as part of their salaries. The lack of any financial protection makes them highly vulnerable, particularly in the current times.

### Department of Urban Local Bodies Kashmir Office of the Executive Officer, Municipal Committee, Budgam TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders affixed with Rs 6/- Revenue stamp are hereby invited from registered firms/ Authorized dealers/ Transporters for providing of Poklane Machine on hire basis for leveling / lifting of the heaps of garbage of dumping site situated at Mammal Road Budgam, which should reach this office of the undersigned upto 20th June 2020 upto 02:00 PM.

The rates should be mentioned in per hour inclusive all taxes and the tender will be opened on the same date in presence of the tenderers who wish to present. The tender shall be accompanied with a CDR of Rs 2000/- pledged to Executive Officer MC Budgam. The other terms and conditions can be heard from the office of the undersigned during office hours. The tender shall remain valid for the year 2020-21

No: - MC/ Bud/2020-21 /807-11  
Dated: 13-06-2020

Executive Officer  
Municipal Committee Budgam

DIPK-NB-675/20

### Government of Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir Office of the Executive Engineer Special Sub Division Gurez. Tender Notice NO.(21 )for the year 2020-21 Dtd:-11-06-2020

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

S.NO	Name of the work	Advt cost	Earnest Money	Class of contractor	Time for completion	Cost of T.D	Major of Account
1.	Re-Construction of Chain link fencing of Division office Spl.Sub Division Gurez.	Rs: 3.65 lacs.	Rs:7300/-	DEE	( 15 ) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
2.	Repairs, renovation of J.E.s quarter I&FC at Dawar Gurez.	Rs: 1.27 lacs.	Rs:2540/-	DEE	( 10 ) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
3.	Construction of lined channel on Markoot Khul (L.S Markoot) near Bridge and other necessary repairs.	Rs: 2.79 lacs.	Rs:5580/-	DEE	( 10 ) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
4.	Construction of C.G.I Gange Hut for L.L.S Markoot Lift irrigation Scheme.	Rs: 2.24 lacs.	Rs:4480/-	DEE	( 10 ) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
5.	Construction of C.G.I gange Hut for L.L.S Achoora	Rs: 4.39 lacs.	Rs:8780/-	DEE	( 15 ) days	Rs:200/-	2702 M&R
6.	Channelization of Nagathoo Nallah Markoot incl. F/P work on both sides of Nallah at Spots.	Rs: 5.83 lacs.	Rs:5830/-	SHG	( 15 ) days	Rs:300/-	F. R

**Eligibility:-**  
1. Attested photo copy of the registration card duly renewed for the current year.  
2. Copy of Sales tax certificate for the year 2019-20 be attached with tender documents.  
3. Overwriting/corrections if found in rates quoted by the tenders shall be rejected without assigning any reason thereof.  
4. Quoted rates should legibly be written both in words and figures.  
5. Cello tape needs to be pasted on the quoted rates to avoid any pilferage.  
**Note:-**  
6. If after opening of tenders, it is found that the rates quoted by the lowest tenders are less by fifteen percent of the advertised amount, the contractors shall have to provide an additional security of 10% of tendered amount in shape of CDR, till the expiry of defects, liability period of the year after actual date of completion.  
7. The Departmental materials shall be supplied to the contractor on the following rates from the division store Dwar.  
( in case of non availability of stocks in division stores the contractor may purchase the required material of quality and specifications prescribed, to be certified by Engineer in charge after getting non availability certificate from Executive Engineer and shall not be entitled for any type excessive rates on this account).

No:-EE/SSDG/ 500-509

Dt:11-06-2020

DIPK-1728/20

Head Draftman

Executive Engineer,  
Special Sub Division Gurez

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B SPECIAL SUB-DIVISION URI

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS – FRESH TO NIT No. (10/ 01&02)

NIT No. 16/ SSDU/ 564-83/ 2020-21/ R&B/ Uri. DATED: 13/06/2020

For and on behalf of "Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K", sealed tenders affixed with Six Rupee Revenue stamp are hereby invited from the Govt. approved contractors of the classes shown against each of the following works.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. In lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of Completion (In days)	Class of Contract	M.H. of Account
1.	Construction/ Upgradation of Lachpora Mahkoon Road by way of Nallah Kuch Filling in patches/ stretches, Providing & laying of WBM Grade-II (Crushed) in patches/ stretches and Construction of Kacha Drain	0.95	200/=	1,900/=	07 days	"DEE"	M.H: 3054-M&R
2.	Restoration of Patwarkhana Banali Road by way of Providing & laying of WBM Grade-II (Crushed) in patches/ stretches in Km 1*	0.90	200/=	1,800/=	07 days	"DEE"	M.H: 3054-M&R

Position of funds: Demanded.  
(Two Works Only).

The tenders should be addressed to Executive Engineer, R&B Special Sub-Division, Uri and should reach in his office by or before 20-06-2020 up to 2.00pm, in case the tender receiving date being declared as holiday or public strike, the tenders shall be received on the next working day.

The tender document for the works can be had from the office of the undersigned against treasury challan on any working during office hours up to 19-06-2020. The contractors are advised to paste cello tape over the rates quoted by them on the tender document, without which the tenders will be rejected without assigning any reasons.

The contractors shall in no case give the rebate of their quoted rates. The tender of such contractor shall be rejected without assigning any reasons, who has given the rebate on his tender.

The contractor is liable and bound to taken photographic evidence at every stage of work and submits the same in duplicate duly attested by the A.E./ J.E and cost on account of this has to be borne by the contractor. The work shall be completed within the stipulated period from the date of issuance of allotment order and in case the contractor/ agency fails to complete the work physically within the stipulated time, a penalty of Rs. 1000/= per day shall be imposed upon him for a delayed period.

The tender should be delivered duly sealed with proper cover/ envelop with the name of the contractor, name of the work, reference to C.D.R. No. and date etc. without which the tender can be rejected by the opening authority without assigning any reasons. Also the C.D.R.'s must be pledged in favour of the tender opening authority, failing which the tender will be rejected without assigning any reasons.

The contractor shall not in any case quote more than one rate per item of work. In case the tenderer splits the quantity of any item of work and quotes more than one rate for the same item, his tender will not be accepted.

The contractors should submit their Phone No.'s. in the original document.

All other terms & conditions shall remain same as per this office detailed N.I.T No. (01) of 2020-21.

No. SSDU/ 2020/ 564-83.

Dated: 13-06-2020.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
R&B Special Sub-Division, Uri.  
/M. Yousof/

DIPK-1739/20

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

Muffasil R&B Division, Budgam

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No: 18/MDB/ 865-85 of 2020-21 DATED: 09.06.2020

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

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. In lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of Completion (In days)	Class of Contract	M.H. of Account
1.	Construction of crate protection on Yechikote Munipary road at Wawal Ichikote near the H/O Gh. Hassan Ganie and others KM 1 Providing and a Laying of M.S on Nassrullahpora Soibugh road at Qadipora.						
2.	Improvements of road by way of GSB course and P/L of WBM G 11 Hamdaniya colony						
3.	Construction of R/B wall at Sonpach Checkpora road at						

Position of funds: Demand

1. The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) per schedule of dates given below:

Date of issue of Tender Notice	2020 from 4.00 PM.
Period of downloading of bidding documents	2020 from 4.00 PM. 2020 upto 4.00 P.M
Date & time of opening of Bids	2020 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Executive Engineer Muffasil R&B Division

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

The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e mail message on their e bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Executive Engineer Muffasil R&B Division Budgam (tender receiving

The earnest money in favour of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of Treasury Challan The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:
- Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of

Date: 09.06.2020

DIPK-1735/20

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

### DIAL-EMMA



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

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

### RAILWAYS



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

### HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI  
CALENDAR  
24 Shawwal  
1441

### PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 34
ZUHR	12: 31
ASR	5:31
Magrib	7:46
ISHA	9:28

## This Day In History

- 1487 - Battle of Stoke, Nottinghamshire: Henry VII beats John de la Pole & Lord Lovell
- 1745 British fleet occupies Cape Breton on St Lawrence River
- 1746- Battle at Piacenza: Austria & Sardinia beat Spanish and French army
- 1779 - Spain declares war on Great Britain in support of the US, and the siege of Gibraltar begins
- 1815 - Battle at Ligny: French army under Napoleon beats Prussia
- 1815 - Battle at Quatre-Bras: allies strike French
- 1832 - Battle of Kellogg's Grove, Illinois
- 1891 - John Abbott becomes Canada's third prime minister
- 1898 - China's emperor De Zong (Guang Xu) receives Kang Youwei
- 1903 - Roald Amundsen commences the first east-west navigation of the Northwest Passage by leaving Oslo, Norway
- 1903 - Reichstag elections with gains for the Social Democratic Party of Germany
- 1907 - Tsar Nicolas II of Russia dissolves the Second Duma (parliament) and issues an edict that will increase representation of propertied classes while reducing that of peasants, workers and national minorities
- 1930 - Sovnarkom establishes decree time in the USSR
- 1931 - Austrian government of Ender falls
- 1932 - Germany forbids SA/SS-gang fights
- 1940 - Communist government installed in Lithuania
- 1957 - French offensive in Algeria
- 1961 - Discoverer 25 launched
- 1980 - US Supreme Court rules new forms of life created in labs could be patents
- 2000 - Israel complies with UN Security Council Resolution 425 after 22 years, which calls on Israel to completely withdraw from Lebanon. Israel withdraws from all of Lebanon, except the disputed Sheba Farms
- 2012 - 32 people are killed by a car bomb in Baghdad
- 2012 - 30 people are killed and 15 injured after a bus falls into a gorge in Osmanabad, India
- 2013 - 20 people are killed by a series of car bombings across Iraq
- 2018 - Two suicide bombers attack Damboa in Borno state, Nigeria, killing at least 31 people

From KO Archives

## Kargil War Could Have Led To Nuke Attack: Book

Washington - During the Kargil war, the Pakistan military had prepared their nuclear-tipped missile to fight back a possible Indian attack, and former US president Bill Clinton had informed about the military's move to the then Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif. Bruce Riedel, a close aide of Clinton, has been quoted as saying this in a forthcoming book "Pakistan between Mosque and Military" written by a Pakistani writer Husain Haqqani.

On learning about the military's plans, Sharif was taken aback and said that India was probably doing the same, writes Haqqani, a former Pakistani diplomat, journalist and senior adviser to Pakistan's government. Presently, he is a scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.

According to the Dawn, Riedel further says: "Clinton asked Sharif if he knew how advanced the threat of nuclear war really was? Did Sharif know his military was preparing their nuclear-tipped missiles? Was that what Sharif panted. Clinton asked? Did Sharif order Pakistani nuclear missile force to prepare for action? Did he realize how crazy that was? You have put me in the huddle today, set the US to fail and I won't let it happen. Pakistan is messing with nuclear war."

Riedel, a special assistant to Clinton and a senior director of Near East and South Asian affairs at the National Security Council in the Clinton era, says that he was present in the July 4, 1999, meeting between Clinton and Nawaz.

During the meeting, Clinton also raised the issue of Pakistan's reluctance to help the US catch Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders. "The president was getting angry. He told Sharif that he had asked repeatedly for Pakistani help to bring Osama bin Laden to justice from Afghanistan. Sharif had promised often to do so but had done nothing. Instead the ISI worked with bin Laden and the Taliban to foment terrorism." Riedel adds.

The former US official recalls that Clinton's draft statement on the Kargil crisis also mentioned Pakistan's role in supporting terrorists in Afghanistan and India.

Apparently hinting that Sharif had withdrawn troops under US' pressure, Riedel says that at the end of that meeting, Sharif agreed to announce Pakistani withdrawal from Kargil and restoration or the sanctity of the Line of Control in return for Clinton taking a personal interest in resumption of the India-Pakistan dialogue

(Kashmir Observer, 16 June, 2005)

KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

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Editorial: (0194) 2502327  
Email editorial: editor@kashmirobservers.net

## Let Media Be

As if the existing unfavourable climate for the media in Kashmir wasn't bad enough, J&K Government has come up with a new media policy that gives it powers to decide what fake, unethical and anti-national news is. And if it finds any journalist or media organization culpable on these counts, it will take legal action against the journalist or media organisation concerned including stopping government advertisements.

These actions are not new. Many such actions have been undertaken over the past year or so. Journalists have complained of being called to police stations over a story not deemed factually right. Sometimes they have also complained of being questioned over their social media posts. In some cases, FIRs have also been filed over the news stories and the social media comments. Government's rationale for the policy is "the significant law and order and security considerations", making it "extremely important that the efforts of anti-social and anti-national elements to disturb peace are thwarted." The new policy has made mandatory a background check of newspaper publishers, editors and key staff before empanelling them for government advertisements, apart from security clearance before a journalist is given accreditation.

The policy has deepened the anxiety among the local media which has been at the receiving end of the extraordinary situation following the revocation of Article 370 on August 5. The security lockdown and the communication blockade that followed the decision has hit the Kashmir media hard. Journalists didn't have an internet connection to get their stories out. The newspapers too struggled to get the news content. Though the government later put together 'Media Facilitation Centre', initially only with four computers, it made no difference. The communication gag has been eased since, with the media given high-speed access to internet, but this hasn't made any redeeming difference to the prevailing pathetic state of journalism. Logistically, the situation may have eased, it has progressively worsened in terms of freedom of expression as recent FIRs against some senior journalists bear this out.

The media in Kashmir, comprising a robust English and vernacular press and online sites, have a particularly unenviable job to do. The problems faced by it are both universal to the conflict situations and unique to the state. It is hobbled by the dearth of the advertising resources and the dependence on the government advertisements. But despite that, media has done an amazing job in Kashmir by reporting honestly and objectively the situation in the state. The local newspapers have similarly played a great role by articulating the prevailing situation for the people in Valley and for the world. The local media with its exclusively Valley-centric focus has helped uncover the shades of the truth that have otherwise found little resonance in the larger Kashmir debate. The administration should therefore have let the media be. More so, when Kashmir media has generally behaved professionally and responsibly. Also, the media needs an environment free of control as much as the government needs a free media. This gives it a better comprehension of the situation as it is, not as it wants it to be.

OTHER OPINION

## Ministry of Truth

The New Media Policy of the Jammu & Kashmir administration resembles 1984 in its 53 pages of rules and regulations on what is news, the setting up of a mechanism for "monitoring" of fake news, conditions newspapers need to meet in order to be empanelled and under what circumstances they will be "de-empanelled". The J&K Directorate of Information and Public Relations may not have George Orwell's vocabulary but the framers of this policy have managed to provide a remarkably clear picture of the media they want — journalists and news organisations answerable not to their readers, nor even to their editors, but to government bureaucrats and security officials, who will have the powers to decide which news item is fake or "anti-national"; and with these determinations, to further decide the economic viability of a newspaper through the carrots and sticks of government advertisements. Officials will sit in judgement on journalistic ethics and issues of plagiarism. All this for building "a genuinely positive image of the government based on performance", and to "build public trust" and "increase public understanding about the Government's roles and responsibilities". In case anyone missed it, a Goebbelsian reminder is provided under the separate sub-head of "Repetition": "Wherever possible a repetitive schedule shall be devised for placement of important information to ensure it receives public consideration".

Clearly, the J&K administration's ideas of democratic governance are very different from what the Constitution of India promises. Though the government talks of bringing "equality" to the people of the former state, its heavy-handed approach has ensured that the people of J&K have not yet been given the opportunity to voice their opinion on the August 5, 2019 decision to strip the erstwhile state of its special status under Article 370, and bifurcate it into two union territories. Political leaders were jailed and a former chief minister is still under house arrest. The internet has still not been restored to its full strength. Restrictions on the media ensured that there was no first draft of history from the ground. At a time when democratic political voices remain missing in J&K, the "new media policy" is a further affront, intended to keep control of the narrative of J&K.

An indication of the "new normal" for journalism in and about J&K that the government wants to create came last month, when it booked photographer Masrat Zehra and journalist-author Gowhar Geelani under anti-terror laws for social media posts, and registered a case over a report in a national newspaper, summoning its Srinagar correspondent for questioning. A free media can help the government take the right actions more effectively than sunshine stories. The government should enable an atmosphere for free and fearless journalism, instead of creating policies to obstruct and prevent it.  
*The Indian Express*

# Forced National Integration

Composite culture must reject mono-cultural domination, and reaffirm the value of pluralism of India. Tagore had said that the best way to union is to honour separateness.

JUSTICE PRADEEP NANDRAJOG (RETD)

Manoeuvres for power, privilege and unabridged hegemony remain a grave impediment in the march towards an equitable polity. India has passed through many phases of chaos and anarchy, which, in hindsight, reveal an alarming pattern of destabilisation of the polity. The silver lining being an egalitarian democratic system, supported by a large mass of people — with courage and hope.

The emergence of a distinct pattern of national integration seems to be in an unhealthy competition with the composite culture of India. At one level, the two are different processes, but at a more meaningful level, they represent jointly a design of congruence.

A culture, rooted in heritage and critically appreciative of it at the same time, can alone become an effective medium for national integration. The vast variety of religion, caste, community, language, race, custom, dress, climate and living style, makes India the greatest museum of living cultures.

### A laboratory of intermixing

In 1889, William Comer Petheram, then-Chief Justice of Bengal, in an address at the University of Calcutta, said: "Above all, it should be borne in mind by those who aspire to lead the people of this country into the untried regions of political life, that all the recognised nations of the world have been produced by the freest possible intermingling and fusing of the different race stocks inhabiting a common territory. The horde, the tribe, the caste, the clan, all the smaller separate and often warring groups, characteristic of the earlier states of civilisation, must, it would seem, be welded together by a process of unrestricted crossing before a nation can be produced."

A few years later, in 1911, Rabindranath Tagore observed: "The fact of the matter is that their separateness is a reality, a blind attempt to wipe it out in order to secure advantage of the large unit is not in consonance with truth. A suppressed separateness is a terrible explosive force. The best way to union is to honour the separateness of what is really separate."

Historically, India has been one of the greatest confluences of cultural strands, a laboratory of racial intermixing, of cross-fertilisation of religious ideas and secular thought. Sixteen major languages, about 2,000 dialects, a dozen ethnic groups, seven religious communities fragmented into many sects, castes and sub-castes inhabiting India's 68 socio-cultural sub-regions within the seven natural geographic regions have given birth to a vivid and vibrant scheme of unity in diversity. India's survival and continuity for more than 3,000 years of recorded history, and possibly 2,000 years of prehistory, makes it the world's oldest, largest and most tenacious plural society.

The migration of primordial hordes of ethnic group from central, south-central and north-eastern parts of Asia into the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains, moving southwards to the alluvial Deccan Plateau, inhabited by the indigenous people, provided the first pattern of inter-ethnic mixture.

**A few years later, in 1911, Rabindranath Tagore observed: "The fact of the matter is that their separateness is a reality, a blind attempt to wipe it out in order to secure advantage of the large unit is not in consonance with truth. A suppressed separateness is a terrible explosive force. The best way to union is to honour the separateness of what is really separate."**

The Dravidians, the Aryans, the Semitics and the Mongoloids provided the ethnic substratum of Indian civilisation. The Aryans, followed by the Sakas, the Yue-chi, the Kushans, the Bactrians, the Scythians and the Huns made inroads into Bharatavarsha. Muslim migratory clans, Uzbeks, Turkomans, Tajiks, Iranians, Turanians, Afghans and Pathans made Hindustan their homeland.

### Making of the 'composite culture'

In terms of culture, the two most profound influences on the making of a distinct Indian civilisation, are those of the ancient Indo-Aryan and the medieval Indo-Muslim segments. The former contributed to the flowering of Vedic cultural streams, which, over the centuries, have continued to fertilise the body politic of the ancient land and even today remain the subsoil of acculturation. The latter has weaved strands into the fabric of India, creating a rich design of 'composite culture' by intertwining the threads of the 'Bhakti Marg' with the 'Islamic Sufi' (mystic) traditions.

One needs, therefore, to understand that the composite culture of India originated in an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, cooperation over confrontation, coexistence and not mutual annihilation. Between the 12th and 16th century AD, a continuous process of fusion took place in the Indo-Gangetic plains between heritages originating in three geographically determined cultural belts: the Arabian, the Iranian-Turanian, and the Indian. Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism, each in turn subsuming, with innovation and mutation, the ancient Judaic, Manian and Vedic-Vedantic traditions, respectively.

Composite culture must represent the rejection of uni-cultural regimentation or mono-cultural domination, and positively reaffirm the value of pluralism and syncretism. Composite culture is a product of borrowing, sharing and fusion through a process of interaction, for such cultural symbiosis has greater vitality over mono-culture.

### Towards national integration

In the wake of the encounter with European civilisation, when explorers sailed into the shores of India, the concept of composite culture has widened in its dimensions and includes much more than its original medieval form. The composite culture of India, called 'Ganga-Jamunitehzeeb' in common parlance, embraces seven streams of influence.

The Vedantic Vision, imbued with tolerance and respect for the many paths to truth, and the essence of Bhagavad Gita, that salvation is through action, and action is duty well done without expectation of reward.

The traditions of the Bhakti Marg, where the emphasis on 'love' is the axial principle of life, for the attainment of liberation.

The humanistic concepts of Islam, which include fraternity of human beings and charity towards the have-nots. Emphasis on the beneficent (Rahman) and the merciful (Rahim) attributes of God.

The Sufi message of 'Sulhe-kul': peace for all; 'silsilahs': mystic orders.

The elegance and ethos of the syncretic Indo-Islamic cultural values, which are manifested in social relations, professional ties, etiquette of daily life marked by deference towards elders, concern for the younger, compassion towards dependents and refinement in tastes.

The cosmopolitanism of modern urban development, due to migrants from the rural hinterland, increasing in the cities; and caught up in the vortex of change due to industrialisation, coupled with the rise of urban professionals.

And then there's the heritage of the freedom struggle, which was perhaps the most broad-based, anti-colonial mass movement. It was multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-regional, non-xenophobic and forward looking, stretching its hands to other liberation movements in Asia and Africa. The finest element in the struggle for independence of India was the value of humanism and human fraternity.

Let us comprehend the basic truth of national integration for India. The five major segments of our continental plural society have to be coalesced in a pattern of unity in diversity. These are the segments of religion, caste, tribe, language and region. Thus, in the semantics of functional politics, national integration means, and ought to mean:

*Cohesion but not Fusion,  
Unity but not Uniformity,  
Reconciliation but not Merger,  
Agglomeration but not Assimilation,  
Solidarity but not Regimentation.*

Let us not forget that the three pillars which ensemble India, viewed from the perspective of history, are continuity: notwithstanding change; assimilation: not precluding conflicts; and syntheses: not overlooking the polarities of theses and anti-theses. There is a causal linkage between the three. Continuity is the result of the triumph of assimilation and synthesis; assimilation and synthesis, in turn, have been the two dominant processes of India's society.

*The author is former Chief Justice of Bombay and Rajasthan High Courts.*

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## The Plight Of Private School Teachers

Three decades have passed but the violent upsurge triggered by widely rigged 1987 assembly elections in the Kashmir valley continues. It has disrupted the normal life and engulfed us into the never ending turmoil. Uncertainty has gripped us and future looks bleak. The unrest has not only severely disrupted our economy but also pushed the education sector into dark abyss. This sector was worst hit.

The political uncertainty has dimmed the future prospects of our children. It has snuffed out our hopes. We are in a dilemma. Our daily routine is paralysed by lockdowns and shutdowns. The entire valley has turned into a militarised zone. Schools and colleges too became targets. At many places these institutions were converted into the camps for government forces.

After Pandit migration, outsiders and many locals were of the opinion that we would never stand on our own feet. Pandits were dominating government sector including teaching profession. With their departure education sector suffered a big hit. There were many apprehensions and challenges. In those testing times, teaching was not an easy task. Students were rough and rigid. Teachers had to be very careful with their head and hands. Any inordinate error could sometimes land a teacher into trouble and even could have cost him or her dearly. With the passage of time, private school teachers held the reigns and overcame the sad state of affairs. They played pivotal role in imparting the qualitative education. Their hard

work was paid off when the students from Valley excelled and topped in different Entrance Exams for professional courses which was a distant dream before. They not only prepared them for competitions but also for the real life challenges.

They confronted the challenges and delivered beyond our expectations. It is only and only because of their tireless efforts that today Kashmiri professionals are making waves around the world. Be they writers, doctors, professors, poets, engineers, bankers or business leaders Kashmiris are leaving an indelible mark of excellence across the globe. It was a herculean task, which our teachers performed with utmost devotion. They took us out of the shackles of darkness. They have shown us a path and reignited hopes in us to dream big for our children. All these years, these teachers are toiling so hard for us. Now is it not our duty to address their concerns?

Every time, any untoward incident happens, the fee charged by the private schools becomes the talk of the town. We need to understand the plight of private school teachers before drawing any conclusions. Ever since schools were closed following the August 5 lockdown teachers are made the target. The hue and cry over the school fees (to be paid or not) has led to an uncomfortable feeling among the teachers. Its deeply worrisome that their worth is being made to look directly proportional to the school fee being paid. The stake holders not for a moment sympathized with them. There has always been blatant ex-

ploitation. Social media is abuzz with updates of parents stigmatizing the teachers at the slightest pretext.

We had witnessed many tragic summers in last one decade. As and when the torch bearers of the private sector education felt the pulse of normalcy they were found at the forefront. However the entrepreneurs running schools leave no opportunity to force parents to fee in full despite schools remaining shut. Ironically many of them refuse to pay to teachers during lockdown periods.

There has to be the proper rationalisation so that neither parents nor private school teachers have to bear the brunt. Sometimes being kind is better than being right. We have to look at the core aspects and then decide the future course of action based on computation and compassion. There are around 2640 private schools operating in Kashmir out of which 96% comprise economical schools and 4% are expensive schools. In the former class, what teachers earn is pittance and in the later case, they are profit making enterprises where still teachers are paid decent perks. Its not difficult to gauge whether the economical or elite class schools are on the break even point or not. It is proven fact how much annual admission donations augment to the regular income of elite schools. If we dig deep, we will be surprised to find that almost 60% of the economy class schools are under heavy debt and mostly the students from the lower middle class are enrolled in these schools. In view of the harsh economical crises, it's utmost difficult for these schools to sustain and repay the

loans. Unfortunately in these unusual and unprecedented times, the axe has fallen on them. Only Govt relief package can save them, as they are on the verge of closure. Our concern should be the welfare of the private school teachers who are running these enterprises with their sweat and blood, otherwise it's going to hurt the future of our children. We should support the economical schools to what ever extent we can and in case of elite class schools the entire burden shouldn't fall on the parents. There has to be justified fee cut.

We have been in lockdown from last 10 months. The business is already in shambles. Every sector be that tourism, transport, arts and crafts are badly hit. It is the money of government employees which is circulating back forth in the market. Their 4% DA raise, annual increment, travel allowance had already been slashed down. Given the current situation, there are chances for the financial emergency as well. There are around 7.5 Lakh students in Kashmir and everyone is not supported by the government employee.

Without proper profiling it will be sheer injustice if parents are asked to pay the whole amount for days of closure. Kashmiris may be known for stocking rations for exigencies but it is not also necessary for us to make a provision for the "education budget" for our children as well. Storage of food items meet the needs of our belly but education satiates the needs of our soul.

Riyaz Ahmad Kazmi  
Riyazahm72@gmail.com

# In COVID-Cornered New York City, This Kashmiri Doctor Is Showing the Way

MRINAL PATHAK

**6 Kashmir, where Dr. Mir comes from is battling the current pandemic with its existing health system, which itself is gasping for breath. The frontline workers here are overburdened with the increasing number of infected patients. Jammu & Kashmir has so far reported total of 55 deaths due to COVID-19 and the total number of cases stands at 4574 with 1820 recovered from the deadly infection.**

**I**T was quite a scene when the officials from the New York Police Department recently lined up as cheerleaders to applaud Dr. Parvez Mir's efforts in saving the lives of his patients. The modest medic from mountains he calls home gracefully received the ovation and assured that the fight would continue.

While Dr. Mir is saving hundreds of lives in a borough of New York City called Brooklyn through his grit and determination, he is leaving no stone unturned in helping the doctors back home.

But the fight back is coming at a huge cost. "My family members are quarantined from me," Dr. Parvez Mir, Director of Intensive Care Unit at Wyckoff Heights Medical Centre (WHMC) in Brooklyn, told Kashmir Observer.

Dr. Mir got to know about the first patient infected with COVID-19 on March 10, when an old woman was admitted to WHMC.

The 82-year-old woman succumbed to infection, 10 days after her admission to the hospital. She was the first woman to die of COVID-19 in New York.

Dr. Mir hails from Srinagar and completed his graduation in Medical Sciences in 1980 from Government Medical College, Srinagar. He moved to Brooklyn in the early 1980s and specialised in Pulmonology at WHMC.

Since then, Dr. Mir never looked back and worked relentlessly in the field of public health care. He says, "I am working here as a director of ICU since 1998."

Kashmir, where Dr. Mir comes from is battling the current pandemic with its existing health system, which itself is gasping for breath. The frontline workers here are overburdened with the increasing number of infected patients.

Jammu & Kashmir has so far reported total of 55 deaths due to COVID-19 and the total number of cases stands at 4574 with 1820 recovered from the deadly infection.

While the fragile state of the health department in J&K is finding it hard to control the situation, the scenario is not good in Brooklyn either.

From space crunch to unpreparedness, the health staff at WHMC is battling the deadly virus on multiple fronts. With no adequate guidelines from the government at place, the hospital staff is handling the situation on its own.

According to Dr. Mir, the conventional ways of handling a health crisis will not be of any use at this juncture of time. "Me and my staff are learning from practical examples," he said.

Dr. Mir and his team are learning from experiences of doctors facing similar situations in other parts of the world.

"Many Asian and European countries," Dr. Mir continues, "went through similar situations, so it is need of the hour for us to learn from their experiences."

Just like his homeland, Brooklyn also faces the problem of social disparities.

According to Dr. Mir, the demography of a place plays a huge role in the number of people getting infected. The neighbourhood Dr. Mir stays in is dominated by Afro-Americans and Latinos.

"A majority of patients infected with novel coronavirus are either Afro-Americans or natives of Latin America," he says. "In many localities, at least five people stay at a single home, if one gets infected, the entire family gets infected."

But as the healthcare workers across the globe started dealing with an unknown disease, US President Donald Trump in March recommended the use of an anti-malaria drug called Hydroxychloroquine for its treatment.

But Dr. Mir suggests that the excessive use of the drug



**6 Away from his homeland, a Kashmiri doctor in America has emerged as a new hope in the fight against COVID-19. While exploring new means and methods to counter corona, the doctor dismisses the Hydroxychloroquine treatment theory for the vicious virus.**

may result in hazardous side effects on some patients. "Few patients got cardiac arrest and others developed heart ailments due to the use of this drug," he says.

Once that happened, Dr. Mir stopped the use of Hydroxychloroquine on coronavirus patients.

The lack of health workers is adding to the existing woes of the already fractured health system across the world. Fearing the spread of the infection, many health workers at WHMC have either gone on leave or left the job.

But, this is not the case with Dr. Mir's department.

Dr. Mir remains on Covid call in NYC where the virus has already consumed many lives

"The nursing staff in my department is very responsible," he says. "None of them has quit and they are working tirelessly for the recovery of the patients."

The persistent and collaborative leadership Dr. Mir learnt through his experiences in Kashmir has motivated the entire health staff at ICU to work as a team in a positive direction.

Apart from the supporting staff, the inadequate num-

ber of doctors is a major issue as the ICUs are getting flooded with patients every day.

The hospitals are taking in more patients than their original capacity. Seeing the deteriorating situation, Rebecca Martin, the Arkansas Pulmonologist, joined hands with Dr. Mir in his battle against the virus which has spread like a wildfire.

Dr. Mir's efforts in the direction of the treatment of his patients have saved many lives, but the fight back wasn't easy. He has to keep himself away from his aging mother to keep her away from the risk of getting infected.

"Since I do not want to take risk of infecting my loved ones," he says, "I have asked my children to maintain a distance from me while I am at home."

On professional front, however, he's equally working on his homeland's health. The doctor actively shares his expertise and experience with the doctors in Kashmir.

"I regularly talk to people over there and share my suggestions through my blogs. The sole aim is to yield promising results," concludes Dr. Mir.

## COVID-19: Nations May Be Safer Under Women

They handled coronavirus best by humbly consulting health experts and acting quickly

NICHOLAS KRISTOF  
New York Times

**I**compiled death rates from the coronavirus for 21 countries around the world, 13 led by men and eight by women. The male-led countries suffered an average of 214 coronavirus-related deaths per million inhabitants. Those led by women lost only one-fifth as many, 36 per million.

If the United States had the coronavirus death rate of the average female-led country, 102,000 American lives would have been saved out of the 114,000 lost.

"Countries led by women do seem to be particularly successful in fighting the coronavirus," noted Anne W. Rimoin, an epidemiologist at UCLA. "New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway have done so well perhaps due to the leadership and management styles attributed to their female leaders."

I actually think there's something to that also in terms of women's leadership, in terms of recognising expertise and asking experts for advice, and men sort of barreling ahead like they got it.

Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel,  
University of Pennsylvania

Let's start by acknowledging that there have been plenty of wretched female leaders over the years. Indeed, according to research I once did for a book, female leaders around the world haven't been clearly better than male counterparts even at improving girls' education or reducing maternal mortality.

There has been solid research that it makes a difference to have more women on boards and in grass roots positions, but evidence that they make better presidents or prime ministers has been lacking — until COVID-19 came along.

It's not that the leaders who best managed the virus were all women. But those who bungled the response were men, and mostly a particular type: authoritarian, vainglorious and blustering. Think of Boris Johnson in Britain, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Iran and Donald Trump in the United States.

Male ego and bluster



every country that has experienced coronavirus mortality at a rate of more than 150 per million inhabitants is male-led.

"I don't think it's a coincidence that some of the best-run places have been run by women: New Zealand, Germany, Taiwan," mused Susan Rice, who was national security adviser under President Barack Obama. "And where we've seen things go most badly wrong — the US, Brazil, Russia, the UK — it's a lot of male ego and bluster."

I think the divergence has a great deal to do with that ego and bluster.

Female voters alike are turned off by women who seem self-promotional. That forces women in politics to master the art of communicating effectively in a low-key way — just what's needed in a pandemic.

"We often joke that men drivers never ask for directions," observed Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel of the University of Pennsylvania. "I actually think there's something to that also in terms of women's leadership, in terms of recognising expertise and asking

experts for advice, and men sort of barreling ahead like they got it."

He has a point. Those leaders who handled the virus best were those who humbly consulted public health experts and acted quickly, and many were women; in contrast, male authoritarians who botched the response were suspicious of experts and too full of themselves.

"I really get it," Trump said when he visited the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in March. Surrounded by medical experts, he added, "Maybe I have natural ability," and he wondered aloud if he should have become a scientist.

(Given that Trump said in January that COVID-19 was "totally under control," he has his answer. And peer review might not have been kind to his ideas about bleach.)

No gender gap in the US

While women have generally outshone men as international leaders, that does not seem true within

the United States. Some female governors have done better, others worse, so there isn't an obvious gender gap at home.

It's also possible that this isn't about female leaders but about the kind of country that chooses a woman to lead it.

Companies with more female executives on average perform better than those with fewer women, but analysts think that the reason isn't just the brilliance of female leaders. Rather, companies that are culturally open to having senior women are also more willing to embrace other innovations, and it may be this innovative spirit that leads to higher profitability. Likewise, countries willing to elect female prime ministers may be those more inclined to listen to epidemiologists.

Yet I think that there's also a difference in the leadership itself.

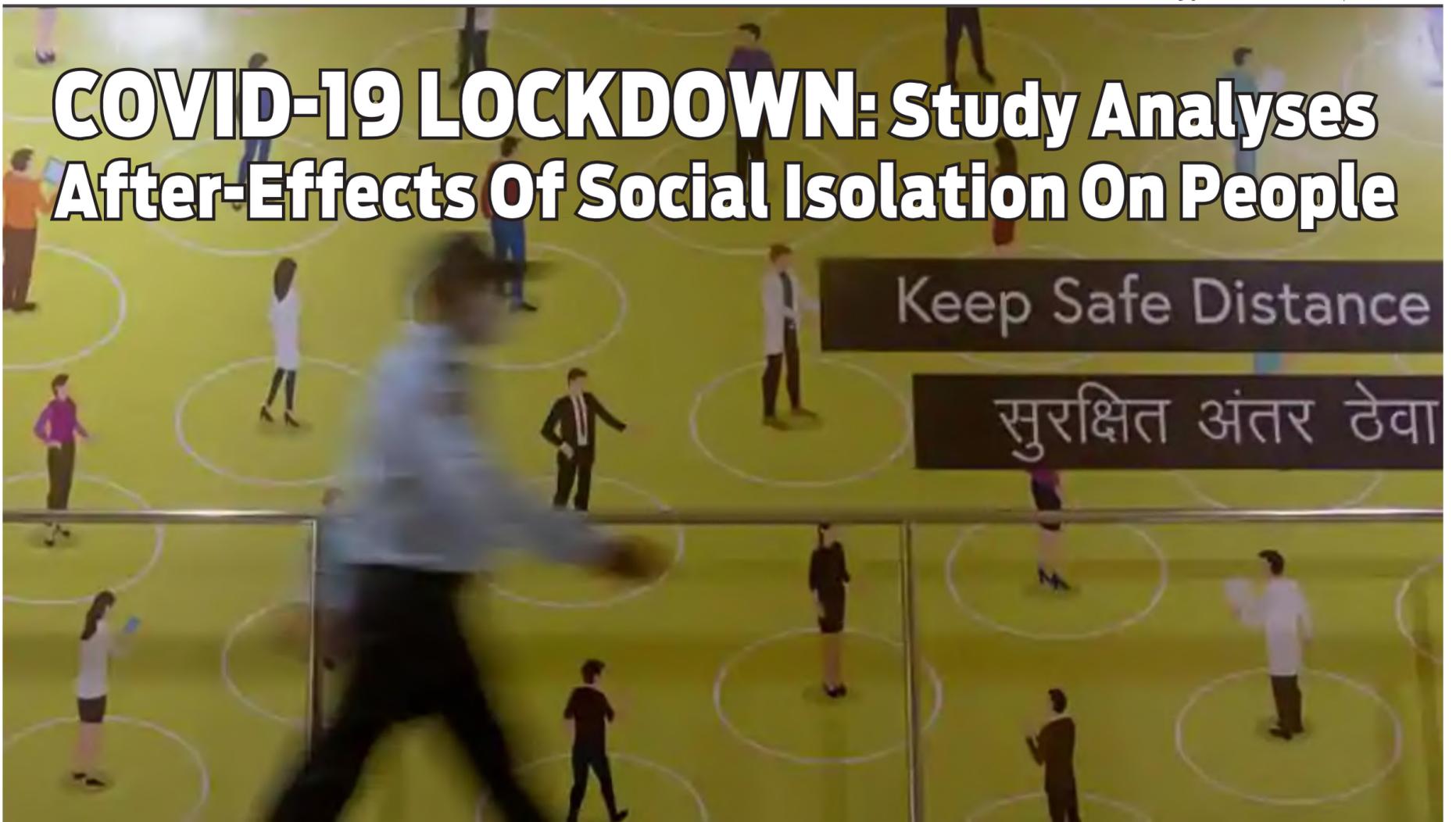
"Women lead often in a very different style from men," said Margot Wallstrom, a former Swedish foreign minister, citing examples from Norway, Germany and New Zealand of women with low-key, inclusive and evidence-based leadership.

Wallstrom also noted that public health is a traditional "home turf" concern for many female leaders. Grant Miller, an expert in health economics at Stanford University, found that as states, one by one, granted the vote to women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, those states then also invested more in sanitation and public health — saving some 20,000 children's lives a year. Boys were thus huge beneficiaries of women's suffrage.

One trap for female politicians is that brashness can be effective for male candidates, but researchers find that male and female voters alike are turned off by women who seem self-promotional. That forces women in politics to master the art of communicating effectively in a low-key way — just what's needed in a pandemic.

"Perhaps the skills that have led them to reach the top," said Rimoin, the UCLA epidemiologist, "are the same skills that are currently needed to bring a country together."

Nicholas Kristof is an American journalist, author and a winner of two Pulitzer Prizes.



# COVID-19 LOCKDOWN: Study Analyses After-Effects Of Social Isolation On People

Agencies

In line with the current lockdown phase imposed on many countries owing to the coronavirus crisis, a recent study analysed how the social isolation is going to impact on people.

Loneliness affects both mental and physical health, but counter-intuitively it can also result in a decreased desire for social interaction.

To understand the mechanics of this paradox, UCL researchers

based at the Wolfson Institute and the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre investigated social behaviour in zebrafish. The results of the study have been published in eLife.

Most zebrafish demonstrate pro-social behaviour, but approximately 10 per cent are 'loner' fish who are averse to social cues and demonstrate different brain activity than their pro-social siblings.

However, even typically social zebrafish avoid social interaction after a period of isolation. PhD students Hande Tunbak and Mireya

Vazquez-Prada, Postdoctoral Research Fellow Thomas Ryan, Dr Adam Kampff and Sir Henry Dale Wellcome Fellow Elena Dreosti set out to test whether the brain activity of isolated zebrafish mimics that of loner fish or whether other forces were at play.

To investigate the effects of isolation, the researchers isolated typically social zebrafish from other fish for a period of two days and then compared their brain activity to zebrafish, who demonstrated aversion to social interac-

tion without having been isolated.

The isolated fish demonstrated sensitivity to stimuli and had increased activity in brain regions related to stress and anxiety. These effects of isolation were quickly overcome when the fish received a drug that reduces anxiety.

The differences between loner fish and their siblings were found mostly in the hypothalamus, the region of the brain responsible for social rewards. The loner fish hypothalamus did not demonstrate the same pattern of activa-

tion during social exposure as its typical counterparts, indicating that loner fish do not experience rewards in the same way as typical fish during social interactions.

By contrast, 'lonely' fish—those that demonstrated typical social behaviour and were isolated—demonstrated hypersensitivity to stimuli and activation of brain regions associated with stress and anxiety. Lonely fish experienced actively negative outcomes from social interaction whereas loner fish simply did not

experience reward.

"A detailed view of the zebrafish brain can provide important clues for all of us currently experiencing the effects of social isolation," said Dr Elena Dreosti.

"Our understanding of the neural mechanisms of social behaviour are limited, but we do know that zebrafish and humans share a fundamental drive for social interaction that is controlled by similar brain structures," Dreosti added.

Although human behaviour is much more complex, under-

standing how this basic social drive arises—and how it is affected by isolation—is a necessary step towards understanding the impact of the social environment on human brains and behaviour.

The zebrafish, which is completely transparent throughout early development, offers neuroscientists a detailed view of its brain circuitry.

As per the study, humans won't all be loners after lockdown but will be anxious upon returning to normal social lives.

## Are COVID-19 Mutations Leading To Diagnosis Test Mismatches?

Press Trust Of India

Scientists have found that seven out of 27 COVID-19 diagnostic tests which are currently in use may be under-performing possibly due to the novel coronavirus mutating, and have cautioned that the effectiveness of testing methods needs to be re-evaluated. According to the study, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, many of the tests were developed early in the outbreak when the virus was first identified, and its genetic material was sequenced.

The researchers from York University in Canada said it is important to re-evaluate the methods periodically to ensure they still work.

"COVID-19 tests use polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assays to diagnose the virus in patients, but if those assays are mismatched due to genetic variability in the viral genome, that raises the concern that the tests may not be detecting all the circulating variants of the virus and results could be inaccurate," explained Kashif Aziz Khan, corre-



sponding author of the study.

Correcting any mismatches between the assays and the coronavirus genome may help improve the sensitivity and accuracy of some of the diagnostic tests, the researchers said in a statement.

According to the scientists, the early sequencing of the genetic material of the virus allowed for the development of PCR detection protocols by multiple national organizations that were published by the World Health Organization (WHO).

These tests, according to the

study, use probes that bind to the viral genetic material in a patient sample and help produce several detectable copies of it, if the person is infected with the coronavirus.

However, the researchers said these tests that do not account for variations and mutations.

"Given the potential for the viruses to mutate, genetic variations in the viral genome at primer/probe binding regions can result in potential mismatches and false-negative results," the scientists wrote in the study.

## Up To 45 Per Cent Of Coronavirus Infections May Be Asymptomatic: Study

Press Trust Of India

LOS ANGELES: As much as 45 per cent of people infected by the novel coronavirus never show symptoms of the disease, according to a review of studies which suggests that the virus may silently damage the bodies of these asymptomatic individuals.

Scientists, including Eric Topol from the Scripps Research Translational Institute in the US, analysed public datasets on asymptomatic infections of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2.

The findings, published in the journal Annals of Internal Medicine, suggested that asymptomatic people may account for ap-

proximately 40 to 45 per cent of SARS-CoV-2 infections, playing a significant role in the spread of the disease.

Based on the study, the scientists highlighted the need for expansive testing and contact tracing of infected individuals to mitigate the pandemic.

"The silent spread of the virus makes it all the more challenging to control," said Topol, founder and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute and professor of Molecular Medicine at Scripps Research. "Our review really highlights the importance of testing. It's clear that with such a high asymptomatic rate, we need to cast a very wide net, otherwise the virus

will continue to evade us," he added.

In the study, Topol and his team collected information from testing studies on 16 diverse cohorts from around the world.

The scientists noted in a statement that these datasets were gathered via keyword searches of PubMed, bioRxiv and medRxiv, as well as Google searches of relevant news reports. They said the analysis included data on nursing home residents, cruise ship passengers, prison inmates and various other groups. "What virtually all of them had in common was that a very large proportion of infected individuals had no symptoms," said Daniel Oran, another co-author of the study.

## Researchers Find Potential Element To Improve Productivity, Quality Of Life In Elderly

Agencies

WASHINGTON D.C.- In a recent study, researchers discovered nutraceuticals (products derived from food sources with extra health benefits in addition to the basic nutritional value found in foods) as the potential elements to slow ageing processes and help in avoiding a host of chronic diseases that comes with the process.

Ageing is considered synonymous with the appearance of major diseases and an overall decline in physical and mental performance.

The recent study summarises the main findings on nutraceuticals that are believed to slow ageing processes by delaying and even preventing the development



of multiple chronic diseases.

These nutraceuticals may help improve productivity and quality of life in the elderly.

Researchers from Migal-Galilee Research Institute (Israel),

University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), and University of Belgrade (Serbia) have contributed their review after conducting a literature review work published on nutraceuticals.

The research found that the most robust environmental manipulation for extending lifespan is caloric restriction without malnutrition. Some nutraceuticals can mimic caloric restriction effects. Caloric restriction is well established as a strategy to extend lifespan without malnutrition.

A variety of nutraceuticals were reported to mimic the effect of caloric restriction by modulating the activity of insulin-like growth factor 1 receptor signalling and sirtuin activity and consequently promote longevity. The review, published in Current Nutraceuticals, offers a special focus on the nutraceuticals that impact insulin-like growth factor 1 receptor signalling and sirtuin activity in mediating longevity and healthspan.

## Artificial Brains May Need Sleep For Proper Functioning, Says Study

Agencies

WASHINGTON - According to new research from Los Alamos National Laboratory, artificial brains too might require sleep for proper functioning.

"We study spiking neural networks, which are systems that learn much as living brains do," said Los Alamos National Laboratory computer scientist Yijing Watkins.

"We were fascinated by the prospect of training a neuro-morphic processor in a manner analogous to how humans and other biological systems learn from their environment during childhood development," Watkins added.

The scientist and her research team found that the network simulations became unstable after continuous periods of unsupervised learning.

When they exposed the networks to states that are analogous to the waves that living



brains experience during sleep, stability was restored. "It was as though we were giving the neural networks the equivalent of a good night's rest," said Watkins.

The discovery came about as the research team worked to develop neural networks that closely approximate how humans and other biological systems learn to see.

The group initially struggled with stabilising simulated neural networks undergoing unsupervised dictionary training, which involves classifying ob-

jects without having prior examples to compare them to. "The issue of how to keep learning systems from becoming unstable really only arises when attempting to utilise biologically realistic, spiking neuromorphic processors or when trying to understand biology itself," said Los Alamos computer scientist and study coauthor Garrett Kenyon.

The vast majority of machine learning, deep learning, and AI researchers never encounter this issue because in the very artificial systems they study they have the luxury of performing global mathematical operations that have the effect of regulating the overall dynamical gain of the system," added Kenyon.

The researchers characterise the decision to expose the networks to an artificial analog of sleep as nearly a last-ditch effort to stabilise them. They experimented with various types of noise, roughly comparable to the static you might encounter

between stations while tuning a radio.

The best results came when they used waves of so-called Gaussian noise, which includes a wide range of frequencies and amplitudes. They hypothesize that the noise mimics the input received by biological neurons during slow-wave sleep. The results suggest that slow-wave sleep may act, in part, to ensure that cortical neurons maintain their stability and do not hallucinate.

The groups' next goal is to implement their algorithm on Intel's Loihi neuromorphic chip. They hope allowing Loihi to sleep from time to time will enable it to stably process information from a silicon retina camera in real time.

If the findings confirm the need for sleep in artificial brains, we can probably expect the same to be true of androids and other intelligent machines that may come about in the future.

## Israel Owns Between 80 To 90 Nuclear Warheads: Report

Agency

JERUSALEM: Israel is believed to possess between 80 and 90 nuclear warheads, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said



on Monday.

In a report, SIPRI said Israel continues to pursue a policy of ambiguity regarding

its nuclear program.

It said that the number of nuclear warheads in Israel rose to 90, up from 80 warheads in 2019.

"The nine nuclear-armed states—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)—together possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons at the start of 2020," the SIPRI report said.

In 2015, the Washington DC-based Institute for Science and International Security said that Israel has produced 115 nuclear warheads since it began making them in 1963.

The true number of Israeli nuclear weapons remains a closely guarded secret.



## Violence grips US again as police kill another black man

Anwar Iqbal | Dawn

WASHINGTON: "We are done dying," declared the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) as violence re-erupted across America on Sunday over death of yet another African-American man, this time by police shooting.

Rayshard Brooks, 27, was shot dead by police on Friday night outside a Wendy's outlet in Atlanta, Georgia, after he was found sleeping in the restaurant's drive-through area.

"We do not have the full right to live in this country," said NAACP, one of the largest civil rights groups in America, while urging people to join its campaign against racism. "Business as usual may cost us our livelihoods and our lives."

Civil rights activists are trying to change social attitudes in America, particularly towards the African-American community. The movement gained momentum late last month when a policeman choked George Floyd to death in Minneapolis as dozens watched and filmed the incident.

The police cruelty stunned the American nation, causing countrywide protests that were the most intense in Minneapolis and in the nation's capital, Washington. Tens of thousands of whites joined the protest, although Floyd was an African-American.

But appeals for peace, and the fear of a resurgence of Covid-19, eased the tensions until this weekend when Brooks' death re-ignited the fire. The backlash started with a video that showed Brooks resisting arrest and then running away from two police officers after snatching a taser.

One of the officers chased Brooks and fired several shots into him after he turned the device, which is used to stun a detainee, towards the officer.

A crowd gathered outside the restaurant on Saturday and set it on fire, as an estimated 1,000 protesters watched it burning. Protesters then walked to a nearby highway, stopping traffic.

They locked arms, chanting "black lives matter" and "I can't breathe," slogans popularised during the protest

against Floyd's killing.

"I can't breathe," were Floyd's last words and of another African-American, Eric Garner, who died in police custody in Staten Island, New York, in July 2014. He repeated the words 11 times before he died.

These words have now become an international rallying cry against racism as people across the globe continue to express solidarity with the protesters in the United States.

In Atlanta, police made several attempts to disperse the crowd and made dozens of arrests, but the demonstrations continued till Sunday morning. A small group emerged later and set the Wendy's on fire again. Others spread out to various neighbourhoods.

As the unrest continued, the Atlanta Police Department fired officer Garrett Rolfe, who shot Brooks, and placed his partner, Devin Bronson, on administrative duty.

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced that police chief Erika Shields had also resigned. "I do not believe that this was a justified use of deadly force," she said.

## Over 400 Afghan Security Men Killed Or Wounded By Taliban In Past Week

Agencies

KABUL: The Taliban have killed or wounded more than 400 Afghan security personnel over the past week, the interior ministry said on Sunday, accusing the insurgents of increasing attacks ahead of expected peace talks.

Violence had dropped across much of Afghanistan since the Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire on May 24 to mark the Eidul Fitr holiday, but officials have accused the insurgents of stepping up attacks in recent days.

"In the past one week, the Taliban carried out 222 attacks against the Afghan security forces, resulting in the death and injury of 422" personnel, interior ministry spokesman Tareq Arian said

week after an Islamic State-claimed attack at a mosque on the edge of Kabul's heavily fortified Green Zone killed a prominent prayer leader. The Taliban condemned both attacks.

After initially reporting a drop in overall violence following the ceasefire, National Security Council spokesman Javid Faisal on Sunday said the Taliban "have not reduced, but rather increased their attacks across the country".

The council on Saturday also charged that the insurgents had killed 89 civilians and wounded 150 in the last two weeks. Interior Minister Massoud Andrabi said both the Taliban and Afghan forces had honoured the ceasefire during Eid.

"But after Eid, the Taliban attacks slowly started rising to



at a press conference.

He also accused the Taliban of targeting religious scholars in a bid to put "psychological pressure" on the Afghan government.

Bomb attacks on Kabul mosques that killed two prayer leaders this month were the work of the insurgents, Arian claimed.

"This has been the goal of the Taliban to target religious scholars, especially in the past two weeks," Arian said, accusing the militants of being an "umbrella group for other terrorist networks".

On Friday, four people including a prayer leader were killed when a blast ripped through a mosque in Kabul during the weekly prayers.

No group claimed that assault, which came just over a

its previous recorded numbers as before Eid," Andrabi said.

"The Taliban are now looking for any targets or opportunities to attack, kidnap and assassinate Afghan officials," he said.

The Taliban is currently conducting more than 60 attacks every 24 hours, he said, adding that insurgent fighters were coming from areas in Waziristan and Baluchistan in neighbouring Pakistan.

The Taliban acknowledged carrying out attacks against security forces, but insisted the level remained low.

"We have reduced our attacks to 35-40 percent of what it used to be in the past," Taliban's spokesman representing insurgent fighting forces, Zabihullah Mujahid, said.

## Pandemic leads to a bicycle boom, and shortage, around world

Agencies

Portland : Fitness junkies locked out of gyms, commuters fearful of public transit, and families going stir crazy inside their homes during the coronavirus pandemic have created a boom in bicycle sales unseen in decades.

In the United States, bicycle aisles at mass merchandisers like Walmart and Target have been swept clean, and independent shops are doing a brisk business and are selling out of affordable "family" bikes.

Bicycle sales over the past two months saw their biggest spike in the US since the oil crisis of the 1970s, said Jay Townley, who analyses cycling industry trends at Human Powered Solutions.

"People quite frankly have panicked, and they're buying



bikes like toilet paper," Townley said, referring to the rush to buy essentials like toilet paper and hand sanitizer that stores saw at the beginning of the pandemic.

The trend is mirrored around the globe, as cities better known for car-clogged streets, like Manila and Rome, install bike lanes to accommodate surging interest in cycling while public transport remains curtailed.

In London, municipal authorities plan to go further by banning cars from some central thoroughfares.

Bike shop owners in the Philippine capital say demand is stronger than at Christmas.

Financial incentives are boosting sales in Italy, where the government's post-lockdown stimulus last month included a 500-euro (\$575) "bici bonus" rebate for up to 60% of the cost of a bike. But that's if you can get your hands on one. The craze has led to shortages that will take some weeks, maybe months, to resolve, particularly in the US, which relies on China for about 90% of its bicycles, Townley said.

Production there was largely shut down due to the coronavirus and is just resuming.

The bicycle rush kicked off in mid-March around the time countries were shutting their borders, businesses were closing, and stay-at-home orders were being imposed to slow the spread of the coronavirus that has infected millions of people and killed more than 450,000.

Sales of adult leisure bikes tripled in April while overall US bike sales, including kids' and electric-assist bicycles, doubled from the year before, according to market research firm NPD Group, which tracks retail bike sales.

## Israel OKs plan for new Golan settlement named after Trump

Agencies

Jerusalem: An Israeli cabinet minister on Sunday said the government approved plans to build a new settlement in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights named after President Donald Trump.

Settlements Minister Tzipi Hotovely wrote on Facebook that her ministry will start preparations for Ramat Trump — Hebrew for "Trump Heights" — to house 300 families.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed it in 1981. Most of the international community considers the move, and Israeli settlements in the territory, illegal under international law.

But Trump signed an executive order recognizing the strategic mountainous plateau as Israeli territory in March 2019. The move came during a visit to Washington by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu just weeks before Is-



raeli elections.

The decision, just one of several diplomatic moves benefiting Israel, was widely applauded there.

The Israeli government's approval of the plan, which according to Israeli media will involve earmarking 8 million shekels (\$2.3 million) for developing the town, advances a project announced by Netanyahu last year with great pomp and fanfare.

Last June, Netanyahu convened his Cabinet in the small hamlet of Qela for a vote on rebranding the community as a gesture of appreciation for the president's recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

The small town of Qela is home to under 300 people. Its original neighborhood of Bruchim, which will be rebranded as Trump Heights, is home to less than a dozen.

## Pakistan's coronavirus tally crosses 140,000-mark

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: Pakistan's COVID-19 cases reached 144,676 after 5,248 new infections were detected, while 97 more people have succumbed to the coronavirus, pushing the death toll to 2,729, the health ministry said on Monday. According to the Ministry of National Health Services, 29,085 tests were done in the last 24 hours taking the total number of COVID-19 tests conducted in the country to 897,650.

Out of the total 144,676 infections, Punjab reported 54,138 cases, Sindh 53,805, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 18,013, Islamabad 8,569, Balochistan 8,177, Gilgit-Baltistan 1,129 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 647.

The ministry said that 97 more patients died in the last

24 hours taking the death toll to 2,729 and another 53,721 have recovered.

Minister for Planning Asad Umar warned on Sunday that the number of patients could reach up to 1.2 million by the end of July.

According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the contagion has infected over 79,00,000 people and killed more than 4,30,000 across the world. The US is the worst affected country with over 2.09 million cases and more than 1,15,000 deaths.

The COVID-19, which originated in China's Wuhan city in December last year, has also battered the world economy with the International Monetary Fund saying that the global economy is bound to suffer a "severe recession".

### NEWS MAKERS

## "I Scream For Me": Swiss Women Protest To Demand Equal Treatment

Agencies

Geneva: Women across Switzerland let loose with screams during a national protest on Sunday, demanding equal treatment and an end to violence at the hands of men.

Last year half a million people marched to highlight the nation's poor record on women's rights. This year's version of what organisers call the Women's Strike was more subdued given coronavirus restrictions.

"For me it is emotional. Because I scream for me, but I also scream for my sisters and brothers, I scream for all the other children who lost a mother or a father, and I also scream for my mother, who would have screamed if she was still here," said Rox-



anne Errico, a 19-year-old student who said her mother was killed by her violent boyfriend.

Another Geneva resident, Rose-Angela Gramoni, said she had joined all the women's strikes since 1991.

"Now I can die in peace, the next generation is here to take over. But for a while, I was very sad. I thought we fought for many things, but we did not finish the job and nobody was here to finish it," said Gramoni, who is in her 70s.

## Palestinians mourn death of a Bangladeshi war hero

Palestinian activists are mourning the loss of Saiful Azam, 79, a Bangladeshi fighter pilot who died of natural causes in the capital, Dhaka, on Sunday.

Azam, also a former legislator from Bangladesh's mid-northern Pabna-3 constituency, was regarded as a legendary figure for Bangladeshi people, thanks to his record as an ace fighter pilot.

A unique figure in the history of Bangladesh, Azam fought in wars as a fighter pilot in three different countries - Jordan, Iraq, and Pakistan.

During the 1967 Six-Day War, he was the only pilot to have downed four Israeli aircraft. Mourning him on Facebook, Palestinian historian Osama al-Ashqar hailed Azam as a great airman.

"Our brothers in Bangladesh and Pakistan were our partners in resistance and defending the Al-Aqsa Mosque," the holy site in Jerusalem, he added.

The Palestinian professor Naji Shoukri posted on his Twitter prayers



mourning Azam.

"Saiful Azam loved Palestine and fought for the sake of Jerusalem," said Shoukri, saluting him and wishing him God's grace. Renowned Palestinian journalist Tamer al-Mishal lauded Azam, calling him "the Eagle of the Air".

Downing four Israeli warplanes On June 5, 1967, four Israeli jets were descending on Jordan's Mafraq airbase to smash the country's tiny air force, shortly after the entire Egyptian air force had been destroyed.

## 40,000 cruise ship workers still trapped at sea

Miami: More than 40,000 cruise ship workers are still stuck at sea because of concerns about the coronavirus.

The Miami Herald reports that at least 42,000 workers remain trapped on cruise ships without paychecks, and some still are suffering from COVID-19, three months after the industry shut down.

Cruise lines stopped sailing in mid-March after several high-profile outbreaks at sea. More than 600 people fell ill aboard Carnival Corp.'s Diamond Princess while it was quarantined off Japan, for example. Fourteen passengers died.

The US Centers for Disease Control has prohibited cruises in US waters through July 24.

Some cruise ship workers have started being repatriated to their home countries.

About 3,000 Carnival Cruise Line workers got off in Croatia earlier this month to catch rides and flights home across Europe. MSC Cruises has flown more than 1,000 Indian crew members home on charter flights from Europe and South America.

## Not Eyeing Land In Pakistan, China, Says Gadkari

**AHMEDABAD:** India is not interested in land of Pakistan or China but wanted peace and amity, Union minister and senior BJP leader Nitin Gadkari said on Sunday.

Addressing virtual 'Jan Samvad' rally of Gujarat BJP from Nagpur in Maharashtra, he said India believed in peace and non-violence and do not want to be strong by becoming an expansionist.

"India never tried to grab land of its neighbours like Bhutan and Bangladesh," he added.

The Minister of Road Transport & Highways and MSME also said that COVID-19 crisis will not last long, as a vaccine is on its way soon.

"India do not want land that rightfully belongs to Pakistan or China. All India want is peace, amity, love, and (want) to work together (with neighbouring countries)," Gadkari said.

His comments came at a time when India and China are engaged in a stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Talking about the completion of one year of the second term of the Modi government, Gadkari said its biggest achievement was to bring peace in the country by dealing with matters of internal and external security.

"...Whether it is about almost winning over the Maoist problem or securing the country from Pakistan-sponsored terrorism...There

is China on the one side of our border and Pakistan on the other side. We want peace, not violence," he said.

"The strong steps taken by our government against terrorism and naxalism; giving importance to internal and external security has made peace possible in the country," Gadkari said.

During his speech, the Nagpur MP referred to famous novel "Mrityunjaya" by Marathi novelist Shivaji Sawant, saying peace and non-violence can be established by only those who are strong and not weak.

"We should not make India strong by becoming expansionist. We want to make India strong for establishing peace. We never tried to grab land of Bhutan. Our country made Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the prime minister of Bangladesh after winning the war (with Pakistan in 1971), and our soldiers returned thereafter.

"We did not take a single inch of land. We do not want land either of Pakistan or China. All we want is peace, amity, love, and wanted to work together," he said.

Gadkari also said the coronavirus crisis will not last long as scientists in India and abroad have been working to develop a vaccine.

"This crisis is not going to last long. Effort is on in our country to develop a vaccine for coronavirus. Scientists across the world are working in this direction.



## Centre Working To Stop Water Of India's Share Into Pak: Nitin Gadkari

**AHMEDABAD:** Stating that water of India's share from three of six rivers in "Akhand Bharat" is flowing into Pakistan, Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said the Central government is trying to stop this outflow.

He said Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh will get this water.

Addressing virtual "Jan Samvad" rally of Gujarat BJP from Nagpur in Maharashtra, he also said India believed in peace and non-violence and do not want to be strong by be-

coming an expansionist.

"There were six rivers in Akhand Bharat (passing through both India and Pakistan). As per division, waters of three rivers was reserved for Pakistan, while water of other three rivers was to be used by India. Water of our share was also flowing into Pakistan," Mr Gadkari said.

He said states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh were not coming together on this issue earlier.

"For the first time since 1970, I asked our (former J&K governor

Satya Pal Malik and Punjab Congress CM (Amarinder Singh) to sign a treaty. We are working to stop the water from flowing into Pakistan. Now Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Himachal will get this water. Our government shows the courage to take this decision, otherwise nothing has happened since 1970," he said.

He said, "Seven out of nine projects (related to division of water of rivers) where consensus had eluded states earlier have been cleared after CMs of these states were brought together to resolve the matter".

## China No Substitute To India: Senior Nepali Economist



**NEPAL:** India relationship should not deteriorate over the border row as the landlocked country is dependent on its southern neighbour for all the essential items and it would be unwise to consider China as an "alternative", a leading Nepali economist said on Monday.

Commenting on Nepal's move to amend the Constitution for incorporating India's territory of Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, Dr Posh Raj Pandey, the executive chairman of the South Asia Watch on Trade Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), a consortium of South Asian NGOs, said that its economic impact will depend upon how India reacts.

"Nepal is not only a landlocked country, but also India locked as it is surrounded by India from the three sides. The situation will be vulnerable. If India retaliates, it will have a huge economic impact on the country," said Pandey, who has been working on issues of international trade and economic development for over 20 years.

His remarks came as Nepal's ruling and opposition political parties on Saturday voted in unison to amend the Constitution to update the national emblem by incorporating the controversial map incorporating Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura in India's Uttarakhand.

India has described Nepal's move as "untenable." Pandey said that the "Nepal-India relations should not be allowed to damage and there is a need for early negotiations and a dialogue to resolve the issue at the earliest".

Nepal is dependent on India for the supply of essential goods, said the economist, who was one of the negotiators for Nepal's accession negotiation for the World Trade Organisation membership.

"Our imports from India account for two-third whereas that from China is just 14 per cent," Pandey, a member of Nepal's National Planning Commission, said, adding that China cannot be an alternative to India as far as the supply of essentials are concerned.

## At 11GB Data Per User A Month, 90% Indians Binge On Streaming

**NEW DELHI:** As data consumption touches over 11GB per user a month in India owing to the lockdown times, 90 per cent people are spending more time on content streaming, e-learning, infotainment and social media, a new survey said on Monday.

Nearly 61 per cent consumers are streaming more content than they were before the lockdown, said the 'EY Digital Consumer Survey'.

"Time spent on video streaming has surged 1.2 times to average 4.2 hours per user per week," the findings showed.

While 60 per cent respondents prefer subscription-based video on demand, 20 per cent prefer TV entertainment. Nearly 50 per cent of respondents who prefer TV, are spending more time watching movies, shows and news telecast.

"The access and speed to real-time engagement is driving digital adoption to the next level. Now is the time for business models to change and capture a larger share of customers' wallet and attention," said Prashant Singhal, Emerging Markets TMT Leader at EY.

The survey analysed views of over 2,600 consumers to highlight the changing behaviour and perception toward digital services.

"Nearly 33 per cent respondents upgraded broadband plans for higher data packages. Interestingly, un-



limited plans accounted for 40 per cent of total upgrades, underlining the growing confidence to do more digitally," said the survey.

Many basic users, those using data only for thin web-browsing, chatting and calling, are migrating to high user bucket.

"Nearly 11 per cent of basic data users upgraded their existing packs to either unlimited or 50 per cent 100 per cent higher data to do more of content streaming, gaming and video calling.

The survey revealed that as many as 76 per cent respondents are either first timers or have increased the time they spent on video calling.

"The demand for high-speed broadband with increasing remote working population will only spiral to support use of data-intensive tools. As work from home or remote working becomes a reality, the need for stable, high-speed internet becomes even more critical," the survey said. IANS

## High Court Permits Airlines To Allow Passengers On Middle Seats

**MUMBAI:** The Bombay High Court on Monday permitted all flight operators to allow passengers to occupy middle seats in flights, but said they should strictly comply with guidelines of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A division bench of Justices SJ Kathawalla and SP Tavade refused to accept the contentions raised in a petition filed by Air India pilot Devan Kanani, who said the middle seats of all international and domestic flights should be kept vacant to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

"We are of the prima facie view that the safety and health of passengers on board the aircraft qua (with regard to) COVID-19 virus is adequately taken care of even if the middle seat of the aircraft is not kept vacant on account of passenger load and seat capacity," the court said.

The court permitted air carriers to allow passengers to occupy the middle seat in flights, but said they should strictly comply with DGCA's guidelines on measures to be taken to prevent spread of the coronavirus.

The DGCA in its May 31 circular said flight operators should try to keep the middle seat vacant but if it has been booked, then the passenger shall be provided with a wraparound gown in addition to the mask and face shield.

If possible, passengers from

one family or those travelling in one group could be allotted seats along with the middle seat, it said in the circular.

The court in its order said it has not seen any material to show wrongdoing on part of the Air India and Air India Express or violating circulars issued by the DGCA on March 23 and endangering the lives of passengers travelling back to India from abroad in the Vande Bharat flights.

The bench noted that all precautionary measures, as stipulated with regard to passengers and the crew, are complied with by all flight operators.

Upon disembarkment, thermal screening of all passengers is again carried out and they are thereafter compulsorily placed under institutional quarantine for seven to 14 days. It is not established till date that any passenger, who tested positive, has been infected on board an aircraft, the court said.

It further said even if the middle seat is kept vacant, the person occupying the window seat, while getting out for going to the wash-room and thereafter returning to the seat, is likely to touch the person sitting on the aisle seat.

The court noted that a high-level expert committee of the Ministry of Civil Aviation has specifically considered and rejected the suggestion that seats must be kept vacant between passengers.

## Indian Actors' Suicide Stories: Guru Dutt To Sushant Singh Rajput



**NEW DELHI:** The curse of suicide has haunted the showbiz since time immemorial with the likes of iconic actor-director Guru Dutt, South star Silk Smitha, actor Jiah Khan and now Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput giving up on life in the Indian film industry known for being harsh and demanding of its stars.

Known for films like "Kai Po Che!", "MS Dhoni: The Untold Story", "Chhichhore", Rajput was found hanging at his Bandra home, the police said on Sunday. He was 34.

Rajput's last screen appearance was Nitesh Tiwari's 2019 film "Chhichhore", where he played the role of a father who conveys a message of hope and affirmation to his son who has attempted to kill himself.

And his last social media post, dedicated to his late mother who died in 2002 when he was a young teen,

was on June 3, a foretelling perhaps on what to come.

"Blurred past evaporating from teardrops. Unending dreams carving an arc of smile.

"And a fleeting life, negotiating between the two," he wrote on Instagram post with a black and white photograph of his mother.

Rajput's sudden death comes days after his former manager, 28-year-old Disha Salian, ended her life by jumping from a high rise building on June 9. "It's such devastating news. My deepest condolences to Disha's family and friends. May your soul rest in peace," he had said, mourning her death. Guru Dutt, known for black-and-white classics like "Kaagaz Ke Phool", "Baazi", and "Pyasa", was found dead on October 10, 1964 in his bed in his rented apartment at Pedder Road in erstwhile Bombay. He was 39.

## Odisha Man Kills Woman For 'Practising Witchcraft', Walks 13 Km With Severed Head

**BARIPADA (ODISHA):** A 30-year-old man walked around 13 km with the severed head of a woman he allegedly killed on suspicion of practising witchcraft and turned himself in at a local police station in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Monday, police said.

Budhuram Singh told the police that he beheaded Champa Singh, his aunt, in the morning as he suspected that his daughter died three days ago because of black magic done by the 60-year-old woman on her.

Both Budhuram Singh and the woman lived in Nuasahi village and were tribals, Khunta Police Station inspector-in-charge Swarnalata Minz said.



The accused also handed over to the police an axe used in the killing, Minz said, adding that the torso of the woman was recovered.

Champa Singh, a widow, was sleeping in the verandah of her house when Budhuram Singh allegedly dragged her out and decapitated her, police sources

said. He then wrapped the severed head in a 'gamcha' (traditional towel) and headed for the police station.

Several people were present at the spot but nobody tried to stop Budhuram Singh from killing the wife of his maternal uncle, sources said.

Police arrested Budhuram Singh and registered a murder case while the body was sent for post-mortem examination.

On an average, 60 witchcraft-related murders have taken place annually since 2010 across Odisha, mostly from its tribal belts. Of them, 12 have been reported from Mayurbhanj, sources said. PTI

## NEWS MAKERS

### Up Princess' Photo Removed From Menu Of Shanghai Eatery After Family's Objection

**BEIJING:** A popular Indian restaurant in Shanghai has removed its menu card featuring the photographs of a former Indian princess from Uttar Pradesh following a complaint filed by her family to the Indian Embassy in Beijing.

The pictures of princess Mehrunnisa Khan, daughter of late Nawab of Rampur Syed Raza Ali Khan, were printed on the menu of the restaurant in the eastern Chinese metropolis to showcase the cultural background of the Mughlai cuisine.

The restaurant immediately replaced the menu card



after the Indian Consulate in Shanghai took up the complaint of the princess' close relative Nawab Kazim Ali with the restaurant owner, Indian officials said.

According to the complainant, the restaurant did not take the permission of the Rampur Nawab family to use the photos. The photos were used in a derogatory manner which is a total invasion of the princess' privacy.

"The issue is settled. The restaurant has immediately agreed to replace the menu card and her family has been informed about this," an Indian official from Shanghai said.

The owner of the restaurant could not be reached for his comment.

According to various reports, Ms Mehrunnisa, 87, is currently living in the US. Rampur, which is in Uttar Pradesh, was a princely state of British India. It merged with independent India in 1949. Titles like Nawab are no longer recognised by the government after princely states were abolished in 1971.

### Man Throws Off 2 Children From 4Th Floor In Kolkata, 1 Dies

**KOLKATA:** In a horrific incident, two children were allegedly thrown off from the fourth floor of a building by a 55-year-old man in Kolkata's Burrabazar area. One of the children died on the spot while the other was admitted to a hospital in a serious condition. Police said on Monday that one of the two children, a two-year-old was declared brought dead by a city-based hospital on Sunday night and the other, a six-year-old survived the fall and is in a critical condition. Shiv Kumar Gupta, the 55-year-old man, has been arrested in connection with the case, the police said. According to local sources, Gupta reportedly had some dispute with the father of the deceased child. A verbal spat also took place between them a few days ago over the issue of using the common space in the building for playing by the children. On Sunday, when Gupta saw the children playing in the common area once again, he flew into a rage and flung two of them away.

The accused would be interrogated by the police in front of a psychiatrist on Monday.—IANS